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Federal Indian policy and the St Francis Mission School on Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota: 1886-1908

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**For the Graduate College**
For my parents
Donald G. Ekquist
and
Diane R. Ekquist
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Education. Since the beginning of humankind, the concept has been intricately entwined with our lives. Current generations benefit from and build on the experiences of those who went before. The transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next (i.e. education), has taken numerous forms from experiential, to observational to the highly structured classroom education, commonly utilized today. No matter its form, the goal of educational systems in which children participate are similar. The need to pass on culturally relevant survival skills and the desire to ensure the continuance and well-being of specific cultures and belief systems continues to motivate educational efforts even today.

As Western Societies began to expand and explore new lands, they invariably came into contact with people and cultures that differed vastly from their own. In the majority of Western minds, however, differences did not represent new opportunities for learning and understanding, but were instead viewed as alien and threatening. The words used to describe the new peoples Europeans encountered help highlight their cultural views: ‘savage,’ ‘heathen,’ and ‘barbarian’ were just a few terms applied to non-Christian, non-European peoples. The terminology made it clear these new peoples were not “us,” instead they were distinctly “other.”
European mind, "other" nearly automatically equated with inferior.\textsuperscript{1}

European response to the native peoples of North America followed a somewhat predictable pattern based upon their ethnocentricity. Because the native peoples were different and their ways unfamiliar they were deemed inferior by the white settlers who poured into the Americas. The more humane elements of European society, honestly believed they did the Indians a great service in working to uplift them from "savagery" to "civilization."\textsuperscript{2}

By the nineteenth century, when white settlers began encroaching on tribal lands in the Great Plains, (in particular, the areas that today encompass the Dakotas and Nebraska) the federal government had established a system for dealing with the Indian tribes in the region. The government offered treaties designed to ensure peace and protect both settlers and Indians. The United States Army was utilized against those tribes who resisted federal policy, which operated to confine them on reservations lands. In addition to the army, missionaries also worked to help enforce federal policy and hasten the process of acculturation and assimilation. The federal government sanctioned missionary activity among Indians and promoted their use in order to Christianize the Indians.

Christianization, however, was not viewed as sufficient in and of itself. In order to be assimilated, Indians had to bring their values and cultural practices into


\textsuperscript{2}As opposed to those who would have preferred to eliminate Indian populations altogether.
line with those of white society. In order to facilitate this change, missionaries focused much of their energies on the establishment and maintenance of Indian schools, both on and off the reservations. Federal authorities eagerly supported such educational efforts. They generally viewed the older Indians as a lost cause, but believed, with the proper influences and strong role models, the children could be taught white values and culture.

The Lakota, one of three branches of the Sioux Nation (Lakota, Dakota and Nakota), went through the painful process of white contact, restriction to reservations and exposure to white missionaries. The missionaries, representing numerous denominations, worked eagerly to introduce the Lakota to their various brands of Christianity and to educate them about the white way of life.

The history of contact between the Lakota Indians and the whites has been examined by numerous scholars from various perspectives. The military and political conflicts that raged between the two groups are well documented in a myriad of works. Because the primary focus of so many of these works explore issues concerning politics, military conflicts and biographies of prominent leaders some of the social and cultural aspects of Lakota history have been neglected. One such area where relatively little has been written is the history of education among the Lakota.

The Lakota are not a single political/social unit. Instead, they comprise
seven bands, or council fires.\(^3\) The various council fires represent subdivisions of political and social organization. The second largest band (outnumbered only by the Oglala) are known as the Sicangu (also referred to as the Upper Brule). It is various aspects of the educational history of the Sicangu that are examined in the following chapters.

In most works on the Lakota, education is only superficially examined, if addressed at all. Many writers and policy makers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries assumed that the Indians in general had no system to educate their children before the advent of the white man, and the introduction of European-style schools for ‘their benefit.’ Contrary to European assumptions, however, long before the arrival of the white men, the Sicangu established effective and dynamic methods for educating their young. The first chapter examines the basics of education among the Sicangu prior to their restriction on reservations.

As with so many other aspects of native cultures, the Europeans suffered from acute myopia when observing the practices and traditions of the Indians in educating their children. Many whites proved unable to transcend their own cultural norms as they encountered new cultures. Europeans interpreted Christian doctrines in such a manner that they viewed their culture and traditions as the only acceptable form of civilization. Because of such attitudes many whites could discern little or nothing of value in the cultures and traditions of the Indians they encountered.

\(^3\)Duncan Kunigunde, *Blue Star: The Story of Corbelle Fellows, Teacher at Dakota Missions 1884-1888*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1990), iii. The seven council fires of the Teton Lakota (also referred to the Western Sioux) are the Oglala, Sicangu (or Brule), Hunkpapa, Minneconjou, Blackfoot, Two Kettles and the Sans Arcs.
It is certainly true that before European-style Indian schools were established in America, the Indian children did not sit together in groups for hours on end, in carefully constructed classrooms reciting their lessons for the day. Their classroom, instead, was the environment in which they lived, and for teachers they looked to the elders within their community. The tools they used for their lessons were well developed memories, keen observational abilities and inquisitive minds.

Chapter two discusses the process by which Sicangu (and other Lakota) freedom, and much of their lands was lost. During this period of increasing contact with whites there were also numerous efforts to establish white-style schools for the Indian children. The establishment of the Great Sioux Reservation, and later the Rosebud Reservation, helped lead to the creation of schools run by various religious denominations, including the Catholics.

The Catholics had a long history of contact among various elements of the Sicangu and vigorously fought to maintain their influence among members of the tribe. Chapter two continues on and examines the creation of St. Francis Mission School on Rosebud Reservation in 1886. Like most white American's, Catholic missionaries generally saw Sicangu children as uneducated and neglected. The creation of such mission schools also served as a means for the Catholic Church to keep its converts and to encourage others to join them.

As the rest of the chapters demonstrate, the establishment and maintenance of St. Francis was not a simple or easy process. The Franciscan priests, and the nuns that worked with them, faced a constant struggle to keep the school alive. In addition to the sometimes bitter conflict with other Christian denominations, the
Catholics at St. Francis faced numerous challenges from the harsh environment and from Indian attitudes toward the priests and the school. The biggest boon and the biggest thorn in the side of those who supported the St. Francis Mission School was the problem of changing federal policy toward religiously run schools and their funding. The relationship between the federal government and the operations of St. Francis Mission School was vital for the school’s survival. Most denominational Indian schools, however, eventually either closed their doors, or sought private funding when federal funds for their support dried up. The scope of Catholic operations and the volume of resources needed to maintain them, however, made private funding impractical over the long term. At times closing St. Francis, and other Catholic schools, seemed nearly inevitable. From the priests and nuns at St. Francis, to the bureaucracy of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in Washington D.C., a war, which ultimately succeeded, was waged to find a way to keep the doors of St. Francis open to the children of the Rosebud Reservation.

To many Catholics involved in Indian missions and education, the crisis seemed very real. The new government-run Indian schools, which replaced the increasing number of religious schools that closed their doors, were primarily Protestant organizations. If St. Francis had to close, Catholics feared many potential and old converts would be lost under Protestant influence. The eventual, hard fought solution to their financial problems ensured Catholic influence on Rosebud, and other, reservations well into the twentieth century.
CHAPTER TWO

PRE-CONTACT EDUCATION AMONG THE SICANGU

In the years preceding the restriction of the Upper Brule to reservation lands, they exercised usufruct rights in the area that today encompasses western South Dakota and northern Nebraska. The Plains environment in which they lived helped dictate their lifestyle and the skills needed to survive in a beautiful, but sometimes harsh land. Necessary survival abilities and other cultural expectations determined the knowledge and skills the members of the tribe believed should be passed on to the younger generations. The goal of educating their youth, as in any society, served to ensure the continuity of the Upper Brule culture, beliefs and traditions by passing on relevant information and expertise needed for survival.

By the late eighteenth century, the Upper Brule lived in a Plains region, which supported a wide variety of animal and plant life. They relied for their subsistence primarily on a pattern of hunting and gathering. Every member of the tribe was expected to contribute in some way to the survival and well-being of the community. It was the responsibility of the entire community to see that the young were fully indoctrinated in the culture, traditions and language of the tribe, to ensure their ability to fully participate in village and tribal life. Methods of education were often

informal, but powerful.\(^2\)

Similar to other societies, traditional education among the Sicangu included the transmission of knowledge to the young and inexperienced by older, more seasoned members of the community. The Lakota, however, possessed no formal written language, thus the knowledge of generations was passed down in oral traditions, often by skilled storytellers. The tribal history and stories were preserved orally from one generation to the next, ensuring a continuity in the traditions, beliefs and practices of the people. In the evenings, Upper Brule children often sat around their elders and listened to them relate stories about hunts, fishing, battles and other noteworthy events and legends. Like children of most cultures, they strove to bring to life in their play the stories they heard from their elders. Such make-believe in their play helped to inculcate in young minds, the lessons contained in the stories related to them by their elders.\(^3\)

Storytelling has served, and in many cases still serves, as an essential element in many cultures. Similar to other cultures which practice oral history and storytelling, the Sicangu adults passed on to the youth stories they learned as children. In this way, storytelling helped to connect each new generation to those that preceded them. The stories acquaint the youth with their position in relation to the history of their people. This process of oral history and storytelling has served


as a means of ensuring the survival not only of the Upper Brule, but of numerous other peoples and cultures as well.

The traditional stories and knowledge of the Lakota served several purposes. They were designed, for example, to inculcate accepted virtues (such as obedience, kindness, thrift, and honor). The stories also assisted in preserving the memory of significant events in the history of the tribe as well as interpreting natural phenomenon. Sometimes, the stories simply served as entertainment for both the children and adults.⁴

One Lakota who experienced both traditional tribal life, as well as the European style education during the late nineteenth century, was Luther Standing Bear. Standing Bear explains that the oral stories of the people served as libraries. Each of the stories recorded some interesting or important occurrence, some incident affecting the lives of the people. Learning experiences, disasters, accomplishments, and triumphs, all were preserved through oral history. Such events were often used to name the various seasons and years while the stories assisted in answering the questions of children concerning the world in which they lived. Elders would often use stories such as "how we got our pipestone," "why lightning flashed in the sky," or "where corn came from," to answer questions from children.⁵

⁵Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 26-27; Coleman, Indian Children, 4-5, 21.
Stories also found a place during gatherings such as tribal councils. At such councils, stories which served as tribal history were related by elders of the tribe. Many of these stories had been told numerous times, but the people never tired of hearing them. The Upper Brule remembered their past through the stories of noteworthy events, and there were always the youth who were hearing the stories for the first time. During councils, young warriors often told their stories with dance and song. The new stories of the young warriors added fresh, and often colorful, chapters to the tribe's history. In addition to the stories, the songs of praise which people sang for the braves aided in motivating the younger boys to be courageous and to earn honor and praise for themselves through proper and, perhaps, exceptional conduct. Attending tribal councils children learned to sit, listen to stories and talk about other matters, and respect the wisdom of their elders. During their play, Lakota children often reenacted the stories they heard in such councils as well as from their parents and other elders.⁶

The concept of history held by the Upper Brule, served to shape their stories and the manner in which they were told. Unlike the history of Western Civilization, that of the Upper Brule (and American Indians in general) tended to be nonlinear before contact with whites. This conception of the past involves seeing, “memory as not just associated with past history, past events, past stories, but nonlinear, as in future and ongoing history, events, and stories.” The stories change over time, from storyteller to storyteller and new experiences and circumstances can help

⁶Ibid., 24-25; Standing Bear, My People, 48; Hassrick, The Sioux, 151-156.
change how stories are told and their content. But such changes do not lessen the
dpower of the stories to teach and to promote tribal solidarity.\textsuperscript{7}

Early white observers of traditional storytelling practices among the Lakota
generally misunderstood the purpose and significance of the stories. One such
observer noted that,

So far as I was able to understand, their only history was in the legends
passed from one to another. It was one of their favorite pastimes to re­
count these inauthentic narratives, and groups of the men would often be
seen, one leading in the recounts of some daring deed of an individual or
of some encounter with their \ldots enemies \ldots the others listening with
many marks of interest and even excitement. \ldots Incidents recounted in
this way soon become changed, and the narrators tell the wildest and
most improbable stories with little or no intention of exaggeration.\textsuperscript{8}

Although some stories were told for the sole purpose of entertainment, the observer,
in this case, missed their underlying significance. In viewing the Indian narratives
as strictly fictional, exaggerated, and purely a form of entertainment, the cultural and
educational value inherent in the stories were not perceived.

Ella Deloria, a Lakota and well-respected scholar, translated the following
example of a Lakota narrative. The story is entitled “Incest,” and is an example of a
narrative that conveys important lessons to the audience, while entertaining at the
same time.

There was a tribal camp. And in it lived a young man who was the only
son of his parents, and was greatly loved; so they had him live by himself
in a special tipi in the manner of a boy-beloved. He had two younger sis­
ters who lived with their parents. The entire tribe loved this young man,
and the plan was to make him a chief someday. And it happened that

\textsuperscript{7}Leen, “An Art of Saying,” 2-3.
\textsuperscript{8}D.C. Poole, \textit{Among the Sioux of South Dakota: Eighteen Months Experience as an Indian Agent} (St.
one night as he lay sleeping, a woman entered his tipi and lay down beside his bed. This she did to tempt him. But of course it was dark, so he could not tell what woman it was. In the morning he did not tell his father; he simply said, "Father, this evening I want you to set a dish of red face paint near my bed." "What does he mean?" the father thought, but was reluctant to ask him. The next night, the woman entered again and bothered him, so he secretly dipped his hand in the paint and applied it over her dress as thoroughly as he could. The next morning he said, "Father, I wish all the women in the camp to engage in a shinny game." "What does my son mean?" he thought, but he was reluctant to ask him; so he went without a word to the council tent where he told the boy-beloved's wish. Immediately a shinny game was arranged for the women. But he could not tell whether the woman who visited him nightly was in the game or not; because she could change her clothing for other before taking part. Again she came, (the next night), so this time he covered her entire face with paint, and sent her out. Next day he ordered another shinny game, and it was arranged through the council tent. In time, all the women assembled in the centre of the enclosure, and now they ran. Out of all the players there was one who unbraided her hair and left it hanging loosely about her face. As she played, with her face thus hidden, he studied her to make sure, and it shocked him to realize that she was the elder of his own two younger sisters! Her face was as if dipped in blood. That is why she hid it as she played. It came over him then that one of his own sisters was tempting him, and he was filled with anger and shame. As he was retiring he said, "Father, get an iron rod and heat it thoroughly, and wait near the tipi. When I clear my throat, slide it in to me." Why he should request this was not at all clear, but the father did what his son commanded. And now, once again the woman entered and came and lay down beside his bed. But that instant, he cleared his throat, and his father, who sat immediately outside the tipi, slid the heated iron in to him, under the base of the tipi. With the iron he branded the woman's face all over, and then sent her out. Now that he was aware that this was his own sister he was very much ashamed, and angry. After she left he slept, and on waking, he felt something move under him, so he looked down and saw that he was standing attached, as if glued, to a tree which was rapidly growing taller; of course, since he was part of the tree, he was rising higher all the time, too. Until now he was rising out of the tipi through the smoke-vent. So the people below took down the tipi in haste. Then the tree grew even faster, elevating the young man higher and higher. The people were frightened by the miracle, and because of fear they moved away and disappeared from the scene. Only the good little sister of the young man stayed at the base of the tree and wept. It did not disturb her that the people had left her behind, and as she stood weeping, suddenly, from the wood near by, the wicked sister looked out, and called tauntingly, "There's someone loves her brother very much; but I have caused him to
grow onto the tree!" And the young man called down to his good sister, "Reply this to her, little sister, 'There is someone who tempted her own brother, but he caused her face to be branded with a hot iron!'" So the girl called back as her brother had taught her, and straightaway the one in the wood called back, "G, that's the thing I resent!" and a deer ran back into the wood amid rustling leaves. From then on, the girl who was very weary, slept, until a man came from somewhere, and said, "Young girl, roast this for your brother," and he threw her a piece of deer meat. So she rose and cooked it and tossed it up to her brother, though by now he stood very high. Her brother ate it. Then the man said to her, "Now I have something for you to decide. If it pleases you that we two shall live together, I can cause your brother to come down." So she told her brother what the man had said to her; and the brother said, "Do it sister; I want to come down; I am so thirsty." So the girl consented to become the wife of the stranger, and he said, "In that case, lie down under here." She did so, and he covered her with a blanket, and pegged down the four corners so securely that she was imprisoned underneath. Thus it was that she did not see how her husband worked his magic, and was unable to tell it. He was actually a Thunder man, though they did not know it at first. For the Thunder man opened his eyes, (lightening), and repeatedly he roared (thunder), and the tree was split in two, and fell broken to the ground so that the young man stepped off. Then the man took out the tipi-base pegs and removed the blanket, and helped the girl to her feet. So she greeted her brother. Because he was thunder he killed many buffaloes, and with his bare hands he ground the meat and bones, and made a cake of pemmican which he handed to his brother-in-law. "Now go to your tribe, and invite them back to this camp-site they have abandoned," he said. So he went to his people and called them together. Then he gave everyone a piece of the pemmican, in very small amounts. He was distributing it in that manner when a very greedy woman who was in the company complained at the smallness of her share, and threw it into her mouth at once. Then she chewed; but it gradually increased in amount until finally her mouth could not hold it all; and she was choking on it. So they took a knife, and cut out piece by piece until she was relieved. Despite the smallness of the cake, the quantity continued to increase, until they were able to fill many containers with it. Then the young man invited the people to their old campground. So they followed him back, and on their arrival, they found at each individual site, great quantities of meat, jerked, and drying on poles. "That is our campsite!" was heard on all sides as families identified their places and proceeded to set up their homes again; and they were very well provisioned. From then on, that people never knew want, they say. Then the Thunder man told his wife this, "Now, young girl, you whose love for your brother was so big that you consented to be my wife for his sake, I am going home. It is enough, for I have now given you aid." And so he went away, somewhere, wher-
ever it is that the thunders abide. That is all.\(^9\)

To the listeners, this story imparted several important lessons of morality and conduct which are examined by Julian Rice in *Deer Women and Elk Men*. The boy, who is the central character of the story is identified as a "boy-beloved," or a child whose parents have been specially preparing him for a leadership role. Rice sees the story as suggesting that such a boy, who has never known failure, and who has had only approval can become ruinously self-righteous. Most girls act in a virtuous and loyal manner, like the boy's younger sister, but some will not. In his youth, the boy overreacts to his older sister's crime. He allows his emotions to run rampant, and his response causes him to become part of the growing tree. The boy's improper response to the girl goes along with his difficulty in identifying her. Although branding the girl might have some element of justice, the story suggests that someone who would take such an action has the untempered emotions of a child and will not necessarily develop into the strong and temperate character needed for leadership. The story does not question the permissiveness of the boy's father, because the Lakota believed that "youthful independence" should be encouraged. It does, however, imply that boys are transformed into leaders when they learn, the hard way, humility.\(^{10}\)

In Lakota society, individual leaders were not allowed to punish transgressors of the law. Families generally settled any disputes. The boy being stuck to the

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rising tree exemplifies his intemperate methods and sense of justice. The boy is correct to condemn the actions of his sister, but he goes too far in punishing her. The tribe's fear of the rising tree symbolizes the fear inspired by any leader who can impart too harsh a punishment for crimes which he, himself has defined. Family groups who sensed the danger of a potential despot would simply pack up and leave.  

The Thunder Man teaches the boy the truth of the two types of women expected to exist in every generation. His obsession with the Deer Woman has led to trouble, but his younger sister is true and loyal. She agrees to sacrifice herself for the sake of her brother. The Thunder Man destroying the tree while the girl cannot watch represents the separate social spheres occupied by men and women. His actions are intended to instruct the boy where and when warrior power should be exercised. Such power should not be brought to bear against a Deer Woman. Finally, the warrior's strength is used to kill the buffalo and teaches that the first responsibility of a chief is to provide food for the people. The woman who complains about her portion when the food is handed out represents greed, and its impact. She nearly chokes to death for her vice.

The boy in the story obviously does not portray the ideal male. His imperfections are emphasized when he pleads with his sister to marry the Thunder Man to effect his release from the clutches of the tree. Undergoing weakness in

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11Rice, Deer Women, 84; Walker, Lakota Society, 23-27; For further discussion of leadership and status see Hassrick, The Sioux, 15, 21-23, 30-31, 78, 296-309.

12Rice, Deer Women, 85; Hassrick, The Sioux, 262.
ceremonies such as the Sun Dance and the Vision Quest, however, was a fundamental component of the experience. Those who participated in such rites would not seek to ease their discomfort, although they may have been tempted. Enduring such rites helped individuals to recognize their limits and to be accepting of the limits of others.\textsuperscript{13}

Because he has become a man, the young man is able to lead his people back to their original campsite. The Thunder Man, then refuses to exploit the girl who agreed to marry him for the sake of her brother. He releases her back to her people. Thus he represents the ideal male figure. He is unselfish and able to help others with no conditions or repayment expected. His compensation is the satisfaction that comes from helping others. A strong man, thus, should be able to release a wife who sacrificed her personal happiness for the good of her family in marriage. If a family was poor and needed the horses offered by a suitor, a girl may well have agreed to the marriage, even if it was at her expense. It should be enough for the man to have helped the family without insisting that the woman sacrifice her happiness.\textsuperscript{14}

Such stories, full of lessons and meaning, were part of the preparation Lakota boys and giris received. This preparation enabled the young men and women to assume their rightful roles in the community when they reached adulthood. Stories, such as "Incest" also taught children that their actions could have serious

\textsuperscript{13}Rice, Deer Women, 85-86.
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid. 5.
consequences, not only for themselves, but for the tribe as well. These stories were often told in the home, the center of Lakota society. From lessons at home children first learned of their obligations to themselves, their tribe, parents, lodge and band.

In the children lay the future of the tribe as a whole. With so much at stake in the well-being and proper upbringing of the youth, neglect of children was unknown among the Lakota. There were no orphans among them, for if a child lost its parents it was still assured of being taken care of. In some cases an orphan received greater attention and care than other children, as community members were eager to show a willingness to help care for them. A brave, for example, might give an orphan one of his good horses as a symbol of his concern for the welfare of the child.15

The entire community assisted in the upbringing of children, but the immediate families generally took primary responsibility for their own children. Parents wanted to see their children grow up physically strong and agile, having the ability to swim, jump, ride, run, and climb. Although physical development was important, Lakota education emphasized the simultaneous development of both body and mind. The development of one without the other would not produce an able person. To ensure this dual growth, playtime and learning were not distinct and separate times for the children. Instead, opportunities for physical and mental development were taken advantage of in a myriad of everyday activities and events.

To encourage their development every Lakota parent and elder had the responsibility of passing on their knowledge to the next generation. Children learned primarily by observing and imitating the actions of their elders, thus lessons were mainly by example, not by lecture. This method of learning helped cultivate respect for those who were experienced and wise. Children were motivated to pursue the development of wisdom so they might earn honor. Children were also inspired to develop the skills they would need as adults to gain the approval of their parents and others. From the time a child was born the parents and community acknowledged the importance of the child to the continuance of the tribe, and strove to provide the necessary attention and training to prepare the child for his or her future role. With parents working toward this goal Luther Standing Bear notes that adulthood was planned in childhood. His parents were well aware they were responsible for the upbringing of a child who would one day serve as a guardian of the people and their traditions.  

Grandparents also played an important role in raising the children. Elderly family members served as teachers and their continued usefulness and ability to contribute to the well-being of the people gave them little reason to feel unwanted or useless. The elderly performed important duties for the tribe, reserved exclusively for them. Children learned to always respect their elders and the wisdom which

they had gained through a lifetime of experience. Grandparents played an important role in the life of their families. Grandmothers often put their knowledge to use by serving as the medicine women in their family. They prepared food for the ill, kept herbs, made teas, and tended the bruises and scrapes of the children. Standing Bear recounts that when his grandfather sang, his grandmother encouraged the children to dance. She showed them the proper way to step to the music. Through close interaction with young family members, the knowledge she had about their people and the world in which they lived was passed on. This grandmother rarely ventured into the woods, or onto the plains without taking her grandchildren along. The trips with their grandmother proved valuable to the children as they acquired knowledge about their world. She showed them valuable plants and explained their uses, she pointed out wildlife and related her knowledge of them, and she spoke of their people and the values and traditions they held. Nearly every word and act she performed was, "filled with the wisdom of life."\(^{17}\)

Some of the qualities the Lakota valued and strove to pass on to the children, through grandparents and other members of the tribe, included truthfulness, order, virtue, kindness, generosity, and respect for the rights of all people. A high value was also placed upon cooperation and sharing. Children learned to accept and act according to the precept that the needs of the tribe as a whole outweighed the needs or desires of an individual. Women would often make a point to show

kindness, generosity and respect to the elderly, and encourage their children to do the same. A common gesture was to invite an elderly member of the tribe to eat and share the family’s food, even if food was in short supply. In imitation, small children often brought into their tipi an aged or feeble person. The child’s mother then prepared food for the visitor as it would have been unforgivable to ignore the generosity of a child.\textsuperscript{18}

Obedience was one of the earliest qualities taught to Lakota children. Upon learning to walk, a child’s education in obedience began. Parents, or other family members, sent young children to do small errands. The successful completion of such errands helped the children establish a confidence and pride in their abilities. No matter how small the task, the praise or approval of an adult would be forthcoming to reinforce the accomplishment. Children were expected to be obedient not only to their parents, but also to their grandparents and other elders of the community. A child who failed in a task or in some other aspect did not receive an angry scolding or reprimand. Among the Lakota it was inconceivable to punish, or hit a child. Standing Bear recalls that, force, backed by anger, was unknown to him when he grew up among his people. Such actions were never exhibited in his presence. This is not, however, to say that Lakota children did not misbehave, or that they were permitted to run amuck. Parents and communities did possess methods of controlling and modifying behavior.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{19}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 7, 8; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 316-317.
One Lakota woman remembered that, "we never struck our children for we loved them. Rather we talked to them, gently, but never harshly. If they were doing something wrong we asked them to stop." If this approach failed, ridicule and community scorn often proved effective in correcting undesirable behaviors.

The children of the Lakota did not belong exclusively to their immediate family, but to the band as a whole. Some relation existed to every other member of the band. As young children, the Lakota were always under the watchful eye of an elder, either a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin or older sibling. Communication consisted of adult language from the beginning, the adults used no type of "baby talk," when they spoke to the children. By setting an example of clear and concise communication, the adults demonstrated to the children a useful skill, valued by the community. Because the education of Lakota children relied so heavily upon observation and example, a heavy burden fell upon the adults of the community.

Perhaps the hardest duty in the performance of parenthood was not so much to watch the conduct of their children as to be ever watchful of their own -- a duty placed upon parents through the method used in instructing their young -- example. Children, possessors of extreme vigor of health, with faculties sensitized by close contact with nature, made full use of eyes and ears; and Lakota parents and elders were under scrutiny for conduct and conversation. They were consequently bound to act in as kind and dignified a manner as possible.

Through their training and observation, Upper Brule children learned to place

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worth in human values, and not in power or wealth. Parents taught their children
politeness. They were instructed never to pass between an elder or visitor and the
fire, never to ridicule a crippled or disfigured person and never to speak while others
were speaking. Other lessons, absorbed by the children included learning to
choose their words carefully when they spoke, and never interrupting or speaking
while another person was speaking. Interrupting a person as they spoke would be
considered foolish, as well as impolite. Another skill parents hoped to impart to their
children was the ability to remain calm and collected in any situation. Children were
encouraged to think through the situations they encountered, as well as their
response to them. During conversations, embarrassment or discomfort did not
result from silences while a person carefully considered their position and/or
response, instead, such breaks were gracefully accepted. Poise was a much
admired social attribute among the Lakota, and could not be achieved by an
individual if they were anxious.23

Lakota elders worked to pass on a knowledge about and respect toward the
world in which they lived to the next generation. The children were taught that,
"Everything was possessed of personality, only differing with us in form. Knowledge
was inherent in all things. The world was a library and its books were the stones,
leaves, grass, brooks, and the birds and animals that shared, alike with us, the
storms and blessings of earth."24

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23Ibid. 130, 135; For further discussion of Sioux morals and manners see Hassrick, The Sioux, 32-54, 323-324
24Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 193.
Standing Bear recalls his elders imparting lessons to him and other children which helped shape their view of the world in which they lived.

We sit in the lap of our Mother. From her we, and all other living things, come. We shall soon pass, but the place where we now rest will last forever.' So we too, learned to sit or lie on the ground and become conscious of life about us in its multitude of forms. . . . The old people told us to heed was make skan, which were the 'moving things of earth.' This meant . . . the animals that lived and moved about, and the stories they told of was make skan increased our interest and delight. The wolf, duck, eagle, hawk, spider, bear, and other creatures, had marvelous powers, and each one was useful and helpful to us.\(^{25}\)

For children, stillness was a necessary element in developing their senses. Elders taught children that if they could not learn to sit still, they would be unable to fully develop themselves. Lakota children were taught to completely exercise all their senses. They learned to smell, look and listen even when it seemed there was nothing there to observe.

Part of learning to be observant, included allowing the children access to nearly all the happenings in the tribe. Children were generally not segregated from the rest of Lakota society. They were permitted to observe the important events and deliberations within their community. They were not hustled off to bed, given some bit of busy work to do, or told to go play in order to be put out of the way of the adults. Instead children were included in tribal activities. They learned to sit quietly and listen to their elders at councils and other important events. The young people learned restraint, to be quiet and to think before speaking. Such inclusion in a wide range of activities helped teach the young about proper social conduct and manners

\(^{25}\text{ibid. 194.}\)
at councils, ceremonies and feasts.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition to developing their powers of observation, the mastery of oratory skills was also important among the young Lakota. Clear and concise communication was important for the well-being of the community. Fred Hans, a white man, who for many years during the late nineteenth century had the opportunity to observe Sioux (including the Lakota) noted that nearly all the warriors could speak with exceptional skill in public. He noted that many of them could even be considered eloquent speakers when they spoke at council and other gatherings. The ability to speak well, and clearly communicate one's thoughts and ideas was a far more universal skill among the Indians, than among whites. Individuals used their oratory skills during councils to communicate their opinions on issues concerning the welfare of the tribe.\textsuperscript{27}

Even in play children worked on developing needed skills for adulthood. Boys and girls played together on occasion. When they did participate in such play, the children assumed roles they expected or hoped to fulfill as adults. Brothers assumed responsibility for the safety of their sisters. When playing, the boys practiced their role of protectors of the girls. The children might set up play villages with the girls choosing the village site, and the boys breaking up into two sides. One group would defend the girls and the village, while the other played the attacking

\textsuperscript{26}ibid. 23, 70, 99; Eastman, \textit{Indian Boyhood}, 51-54.
enemy.  

Similar to the manner in which the children assumed different roles during their play, Lakota society provided their boys and girls with an education designed to prepare them for their differing roles. In the very early years of life for both girls and boys, it was their mother who was primarily responsible for them and their upbringing. Other related women such as female cousins, aunts, grandmothers and the baby's older sisters frequently assisted in caring for children.\(^{29}\) Tipi Sapa, a Lakota, (also known as the Rev. P.J. Deloria) recalled some of the teachings of his mother. He reminisced that:

> When I was old enough to talk and understand my mother began to teach me those laws and customs which she wished me to bear in mind. Out of all her lessons I remember three things she emphasized. She said:  
> 1. 'Never forget the Great Spirit and you will be able to do all you attempt.'  
> 2. 'To hunt and obtain food to sustain life is your duty. The Great Spirit alone can help you in this.'  
> 3. 'In your tribe, do not think evil things. Say nothing wrong. Be kind to the poor and to the orphans. In time of war, be brave and accomplish those things which a man should accomplish. Thus will the tribe think well of you and you will become a great chief.'\(^{30}\)

Tipi Sapa's mother taught him how to use a peace-pipe in case he should ever be deemed worthy to be the keeper of one as chief. In addition both his parents emphasized the value of his long hair. They told him that possessing a head of attractive long hair was quite desirable for a warrior. He was instructed to

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\(^{30}\) Olden, *Tipi Sapa*, 4.
take good care of his hair, and to be brave. Should an enemy take his scalp-lock, he was instructed to die like a man. A warrior who cried out in death was not a man, and would be a disgrace to his people.31

Fathers also took an active interest in the upbringing of their children, especially their sons. Standing Bear recalls that his father often played with him as a child. He would lie down and use his foot to throw Standing Bear up and down. His mother would sing him children's songs, but when his father sang to him, it was always warrior, or brave songs. In this way, Standing Bear grew up appreciating and learning the songs of his people. Once a boy reached five or six years of age, however, an uncle or his father would take a more active role in educating him. Aunts and uncles often served as primary educators of the nieces and nephews. They were likely to be more strict and demanding of the children than parents. In spiritual or religious matters uncles and fathers were usually the primary providers of instruction for their nephews and sons. The men also tried to prepare the boys to face any situation by training them to endure pain and hardship.32

A bow and arrows were among the first gifts given to Lakota boys by their father. Due to their early introduction Standing Bear believed that his father must have considered their use one of the most important things for him to learn. Standing Bear notes the gift of the bow and arrows as the real beginning of his education as a Lakota. With these tools he would someday protect and feed

31Ibid. 5, 12.
32Olden, Tipi Sapa, 52; Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 10; Eastman, Indian Boyhood, 18-19, 51-52,56-58; Hassrick, The Sioux, 316-317.
himself, his family and his people. Thus, it was crucial for a boy to be able to use a bow and arrows as if they were an extension of himself.

Uncles, or fathers, made the first arrows their sons used. For obvious safety reasons, they were constructed with knobs on the end, instead of the regular arrowheads. The bows had to be light enough so the children could pull them. Since the bows had to become an extension of their bodies, whatever the boys were doing, they always kept them nearby. As Lakota boys grew into young men, they always had a bow to fit their size and age.

Luther's father taught him how to hold the bow in his left hand while pulling the string and arrow back with his right hand and then instructed him how to find the arrows he shot. Standing Bear and his father went for trips into the woods. There, Standing Bear learned which materials to use when constructing bows and arrows. The first bow Standing Bear constructed for himself was made of willow, because the willow wood was easy to work with, and was strong enough for him as a child.33

Learning to proficiently use a bow served a vital role in the survival of the tribe. At least half of the Upper Brule's food supply was the result of the efforts of the hunters. The people depended upon the men not only for a supply of meat, but also for protection from their enemies. Upon hearing the news of the birth of his son, Luther's father asked the Great Spirit to make a warrior of his son. The ability to shoot straight was necessary among both warrior and hunters. When Luther

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killed his first animal, a bird, his family believed it an answer to his father’s prayer.

An answered prayer called for a sacrifice to be made. Standing Bear’s father had the camp crier inform the village that his son had made his first kill, and he would give away a pony in celebration. The pony was given to an impoverished old man, who could never reciprocate the gift. Standing Bear marked the example this event set for him as the beginning of his religious training.34

At 8 years of age, although he was rather young for the honor, Standing Bear was permitted to accompany a hunting party. The hunt was a success and although he was not responsible for the kill, Standing Bear received a share of the meat, as did all members of the hunting party. With this success Luther’s father gave away another pony to celebrate the achievement of his son as a hunter and provider. Giving away possessions, such as ponies, served as a common method of celebration and thanksgiving. Not all families had the wealth to give away ponies, but some sort of sacrifice was generally made as their children accomplished similar milestones.35

When Luther was able to stay on a pony by himself, his father presented him with a gentle pony, on which he learned to ride. Developing good horsemanship was similar to making and using a bow, in that many things had to be learned. Not only did a young man need to know how to ride, but he also had to be taught how to use cottonwood and elm to make saddles and the method of using twisted buffalo

34Standing Bear, My People, 9; Hassrick, The Sioux, 318-319.
35Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 21; For more on Indian boys and hunting and sacrifices see Eastman, Indian Boyhood, 86-98, 101-112.
hair or rawhide to make ropes and halters. They also had to learn medical care of
the horses, how make horseshoes from buffalo hides. In addition boys learned how
to listen to and observe their horse in order to know what the animal was
communicating. They needed to learn to trust the horses' senses because they
would detect any animals or people long before a person could.\textsuperscript{36}

In order to ensure the survival of his son and his people, Standing Bear's
father wanted him to learn as much about the Lakota and their ways as possible
while he was young. In addition to other horsemanship lessons, his father taught
him the important skill of catching wild horses. They rode with a group of men, but
Luther recalled that he barely paid any attention to the rest of the riders, because he
wanted to closely watch his father. Standing Bear remembers that his father was
his ideal model. In order not to miss any part of the adventure, he urged his pony to
keep as close as he could to his father so he could closely observe his father's
actions and learn.\textsuperscript{37}

In order to be able to hunt and ride well Lakota boys developed their strength
early in life from exercise walking, running and climbing. They also spent many long
hours crawling or walking in a stooped position. Although difficult, such skills had to
be mastered in order to be successful hunters in a region with low shrubs and
grassy plains. Many of the games the boys and young men played served to test
their strength and endurance. Mounting running horses was one of the skills the


\textsuperscript{37}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 78-81.
boys practiced. Mounting behind a rider going full speed was also an important skill practiced by the boys. On occasion warriors would be unhorsed in battle. In such a predicament, often their only hope for survival was that a comrade would ride quickly by so they could mount behind him.  

The overall object of this physical activity and training was to “further the objective of tenacity and poise. In play we imagined ourselves in the midst of the enemy in all sorts of conditions. . . . The tighter the place in which a warrior found himself, the more resourceful he needed to be.” Boys also pretended to be members of one of the lodges of the tribe, which they hoped to join when they were old enough. They would imitate the dress and practice the songs of the lodge they wished to join.  

As the young boys grew older, they began to wander further from their tipis. During such excursions, they developed their senses further by using their ears and eyes to listen and watch the world around them. They often followed the older boys, observing their activities, and striving to imitate them. The older boys did not view the younger ones as being in the way. Instead they took pride in looking after the young boys and helping them learn what they needed to know. An older boy could adopt a younger one he was particularly fond of and take on the role of teacher, protector and friend. If a boy chose to take on this responsibility, it was for life. Upon committing himself to this role, he was pledging his life, if necessary, to save

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38 Hassrick, The Sioux, 317-318; Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 34-36.
39 Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle., 34-36; Eastman, Indian Boyhood, 63-75.
that of his younger charge. Standing Bear recalls that as boys played and learned, no real sense of rivalry developed between them. If one youth did better than the others in certain activities, the rest were happy and praised him but never envied him. By the age of ten or twelve years the education of the boys began to show as their skills in tracking, stalking, camouflage, and all the expertise needed by a good hunter became advanced. At this stage, some of the young men were permitted to accompany the older, more experienced men to hunt big game such as bison.\textsuperscript{40}

A young mission teacher in the Dakotas, Corbelle Fellows, described the accomplished hunting skills of the Lakota youth she observed in the 1880's. She tells of a shallow area in a river where some ducks were feeding. Several boys offered to provide her with one, and "Like snakes, two of the children wriggled on their bellies through the tall marsh grass, scarcely ruffling it. Arrived at the water's edge, they lay perfectly quiet for some little time, then, with an outflashing arm, almost too quick to follow, one made a grab. His hand closed so tightly and suddenly about the neck of a duck that it made no sound. . . . these children caught not only wild ducks and geese in this way, but fish as well."\textsuperscript{41}

In addition to hunting skills, young boys also received encouragement in developing strong wills. They needed the ability to be generous to the extreme. They were taught that if it were necessary, they should be able to cheerfully give

\textsuperscript{40}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 13, 32-34; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 111; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 297-300. Hassrick discusses the Hunka ceremony, whereby one Lakota man (usually older) adopts another (generally younger) and the two became bound throughout life to share in each others fortunes and disasters.

\textsuperscript{41}Duncan, \textit{Blue Star}, 105-6.
away all of their possessions. The boys grew up knowing that one day it would be their job to protect the women, children and elderly of their village.\footnote{Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 15, 37; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 317, 319.}

To emphasize how strongly ingrained this responsibility was, Luther Standing Bear relates a story that occurred when he was about seven years old. He and a group of other children were playing some distance from their village. They all had their ponies, but were dismounted. One of his sisters (a cousin) thought she saw an enemy warrior in the bushes. All the children ran for their ponies to escape. Luther relates that despite his fear, he stayed behind until his sister had a good start home, he then stayed behind them as he rode back toward the village to be sure they got back safely. He noted that he never pretended to have no fear. His training, which told him his primary duty was to see to the safety of the girls, was so firmly ingrained that he fulfilled his duty despite his fear and youth.\footnote{Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 15, 37.}

There were three general roles from which a young man might chose as he matured: hunter, scout, or warrior. Although various roles could be combined, not all the men were all three things. As happens among any population, certain individuals excelled in different areas. By the time they reached adulthood each man was ready to follow the role to which he seemed best fitted. The selection of role emphasis was left up to each individual. In addition to the functions of hunters, scouts, and warriors there were medicine men. Most young men, at some point, strove to discover if they were meant to be medicine men. The discovery involved
the purification of body and mind and undergoing a vigil or fast in order to communicate directly with spirit powers. Of those who underwent the ritual, few succeeded in becoming medicine men.\textsuperscript{44}

Those men who became scouts filled an indispensable position in the tribe. A scout was a man, "who preferred, usually, to work alone, either by night or day, and whose outstanding quality was scrupulous honesty. He ran terrible risks, was not a fighting man, yet knew how to fight when he had to, and was withal the most relied-upon man in the tribe. . . . His training was rigorous, his word was inviolable, and in calling he was bound to serve his tribe. The dangers to which he was exposed demanded of him the keenest development and alertness of senses, particularly observation.\textsuperscript{45}

The ultimate hope of most boys, however, was to become a great warrior.\textsuperscript{46} Such an accomplishment demanded the most intense efforts and sacrifice a man could offer.

Not only must he have great physical bravery and fighting prowess, but he must meet the severest tests of character. The great brave was a man of strict honor, undoubted truthfulness, and unbounded generosity. He was strong enough to part with his last horse or weapon and his last bit of food. In conduct he never forgot pride and dignity, accepting praise and honor and wearing fine regalia without arrogance. To endure pain, to bear the scars of life and battle to defy the elements and to laugh and sing in the face of death, a man had to possess the prime requisite of a Lakota brave -- courage.\textsuperscript{47}

A brave was taught that no matter what the sacrifice he must protect and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{44}Ibid. 39; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 321.
\item \textsuperscript{45}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 75.
\item \textsuperscript{46}Ibid., 40; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 321.
\item \textsuperscript{47}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 40.
\end{itemize}
serve his people. Fathers taught sons, that they must be brave. They were told to act in ways that would cause them to be honored for their bravery, because cowards were to be reviled. Teachings such as these were repeated to young children until they became deeply ingrained in their minds.\textsuperscript{48}

All the boys trained to be hunters as it was expected that each of them would contribute to the supply of meat not only for their immediate families, but also for the tribe in general. A skillful hunter could make the difference between starvation and survival in a time of scarcity. In addition, before a young man would ask a girl to marry him he had to prove he was capable of being a good provider. Developing his abilities as a hunter and protector was a prerequisite for a young man who wished to marry. Thus, it was necessary for a young man to master hunting skills early in life.

Men oversaw many other general duties in addition to their specialized roles. Such duties included caring for the horses, watching for enemies, transmitting information between villages, providing fresh meat and hides, keeping an eye on grass and water supplies, determining when the camp should be moved, and holding councils.\textsuperscript{49}

In addition to the reminiscences of those who were educated in the traditional ways, information on early Lakota education can be garnered from the observations of whites who commented on what they perceived during their contacts with the Lakota.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid. 40, 68.
\textsuperscript{49}Ibid. 105, 126.
One limitation of observations by whites, is that they often focused primarily on the men. Women's work and roles were generally dismissed by whites as menial. Fred M. Hans, who helped negotiate treaties with the Sioux during the late nineteenth century, produced what he hoped would be, "an authentic History of the Indians--in all their walks of life." His writings concur with much of what Luther Standing Bear wrote.

Hans noted that Sioux (the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota have often been grouped together as "Sioux") parents emphasized the importance of teaching their children the priority of honor. The lessons were usually imparted indirectly through story-telling. The stories imparted to the children told of the heroic deeds of the Lakota who came before them. These stories served to inspire the young to imitate the actions and strength of character of their predecessors.50

Fathers took a special interest in the upbringing of their sons. Hans writes that for a father, his sons, "are the fire of his ambition, and in their brave deeds lie the precious joys of his old age." Fathers presented their sons with miniature bows and arrows when they reached five or six years of age. The boys practiced shooting at any birds or animals they came across. In their games, they strove to gain experience in tracking and to learn the habits of the wild animals.51

As the boys entered their teenage years they often helped to raid horses from other tribes. Involvement in successful raids provided an opportunity for young men

50 Hans, Great Sioux Nation, 5; Hassrick, The Sioux, 321, 153-156.
51 Hans, Great Sioux Nation, 90.
to earn honor and boys as young as eleven might take part. Upon returning from such raids, the group related their deeds to the council of warriors and elders. Some individuals might claim deeds so brave, that they were considered for elevation to the status of warriors. The elders and warriors would carefully evaluate such claims of bravery and rule on their findings. Most boys generally reached the age of sixteen or seventeen before attaining the status of full warriors.  

Upon becoming a warrior, a young man went out alone to fast and meditate in order to discover what his “Medicine” should be. This medicine was some element, such as particular ashes, specific types of stone, or parts of a particular animal that would serve to protect the warrior and his family from harm. Such medicine was used only so long as it proved effective. If a warrior’s medicine ceased to work, he would repeat the ritual in search of a new and more effective medicine.

A thorough and extensive education was provided to the young boys of the tribe, so they would be capable, in time, of assuming their proper roles within the tribe. Just as important to the survival and well-being of the tribe, however, was the proper education of Lakota girls. They too, had to be thoroughly trained to perform their duties within the tribe as competently as possible. The duties of the men tended to focus outside the village with hunting, scouting and warfare. The women, on the other hand, generally focused their energies towards the maintenance of the

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52 Ibid., 90, 92-93, 213; Hassrick, 319-321.
53 Hans, Great Sioux Nation, 90, 92-93, 213.
village and helping the men to provide shelter, food and clothing. There was an equity between the men and women. The work of women was viewed as significant and dignified. The duties differed from those of the men, but were not viewed as less important or menial, there was no concept of menial labor among the Lakota. Luther Standing Bear noted that women and children were to be cared for and protected by the men of the tribe. The women and children led, as far as possible in their environment, relatively sheltered lives.\footnote{Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 90; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 228; and for a more in depth discussion of gender expectations see Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 121-138.}

Young boys as they grew older, spent increasing amounts of time, away from the tipi and their mother. Young girls, however spent their days with their mothers, learning to imitate them as they carried out their responsibilities in the proper manner.

During the years of their upbringing, Lakota girls were more strictly restrained than the boys. Mothers gave greater attention to the personal appearance and movement of their daughters than their sons. It was important for girls to learn the proper decorum. They learned to sit as women should, with their legs to one side, and never straight out. A young woman's movements while in the tipi needed to be orderly and quiet. Girls lived with their mothers until they married, and were usually very obedient. A girl who had been properly brought up, would take after her mother in being modest and quiet, and in giving great respect to elders. The sphere in which women operated was clearly defined, as was that of the men, and to step
outside the boundaries of their spheres was looked upon as unseemly and rude.\textsuperscript{55}

Some girls, who showed signs of having the gift of healing or prophecy, were trained as medicine women, or heeded as prophets. For most girls, however, their future role in the tribe would be primarily as wives and mothers. Looking ahead to fulfilling these roles, their training focused on food gathering and cooking, caring for the tipi, and sewing clothes for the family.\textsuperscript{56}

There were garments to be made, and moccasins, robes and blankets, and sometimes gloves, caps and scarfs. . . . Sinew was split for thread . . . then folded into little bundles and placed in a sewing kit. When the men came home from the hunt there were skins to be cleaned and tanned. New tipis were made and old ones, for the sake of frugality, made into clothing for children. From rawhide were made moccasin soles, bags and trunks for holding ceremonial garments, headdresses, and other articles to be kept in neatness and order.\textsuperscript{57}

One of the duties of the women, the tanning of hides, was a tough, dirty, smelly procedure, but one that was vital to the production of clothing, shelter and many other items. Girls learned that the fat first had to be scraped from the inside of the hide with a horn, “and a mush or paste, made of the brain, liver and gall was rubbed over it again and again. The hide was turned towards the sun for a day or two, then soaked in an infusion of sage brush. After a certain length of time it was taken out, dried thoroughly, and rubbed all over with a large stone.”\textsuperscript{58}

Once scraped and dried, the hide was covered with several coats of a colored oil. Six to eight such skins generally sufficed to cover fourteen to sixteen tipi

\textsuperscript{56}Olden, \textit{Tipi Sapa}, 43; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 322-324.
\textsuperscript{57}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 85.
\textsuperscript{58}Olden, \textit{Tipi Sapa}, 64.
poles. The women used bone needles and sinew thread to stitch the skins together and then painted the seams. Bison, and later cow, hides were utilized in the construction of tipis and leggings. Shirts, however, were exclusively made of deerskin. As the girls began to cut the skins they learned how make use of every scrap of material. Stitched together, larger scraps formed moccasins, while smaller pieces became ornaments for clothing or tipis.  

A few of the girls could afford the luxury of practicing their skills by tanning buckskin and sewing it together to make a small play tipi. Seven or eight foot long poles from willow trees made frames for nice little play tipis. The few girls who had the materials to make them were quite proud of their tipis and enjoyed showing them off. Skins for such play tipis were obtained from fathers, brothers or other family members whose skill had had already provided sufficient skins for the family's immediate needs, or were sewn together from scraps.  

The Lakota appreciated beauty, and the women worked to beautify the items they constructed, such as clothing, bags and other items, through the use of painting and quill work. The women used porcupine quills to make many designs. Mothers taught their daughters that in order to use the quills, they first must be softened, through soaking, so they could be bent and dyed in various colors. With a needle of bone and sinew thread the girls learned how to sew the quills into place to complete a previously designed pattern. With experience, the women showed great

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skill in designing both geometric and naturalistic patterns. Women often labored for
days on a single small piece of skin in order to decorate it in a precise design.\(^6\)

Corbella Fellows, a young white teacher who observed and described in
detail many aspects of late nineteenth century Lakota life was impressed by the skill
displayed by Lakota women in making many beautiful, and useful items. Such
talents could be acquired only through the instruction and help of older, more
practiced women and the use of much patience and practice. Fellows vividly
describes the skill of one particular woman, Mastincha, in making moccasins.

Mastincha,

had several sizes and pairs in construction, some of which she had sewed
from the tiniest of scraps. Beside her lay three or four bone punches and
many sizes and kinds of soiled leather, carefully trimmed to various
shapes, mostly geometrical. . . . Patiently . . . she tried first one and then
another of these 'patterns' to the moccasins she was finishing. When at
last she found the one that suited her she held the 'pattern' to the mocca­
sin and with her bone punch outlined its shape upon the moccasin with
the most precise touch. When the chief motif of the design to be beaded
was thus outlined she began the slow work of beading, after she had tried
out several color combinations and had chosen the one she preferred.
About her lay also several motifs, beaded and completed. These she
tried on various moccasins, and when the effect pleased her she placed
the beaded ornament inside the moccasin it was to adorn when she came
to sewing. When she began to stitch an ornament in place, she used her
punch to make holes very close together in outer edge of the motif.
Holding it in its chosen position, she now punched holes in the moccasin
to match those in the motif. With sinew thread she deftly and with in­
credible swiftness threaded the sinew back and forth through the matched
holes with her fingers, and by knots made too rapidly for me to follow,
fastened the ends securely.\(^6\)

The responsibility of making all the clothing for each family fell upon the

\(^6\) Duncan, *Blue Star*, 110-111.
women in the family. Girls learned at an early age the sewing skills needed to clothe themselves and their family. They took much pride in constructing detailed and beautiful clothing and in wearing such garments during their various ceremonies.\textsuperscript{63}

In addition to sewing, girls learned about cleaning. Much like European women, Lakota women had designated wash days and house-cleaning days. The roots of yucca plants, when properly used, made soap and suds for use in cleaning. Girls also learned how to turn wood ashes into a bleach as well as a hair remover for use when processing skins. Starch was made by using a white type of earth or makasan, ground into powder and mixed with water.

It is clear that young girls needed to learn numerous skills and absorb much information for them to be able to perform the important duties expected of grown women. They had to know how to find and use the materials they needed for everyday use, and for special occasions. Women carried many responsibilities such as: finding the proper clay for paints, constructing paint brushes from the spongy inside of socket bones, making and decorating cradles for their children, constructing travois to haul household possessions, breaking dogs in to pull the travois (especially before the advent of horses) and supplying their family with fruits and vegetables.\textsuperscript{64}

In addition to caring for their family, women also took responsibility to care

\textsuperscript{63}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 64; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 224-228.
\textsuperscript{64}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 6, 64, 86, 90; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 42, 62, 64-65, 130, 202-204, 215, 322-323.
for the needs of any visitor, including providing meals and mending any worn clothing. Girls learned the necessity of always keeping enough food available and cooked to be able to provide a meal at any time. This availability was not just for the family, but for anyone who came to the household, including relatives, strangers and any elderly people the children might bring in as an act of generosity.

At meal time it fell to mothers to serve their family the prepared food. Meals were a quiet and orderly affair with the father sitting at his spot in the tipi and the children sitting around. Everyone ate what was served to them, and no one questioned the size of the serving, or asked for more. In such matters, the judgment of the women was accepted without question.65

Women played an important role, not only in preparing, but also in finding food for their families. Careful attention was paid to teaching young girls how to help provide food for their families. They did not hunt game as the men did, but instead tended to focus their efforts on gathering and on some very limited agriculture. Girls learned how to locate the food caches of gophers, mice and other small animals that gathered food for the winter. Mice and other rodents hoarded beans and other foodstuffs for the winter, that could be collected if one knew where to look. In addition to raiding the caches of the wild animals, women and children also foraged for wild turnips and sweet potatoes. After gathering such roots, the women could store them for future use. Potatoes could be saved with relatively little preparation, but turnips required the removal of their tough black skins before slicing

65 Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 6, 86, 88; Hassrick, The Sioux, 36-39, 322.
and drying them. The women also spent time gathering wild crab apples, apples, cherries, grapes, plums, buffalo berries, strawberries, and Juneberries. When gathered, the fruits were mashed, sun dried and then usually stored for special occasions, such as friendship, marriage and burial feasts. Once the collected food had been prepared for storage, deerskin pouches, constructed by the women, served as storage containers.66

The Upper Brule grew some corn, but due to their very nomadic lifestyle they had no way to protect what they planted from bison and other wildlife. When they did plant, the corn would be placed in small areas near streams where the soil was fertile and damp and then left on its own to grow. Any surviving corn was harvested when the people returned later in the year to the same location. With the uncertainties of weather and wildlife, agriculture, as practiced by the Lakota, could not be relied upon as a stable source of food.67

Although men chose the location for the camp, each individual woman decided where her tipi would be pitched. In deciding where her family was to live, the head female of a household, had the last word as to the specific location. In order for a woman to chose a site, however, she had to be taught as a young girl how to recognize what constituted the best location for a tipi. They had know that the ground needed good drainage for when it rained and be able to locate suitable areas. No gopher or small animal holes could be on the chosen spot because

66 Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 57; Duncan, Blue Star, 102-103, 106; Hassrick, The Sioux, 203.
67 Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 58.
snakes and rodents often lived in such holes. Once a good location was chosen, every woman was responsible for pitching her own tipi. If a woman happened to have a large tipi, assistance from other women might be welcomed, but the help of a man generally was not accepted in performing such tasks.68

Because the women made all the items in their home, girls had to learn how to fill their tipis with all the necessary items for successfully running their household. "They tanned and sewed together the skins in the tipi, made floor rugs suitable in size, filled soft buckskin pillows with cottonwood floss and finished the blankets spread over the tripod bed. Painted bags and clothes containers decorated with brightly hued quill work hung against the brown walls of the . . . home. Everything was from her industrious hand." In order to learn all the skills they needed, the girls began their training when very young, and advanced until they knew how to provide and prepare food, tan hides, make sinew thread, moccasins, clothes, and tipis.

Once a young woman could accomplish these things, she was entitled to carry with her a decorated bag holding her sewing implements. The bag and implements, served as a type of diploma. A young women who rightfully earned such a bag wore it with pride. The presence of the decorated bag announced that a particular girl possessed all the skills needed to perform the necessary duties of a woman, and was therefore eligible to marry. The women of the tribe kept an eye on the girls, and those who had not yet earned the right, were not permitted to wear the

68Ibid., 58, 83; Hassrick, The Sioux, 173.
decorated bags.\textsuperscript{69}

As the young women and men gained the skills they needed for adulthood, they also began to take more notice of other young adults who might be potential spouses. Part of the training of the Lakota girls and boys included instruction about proper courting practices. With the passage of their youth, the young men and women began to act in a more dignified and thoughtful manner. Young women stayed close to their tipi, while the young men busied themselves with the hunters or warriors. Whenever a young woman left her tipi, she was always accompanied by an older woman. For a young woman to go out by herself would be inviting dishonor. The young men and woman could meet and talk but only under very strictly defined conditions.

With the acquisition of horses, girls, as well as boys, learned to ride and many girls were very skilled riders. Showing off riding skills was considered an acceptable and dignified means for the young adults to perform before each other. After such ceremonies, a young man could walk or ride close to the young woman with whom they wished to speak. The girls briefly left their mothers for a little distance and listened to what the young men had to say. Usually the girls said nothing, but only listened, and then returned to their mothers.\textsuperscript{70}

Young girls often played with dolls, and acted as children until they were eight to ten years old. At this age, the girls began to take increasing notice of social

\textsuperscript{69}Standing Bear, \textit{Spotted Eagle}, 83-84, 105.

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid. 98, 103; for more on courting and the interaction between Lakota men and women see Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 121-138.
gatherings and of the young men. Many of the girls married between the ages of ten and twelve years. Protocol demanded that a prospective husband buy his bride from her family. Some of the factors that played a part in determining the price of a young woman included her industriousness, how hard she worked, and her skill at her work as well as her physical appearance or beauty. The agreed upon price was generally paid in horses, rifles, skins and other goods. The practice of payment for a bride, far from being degrading, indicated her great value to her family and was designed to compensate the bride's family for the loss of her labor.\textsuperscript{71}

Once married, women held considerable power in their lodge and in some tribal affairs. A woman was free to leave or divorce her husband and return to the lodge of her parents, or other relatives, if the marriage was not satisfactory. She might also leave if another man offered to pay for her and all parties agreed to the transaction.

Living within the accepted norms of the tribe provided a stability and coherence to tribal life. The power of peer pressure was very persuasive within the tribes. Women exerted strong pressure on others to behave properly and to conform to tribal norms. The interdependence necessary for survival helped create a culture where cooperation was prized above competition, and the needs of the individual were secondary to the needs of the tribe as a whole. The children of the Lakota were educated accordingly and taught to value cooperation and to consider

\textsuperscript{71}Hans, \textit{Great Sioux Nation}, 95; Hassrick, \textit{The Sioux}, 42, 323.
the well-being of the entire group before their own.72

Luther Standing Bear explains the Lakota experience of education as he knew it by saying that:

Such an education could not be confined to a certain length of time nor could one be `finished' in a certain term of years. The training was largely of character, beginning with birth and continued throughout life. True Indian education was based upon the development of individual qualities and recognition of rights. There was no `system' no `rule or rote,' as the white people say, in the way of Lakota learning. Not being under a system, children never had to `learn this today,' or `finish this book this year,' or `take up' some study just because `little Willie did.' Native education was not a class education but one that strengthened and encouraged the individual to grow. When children are growing up to be individuals there is no need to keep them in a class or in line with one another. Never were Lakota children offered rewards or medals for accomplishment. No child was ever bribed or given a prize for doing his best. . . . The achievement was the reward and to place anything above it was to put unhealthy ideas in the minds of children and make them weak. Neither were lessons forced upon a child by an attitude of threat or by punishment. . . . I have never heard of a child in my tribe leaving home on account of discontent or to escape parental rule. There could be no greater freedom elsewhere. Neither have I heard of young people committing suicide over studies or duties imposed upon them. . . . In the course of learning, the strength of one small mind was never pitted against the strength of another in foolish examinations. There being no such thing as `grades,' a child was never conscious of any shortcomings. I never knew embarrassment or humiliation of this character until I went to Carlisle School and was there put under a system of competition.73

The education of the Upper Brule children was carried out, prior to extensive contact with whites, in the region which today encompasses the southwest and south central region of South Dakota as well as northern Nebraska. The children of the tribe were well-educated and insured the survival of their people and culture.

72 Hans, Great Sioux Nation, 143; Olden, Tipi Sapa, 43; Hassrick, The Sioux, 40-41, 43, 131.
73 Standing Bear, Spotted Eagle, 15-16
Upper Brule children were not educated in European style classrooms, with printed books, blackboards or lectures. Instead, every member of the tribe took responsibility to see they passed on their knowledge and skills to the next generation. Observation and practice served as the main learning tools for the children. Because Upper Brule children were not segregated from the adult activities, they were able to observe and learn culturally acceptable behavior in a myriad of situations.

Along with observation, listening to the stories told by elders also provided the children with moral and behavioral guidelines as well as entertainment. Stories not only taught lessons of morality and acceptable or healthy behavior, but also contained accounts of tribal history. Warriors told stories of their deeds in battle, hunters recounted outstanding events during hunts and scouts related their experiences, all in the oral tradition. These accounts served to inspire the youth to achieve similar accomplishments and to earn the honor and praise of their people.

Fathers and uncles were particularly concerned and involved with the education of their sons or nephews. When boys were old enough to leave their mothers, they would wander further and further from the tipi often with the guidance of their fathers. They would learn about bows and arrows, horses, hunting, warfare, and decision-making in council. They practiced with their friends and developed their skills in these important areas.

Girls stayed near their homes and mothers and other female relatives, as they matured into young women. Mothers took pains to instruct their daughters, through example, in proper behavior and the skills they would need to successfully
manage their own family someday. Gathering and preparing food, sewing clothing, constructing tipis and other skills had to be learned before a young woman could marry and set up her own household.

All Upper Brule children were taught to value cooperation among their people and to avoid unhealthy, and potentially destructive, competition. Education was simply a part of everyday life, it was not an undertaking apart from the larger everyday activities of the people. This form of education served the Upper Brule well for many generations. Increasing contact with the white culture, however, eventually influenced traditional education, as well as many other aspects of the traditional lifestyle of the tribe. In the span of two generations, the educational system and lifestyle of the Upper Brule were significantly impacted and forever changed by the increasing influence of a dominating white culture.
CHAPTER THREE

YOU MUST KNOW THAT DIFFERENT NATIONS HAVE DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF THINGS

During the course of the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries the white population of North America steadily increased. With the growing pressures of a burgeoning population and the exhaustion of previously fertile farm lands, the vast and fertile lands west of the great Mississippi River beckoned to land-hungry Whites in the east. Even before the government completed its land surveys, thousands of squatters took up residence on these lands. This invasion of western territories, however, presented difficulties other than dealing with squatters, establishing claims, and breaking and cultivating the ground. The government, as well as the settlers, frequently came into contact with new peoples holding ancient claims to these western lands. As the middle of the nineteenth century approached, the growing white presence was increasingly felt among many tribes, including the Sicangu. Before this period, the Sicangu knew little of the Whites or what their presence meant for Native American peoples and the world they inhabited.

To understand how White contact and policy affected Lakota education, it is necessary to understand the history of their contact with the Lakota. The education offered to, or forced upon, Native Americans was designed not only to provide a European style education, but more importantly to convert them to Christianity and assimilate them into White society. Thus, religious organizations were involved
from the early days of educational efforts aimed at Native peoples.¹

   Precedents for dealing with the “Indian problem” were established years before Whites came into contact with the Sicangu. Attempts to “civilize” Indian peoples through European style education began during the colonial years. American colonists made efforts to induce the Natives they encountered to send some of their children to schools in the various colonies. A few agreed and sent their children to be educated among the Whites. One of the primary difficulties of teaching Native American youth in the White system of education, however, was the broad and deep chasm of cultural differences between the two groups. The experiences of these Indian youth, however, served as a lesson to other Indians about the many differences that separated them and the White colonists. While acknowledging the distinctions between them, most groups of Indians viewed the situation as one of two equal groups of people who simply had their own way of doing things. They did not see the relationship as a struggle to prove their way of life superior to others.

   Most European colonists, however, found it difficult to view their interactions with their Native neighbors without passing judgment on the differences they encountered. The discrepancy between skills and morals valued by White settlers, and those valued by the Native Americans is highlighted by an exchanged between the Virginia legislature and Canassatego, a leader among the Iroquois. The Virginia legislature issued an invitation in 1744 to Canassatego to send several young men

¹David H. DeJong, Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States (Golden, CO: North American Press, 1993), 22-33
from his tribe to be educated at the college of William and Mary. The cultural concepts of education held by the two groups were starkly different. Canassatego politely declined the Legislature’s offer telling it that the offer, although declined, was very much appreciated. He recognized that it would be expensive for the Legislature to maintain the young men while they were being educated at the College, and so believed the offer was made with the best of intentions. Canassatego, perhaps, recognizing the agenda of assimilation pursued by the colonists, concluded his address by saying:

But you who are so wise must know that different Nations have different Conceptions of things; and you will not therefore take it amiss if our Ideas of this kind of Education happens not to be the same with yours. . . . Several of our young People were formerly brought up in the Colleges of the Northern Provinces. . . . but, when they came back to us, they were bad Runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either Cold or Hunger, Knew neither how to build a Cain, take a deer, or kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for Hunters, Warriors, nor Counselors; they were totally good for nothing. . . .to show our grateful sense of [the offer], if the Gentlemen of Virginia shall send us a Dozen of their Sons, we will take great care of their Education, instruct them in all we know, and make Men of them.²

Although a few White boys were sent to be raised among some of the Indians, with the hope they would later serve as interpreters, and perhaps spies for the colonists, they were certainly not the sons of any “Gentlemen.” Most were orphans, or others with no family ties in the colonies. Unlike Indian children educated among Whites, these boys often ended up with stronger loyalties towards the tribe they lived among, than towards the White colonists they were intended to

²Ibid., 4-5.
serve.

For all the efforts made to Christianize and educate Indian children, the colonists met with relatively little success. Only about fifteen schools dedicated to educating Indian children were established during the Colonial era. Some of the schools were run by Native American teachers who had been educated by Whites and converted to Christianity. In addition to the schools, efforts to educate and convert the Native population were also made by individual missionaries who served as teachers as well as preachers. These missionaries received financial support for their efforts not only from private and church organizations, but also from the government. The ultimate goal of this policy of government support was to spread both Christianity and the European brand of civilization, ultimately resulting in the assimilation of all native peoples into White society. Families or tribes which resisted sending their children to school were sometimes forced by Whites to do so, often through the kidnapping of their children. The labors of the colonists brought forth relatively few Indian converts to the Christian faith. Their efforts did, however, set precedents, such as providing federal funding to secularly based Indian education. These precedents became important in directing later attempts by the United States to educate and convert their native populations. ³

During the Revolution, the newly formed United States government, had to find a way to coordinate their dealings with the Native population. Their solution was

three Departments of Indian Affairs: one each in North, South and Middle regions of the nation. Each department had its own committee of commissioners who oversaw government dealings with the tribes under their jurisdiction. Commissioners were appointed, supposedly to negotiate or "treat" with the Indians, to maintain peaceful and friendly relations. Under this system the government claimed to recognize the rights of the Indians to the lands they occupied.

In 1786 oversight of Indian affairs was delegated to the Secretary of War. Under the Articles of Confederation, two Indian Departments, each with its own superintendent, were created. One department oversaw tribes located west of the Hudson River, the other claimed jurisdiction of the tribes located south of the Ohio River. In 1789 when the War Department was founded, the responsibility for Indian affairs was put under the Department's jurisdiction.4

With the goal of assimilation in mind, the United States in December of 1779 signed the first Indian treaty including educational provisions. This treaty was between the United States government and the Oneida, Tuscarora, and Stockbridge peoples. The government promised to train some of the young men from each of the tribes to be millers and sawyers. Educational provisions became a common element in treaties between the United States and the Indian nations. By 1802 the federal government began periodic appropriations for Indian education. The funds were designed to support treaties such as the 1803 treaty with the Kaskaskia. In

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this treaty the federal government promised financial aid to the Kaskaskia to help provide them with religious and educational services.\(^5\)

The need to find ways to regulate Indian-White interaction, increased as the White population continued to push further and further West. The initial contact many Indians, especially those west of the Mississippi River, had with Whites took place through interaction with White trappers and traders moving through the region. Trappers and traders, however, were soon followed by settlers and missionaries into the remote regions of the country. Among these groups of Whites, the settlers and missionaries had the greatest social and cultural impact upon the Native populations. They had little, if any, interest in the maintenance of the traditions and cultures of the tribes they encountered. Unlike the trappers and traders, their interests were best served by the destruction of the Indian cultures and, for the settlers, even the Indian people themselves, with whom they found themselves competing for land and other resources. Such conflict often helped to spur the federal government into taking action.\(^6\)

During these years, the Sicangu, as many other tribes in the region, were experiencing changes due to the increasing contact with Whites. Even as Whites were discovering the necessity of finding ways to deal with the Indians, so too were


the Indians encountering the challenge of finding ways of dealing with the Whites and the goods and culture they brought with them. The changes began slowly, but picked up momentum during the latter years of the nineteenth century. As increasing amounts of goods from the Whites began to make their way into the hands of the Lakota, new skills had to be learned and old skills were often modified or abandoned. The introduction of the horse, for example, enabled the Lakota to pursue a more nomadic lifestyle as horses began to replace dogs as beasts of burden. Horses also provided a faster means of transportation and new options for hunting game, especially bison. This inadvertent introduction to Plains cultures, became an integral part of Lakota life and culture by the middle of eighteenth century.\(^7\)

In its pursuit of a solution to the “Indian problem” the United States Government made a more extensive commitment towards efforts to educate Indian children in 1819. In this year, the Civilization Fund was established under “An Act Making Provision for the Civilization of the Indian Tribes Adjoining the Frontier Settlements.” The Fund was designed to provide monetary assistance to religious organizations involved in educating Indians. Ten thousand dollars were to be appropriated annually for distribution among the various religious groups. Despite the Government’s financial involvement, school operations were to be left entirely up to the individual denominations. In addition to government assistance, these mission schools relied on other sources of income, such as church donations, to

make ends meet. Occasionally tribal annuities and education funds would also be given to missions to further their efforts.®

Five years after the establishment of the Civilization Fund, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (B.I.A.) was created by the Secretary of War, John Calhoun. The B.I.A. replaced the earlier system designed for dealing with the Native American population. Although it was responsible for Indian affairs, the B.I.A. was still under the jurisdiction of the War Department. Calhoun summed up the attitude and policy of the United States government towards the Native Americans they were dealing with. It was his belief that the Indians, "should be taken under our guardianship; and our opinion, and not theirs, ought to prevail in measures intended for their civilization and happiness." In spite of the fact that the Bureau was removed from War Department supervision altogether in March of 1849, and was instead put under the supervision of the newly formed Department of the Interior, sentiments similar to Calhoun's remained dominant.®

As the United States struggled to form a coherent policy towards dealing with the Native populations, the Lakota were one of several groups of Indians who were

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®DeJong, Promises of the Past, 57; Francis Paul Prucha, "Thomas L. McKenney and the New York Indian Board," in Francis Paul Prucha, Indian Policy in the United States: Historical Essays (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 119; Ibid., "American Indian Policy in the 1840s: Visions of Reform," 162-163; Ibid., "Scientific Racism and Indian Policy," 186; Estelle Fuchs and Robert J. Havighurst, To Live on This Earth: American Indian Education (N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 5. This appropriation was repealed in 1873 when another "Civilization Fund" was established in 1867. This fund was maintained by proceeds from the sale of Indian lands.; The use of tribal annuities for secular educational efforts was permitted only with the assent of tribal members.®DeJong, Promises of the Past, 57; George E. Hyde, A Sioux Chronicle (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945), 7; Fuchs, To Live on this Earth, 5; Theodore W. Taylor, The Bureau of Indian Affairs (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 34. This attitude of presuming that members of White society knew what was best for the Native population became a hallmark of White-Indian relations.
largely unmolested by White treaty makers and educational efforts, until the middle and late nineteenth century. Despite their long independence, as early as the 1830s some bands of Lakota had treaties with the United States government. These treaties were designed to guarantee peace, safe passage through Lakota lands for traders and government agents, and to ensure that the Lakota dealt only with traders licensed by the United States. By the 1830s the tribes had been drawn into the world economy through their participation in the trade of buffalo and other hides with the American Fur Company. In exchange, they received items such as guns, powder and shot, iron implements, and other goods produced by the Whites. Due to their nomadic lifestyle and strong sense of independence it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, when they were restricted to reservation lands, that the Lakota signed treaties containing federal promises of educational provisions.¹⁰

Throughout the late seventeenth and into the nineteenth century, the Sicangus' territory encompassed present-day South Dakota and northern Nebraska. In this region they found an abundance of game, were relatively unmolested by White settlers and could raise their sons and daughters in the traditional manner. The first real intrusion on their independence came in 1825 when White mediators sent by the government oversaw the signing of the Prairie du Chien Treaty. Several tribes, including the Sioux, Ioway, Chippewa, and Winnebago agreed to the treaty which was designed to put an end to warfare between the tribes and assigned

territorial boundaries to help prevent disputes. This early treaty, although assigning boundaries, did not create official reservations, nor did it make any mention of establishing schools. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his 1824 annual report, noted that due to their nomadic lifestyle, and frequently uneasy relationship with the United States, there were no schools yet established among the Sioux. Secularly run, federally supported schools, however, did exist among other tribes during this time. Tribes that found themselves in close proximity to White settlements were the ones most often targeted for the establishment of European style schools for their children. By 1830 there were fifty-two such schools in operation, with 1,512 students.\footnote{Ibid.; T.L. McKenney, “Commissioner’s Report,” in B.I.A., Report (1824), 524; Ibid., S.S. Hamilton, “Commissioner’s Report,” (1830), 167-168; Hickerson, Sioux Indians, 23; Robinson, History of the Dakota, 143-153.}

By 1838 the Lakota developed extensive ties with White traders in their region. They still, however, depended almost exclusively on traditional techniques of hunting and gathering for their survival. The United States’ government during this time adhered to its belief in the ultimate efficacy of pursuing their policy of “civilizing” Indians through education. In his 1840 report, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas Hartley Crawford, explained his support of a broad definition of Indian education and efforts aimed at Christianization. Crawford believed Indian education had to include more than the basic three R’s that were commonly taught to White children. He clearly voiced support for combining the two factors of education (academic and practical) and religious conversion. This strong belief in
the need to Christianize the Indian population as well as providing them with a practical, or industrial education, led the government to continue its support of the growing numbers of contract boarding schools, run by religious organizations. These schools not only taught Indian children to read, write and speak English, but also included lessons in farming techniques, livestock management, carpentry, cooking, and housekeeping in addition to other skills and subjects considered valuable in White society.\(^\text{12}\) Crawford wrote:

> The great instrument of their elevation must be education: I do not mean merely of the book...but with it they must be taught the use of domestic comforts, and how to make and provide them through mechanics and the arts of housewifery and farming; with these will come a distaste for a rambling life, and an attachment to the fire side, with its crowning accompaniment, religion, which is the only security for progression in all the others. It appears to me to be utterly vain to hope for any valuable advance, except through this portal.\(^\text{13}\)

During this decade of the 1840s, the federal government increasingly began to turn its attention towards the Sioux population. The Sioux people occupying the Dakotas and other western territories, had no missionaries, no schools and no treaties providing for annual payments of annuities by the federal government. The Indian agent at the Upper Missouri Agency, T.P. Moore, believed the late 1840s were a critical time to begin attempts to “civilize” the Sioux. Wildlife, and in particular the life-giving herds of buffalo, was rapidly being depleted due to the combined pressures of Indian hunting, and the wasteful slaughter practiced by many


\(^\text{13}\)Ibid., (1840), 17. It was widely believed among Whites that Native Americans had no real concept of spirituality or religion.; For further discussion of Commissioner Crawford and his policies see also: Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola eds. The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824-1977 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 23-27.
Whites. Moore believed action needed to be taken because once the game was gone, the Indians' traditional methods of providing for themselves would be of little use. The Sioux, especially the children, needed to be educated in order to learn how to farm or acquire other skills considered valuable by White society. In order to accomplish this, they would have to be convinced to give up their nomadic lifestyle and settle down in one spot, construct houses for their families, and acquire the concept of exclusive ownership of land and other property. The suggested educational medium for enabling Sioux children to adopt such a lifestyle was a manual labor or industrial school, where they could gain practical experience. Moore's request was among the first of many pleas sent to the federal government in support of establishing European-style schools among the Sioux.  

Moore's concerns were not unfounded and by 1850 the once vast herds of bison had been greatly reduced, and the Lakota, along with many other Plains Indians, keenly felt the impact of their loss. Successful hunting trips became less frequent, the remaining buffalo were increasingly difficult to locate and hardship and hunger visited the Lakota more often than in previous years. The government recognized the impact of the depletion of the great herds, and feared increased conflict would result between the tribes who depended upon them for sustenance. Hostility towards Whites was also expected as the buffalo herds declined. White settlements increasingly encroached on Sioux lands, putting further pressure on the

limited resources, consequently, conflict with White settlers and the military seemed to become inevitable.\(^{15}\)

As their proximity to the various tribes increased, so did the conviction of both the government and settlers that something would have to be done to begin a process of either assimilation or extermination among the Sioux population. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs noted that the Sioux,

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\ldots \text{are a wild and untamable people, and whom, after years of unremitting efforts...the Government has not been able...to induce them to resort to agriculture, or to adopt any of the habits of civilized life. They are the most restless, reckless, and mischievous Indians of the northwest; their passion for war and the chase seems unlimited and unassuageable; and so long as they remain where they are, they must be a source of constant annoyance and danger to our citizens.\ldots}^{16}\]

The first step towards "civilizing" the Lakota, was to establish a means of control over them. The Commissioner espoused assigning each tribe a limited area of land, suited to agriculture and forcing them to stay on this land until they took up farming and adopted a "civilized" lifestyle. He believed the government should assist them by providing agricultural implements, livestock, White style clothing and homes, and most importantly, "intellectual, moral, and religious" education.

Adhering to the belief in the superiority of White culture, the Commissioner had no

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\(^{16}\)L. Lea, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1850), 10, 18; Ibid. A. Cumming, "Superintendent's Report," (1857), 118. On occasion, less scrupulous Whites took matters into their own hands and introduced disease among Indians to remove them from desirable land. In 1850 traders noted the bands of Sioux on the Upper Missouri and Platte River were suffering severely from cholera. The Indians claimed the disease was deliberately introduced among them by Whites in order to exterminate them. Superintendent A. Cumming confirmed the Indians' claims in the 1857 Annual Report, when he noted that thousands of Indians in the region had been victims of smallpox, spread intentionally by White men. He deplored such actions and wanted provisions to punish those responsible.
qualms about working to destroy Native cultures and peoples. He vigorously
supported the idea that the United States should make no apology for taking vast
amounts of land from the Indians because they were a barbarous, non-Christian
people. In his view, proper efforts were being made to give the Indian peoples the
opportunity to assimilate and survive, with an emphasis on the use of schools. The
Commissioner endorsed the use of boarding schools, especially those that taught
manual labor along with book learning.¹⁷

During the mid-1850s Commissioner George Manypenny made note in his
reports of the increasing scarcity of game, and the resulting hardship suffered by the
Sioux. In addition, he recognized that the lands on which the Sioux lived were, for
the most part, unsuited to agriculture. The region was too dry for agriculture, and
soil was too poor. Consequently, Manypenny, along with Upper Missouri Indian
Agents, voiced concern that without government aid or a new source of sustenance,
the Sioux would soon face extinction.¹⁸

The Superintendent of the Northern Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Clark
Thompson, agreed with earlier evaluations of the “Indian Problem,” but went further,
defining the process as being necessarily one of completely changing Native
American values and traditions. Thompson strongly supported the view that the
Native peoples should be educated with an eye toward giving them skills found

“Commissioner's Report,” (1853), 113; Ibid., (1855), 4; Ibid., A. Vaughan, “Agent's Report,” (1855),
76-77.
¹⁸Ibid., L. Lea, “Commissioner's Report,” (1852), 3-4, 6; Ibid., G. Manypenny, “Commissioner's
Report,” (1855), 4; Ibid., A. Vaughan, “Agent's Report,”, 76-77; Ibid., G. Manypenny,
useful in White society, such as farming or carpentry. He also recognized, however, that educated Indians who retained their culture would present far more of a threat than those who were not educated in White schools. In his 1861 report, Thompson wrote:

There is something more necessary to be done to educate the Indian than to teach him the arts and sciences or religion. His whole nature must be changed. He must have a White man's ambition, to be like him. He must have the object and aims of a White man; for however well an Indian may be educated, in a literary sense, or however fine a mechanic or agriculturalist he may be... if he looks to the chase for his livelihood, or to the war-path for position and honor, and to the medicine dance for his religion, he is but the more an Indian and more dangerous than while he was ignorant.\(^{19}\)

In spite of all the difficulties associated with it, the policies of the United States Government concerning the "civilizing" of Indians continued to support the idea of leaving educational efforts in the hands of religious organizations. The religious groups involved established schools which were generally run under contract with the federal government. These "contract schools" were created solely to provide educational and religious services to the various tribes. The government assisted their efforts by agreeing to provide specified amounts of funds for each child attending school. This system of religiously operated contract schools predominated until the 1870s when the government began to construct and operate its own Indian schools.\(^{20}\)

During the early years of the nation, the federal government followed many of

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., C. Thompson, "Superintendent's Report," (1861), 73.

\(^{20}\) DeJong, Promises of the Past, 57, 72; Moorehead, American Indian, 208; Prucha, Great Father, 234, 240; Prucha, Policy in Crisis, 290-291.
the precedents set during the Colonial Era for dealing with the Native peoples. The ultimate goal, assimilating them into White society, also remained unchanged. By 1778, most white Americans accepted the idea that Indians should be educated in accordance with white standards. In the view of policy-makers and many others, education was viewed as the critical link in the goal of "civilizing" the native populations. 21

Although peaceful negotiations were generally preferred by both sides, when agreement could not be reached, was violated, or simply became inconvenient for Whites to adhere to, Indians often faced the wrath of the military. Those peoples who resisted the efforts of missionaries and teachers to assimilate them were often subject to severe retribution from the United States. In addition to military action, the United States attempted to enforce its Indian policies through the use of treaties. The official treaty-making period lasted from 1778 until 1871. During this period the government was responsible for overseeing the signing of and ratification of nearly 400 treaties. More than 110 of the ratified treaties, and some that were never ratified, included specific educational provisions, designed to further the goal of assimilating the Native American peoples. In spite of such treaty provisions obligating the United States to provide educational facilities and teachers to the various tribes, the government failed to fulfill most of its promises pertaining to

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The federal government continued to move forward with its assimilation policies and in 1868 it took an important step toward its goal of confining and controlling the Sioux. In April of this year, the Ft. Laramie Treaty was signed. The Sicangu leader, Spotted Tail (Sinte Gleska), along with twenty-four other chiefs put their signatures on the Laramie Treaty, thus officially ending the relatively unlimited freedom of the Lakota to travel throughout the region. The treaty also provided, for the first time government promises of White schools to educate the Lakota children. This treaty arranged for the formation of the Great Sioux Reservation in the Dakotas. The reservation border to the south was the northern boundary of Nebraska, then east to the forty-sixth parallel, bounded the Missouri River, and west to the 104th line of longitude. In addition to creating the reservation, the Ft. Laramie Treaty also stipulated the government's responsibility to construct an agency and one schoolhouse and one teacher for every thirty school-age (between the ages of six and sixteen) children.

In exchange for the limitations placed on their territory, the government promised the Indians they would provide annuities to males over fourteen years of age and to females over the age of twelve. These people would receive a wool suit or material, woolen hose, and a skirt. Younger children were to be provided with

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sufficient amounts of cotton and flannel material that a suit of clothes could be made for them. The annuities also included a cash payment every year for thirty years of ten dollars to each Indian who continued to live a nomadic lifestyle. For those Sioux who settled in a single location and began to farm, they would receive twenty dollars each year in the form of merchandise, not cash. They were also to be provided with seeds, farming implements and help from an agency farmer who would instruct them in proper farming techniques. Farming families were also to receive a one time payment of one cow and a pair of oxen. The theory was that while the Indian children were being educated in White schools, their families would be learning how to farm and live in a “civilized manner” so the children would not revert back to the old ways when they returned home.24

In accordance with the Treaty, the Whetstone Agency, was constructed on the Missouri River, just north of the Nebraska border and became the first agency to serve the needs of the Oglala and Sicangu Lakota. A year after its establishment the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Nathaniel G. Taylor, received word that the bands of Sicangu and Oglala who came to the agency were in poor condition. They were in desperate need of more annuity goods and provisions of food and clothing. Without such additional provisions, the Commissioner and other officials feared that many of the Indians would not survive the winter months. A small number of Indians at the agency attempted some cultivation of the land, with limited results.

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Despite this small number of Indians who stayed near the agency, and government promises to provide a school, there was no school established at the Whetstone Agency until 1871.\footnote{25}

Although a few bands did stay nearby, most of the Sicangu and Oglala did not settle down at the agency. The majority of the Lakota still adhered to their nomadic lifestyle. They did, however, usually limit their range in order to stay within twenty to fifty miles of the agency. Such close proximity to the agency allowed them to come in for the disbursement of annuities and provisions with relative ease.\footnote{26}

The first school designed to serve the Sicangu and Oglala was established, at the Whetstone Agency in January of 1871 by the Episcopal Missionary Society. The school was run by Mrs. Hattie Washburn, the wife of Whetstone Agent J.M. Washburn, and was short-lived. The Whetstone Agency was moved, at the request of Spotted Tail, to the White River, about 225 miles west of the Missouri River, in June of 1871. Due to the move the school was discontinued. It is unclear, however, if the decision to close the school was Mrs. Washburn's or if it came from another authority. In any case, the effectiveness of the school, for those who attended, was negligible due to its short existence.\footnote{27}

The Agency changed locations again in 1874. With this move, Whetstone Agency also changed its name to Spotted Tail Agency. The move relocated the

\footnote{25}Poole, Among the Sioux, xii-xiii; Biolsi, Organizing the Lakota, 6; J.M. Washburn, “Agent’s Report,” in B.I.A., Report (1871), 527. The first school established at Whetstone operated for only a few months when the agency changed locations. Due to the move the school was discontinued. \footnote{26}E.S. Parker, “Commissioner’s Report,” in B.I.A., Report (1870), 206. \footnote{27}Ibid., J.M. Washburn, “Agent’s Report,” (1871), 527; Ibid., (1872), 45.
Agency about twelve miles away, to an area just outside the reservation, about ten miles south of the Nebraska line. The reason given for the move was to find a spot that had adequate water and wood, and such a location had not been found on the reservation.\(^\text{28}\)

The Sicangu who depended on Spotted Tail Agency numbered about 7,000. Just as they had done earlier at Whetstone Agency, the Sicangu stayed within a fairly close range of the agency in order to collect their rations. They made no attempts at cultivating the land, and the Commissioner's Annual Report notes that almost no progress had been made toward "civilizing" the Lakota at Spotted Tail Agency. About the only positive accomplishment came from the regular rations of beef, sugar, blankets, and coffee issued by the Agency. As a result, the government could claim increases in "the control and confidence... gained, their attraction to, and comparatively permanent abode around an agency, and their manifest unreadiness to join in hostilities against the Government..." Although not mentioned in the report, the depletion of game animals, especially the buffalo herds, also undoubtedly played a large part in encouraging the Sicangu and Oglala peoples to stay near Spotted Tail Agency for access to badly needed food and other supplies.\(^\text{29}\)

One indication of the lack of buffalo was that by 1875 most of the Indians

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\(^{28}\) Ibid., J.M. Washburn, "Agent's Report," (1871), 527; Ibid., E.P. Smith, "Commissioner's Report," (1874), 46. The fact that a suitable location, in terms of plenty of fuel, and water was not found on the reservation, gave an early indication of the difficulties that would be faced by the Indians who were expected to take up farming and establish themselves in one location on the reservation.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., E.P. Smith, "Commissioner's Report," (1874), 46, 47, 254.
near the Agency were no longer living in buffalo hide covered tipis, but in tipis covered with canvas. The agent at Spotted Tail, E.A. Howard claimed that many of the Sicangu wanted to live in houses, like the Whites had. He also made note in his report that in order to "civilize" the tribes the younger generations needed to be educated to read and write. Howard recommended the government make generous appropriations to help fund schools and churches for the Indians.\(^{30}\)

Prior to the creation of the Great Sioux Reservation in 1868, the Lakota had experienced sporadic contact with Catholic missionaries throughout much of the nineteenth century. By the time the Great Sioux Reservation was created, many of the Sicangu had been influenced by the teachings of, and baptized by, a traveling missionary: Father Pierre DeSmet. A Catholic priest, Father DeSmet worked among the Sicangu in their camps before they were confined to the reservation, and had made, among a portion of the Indians, a very positive impression.\(^{31}\)

Soon after the creation of the reservations and the confinement of the Sicangu on the Great Sioux Reservation, President Grant established his Peace Policy to deal with the Indians and help "civilize" them. The Policy was designed to curb competition between the various Christian denominations for Indian converts. Each reservation was assigned a specific religious denomination. Despite their

\(^{30}\)Ibid., (1874), 254; Ibid., J.Q. Smith, "Commissioner's Report," (1875), 254. In spite of the agent's report, the actual number of Indians expressing a desire to live in White style houses is questionable. Agents were always under pressure to advance the "civilizing" process on their reservation and thus, their reports were undoubtedly sometimes overly optimistic about the progress being made.

previous contact with the Catholic Church, the inhabitants of the Great Sioux Reservation were officially assigned to the Episcopalians. The Sicangu who had had contact with the Catholic Church, led by Spotted Tail, petitioned the President to permit the Black Robes (Catholic Priests) on the reservation in an official capacity. After several years, permission was finally granted, and on December 31, 1885, the first Jesuit priests arrived at the village of Owl Feather War Bonnet. The location of this village eventually became the location of the largest Catholic Indian boarding school in the United States. Although the Catholics had official approval to operate among the Sicangu, co-habitating the reservation with the Episcopalians proved a frequent cause for tension between the denominations.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1875, however, the Catholic missionaries still had a long way to go before they could establish their school. Spotted Tail Agency claimed to be supporting 7,292 Sicangu in 1875, all of who were entirely dependent on rations for their survival. The same year, another day school was finally established at the Agency. The Peace Policy of the federal government which had given the Protestant Episcopal Church license to operate near the Spotted Tail agency meant that this school was conducted by the Episcopalians. The Reverend W.J. Cleveland and his wife, were in charge of the Episcopal church and school. They employed a Miss Mary J. Leigh and Miss Sophie Pendleton, described as “lady missionaries,” to work

as teachers in the school. This new school reported an enrollment of seventy-five students: forty boys and thirty-five girls. The following year, attendance jumped to a total of 195 students who attended for at least one month during the year. The ratio of girls to boys was still fairly even, with ninety-nine boys and ninety-six girls.\textsuperscript{33}

In spite of enrollment figures, actual attendance often varied greatly from month to month, depending on factors such as the weather and the mobility of children's families. When the government proved unreliable in delivering promised supplies in 1876, for example, the Indians at the Agency suffered from hunger. As a result, some families left in order to join Sitting Bull and his band to the North. Other families left the immediate vicinity of the Agency with their children in order to hunt, in hopes of providing for themselves.\textsuperscript{34}

Although it was run by the Episcopalians, the school building at Spotted Tail Agency belonged to the Government and could seat seventy-five students. Reverend Cleveland pointed out in his 1877 report the inadequacies of this day school. The Indians in the vicinity, including the Sicangu and others, were believed to number nearly 7,000. Among the Sicangu, an 1876 census counted 914 boys.


\textsuperscript{34} J.Q. Smith, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1876), 34, iv-v. Agency counts on their Indian populations are notoriously unreliable, but they are one of the only sources from which we can get an estimate of the actual numbers. Religious organizations were active on all the reservations in the United States. Under Grant's Peace Policy the federal government adopted a policy of doling out Indian reservations and agencies to specific religious organizations in order to decrease the tensions and hostilities between denominational groups as they competed for Indian converts and influence. In spite of grants to specific religious groups, the Indian Agent on the scene was ultimately responsible for deciding who would be allowed access to the reservation. On most reservations, including Rosebud, several different denominations were permitted to operate missions.
and 888 girls who were of, or near, school age. Such numbers obviously could not be served by a single school with such a small capacity. The school location was a great enough distance from most of the people, to prevent them from sending their children. Attendance varied greatly, sometimes the school was full to overflowing, while other times few students appeared. Total enrollment of students numbered 400, but the average attendance was eighty-five. Despite the efforts of the three teachers, the school had not been able to focus on a group of students and thoroughly educate them. Instead, a small amount of education was provided to a large number of students. Due to the sometimes large number of pupils, a three hour morning session was held for the boys and an afternoon session, of the same length, for the girls.\(^{35}\)

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, several competing conceptions of Indian intelligence gained influence. One theory subscribed to a belief in environmentalism. The Indians were no different from the Whites in potential. Instead it was the "degraded" environment in which they were raised that kept them from attaining the refinements of "civilization." A second popular theory was that, although Indians were capable of learning, their brains were inherently inferior to those of the Whites.\(^{36}\)

These assumptions inevitably influenced the attitudes of White educators towards their students. For those who had been inclined to believe in inherent


\(^{36}\)Dippie, Vanishing American, 164-171; Prucha, American Indian, 267; Berkhoffer, White Man's Indian, 41, 47-49, 52, 56-57, 59.
inferiority, however, practical experience sometimes overcame popular myths. With his experience in educating Native American youth, Reverend Cleveland came to his own conclusion about their capabilities: "The children are bright, and generally learn easily, but have to be instructed individually, and not in classes, thus making the work of the teacher slower when the numbers are large." Because the children were unaccustomed to the formal and rigid European style of education, it was difficult for students and teachers to create an atmosphere conducive to learning while remaining acceptable to White standards. Unlike some of the tactics used at later schools, however, attendance at the Spotted Tail Agency school was on a voluntary basis, none of the students were forced to attend and little or no action was taken to convince children who did come, to attend regularly.

Conditions at Spotted Tail Agency, the lack of game, delayed rations and supplies from the government, and the relative proximity to the growing White population and the increasingly heavy traffic on the Missouri River, prompted a Sioux delegation to undertake a journey to Washington, D.C. in September of 1877. Part of their purpose was to request permission to move back to the west where, they hoped, conditions would be better. After consulting with authorities in the Capitol, their request was granted, and the Sicangu chose the location for their new agency at the junction of Rosebud Creek and the White River, about sixty-five miles west of the Rosebud landing on the Missouri River. The area they chose, had not

yet been depleted of game, except for buffalo, when the Sicangu arrived. Luther Standing Bear, who was eleven years old when his family left Spotted Tail Agency for Rosebud remembered that, "When we came to the Little White River, where Rosebud Agency is now located, that country was full of game. The deer were so plentiful that they often ran right through our camp."^39

As the new Rosebud Agency slowly took shape, and the Indian population began to settle down in the vicinity, the need for a new school building to help accommodate the 1,500 school-age children was noted by the agent. In October of 1878, there had still been no school-house constructed that would allow the continuation of the schooling done by the Protestant Episcopal Church. Despite the lack of a building, a small school, able to accommodate twenty-five students, and a church were being run in a tent at the agency. The day school reported an average attendance of sixty with fifty-three boys and fifty girls in attendance for at least a month, over a seven month period.^40

The lack of adequate school facilities at Rosebud did not preclude all the children who could not attend the small agency school from exposure to the White educational system. Luther Standing Bear and several other Sicangu children were persuaded, by Lieutenant Pratt, to leave their home on the plains of South Dakota and to travel to the east coast of the nation, in order to be educated in Pennsylvania. Well intentioned, but generally poorly informed, reformers of the

1870s and 1880s promoted the establishment of boarding schools, especially off-reservation boarding schools as the panacea for the so-called 'Indian problem.'

In the fall of 1879 a new Indian boarding school opened its doors in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The director of the school, Lieutenant R.H. Pratt, recruited students, mostly boys, from the Rosebud, Pine Ridge (Oglala) and other agencies along the Missouri River. Some of the children, such as Luther Standing Bear did not clearly realize the purpose of the trip. Standing Bear went of his own accord, but thought he would “stay away long enough to do some brave deed, and then come home alive again. If I could just do that, then I knew my father would be so proud of me.” He did not fully understand he was being taken away for an education in the ways of the White culture.

Carlisle Indian School operated as an industrial school, designed not only to teach English, reading, math and other such academic subjects, but also to provide each student with training in some industry which, it was assumed, would enable them to find work when they left the school. Such industrial training was a role day schools did not have the resources to fulfill. As a result, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and others with a concern for “civilizing” the Indian population, tended to support the establishment of boarding schools, both on and off the reservations. The separation from parents and tribe and the immersion in White culture, which was the hallmark of the boarding schools, provided the only real “opportunity for

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teaching Indian children how to live, as well as how read and think." In spite of the support given to the idea of boarding schools by its many proponents, government funding was sorely lacking to construct a sufficient number of schools to provide for the Indian children of the many tribes.

At the Rosebud Agency the single, small day school, which had been operating under the direction of the Right Reverend Bishop Hare, closed its doors on June 30, 1880. The government contract for the school had been terminated, due to a lack of students. John Cook, Rosebud Agent beginning the third of April, commented that any school in the vicinity of the Agency was bound to fail. Very few students could be persuaded to attend. Bishop Hare agreed with this analysis, he believed the only solution was to establish boarding schools in remote reservation areas, or off the reservation entirely. The students could then be removed from the influence of their families, "which [was] the bane of the day school."

Instead of trying to create another agency school, Cook who was firmly opposed to day schools, recommended that a boarding school be constructed some distance from the Agency. He believed a more suitable location than the Agency's could be found for the school with better land and easier access to water. Such a school, he was convinced, would do more for the Sicangu children than any number of day schools which might be established.

The Indian schools were designed to change the habits and teach new skills.

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44 Ibid.
to Indian children. In part, these goals were based on faulty perceptions Whites held about Native Americans. Commissioner H. Price, and many others, generally perceived Indians as lazy and ignorant when it came to doing work or providing for themselves and their families. As a result, in his 1881 report, the Commissioner complained about the current Indian policy which he believed coddled them by supplying all their needs without making them work for a living. Price wanted this practice to cease and tried to promote the idea of finding ways to force the Indians to work in order to provide for themselves. The necessity of learning English in order to be successful was part of preparing them to be independent, and the Commissioner believed this had to be impressed on the Indian population. In addition to supporting the education of Indians, Price espoused the idea of allotting land in severalty to tribal members. This policy was designed to break up tribal solidarity and quicken the pace of assimilation through a heightened sense of individuality and personal interest, as well as an appreciation of the value of accumulating property. Through methods such as these, officials hoped to modify the habits of the adults, which would make the job of educating Indian children a bit easier in the schools.47

Although official government policy favored the creation of boarding schools, Commissioner Price disagreed with Agent Cook's and Bishop Hare's assessment of

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day schools and agency schools. He saw them as important starting points for Indian children and their families to develop an appreciation of white education, thus creating a desire to continue their education at a higher level in the available boarding schools. Price believed day schools allowed parents and children to observe the characteristics required for assimilation in the behavior of the white teachers and staff of the schools. The Indian students were expected to imitate the example set for them by their teachers. Officials believed parents and other tribal members would also be influenced, through the children, by the White culture, traditions and the English language. According to such expectations for Indian education, students at the day schools would return home to spread the knowledge, if not the appreciation, of the new ways. The day schools, from Price's point of view, were especially beneficial to Indian girls since parents were usually more reluctant to allow their daughters to be sent away to boarding schools, than their sons. Because of this reluctance on the part of Indian parents, for many girls their only opportunity to learn English, to read and write and to learn the White interpretation of home-making was in the day schools. These schools were located near their homes on the reservation, so children could live at home while going to school. Arguments concerning the benefits and drawbacks of day versus boarding schools were an issue of debate throughout the nineteenth century among those who viewed education as a panacea for the "Indian problem."

In order to encourage educational efforts aimed at Indian youth, the

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Commissioner put forth a recommendation that the government should provide liberal support of Christian societies regardless of denomination. The only requirement for federal support was that these organizations express an interest in involving themselves in the process of educating and converting Indian peoples. Such education provided by missionaries, the Commissioner theorized, would teach the Indian populations "to be sober, industrious, self-reliant, and to respect the rights of others; and" in his opinion, it was "not only the interest but the duty of the government to aid and encourage these efforts in the most liberal manner." 49

By teaching the Indians a more "civilized" lifestyle, the Commissioner believed, they would lead to abandon practices such as the annual Sun Dance and other manifestations of Native religion and culture. In addition to day schools, industrial boarding schools, with funding from the Government, would help achieve the desired result of English-speaking Indians with skills marketable in White society. 50

In accordance with the United States' Indian Policy, by 1882 there were seventy-four boarding schools in operation throughout the nation. This number included schools both on and off the reservations. The curriculum was fairly standard among the various boarding schools and Indian children were taught skills, values and lifestyles which well-meaning educators and school-supporters believed would benefit the young people. Both boys and girls received instruction in the English language, reading, writing, math and various other subjects. Beyond this

50 Ibid., vii.
basic academic curriculum, however, the education of boys and girls diverged.⁵¹

In the boarding schools, such as Carlisle in Pennsylvania, boys were taught farming skills such as raising vegetables, corn, wheat, hay and other crops. They learned about providing water and fuel for home and farm operations. They were trained to do jobs that among many tribes, traditionally had been the responsibility of their women. In addition each boy was usually tracked into a specific trade such as harness-making, blacksmithing, stock-raising, shoemaking, carpentry or tailoring. The skills acquired in these trades were designed to enable the boys to make living in a “civilized” manner after they left the school.⁵²

The girls attending boarding schools were instructed in household industries. They were taught White standards and techniques for working in a kitchen, cleaning, sewing and child-rearing. Educators believed Indian girls had to fulfill a vital role in “civilizing” Native peoples. The boys who graduated from the boarding schools would need wives who could maintain the White ideals of housekeeping, cleaning and child-rearing. The girls’ skills would insure the men would not revert to the traditional ways of their people, as well as ensuring that the next generation would be raised with a knowledge of the English language and values of White society.⁵³

The annual report from the Carlisle school in 1881 recognized the importance

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⁵¹Gibson, American Indian, 432; Coleman, Indian Children, 108-112
of educating Indian girls:

Of what avail is it that the man be hard-working and industrious, providing by his labor food and clothing for his household, if the wife, unskilled in cookery, unused to the needle, with no habits of order or neatness, makes what might be a cheerful, happy home only a wretched abode of squalor? . . . It is the women who cling most tenaciously to heathen rites and superstitions and perpetuate them by their instructions to the children. . . . the girl who is to be a good housekeeper must acquire what is equal to several trades. She must learn to sew and to cook, to wash and iron, she must learn lessons of neatness, order and economy, for without a practical knowledge of all these she cannot make a home. 54

The boys educated at the boarding schools, especially the off-reservation boarding schools where industrial instruction was often more extensive, were sometimes able to find work at their reservation's agency. Others were able to employ their skills as farmers. Girls, however, coming home after finishing their boarding school education, had few options. About the only hope they had of finding any sort of employment was if there was a reservation school, that could utilize them as teachers or in some other capacity. For a few who were willing to live off the reservation, jobs might be found in off-reservation Indian boarding schools, or as house servants for a White family. Most girls, however, did not have access to schools where they could find a teaching, or other position, and were not willing to strike out on their own off the reservation. Instead, they returned to live with their families in the traditional manner abandoning most, if not all, of what they had been taught in school. Many proponents of Indian education agonized over this

problem, but seemed unable to find a solution.55

These developments in Indian education did not go unnoticed by the agents who worked at the Rosebud Agency. Almost every year, a few of the Sicangu boys and girls made the journey to Carlisle in Pennsylvania in order to attend school. After a few years of experience, however, parents were increasingly reluctant to allow their children to attend off-reservation boarding schools due to the high percentage of children who died before returning home. Illness and death in the boarding schools, especially those which removed students from the reservation, was a frequent problem. As a result, Rosebud agents and Indian parents pushed for the establishment of a boarding school on the reservation. In 1881 the agent went so far as to buy material to build a two story building to serve as a boarding school, but it was never constructed.56

A new agent, James G. Wright, arrived at Rosebud Agency in August of 1882. He reported that due to the dim view his predecessor took of day schools, there were no schools at all on the reservation. Agent Wright went to work immediately to rectify the deficiency. He converted an old dispensary building at the agency into a school-house for a day school. Inside he created two school-rooms with enough space for thirty students in each room. One of the rooms was ready to open in June of 1883, but he delayed opening the school in the hopes of gathering

more students by September. Two other school-houses were under construction as well, at different locations on the reservation, which Wright also hoped would be able to open in September. One of the challenges Wright faced in opening the two additional schools was finding suitable teachers with a genuine concern about the welfare of the children. At this stage, government policy put the responsibility of hiring, firing and supervising teachers on the shoulders of the reservation agents.57

Agent Wright openly criticized the government for ignoring the promises it made to the Lakota concerning schools. The government had promised in the Laramie Treaty of 1868 that the Lakota would be provided with one school and teacher for every thirty school-age children. If this promise had been fulfilled the reservation would have had numerous schools and teachers benefiting the Sicangu population of Rosebud Reservation. Instead, only a few poorly attended, short-lived schools had been made available since the signing of the treaty. With Wright's encouragement, however, during the winter of 1882 and spring of 1883, Protestant Episcopal missionaries ran two mission day schools. One of these schools was located at the Agency, while the other was some distance away at Oak Creek. Two teachers ran the schools, and attendance averaged fifteen students in each school. Reverend Cleveland, a missionary, reported the lack of attendance was due primarily to the fact that there was "no pressure brought upon the children from the outside, either by the parents or by the Government, to make them attend."58

58 Ibid., J.G. Wright, "Agent’s Report," (1883), 38; Kappler, Laws and Treaties, 1,000.
The plans for constructing a boarding school on the Rosebud Reservation, in the works for several years, had still not produced any results. The blueprints underwent changes several times, but were still not complete by 1883. In order to build the school, more funds were needed, and Wright appealed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to see about appropriating money for the school. Once again, he reminded the Commissioner of the reluctance of parents to allow their children to attend boarding schools off the reservation. He also noted that other reservations had government boarding schools, and consequently Wright felt Rosebud Reservation should also be permitted the resources to build and run such a school.⁵⁹

As Agent Wright struggled to get a boarding school, the new day school at the Agency faced a difficult start. Although the school itself was ready to open the first of September 1883, it was put off until November fifth, due to a delay in the arrival of the teachers. Of the relatively small percentage of Sicangu children willing to attend school, nearly fifty were convinced by Captain Pratt to attend the Carlisle boarding school instead of the reservation school. The children were recruited on one of Pratt's frequent trips to the west to find Indian students for his school. Nevertheless, there were forty students in the agency day school when it finally opened. Work continued on the second schoolroom in the building to ready it for classes but, in an accident, the entire building was burned to the ground. Despite

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this setback, the school continued in the agency's employees' house with some success, until another recruiter came to Rosebud. Colonel Tappan from the Genoa Industrial School in Nebraska arrived, and managed to convince over seventy children to leave with him. This final recruitment of Rosebud students left few children at the Agency school.60

Despite the reluctance of many Sicangu parents to permit their children to go to off-reservation schools, a few were sent to such schools. Carlisle, in Pennsylvania, and Genoa, in Nebraska, were the most popular off-reservation schools for Sicangu children to attend. But smaller numbers also went to the Lincoln Institute in Philadelphia, a Catholic school in Yankton, Dakota, a Catholic boarding school in O'Neil, Nebraska, as well as other various mission schools not located on Rosebud Reservation. Of the 1,853 school-age children reported on the Reservation in 1884, 273 (or about 15 percent) were sent off the reservation for schooling. Many of these children were reluctantly sent by their parents due to the lack of educational facilities on the reservation.61

The government schools were not the only ones competing for students and influence among the Indians. The various Christian denominations during the late nineteenth century also competed with one another to gain influence and converts among the native population. The interdenominational tensions and the resulting

60 J.G. Wright, "Agent's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1884), 45. Due to the fact that the Genoa Industrial Boarding School was much closer to Rosebud Reservation than was the Carlisle Boarding School in Pennsylvania, it was easier for recruiters to convince parents to send their children there, than to send them to Pennsylvania.
actions of Whites often displayed anything but the touted ideal of Christian charity and brotherhood. Included on the list of competitors was the Catholic Church. Due to traditional American distrust of the Catholic Church and Papal power, Catholic efforts to "civilize" the Indians often met strong resistance from White Protestants working in Indian agencies and missions. Meeting with such opposition undoubtedly led a few Catholic, and other, missionaries to make, what was deemed by others in the field, inappropriate actions in their zeal to win Indian converts.\(^{62}\)

Prior to receiving official permission from the federal government, Catholic missionaries established the first Catholic mission and school near the Rosebud agency on the Great Sioux Reservation in 1883-1884. Agent Wright permitted their presence on the reservation in his attempt to supply educational facilities to the Sicangu children. The mission school, located several miles from the agency, opened early in January of 1884 and reported an enrollment of seventy-nine students with an average attendance of twenty-one during its six weeks of operation. The school was run by Reverend F.M. Craft with the assistance of Reverend J.A. Bushman; men Agent Wright soon accused of being a bad influence on the Indians. Wright felt so strongly about the actions of the two men (particularly Rev. Craft), he expelled them from the reservation. According to his report, the missionaries convinced the Sicangu not to send their children to government or Protestant schools, and put themselves and their, "church above all civil law or the authority, wishes, or instructions of the President, honorable Secretary of the

\(^{62}\)Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 1-9.
Interior, or any other constituted authority." The most serious offense alleged by
Agent Wright, however, was that they were encouraging the Sicangu to ignore all
authority except that of the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{63}

Reverend Craft defended his actions by saying that the only thing he was
guilty of was giving his opinion to the Indians, when asked for it. He claimed to be
familiar with the Carlisle Indian Training School and its effects on a number of
students who attended the school. Quite a few of the students died at the school, or
at home from illnesses contracted while attending Carlisle. Craft also claimed that
the students who returned to the reservation after having been to the school spoke
English very poorly and brought back no skills or advancements that justified the
risk they took in going. Consequently, for the health and well-being of the children,
Craft sincerely believed he could not recommend that parents permit their children
to attend off-reservation schools such as Carlisle. He was certainly facing a conflict
of interest, however, as he volunteered to instruct the children who stayed on the
reservation at his mission day school. Craft steadfastly maintained that he did not
try to prevail on them to either send their children away or to discourage them from
it. Instead, he claimed to merely be giving them his opinion, which they had
requested.\textsuperscript{64}

In spite of this negative experience, Agent Wright stated that the door
remained open for other Catholic missionaries who might wish to come to Rosebud,

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.; Ibid., John Cook, "Agent's Report," (1881), 53; F.M. Craft to Rev. J.B.S. Bousilet, November
8 1883, in Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions (B.C.I.M.), Correspondence (Marquette University
Archives, Milwaukee, WI: 1883) Reel 4, 351-353.
but only if they taught, “more Catholic views on all subjects.” The competition between reservation boarding schools and off-reservation boarding schools, which helped get the Catholic missionaries in trouble, was only one of the many challenges (such as funding, adequate facilities, and student recruitment) facing those involved in the movement to educate Indian children.65

Although the efforts of the Catholic missionaries had been temporarily curbed, the Protestant Episcopal Church still operated several day schools on Rosebud Reservation. One of the schools was located at Little Oak Creek and claimed an average attendance of twenty-five and an enrollment of thirty-two. In addition to the day school at this location, a night school for older students and adults who wished to learn to speak English, read and write, was also conducted. The night school reported twenty students attending regularly. The Episcopalians’ second school was located at Black Pipe Creek and reported an attendance of twenty-nine pupils. Both these schools were camp schools. Instead of operating at the Agency, or other White settlements, they were located near the camp site of bands of Sicangu who exhibited interest in having a European style school available to their children.66

The same year the first Jesuits arrived near Rosebud agency, 1885, was also the year J.D.C. Atkins took over as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Up until this time, the staff and teachers employed at the numerous reservation government Indian schools (both day and boarding schools) were chosen by the local Indian

66 Ibid., 45-46.
agent (such as Agent Wright on Rosebud). Atkins strongly disapproved of this practice as it often led to unqualified people staffing Indian schools. Legally, only the Commissioner could hire and fire such employees, but due to the remote locations and numbers of staff needed, Indian agents took care of the job. They were also responsible for supervising the work done at the various mission schools on their reservations. With denominational conflicts sometimes creating a heated atmosphere, this practice occasionally resulted in agents facing a conflict of interests. The agents were, however, more immediately familiar with the needs of the schools than was the Commissioner.  

In order to improve the supervision of reservation schools, Commissioner Atkins wanted each reservation's government boarding school(s) to be put under the authority of a bonded superintendent who would be responsible for finding qualified employees and supervising their work. The superintendent, although having no say in personnel, also inspected mission schools and reported on their performance. Atkins hoped such a change in management and personnel would help create higher quality and more effective schools.

Even with qualified teachers and staff, to be truly effective, according to Atkins and other officials such as Agent Wright, reservation boarding schools needed to be located in remote areas on the reservations. The students should be

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68 J.D.C. Atkins, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1885), CXI-CXII; Adams, Education for Extinction, 67-69. A long fight ensued to put employees of the Indian service under the Civil Service system. Teachers and some other staff members at government Indian schools were finally included in the system in 1891.
as isolated as possible to prevent them from being negatively influenced by the language and culture of their families. Keeping the school on the reservation, on the other hand, also permitted students to return to their families from time to time and act as positive influence exposing their families to White values and culture which they had learned at school.  

In spite of all the official support for reservation boarding schools, and the optimism concerning their positive role in the "civilizing" process, by 1885, Rosebud Reservation still had no government boarding school in operation, or even being planned. Although the federal government had promised to build such a school, only six camp (or day) schools served the Sicangu, along with the Agency school (which had been rebuilt after the fire). The Episcopal Church operated three of the six camp schools until January of 1885 when two of their schools were replaced by Government run schools. In lieu of the day schools, they had been operating, the Protestant Episcopal Church began construction of a boarding school. The school, St. Mary's, was designed to accommodate between fifty and sixty students. The building was located about twelve miles northeast of the Agency, and was expected to open in the fall of 1885.

St. Mary's Indian Boarding School, under the direction of the Reverend W.J. Cleveland, finally opened its doors December 15, 1885. The school had forty-nine students enrolled for the term ending June 25, 1886, although, in its finished form, it could accommodate between sixty and eighty children. Reverend Cleveland

\[^{70}\text{Ibid., 42.}\]
planned to begin the fall term on September 15, 1886. By August, the school reported it already had more applicants than they could accept for the Fall. St. Mary's served the Sicangu for many years as a boarding school, but it never achieved the size or influence held by the boarding school that would be run by the Catholic missionaries on Rosebud Reservation.\(^7\)

Although they had encountered some difficulties on Rosebud Reservation, the Catholic Church kept a small presence among the Sicangu. The Catholic missionaries (blackrobes) keenly felt the need to compete with the Protestant Episcopalians (whiterobes) for influence among the Indians. With the construction of an Episcopalian boarding school, the Catholics soon followed suit. As a result, a second boarding school, run by the Catholic Church, was in the planning stages in August of 1885. Reverend J.A. Bushman, who had earlier assisted Reverend Craft with a short-lived Catholic school on Rosebud, was now head of the small Catholic mission on the Reservation. He had been working to get a Catholic boarding school constructed, and he led the way in planning the boarding school, which he decided to locate about 8 miles southwest of Rosebud agency. The design for the Catholic school called for it to accommodate fifty students.\(^2\)

In order to establish a boarding school, the missionaries needed land to build it, and in September of 1885, the Bishop of Dakota, Martin Marty requested the use of one hundred sixty acres on Rosebud Reservation in order to establish an Indian school. The Episcopalians had already received such a grant for their school, and

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\(^7\) Ibid. J.G. Wright, "Agent's Report," (1886), 81.
\(^2\) Ibid., (1885), 43.
the Catholics had little difficulty in receiving permission to use an area on the Reservation. The area they requested, and were granted use of, was located about eight miles southwest of the Agency. Reverend Bushman went to work to construct a frame building that could serve as a school building and dorm for the students and staff. He planned to have the school ready to open by October of 1886.\textsuperscript{73}

The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, established in 1874 and based in Washington, D.C., oversaw the creation and operation of the boarding school. In December of 1885, two Jesuits were sent to finish readying the school for its opening and to help run the school when the students arrived. Father Jutz and Brother Nunlist traveled by train from Buffalo, New York to Valentine, Nebraska, which was the closest station to Rosebud Reservation. Once they arrived at Valentine, the exhausted travelers discovered the only way to reach the Mission site was to journey across the Sand Hills by horse-drawn wagon. When the two missionaries arrived at the site, they found the single frame mission building which had been constructed by Reverend Bushman, under the authority of Bishop Marty, for use as a mission school. Funding for the building had been donated by a Miss Katherine Drexel, a wealthy socialite from Philadelphia. It was a large unfinished frame structure forty-five by ninety feet. It was clear to the pair that much work remained to be done if a co-educational Catholic Mission School were to be opened at the site. The existing building was far too small to conduct a boarding school, provide dormitory space for boys and girls, and provide living quarters for the

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid.
Jesuits and other staff. In the following weeks, the two men labored from dawn until dark to construct additional buildings and to dig a well to provide the water that would be vital to the survival of the school they envisioned.\textsuperscript{74}

The two Jesuits needed help in their efforts to ready the school, and would also need assistance in running the school. In order to fulfill this necessity, Bishop Marty sent a request to the Sisters of Penance and Christian Charity of the Third Order of St. Francis, for several Sisters to come to St. Francis Mission to help the Jesuits in conducting their Indian school and missionary work. In response to the request, a few months after the arrival of Father Jutz and Brother Nunlist, they welcomed not only three Franciscan Sisters, but also two more Jesuits, Father Perrig and Brother Billings. The group was accompanied by the Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Father Stephen. The three Sisters who made the journey, Sisters Rostka Schlaghecken, Rosaria Lampo and Alcantara Fallon came to invest their labor in instructing Indian students in reading, writing, manual labor and housework.

Their journey to Valentine, Nebraska from New York took them about four days. At Valentine, Father Jutz met them to take them another days’ journey by wagon to St. Francis Mission. Word of the arrival of the Sisters had spread among the Sicangu near the Mission, and a large crowd gathered to witness the arrival of the “Holy Women.” The three Sisters, who had not worked among Indians before,

\textsuperscript{74}Stephan to Aktins, September 9, 1885, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 12, 487; Douville, Buechel Memorial, 5.; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 2. Miss. Katherine Orexel, later became Mother Katherine, and founded an order of nuns dedicated to working among the Indian and Black peoples.
must have surely had their doubts about the situation as they drove up to the mission only to find a large gathering of Sicangu, dressed in their finest clothes and waiting for their arrival.  

With the assistance of the hard working Sisters, the St. Francis Mission School was able to open its doors on June 15, 1886. With an initial capacity of fifty, the missionaries waited with high expectations for the students to arrive the first day. They were sorely disappointed when only three students showed up to enroll in the school on that first day. Despite this inauspicious beginning, however, over the next few weeks, they were able to bring the number of students up to about forty. Along with this encouraging development, Father Digmann, who was to have a profound influence over the school in its early years, arrived in August along with another Jesuit brother and three more Franciscan Sisters.  

The majority of students who attended St. Francis and St. Mary's Indian Mission Schools in their first few years of operation came from families that authorities classified as “progressive Indians.” By 1886, the so-called “progressive Indians” composed a small, but growing number of Sicangu on Rosebud Reservation. It was this group of families that encouraged their children to attend the White schools, both on and off the reservation. They placed their hope for the survival of their people on the education offered by the Whites. This education, they believed, would teach their children to speak, read and write English, allowing them

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75Douville, Buechel Memorial, 17-18; Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity, Chronicle: St. Francis Mission, St. Francis, South Dakota 1886-1928 (Marquette University Archives, Milwaukee, WI: Series 2/1:3:1), 1,2.
76Douville, Buechel Memorial, pt. 2, 18.
to serve as guardians of their family and tribe when it came to dealing with the
Whites. It was these educated young people who would be able to fully understand
the provisions written down in treaties and other documents that the Whites wanted
the Sicangu to adopt.\textsuperscript{77}

Other, more conservative, or “non-progressive,” members of the Sicangu
resisted more strongly the efforts of Whites to educate their children and change
their way of life. They saw the pressures to change as a threat to the existence of
their people and they fought to preserve their traditions, culture and language. The
establishment of reservation boarding schools, the growing number of camp
schools, and the increasing pressure to send their children to these schools and
accept Christianity, did, however, eventually take a toll on the “non-progressive”
Indians of Rosebud Reservation. As the end of the nineteenth century approached,
increasing numbers of Sicangu children were being sent to White schools for an
education.

The first session at St. Francis Indian Boarding School which began on June
16, 1886, when the school opened its doors, ran for four weeks and the
missionaries reported an enrollment of forty-two students. The school was large
even enough to handle between seventy and eighty students, so this beginning seemed a
bit underwhelming. Despite this seemingly unfavorable early response of the
Sicangu to the school, St. Francis eventually developed into the largest Catholic
Indian Boarding School in the United States. It outlived many of the other schools

\textsuperscript{77}Gibson, American Indian, 449.
established among the Sicangu. The school influenced the lives and attitudes of the Indian people it worked among. For most of its existence, the teachers and missionaries of St. Francis, encouraged the Indian people to abandon their language, culture, religion and traditions in order to assimilate into White society.78

The missionaries who ran the secularly based schools on Rosebud Reservation, had to find constructive ways to deal with both the “progressive” and “non-progressive” Indian peoples as they established and fought to maintain their schools. The Catholic missionaries who founded and ran St. Francis Indian Boarding School faced a myriad of obstacles and setbacks. Some of their problems came from local conditions, while others revolved around the policies of the Catholic Bureau of Indian Missions, and most significantly, the changing Indian policies of the United States government.

CHAPTER FOUR
ST. FRANCIS MISSION SCHOOL 1886-1890:
THE FIRST YEARS

After years of having little, if any, access to European style educational facilities in the vicinity of the Rosebud agency on the Great Sioux Reservation, Indian School Superintendent, John B. Riley, in his 1886 report was finally able to announce the existence of several schools in the region. With the support of Agent Wright, the Sicangu near Rosebud agency had, by 1886, fifteen schools of various descriptions, purportedly being run for their benefit.¹

Due to increasing popular sentiment the government began working to assume full responsibility for Indian schools. Because of this new direction in Indian education religious organizations were running only four of the fifteen schools among the Sicangu. These four schools were contract schools, operated with the financial assistance of the federal government. The first, St. Mary's, was a boarding school run by the Episcopalians and claimed an average attendance of forty-nine students for the year. There were also two day schools, run by the Episcopalians, which together averaged sixty-five students. The only other boarding school was the newly opened Catholic St. Francis Mission School, which had an average attendance of forty-two students for the first four weeks of operation.²

In addition to the religious contract schools, one government day school operated at the Agency, and scattered over the reservation were another ten camp schools also run by the government. These government schools claimed a combined enrollment of about 365, while each school averaged about twenty-three students in attendance. The camp schools were often difficult to maintain, as the still relatively mobile Indian population moved from time to time. Decisions to either move or discontinue camp schools were frequently faced by their staff and supporters. In addition there was a rising tide among Indian reformers against the usefulness of day schools. The isolation from Indian culture provided by boarding schools (both on and off the reservation) was seen as more desirable than allowing children to continue to live with their families.3

In spite of the increasing availability of educational facilities on the Reservation, a number of children still attended off-reservation boarding schools. In 1886, 325 Sicangu children were reportedly attending schools such as Carlisle in Pennsylvania and Genoa in Nebraska. Many of the children who were attending school off the reservation, had begun their education prior to the establishment of accessible schools on the Reservation. Agent Wright noted that few children were permitted to go off the reservation for schooling in 1886, and he foresaw increasing reluctance of families to send their children away from the reservation for an education. On Rosebud Reservation the total number of children in the fifteen schools in operation was 521. The total number of children, both on and off the

3Board of Indian Commissioners, “Indian Education,” as found in Prucha, Americanizing Indians, 194-195; Adams, Education for Extinction, 56, 58-59.
reservation who were attending school came to about 846.\(^4\)

It was under this new policy of increasing federal involvement in Indian education, that St. Francis Mission School began its operations. Initially, however, federal policy was not at the top of the list of immediate concerns of the Catholic Missionaries laboring to get the school started. One of the first concerns the missionaries faced was the location of the mission and school. The decision was made to locate the school about eight miles southwest of Rosebud Agency. Although near a camp, the area was isolated. The eyes of the missionaries searched the area in vain for any sign of trees. Perhaps even more disturbing than the lack of trees, was the lack of water. No river or stream ran through lands they had been granted for the Mission school. In order to successfully run an industrial mission school, with gardens, livestock, and numerous children to care for, the Jesuits knew a reliable and plentiful supply of water would be essential. The nearest drinking water was a full five miles away at Omaha Creek. Getting water required a journey by wagon, and filling up barrels to be hauled back to the Mission site. Such an arrangement would obviously not be satisfactory to run a boarding school. One of the first tasks, therefore, in addition to providing adequate buildings, was to sink a well and find the necessary water. The Jesuits first hired several people to dig the well for them. The workers, however, gave up after having dug down sixty feet, with no trace of water. When the workers gave up, Father Jutz and Brother Nunlist stubbornly persisted, and continued to dig on their own. Finally, on

the last Saturday in April, 1887, at a depth of two hundred feet the resilient pair found water. Despite the successful sinking of the well, St. Francis Mission continued to face serious water difficulties during its early years. A windmill was relied upon to draw the water up from its bed 200 feet under the earth. If the wind was not blowing, or if the windmill was damaged by a storm or if Indians fetching water forgot to turn the faucet off, water would be in short supply. Such incidents were not infrequent and when shortages occurred, the Jesuits were forced to resort to hauling water from the distant creek. Sometimes, during the harsh winter months when the snow prohibited a trip to the creek, the missionaries simply melted the snow for water.

The original building at the Mission, measuring thirty-five by one hundred feet, was designed to provide 100 children, the missionaries and the sisters with living space. In addition to housing, the single building also had to provide classroom space. Agent Wright described this initial structure, capable of housing between seventy and eighty students, as an "imposing, and substantial building, estimated to have cost $16,000. . ." No matter how imposing, or substantial, however, the inadequacy of the single structure was clear to the early Jesuits on the scene, and additional buildings were soon under construction. One of the first additions was a structure to serve as quarters for the Sisters' community. During the first year of St. Francis's operation new dormitories were also constructed for both boys and girls. Prior to the completion of these additions, the boys, Fathers

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and Brothers slept in the garret while the girls used the playroom on the second floor for sleeping quarters.\(^6\)

Additional staff arrived during the course of the summer and school began at St. Francis, with a total of six teachers dedicated to instructing the Lakota children. Members of the initial school staff came mainly from Germany. The teachers, nuns, Brothers and priests, taught not only academic subjects, such as English, reading and math, but were also strongly dedicated to the doctrine, widely accepted by white reformers, that Indian children should receive a practical education as well. They needed to be taught skills they could use later in life to earn a living, to implement proper methods of child rearing and housekeeping. With this in mind, the missionaries provided for, beneath the sleeping quarters, a carpenter's, blacksmith's and shoemaker shops as well as a laundry. Due to a lack of space, however, it was not long before separate shop buildings were constructed to house these industrial training areas. Also included in the area of practical or industrial education was agriculture. This was viewed as the most important area in which the boys could be educated since most of them would be returning home to their lands, (especially with the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887, the year after St. Francis opened) and there was limited demand for shoemakers, carpenters, and blacksmiths on the reservation. Animals were a key element of agricultural practices in the late nineteenth century, and accordingly, the school provided for the care of a number of horses, cattle, and other livestock. Two stables made of sod were therefore, also

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included in the original structures for the operation of the school. The stables provided shelter from the often harsh Dakota weather for the animals, used to train the boys in the care of livestock and their use in agriculture.  

St. Francis Mission School operated as a contract school. As a contract school, the federal government contracted with the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions to provide for the housing, care and education of a specified number of Sicangu children. The government agreed to pay a determined amount per quarter for each child attending (up to a certain number) the school. In addition to contract funds, St. Francis Mission School also got assistance in the form of rations for the students. Catholic donations built the school, but the daily operations were funded by the government. The Catholic missionaries followed the same arrangement the Episcopalians had, and got school rations of food and clothing for the children in attendance at the school. Although the children's families would have received rations for them if they stayed home, the rations given to St. Francis generally proved to be more substantial. In addition, while in session, the schools did their best to ensure the children had enough to eat and wear, even when it meant finding sources of food and clothing beyond those provided by government rations and subsidies.

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7St. Francis School," Sentinel, Reel 1, 1907, 277; Fritz, Indian Assimilation, 212; Vine Deloria Jr., The Indian Affair (NY: Friendship Press, 1974), 52; Prucha, Great Father, 224-228.
8Stephan to Atkins, October 10, 1885, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 12, 498; Ibid., Stephan to Atkins, July 23, 1886, Reel 13, 1139-40; Ibid., Atkins to Stephan, August 4, 1886, 1141; Mohonk Conference, "Resolution of the Lake Mohonk Conference, 1884," in Prucha, Policy in Crisis, 265; Ibid., 269, 270-271; Gibson, American Indian, 432; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 3; James M. King, "Sectarian Contract Schools," in Prucha, Americanizing Indians, 289-292; Prucha, Great Father, 234.
Political and denominational tensions plagued St. Francis, even in its infancy. Tensions began to build when Wright's term as Agent was coming to an end and he sought the recommendation of Director Stephan for re-appointment to the position. Reverend Stephan declined to provide a recommendation for Wright, since he had "found [Wright] a bigot of the first class. . . ." Additionally, Major Wright proved reluctant to supply the Catholic mission school with the same amount of rations that were given to the Episcopalian school. It took a complaint of Father Perrig (Superior of St. Francis Mission School), to Director Stephens, who, in turn relayed the complaint to Commissioner Atkins. Subsequently, acting Commissioner Upshaw, (who oversaw operations when Atkins was not in Washington, D.C.) wrote Agent Wright, instructing him to supply the rations to St. Francis. The complaint of Father Perrig, and being forced to provide the rations, in the words of Director Stephan, "offended that bull headed english-man. . . ."\(^9\)

The tensions were felt keenly again when a federal school inspector, Pearsons wrote a report on the conditions at St. Francis Mission School. Director Stephens claimed that Agent Wright had poisoned the inspector’s mind against St. Francis, before the man ever saw the school. The report submitted to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs read, in part:

> St. Francis Mission school is located 8 miles Southwest from the Agency on a high ridge between ravines. The buildings are badly arranged for any purpose. They have sunk a well 195 feet deep and found a limited supply of water. I found three Franciscan Brothers and Three sisters at this institution, all hard industrious workers, but wanting a leader. Had

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\(^9\)Stephan to J.D.C. Atkins, July 23, 1886 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 13, 1148; Atkins to Wright, August 3, 1886, in Rosebud Agency, Incoming Correspondence October 27, 1883-May 29, 1886, Vol. 110, Record Group 75, National Archives, Kansas City Depository.
this school been located properly and the money expended judiciously, this school would have been more beneficial to all concerned. Unless the present management places some man of Common Sense at the head of this school, They will waste money and accomplish nothing.¹⁰

This report, naturally caused considerable concern all around. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs relied on the inspector for a full accounting of the people and plans involved in establishing the school in order to evaluate its performance and how it might be improved. A negative evaluation could effect the government contract with the school. The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions which helped support St. Francis and other Catholic schools was also very concerned about the Inspector's report. Director Stephans took it upon himself to go to the St. Francis Mission School and see for himself the existing conditions. In his inspection of the Mission school, he formed the opinion that the inspector's report was inaccurate in its accusations against St. Francis. He noted that the Inspector “did not stay 5 minutes, all told--at the house examined nothing and therefore does know-nothing.” Stephans pointed out that in the Inspector's carelessness, he referred to the missionaries at St. Francis as Franciscans, when in fact they were Jesuits. In addition he found that the well supplied plenty of water for the school, and he was pleased with the location and construction of the school-house and other buildings. He further noted in his response to the report that the plans for the school had first been approved by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, before construction had even begun. When he commented on the leadership skills of

¹⁰Extract of Inspector Pierce's Report to the C.I.A. in Atkins to Stephan, August 19, 1886 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 13, 1143.
Father Perrig, the initial Superior in charge of St. Francis Mission and School, the Director said of him, that he was "...a smart circumspect Jesuit," who was more than capable of making the proper decisions to run the school effectively and economically.\textsuperscript{11}

In spite of such tensions, the school managed to continue its operations and the staff worked to begin the process of educating the Sicangu children in the language and culture of the Whites. When the school opened on June 15, 1886, it was set up to operate classes in grades one through six. Although over fifty children had registered and agreed to come to school at St. Francis, the missionaries were sorely disappointed when, on the first day, only three students arrived, one girl and two boys, all about eight or nine years old. It took only a few weeks, however, for the student population to increase to about forty students. Among a people who were unused to the white calendar and who held a different concept of time in general, knowledge of exactly what day June 15 fell upon and when the students should arrive was a matter of some speculation.\textsuperscript{12}

When the students and their families did arrive, the concerned parents of the first St. Francis Mission School students, set up camp around the school and mission grounds. With forty students in attendance at this new school, the parents and families were naturally very concerned about the treatment their children would

\textsuperscript{11}Stephan to J.D.C. Atkins, July 23, 1886 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 13, 1147-48; Ibid., Atkins to Stephan, August 4, 1886, 1141; Ibid., August 19, 1886, 1143-1144, 1147-1148; Prucha, \textit{Policy in Crisis}, 291, 304-313. Long standing suspicions between Catholics and Protestants played an active role in Indian policy. For a discussion of the problems see Prucha, \textit{The Churches and the Indian Schools}.

receive. Their close proximity was designed to discourage the students from running away as well to discourage any potential actions on the part of the missionaries, which they might perceive as mistreatment of their children.¹³

During the inaugural year of St. Francis Mission School, student attendance averaged between fifty and sixty children. With such relatively small numbers of children, the school was able to operate academic classes with only one classroom. Although their ages varied, most of the children were beginning with no knowledge of the English language and little knowledge of White culture, which they were expected to adopt. Academic work was balanced with elementary training in White culture and lifestyles. Outside of the classroom the girls struggled with their assignments to learn the rigorous manner of laundering and food preparation expected by the Sisters who taught them. The girls often resisted these new ways of doing things, since most had already been taught the traditional manner in which such chores were accomplished. The boys, on the other hand, were assigned chores that included learning to take care of the livestock, and other less palatable duties such as gardening and gathering wood or fuel and hauling water. The missionaries were often mystified at the resistance they encountered from the boys in gathering wood or gardening. The boys, however, had already been educated in the traditional ways of their own people, which dictated that such work was the domain of the women of the tribe. Any man who undertook such chores in the tribe,

¹³Rosebud Sioux Country, 1; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, 2.
was liable to be mocked by both men and women.\textsuperscript{14}

A Sister by the name of Cypriana was in charge of instructing the Sicangu students in the classroom. She conducted a class of about fifty students. Both the Sister and the students had to deal with new challenges. For the students, it was a new experience to sit in a classroom with chalkboards and a rigid atmosphere for learning. Since they had no experience with desks, or other European type furniture, the students did what was comfortable for them, they sat on the floor and placed the slates and books they had been given on the benches, where they were supposed to be sitting. Sister Cypriana, on the other hand, was faced with the challenge of trying to communicate with the young Lakota. She must certainly have had her doubts about communicating what she deemed acceptable behavior, as her students, seated on the floor around her, conversed in Lakota with little, if any, understanding of the English language. Making matters even more difficult was the fact that not all the first year's students were young children. Among the pupils who desired to learn (at least about the English language) was a group of young men, from eighteen to twenty years of age. These men sat among the other, younger students, on the classroom floor, smoking tobacco and waiting to be taught by the "holy woman." The Sisters of St. Francis Mission, later noted that these early students, "knew nothing of school discipline or what studying meant as they had never before attended school."\textsuperscript{15}


For the younger students, the situation was often more difficult than for the older ones. Living away from their families for the first time, sleeping in regimented, and often crowded dormitories, eating strange foods, wearing White style clothing, learning a new language and new being subject to new rules of behavior, all took a toll on the young students. Many children became homesick, and running away from school was a commonly accepted remedy among the children. Because of the frequent run-aways, the missionaries decided to permit the children to visit their families after Mass on Sundays, until the evening. Many children, however, would leave for an entire week, instead of just the afternoon. The Indian police, employed on the reservation, often went looking for the truant students, and brought them back to the school, where they were enrolled. One of the Sisters noted that the chronic problem of run-aways, "was somewhat better when the Indian police took the responsibility of bringing back the missing children." One of the first students at St. Francis Mission School, a girl remembered in later years that for awhile, she ran away every day, but each night they found her and brought her back to the school.16

One missionary at St. Francis Mission School, recalled that, "For these children accustomed as they were to roam about on the prairie, it was at first very hard to follow the daily routine of the school. To run away from school was nothing unusual; but to punish or even to scold the offenders is against Indian etiquette." The prohibition on punishing children was something foreign to the missionaries way

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16Ludgera, Chronicle Highlights, 12, 13; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, 4; Coleman, Indian Children, 84, 153, 157, 164-165, 166-170; for a discussion of the Indian policy see Prucha, Policy in Crisis, 201-209; Priest, Stepchildren, 138-139; and Fritz, Indian Assimilation, 139-140.
of thinking. In only a few years, however, the staff was able to note that parents began to see the difference in progress between those who stayed at the school, and those who ran away. Eager for their children to achieve, parents began to help to keep their children at the school, and even gave permission for the missionaries to punish their children, if needed. Father Eugene Buechel, S.J., missionary, linguist and historian at St. Francis Mission and School, noted that educational progress among the Lakota children was very slow in the beginning. The only type of writing or written records the students might have been exposed to were the winter counts, kept by tribal historians. These winter counts were a series of pictorial paintings kept on pieces of hide that depicted memorable or significant events of each year, helping to recall the history of the tribe. The Lakota had no need for a written language prior to their encounter with Whites, and thus, had no equivalent alphabet, or concept of written language.\textsuperscript{17}

In spite of trouble with runaways, the missionaries believed they had made some progress in educating the children by December 1886. Students were learning to speak, read and write English, and were learning about the White way of life. With the approaching Christmas holiday, much preparation went on at the school for the Christmas celebration. The priests and nuns carefully explained the meaning of Christmas, and the reason for its celebration to the students. The students and their families attended a Christmas mass, given in Lakota, so all could

understand. After mass everyone was invited to supper, which was the big attraction of the evening. The children and staff had been practicing hard and working to organize an entertainment for the parents, to show off their newly acquired skills and knowledge. Unfortunately, however, after consuming the feast of meat and apples, provided by the Mission, the visitors, who numbered over one hundred, forgot about the entertainment and left to go home. Fortunately, the Sisters managed to waylay four elders, who stayed to serve as an audience for the children's entertainment. The parents did get another chance that first year to observe the progress their children had made at the school, during the end of year examinations. During these exams, the children displayed their academic skills, particularly their ability to speak English.¹⁸

Considerable pressure was brought to bear on the Indians of Rosebud, and other reservations, to send their children to schools provided by Whites. In spite of the seemingly growing success of education among the Lakota, Rosebud Agent L.F. Spencer put the situation in perspective in his 1887 report. Spencer noted that in spite of the White perception of Indian acceptance of education, "There are camps on this agency where the mere mention of a prospective school operated like a red flag on an outraged bull. Eliminate from the educational proposition sentiment and gush, and the average Indian of this agency who voluntarily sends his children to the government day-school does it either through fear of gastronomic consequence if he does not, or expects pay from the Great Father as a premium for

surrendering his children for educational advantages." The same was equally true of
the government boarding school. The relationship to the Catholic Boarding School,
however, was somewhat different as most the children who attended came from
parents who had converted (had been baptized and received basic training in the
Catholic faith) to Catholicism. Many of the Catholic families wanted their children
instructed in the Catholic faith, and perceived potential benefits in having their
children educated in a Catholic school. Many Sicangu families, however, objected
especially to the boarding schools, due to the often, extended periods they were
separated from their children, the attempts to destroy their culture, the harsh
discipline the students were subjected to, and the untraditional types of labor they
were forced to perform. These objections were not unfounded, even at the St.
Francis Mission School. 19

The missionaries at St. Francis Mission School not only worked with the
children at the school, but also with their families. Some of the lessons at the
school were communicated to Sicangu families by the missionaries, and
sometimes, the students. While the missionaries, for example, promoted the use of
White physicians and medicine, they did not prohibit the Sicangu from using their
traditional medicines of plants and herbs. The missionaries did, however, try to

19Utley, Last Days, 35, 36-37.; Hyde, Sioux Chronicle, 85, 157-158, 160; Adams, Education for
Extinction, 63-64; St. Francis Mission, The Blackrobe in the Land of the Wigwam, (St. Francis, SD:
circa 1922), 1, in BCIM Records, Series 5:1:1, Marquette University Archives; Douville, "St. Francis
Indian Mission, 1885-1972" part II, in Buechel Memorial, 17; L.F. Spencer, “Agent’s Report,” in
B.I.A., Report (1887), 43; Atkins to Wright, March 25, 1886, Rosebud Agency, Incoming
Correspondence, October 27, 1883-May 29, 1886, Vol. 110, Record Group 75, National Archives,
Kansas City Depository. By the late 1880s it was common practice on many reservations to withhold
rations from families who refused to send their children to school. The practice was generally
sanctioned by the federal government.
forbid the Indians to accompany the administration of these native remedies with the
traditional ceremonies, dances, music and other ceremonial actions that were
usually performed along with the plant remedies. Children at St. Francis school who
became ill were attended to by a nurse or physician who administered European
type medicines and cures.20

In addition to working to weaken the faith the Sicangu placed in their
traditional healers, the missionaries also tried to introduce new work and labor
patterns among the Indians. In spite of the ongoing conflict with Protestant forces,
the Catholic missionaries adhered to much of the doctrine supported by
contemporary reformers on how to "civilize" the Indians. In keeping with the widely
accepted belief that the adoption of agriculture would herald the final step in
assimilating Indian peoples, the missionaries encouraged the Indians to take up
farming. The vegetable garden and farm at St. Francis Mission, which the students
helped plant, tend and harvest served a dual purpose. Not only did the mission
garden and farm help teach students about farming and gardening, but they also
served as an example to the parents and families of the students. Unfortunately, for
the efforts of the missionaries, the weather and soil conditions often worked against
their efforts to get the local populations to farm. In many areas the soil was
unfavorable to crop raising, and droughts were not uncommon. The frequent
droughts and occasional grasshopper plagues served to discourage Indians from

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Stephan, June 11, 1888 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 16, 551; Ibid., Digmann to Wright, August
23, 1890, Reel 20, 227; Ibid., Jutz to Stephan, May 10, 1893, Reel 24, 313; Ibid., Digmann to
Ketcham, October 16, 1902, Reel 31, 78; Prucha, Policy in Crisis, 200-201.
farming. Even many White settlers in the region abandoned their homesteads and left to find more favorable situations. Leaving, however, was not generally an option for the Indian population on Rosebud, and other, reservations.  

The early years of the school were difficult in other ways as well. Communications were sometimes quite slow between St. Francis Mission School in South Dakota, and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in Washington, D.C.. Getting questions answered and figuring out the correct way to handle paperwork for the bureaucracy so that payments could be obtained in a timely manner was an often difficult process. The school superintendent (Father Perrig) held the responsibility to fill out paperwork detailing how many students attended the school, and how many days each was in attendance. Vouchers and quarterly reports then had to be sent to the agent of Rosebud Reservation who was responsible for certifying them and forwarding the paperwork to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. The Bureau, in turn, dealt with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in getting the proper funds owed the school. Father Perrig expressed his frustration at the system, when Director Stephan wrote him asking for an additional attendance report. Perrig responded by saying that, "As no other blanks than those for reports and vouchers were ever handed to me, You will kindly excuse me, that I never wrote

another statement of attendance, than that in the report. . . . I shall gladly fill as many papers as may be necessary, if somebody of the Catholic Bureau will be kind enough to inform me in time and send the necessary blanks, as I am not supposed to know all the mysteries of bureaucracy by intuition.  

As Perrig labored to figure out the bureaucratic mentality, operations at the school proceeded. A new Indian policeman was hired in May 1886. Perrig credited the new policeman's efforts with keeping a good number of children at school. In June, St. Francis had seventy children in attendance, a good number considering the problems with runaways. The staff at St. Francis did try to plan fun activities for the children to break up the monotony and stress of the academic atmosphere. Early in June a picnic was organized for all the children at St. Francis. While Perrig reported that all the children enjoyed the event, it is nearly impossible to determine if they really did. The break in routine such events provided were very likely a great relief to the children, but since the children left no written records of their opinion of such events it is difficult to know for sure.  

Although the children may have enjoyed the day off for a picnic, there was during the summer of 1888, a serious threat to their well-being. Illness at boarding schools was always a major concern, and St. Francis had their first real scare with a limited outbreak of measles. In 1888, the school still had very limited space in which to operate, as a result there was nowhere the ill children could be quarantined.

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22 Stephan to Perrig, December 14, 1887 in BCIM, Correspondence Reel 15, 274-75; Ibid., Perrig to Stephan, June 11, 1888, Reel 16, 551.
23Ibid., Perrig to Stephan, June 11, 1888, Reel 16, 551-552.
from the rest of the students. Rev. Perrig reported only three children were actually ill, but with a lack of quarantine space there was a very real danger of the virus spreading throughout the student population.24

Those in charge of running St. Francis, such as Father Perrig, recognized their dependence on government, and other outside support to help keep the school going. The Catholic missionaries were well aware of the growing opposition to continuing government contracting with religiously run schools. Because of the uncertain long-term prospects of support, St. Francis Mission School attempted to be as self-supporting as possible. The fact that industrial education was emphasized at St. Francis fit neatly into the need for self-support. Agriculture, of course, was a key element in striving to provide for themselves. Rev. Perrig reported during the 1888 summer that forty-one acres had been planted in vegetables and corn. The goal was to produce enough to feed both the livestock, and the people at the mission and school. The older male students were responsible for assisting in all phases of raising and harvesting the crops. In addition they were taught about livestock and how to make use of and care for them. St. Francis boasted ten horses and four mules in 1888 which were used not only for transportation purposes, but also to work in the fields. In addition, there were thirty cattle, twenty-four swine, and somewhere between seventy and eighty

24Ibid., Perrig to Stephan, June 11, 1888, Reel 16, 551-52; Coleman, Indian Children, 135, 162-164; Adams Education for Extinction, 124-125, 130-134.
chickens and ducks, all used to help sustain school operations. The area chosen for the construction of St. Francis Mission and school, had no trees in the immediate vicinity. During the first two years of operation, 1,500 trees of various kinds were planted to serve as windbreaks and sources of shade. About 120 vines were also reportedly planted. Some fruit trees were among those planted. Fruit was a necessary component of the students' and staffs' diet, so growing their own seemed a logical way to save money. Perrig reported that apple trees were planted in 1887, and were still growing well, although not yet producing much fruit, in 1888.

The 1887-88 school year ended June 30 as St. Francis closed for the summer. Over the summer months, while the children were at home, school staff worked to improve the school. Rev. Perrig contacted Director Stephan about St. Francis's contract. Perrig desired a contract that would allow payments for the number of children the school could accommodate, between ninety and one hundred. Commissioner Morgan's policy of reducing rations, kept St. Francis from accepting more students during the school year. Perrig noted that the school could have taken in more students, if the rations had been available to help support them. Much to the relief of Rev. Perrig, the Bureau of Catholic Indian Affairs Secretary, Charles Lusk sent a copy of the contract to St. Francis in August 1888. The new contract provided funds for up to one hundred Sicangu students attending the

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26 Perrig to Stephan, June 11, 1888 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 16, 551-552.
At the same time Perrig was concerned with the contract terms, he also turned his attention to enlarging the school. Perrig wanted to construct a chapel separate from the main building. He also saw the need for a separate building, like that which the Sisters occupied, in order to house the male staff and provide more room for students.

By September of 1888, there were a total of six Sisters working at St. Francis. The Sisters were, “well burdened with labors and worries, since the children did not at first take so well to doing work and resented training.” Much improvement occurred, however, over the course of the year and children who once abandoned a task at the first opportunity, began to attempt to finish whatever their assignment might be. Along with activities, such as picnics, designed to ease the stress of the school the children were still permitted to visit home on occasion. Instead of the policy of the first year, of visiting every Sunday, students could now visit their homes only once a month. Visits were scheduled for the first Sunday of each month. Despite the fact that attendance was still quite erratic among the students, there was definite improvement, which showed up in the end of year exams. In previous years, during the end exams the children were not comfortable to speak up so their answers could be heard. At the end of this year, however, the children answered in quite audible voices and displayed “polite” manners which the

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27 Hyde, *Sioux Chronicle*, 235-236; Perrig to Stephan, July 7 1888 in BCIM *Correspondence*, Reel 16, 555; Ibid., Lusk to Perrig, August 11, 1888, 556.

28 Perrig to Stephan, July 7 1888 in BCIM *Correspondence*, Reel 16, 555; Ibid., Lusk to Perrig, August 11, 1888, 556.

Sisters and other staff members had been working hard to teach them. The Sisters also noted that, in their opinion, the children had come a long way in the area of personal hygiene and cleanliness. From their viewpoint, the Sisters firmly believed that advances in teaching habits of cleanliness were slow among the children because, "insuperable difficulties stood in the way of more rapid progress since the children came from the camps where they lived a wild, careless, and unwashed life." Improvements also began to be seen the second year as communication between teachers and children improved. As students and staff increasingly began to be able to understand one another, it was easier to communicate expectations and problems and life at St. Francis became a bit simpler for staff and students.

Much to the dismay of Catholics, such as Father Stephen, director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, in July of 1889 a new Commissioner of Indian Affairs was sworn into office. In spite of strong Catholic protest against his appointment and a limited background in Indian affairs, T.J. Morgan entered office with some strongly defined ideas about Indians, and what the role of government should be in defining the their future. First, Morgan firmly believed the reservation system could not continue to exist indefinitely and would soon disappear. He also supported the idea of total assimilation of the Indian peoples. The Indians would have to assimilate "peaceable if they will, forcibly if they must. They must adjust themselves to their environment, and conform their mode of living substantially to

30Ibid.
31Ibid.
32Ibid.
our civilization. This civilization may not be the best possible, but it is the best the Indians can get. They can not escape it, and must either conform to it or be crushed by it. In order to promote assimilation, Morgan supported a strong Indian educational system, compulsory, based on the model of the American public school system and designed to accommodate their special needs. In addition to education, Morgan also believed the government had a role to play in encouraging the break up of tribal solidarity and relations. He wanted nuclear families to take precedence over tribal affiliations and promoted the allotment of reservation lands as a way to make families more independent. Once Indian children had attained an education, the Commissioner believed they should be discouraged from returning to the reservation, where jobs were scarce. Another major element in Morgan's plans for the Indians, was to limit, and where possible, do away entirely with the ration system. Morgan, along with many other observers, and employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was convinced that rations were simply encouraging Indians to be idle and not to seek a means of becoming independent and self-supporting.

By far, however, the keystone of Morgan's plan was education in public, or government schools. The government, according to the Commissioner could not "safely or honorably" delegate the responsibility of educating Indian youth to any other organizations or groups. This, of course, was a policy designed to decrease, and eventually end, support for denominationally run Indian schools (i.e. contract

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The education system for Indians, according to Morgan "should be non-partisan [and] non-sectarian." In his 1889 report Morgan stated that

When we speak of the education of the Indians, we mean that comprehensive system of training and instruction which will convert them into American citizens, put within their reach the blessings which the rest of us enjoy, and enable them to compete successfully with the white man on his own ground and with his own methods. Education is to be the medium through which the rising generation of Indians are to be brought into . . . harmonious relationship with their white fellow-citizens and with them enjoy the sweets of refined homes, the delight of social intercourse, the emoluments of commerce and trade, and advantages of travel, together with the pleasures that come from literature, science, and philosophy, and the solace and stimulus afforded by a true religion.³⁵

Morgan acknowledged the existence of Christian schools, already established for the benefit of the Indians. He believed, however, that such facilities should serve as supplemental schools to the state run Indian public schools. Indian parents, he claimed, would have the freedom to send their children to the school of their choice.³⁶

Commissioner Morgan's policies were to have a significant impact on Indian policy in general and on St. Francis Mission School in particular. The policy of favoring government, over mission schools, however, was not immediately a serious issue for St. Francis. Until a government boarding school was constructed on Rosebud Reservation in 1897, there were more children than the reservation schools could accommodate. So long as that situation persisted the Catholics

³⁶ Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A. Reports (1889), 94-95; Adams, Education for Extinction, 61-70; Kvasnicka, Indian Commissioners, 193-202; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 10-25; Moorehead, American Indian, 384; Prucha, Great Father, 237-241, 246-247; Prucha, Policy in Crisis, 296-304.
continued to hope that government funding for St. Francis would remain secure.\(^{37}\)

In spite of the obviously unfavorable conditions faced by most Indians, (such as poor agricultural land, racism, and lack of opportunity) some missionaries, and others involved in Indian affairs, supported Morgan's idea that government rations to the Indians inhibited their motivation to work and retarded any progress that might be made in "civilizing" them. Commissioner Morgan took action and attempted to force the Indians to work by telling agents to cut their rations of food and clothing. On Rosebud (and numerous other reservations), however, there was a definite shortage of suitable farming land. Along with the lack of arable land, there was also little in the way of employment opportunities on the reservation. In a short time on Rosebud, many of the people were in danger of starving with the decline in rations. This, in turn, increased the burden on the St. Francis Mission and School as the Indians turned to the blackrobes for help. The Sicangu did what they could by selling wood and hay, trying to find work hauling freight and other jobs to feed themselves and their families. For most, however, it simply was not enough. As a result, many Indians came to the Catholic missionaries at St. Francis seeking work, food, and clothing. The resources of the mission were limited and they soon found that their "purse was not big enough for the emergency." Such government policies and the subsequent suffering they caused, helped to further alienate many of the Indians, and gave rise to grassroots support for the preaching of Short Bull, who

\(^{37}\)Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1889), 97; C.E. McChesney, "Agent's Report," in BIA Reports (1897), 275. By 1901, under Congressional mandate, all government contracting with schools was ended regardless of the number of children vs. available school capacity.
brought the Ghost Dance among the Lakota.\textsuperscript{38}

In addition to the changes in federal policy, St. Francis Mission was undergoing some internal changes. Father Perrig visited the East coast during late April through mid May, 1889. During his absence, Father P. Florentine Digmann was appointed Acting Superior of St. Francis Mission and School. Having gotten St. Francis up and running, the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions decided to reassign Father Perrig and they turned to Father Digmann as the natural choice to replace him as Superior. Although the official ceremony installing Digmann as Superior was not scheduled until October 17, 1889, he had taken over the respective duties of the office by June.\textsuperscript{39}

Not only was a change of guard occurring at St. Francis, but at Rosebud Agency, Agent Spencer's term was also up and the process of appointing a new agent was underway. Feeling that St. Francis School had a strong vested interest in the outcome, Father Digmann wrote to Director Stephan in May 1889, reminding him how it important it was for the school and mission to have a good Agent who would not persecute the Catholics on the Reservation and who would, instead, support their efforts. Digmann recommended a Freight Agent with whom he was familiar as being a good, honest man who knew how to work with the Indians. Although the man was not Catholic, Digmann claimed he was not predisposed to prejudice against them. Stephan could do little to influence the choice of the Indian

\textsuperscript{39} Digmann to William, April 4, 1889 in BCIM, \textit{Correspondence}, Reel 17, 1228; Sisters of St. Francis, \textit{Chronicle} (1889), 7.
Office in appointing a new agent, and by the end of July a decision had been reached. Mr. George Wright was chosen as Spencer's successor. George Wright, the son of the former Agent, Major Wright, was engaged to be married to Agent Spencer's daughter. The feelings harbored by the new Agent Wright toward the Catholic Church, were uncertain, and of deep concern to Father Digmann. "How we will get along with him, the future will tell. Some...told me...two years ago...that he hated every brick and board of our school, being a strong Episcopalian. Since last Spring also the Presbyterians have settled at the Agency. One of the ministers tried to induce a young Catholic Indian to join the White Robes, [i.e. the Episcopalians] saying: with the Black gowns it would soon be done, all would before long follow the White Robes: Signs of storm from all parts." Although conflicts with non-Catholic denominations on Rosebud would continue to plague the Catholics at St. Francis, Agent Wright did, during his tenure, prove himself a fair-minded man where the Catholics were concerned. He displayed greater interest in and sympathy toward the school than his predecessor. It was not uncommon for Agent Wright to make an appearance at school entertainments, or to hand out rewards during commencement ceremonies. He also assisted the school, by insisting that parents send their children back to school promptly after vacation.

Reverend Digmann was discovering just how difficult a task establishing and keeping the mission school running was. Runaway students persisted in their

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40 Digmann to Stephan, May 8, 1889 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 17, 1242; ibid., Digmann to Willard, July 20, 1889, 1261.
41 Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle (1889), 7.
attempts to abandon the school. Many of the children, however, were now being returned to the school either by their parents, or the police. Most of the families lived fairly near to the school. Such close proximity often seemed to encourage students to flee. There were, however, also benefits to having pupils' families nearby. While being mostly isolated from their families, students could still visit their homes regularly, on designated weekends, helping to expose their parents to the knowledge, skills and religious practices they were being taught.42

In order to continue the education of the students from year to year St. Francis depended heavily upon a federal contract to keep the school running. Each year saw some tense months as negotiations in Congress, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions determined for how much, or even if, such contracts would be renewed for the coming year. During the summer of 1889, Father Digmann anxiously awaited the outcome of St. Francis's request to renew their contract. Finally, in late August confirmation was received that St. Francis once again, had been granted a contract for the coming year.43

Digmann had been especially concerned with receiving contract funds, since he had been forced to make some serious expenditures during the summer. It became necessary to dig a well to help supplement the water supply at St. Francis. The new well stretched to a depth of 220 or 230 feet. The bottom had to be walled up using bricks and approximately 1,200 feet of pipe had to be laid to transport the

42 Digmann to Stephan, July 1, 1889 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 17, 1249-1250; Adams, Education for Extinction, 30-31.
43 Digmann to Willard, August 13, 1889 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 17, 1264-1265.
water. The total cost of the project ran about 700 dollars. Digmann assured, BCIM authorities, however, that he had not spent a single dollar that was not essential for the well-being and operation of the school and mission.\(^{44}\)

After all the hard work the staff of St. Francis had invested in the previous school year, they were quite pleased when, in August, 1889 (the beginning of the new school year), nearly all the students enrolled returned to the school of their own volition. By the end of the first week sixty-nine students had returned, and by the end of the first month there were ninety-two in attendance.\(^{45}\)

Considering past years, this showing was very encouraging. What is not mentioned, however, in the various reports and letters from St. Francis Mission were the dire conditions of the Lakota in 1889. The year brought with it a severe drought, destroying what few crops were planted, forcing wildlife to migrate off the reservation and beyond the reach of the Indians and keeping the wild fruits and plants from growing. Most Whites believed that the government rations alone were sufficient for the Indians to survive. In reality, however, rations had never been enough to keep the Indians from starving. They continued to supplement their diet on the reservation by hunting, gathering, and limited gardening. The loss of these sources of subsistence led to severe hardship and ensured that families willingly sent their sent children back to St. Francis where they would receive three meals a day and decrease the burden on their families. Although the children at St. Francis remained fairly healthy, the malnourished condition of other Sicangu left them very

\(^{44}\)Ibid.; Ibid., August 27, 1889, p. 1279.

\(^{45}\)Ibid., Digmann to Willard, August 27, 1889, 1274.
vulnerable to disease such as influenza, measles and whooping cough.⁴⁶

Whether for nutritional or academic reasons, when children came to school at St. Francis in the Fall of 1889, they discovered some changes in the classroom situation. Instead of running a single classroom, this year, for the first time, the older students were separated from the younger, and three classes were conducted. The separation helped enhance the atmosphere for learning as students received more individual attention in classes designed for their level of learning.⁴⁷

Despite, or perhaps because of the success of the St. Francis Mission School, the chronic denominational squabbles continued unabated even during the start of the new school year. Father Digmann noted that four students, formerly enrolled at St. Francis were sent by their parents to the Episcopalian St. Mary’s boarding school instead. The fathers of all these children, according to Digmann, were “squawmen,” a term used for White men married to Indian women. He said the parents gave various excuses for the transfer, such as their children were not learning English well enough, but suspected the real reasons had more to do with the denominational power struggle and fight for influence which was being actively waged.⁴⁸

The new school year also heralded the official installment of Father Florentine Digman S.J. as Superior of St. Francis Mission and School. A student

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⁴⁷Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle (1889), 7.
⁴⁸Digmann to Willard, August 27, 1889 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 17, 1273-1274; for more on the Catholic/Protestant conflict on the national level during this period see Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 10-25.
choir, under the direction of Sister Aquinas Miller, spent long hours practicing to sing the High Mass on October 17 for Father Digman's official installment ceremony. Remarkably, considering the school generally adhered to the federally espoused policy of allowing only English, the songs and prayers included in the mass were all recited in the Lakota language. 49

By the end of the 1880s many observers, interested in Indian welfare, expressed their pleasure with the progress of education on Rosebud (and other Sioux) Reservation(s). Persons more intimately acquainted with the situation, however, saw the situation in a different light. Most Sicangu families still disliked the idea of sending their children away to the White-run boarding schools. The separation from their children was an emotional hardship for families. In addition, the schools subjected students to harsh discipline, an approach to child-rearing totally alien and largely unacceptable to the Lakota. To top it off, their children, especially the boys, were trained in very untraditional types of work. Young boys who spent their early years listening to the achievements of their ancestors in warfare and other ventures, longed to emulate their bravery and earn honor for themselves. When they attended schools, such as St. Francis, however, they found themselves expected to learn roles traditionally reserved for women, such as farming. With confinement on reservations, and the depletion of the buffalo herds, traditional warrior and hunter roles no longer could be relied upon to provide for their people. Even the practical skills learned at school were generally of little value in


In 1887 Agent Spencer noted strong resistance to the establishment of schools among various groups of Sicangu. Many families strongly resisted the currents of change that threatened their traditional way of life. The families who sent their children to St. Francis Mission school did so voluntarily (although, once enrolled there were enforcement procedures to help ensure attendance), but much coercion was often used to get Sicangu children to the government day schools on the reservation. Spencer noted that it was not uncommon for him to threaten to withhold rations from families refusing to send their children to school, and some families expected extra compensation for allowing their children to be educated in the government schools. The end of decade revealed a situation where Sicangu parents had been compelled to enter their children in an alien educational system. Not surprisingly, the result, as Robert Utley writes, “was to heighten the resentment of the adults and to confront the children, exposed to both the Indian and white environment, with seriously conflicting values.”\footnote{L.F. Spencer, "Agent’s Report," in B.I.A., \textit{Reports} (1887), 43; Utley, \textit{Last Days}, 36, 37; for a discussion of the progression of Indian-White relations from paternalism, dependency to the era of Indian rights see also Francis Paul Prucha’s, \textit{The American Indians in American Society: From the Revolutionary War to the Present} (Berkely, CA.: University of California Press, 1985).}

During this period of continued assault upon Sicangu culture, the Great Sioux Reservation, itself came under attack from land-hungry Whites. In 1889 pressure from White settlers, combined with the lobbying of policy-makers who believed
further limiting the land base of the Indians would help in the "civilizing" process, convinced the federal government to send a series of commissions to the Sioux occupying the reservation. With strong pressure brought to bear against the Indians, the second commission, under General George Crook managed to get the needed Sioux signatures to validate the Great Sioux Agreement of 1889. The Great Sioux Reservation was broken into five, much smaller, reservations: Rosebud (home to the Sicangu), Pine Ridge, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River and Lower Brule. The remainder of the land was opened to White settlement.\(^5^2\)

In addition to this massive loss of land (about 9 million acres), 1889 brought also a renewed emphasis upon education as a panacea for solving the "Indian problem." Thomas J. Morgan, appointed as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, brought to his position plans for reservation and off-reservation boarding schools, reservation day schools, mission schools and public schools to benefit the Native population. On his list of priorities, however, he counted reservation boarding schools as the most important. In such institutions, he believed, the students behavior could be closely monitored and they could be instructed in religion, practical and academic skills. Morgan's emphasis on building an Indian educational system did not, however, bode well for mission schools. The Commissioner believed the job of educating Indians should be assumed by the United States
Government, and that it should not be "delegate[d] to any other party." Under
government control, he wanted Indian schools to become standardized in courses,
methods and texts used and industrial education offered.\textsuperscript{53}

Morgan's tenure as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, heralded the beginning of
a new approach to Indian education by the federal government. The federal
tradition of supporting religiously run Indian schools through the use of a contract
system came under increasing attack during Morgan's administration. The new
Commissioner dedicated himself to the concept of eliminating federal support for all
contract schools. Over the course of the next two decades this policy resulted in
increasingly difficult financial problems for St. Francis, and other mission schools.
In spite of such financial challenges, St. Francis forged ahead and continued to
expand its operations. Because the school's federal funding was threatened new
sources of support had to be sought in order to sustain the Jesuit's educational and
missionary efforts among the Sicangu.

\textsuperscript{53}Hall, To Have This Land, 6-10; Clyde Ellis, "A Remedy for Barbarism: Indian Schools, The Civilizing
Program, and the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation, 1871-1915," in American Indian Culture
Reports, (1889), 94, 95.
CHAPTER FIVE
NEW CHALLENGES

The first four years of its operation brought many challenges to the St. Francis Mission School. Not only did the missionaries and teachers face the difficult realities of reservation life, but they also gained an education about the vagaries and red tape of federal policy and bureaucracy. In spite of the many difficulties the school managed to survive. The new decade (the 1890s) brought with it more challenges to the survival of the school, and the inhabitants of Rosebud Reservation. These new challenges were precipitated by events both on and off the reservation.

As the new decade began, attendance at St. Francis continued to be encouraging. In April, 1890, the school reported a capacity of one hundred students and functioned near capacity with forty-nine girls and forty-five boys. The missionaries at St. Francis saw the growing number of students in attendance as a sign of increasing support for the school and the Catholic Church, by the surrounding community.¹

According to the Catholic missionaries, a growing number of Sicangu began to show support for the Catholic Church during the later months of 1889 and through 1890. During this period, an increasing number of Indians began to request permission to re-locate their families near St. Francis Mission. While some may indeed have expressed such an interest for religious reasons, many others simply

¹Digmann to Stephan, April 7, 1890 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 20, 183, 184.
wanted to be under the protective umbrella of the Mission. The growing Ghost
Dance movement, which, according to Agent Wright, began on Rosebud
Reservation around September of 1890, caused increasing uneasiness among
many Lakotas. Some Sicangu saw moving near the mission as one method of
separating themselves from the dancers and from any possible repercussions from
the federal government.²

A second factor making the vicinity attractive were the crop failures of 1889-
1890. Prolonged drought drove thousands of white settlers from their homes.
Indian farmers faired no better but had no place else to go. In addition to
Commissioner Morgan’s policy of decreasing rations in general, the reduced food
supply meant the rations from the government (which were generally purchased
from the surpluses of Indian and/or white farmers in the region) were decreased, or
in very poor condition, and the population of Rosebud suffered greatly from the
shortages. For some, St. Francis served as a beacon of hope as the staff did what
they could to help with their limited means. Indians near the mission were often
able to get some relief for their hungry families from the missionaries.³

In addition to seeking safety and food for their families, another attractive
feature was the fertility of the lands surrounding the school. The region around St.

²Ibid.; Ibid., J.G. Wright, “Agent’s Report,” (1891), 411, 412; Hall, To Have This Land, 28-36; Prucha,
Great Father, 247-249; Utley, Last Days, 94-96; Dippie, Vanishing American, 202.; Moorehead,
American Indian, 99-132; for further discussion of the Ghost Dance movement and conditions
among the Lakota 1889-1890 see also James Mooney, The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux
Outbreak of 1890 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976, c. 1965), Robinson, A History of the
Dakota or Sioux Indians, 462-469, Hyde, Sioux Chronicle and Utley, Last Days. Both Hyde and
Utley devote several chapters to the topic.
³Hall, To Have This Land, 10-11; J.G. Wright, “Agent’s Report,” in B.I.A., Reports (1891), 413.
Francis contained some of the more arable soil on the reservation. With numerous
droughts, plagues of insects and generally poor soil, the federal policy of
encouraging Indian families to practice agriculture had proved difficult, at best, to
achieve. The families that gained access to more suitable regions had a marginally
better chance of succeeding with gardens or crops. Such success, of course,
depended on the extent of the willingness of families to compromise long held
traditions and adopt agricultural pursuits.4

Many of the students' families were among those living relatively near the
school. Over the 1889-90 Christmas holiday, as in previous years, the children at
St. Francis were permitted to visit their homes. Father Digmann noted the school
allowed the children a two day vacation. The weather was good until December
28, allowing children to take advantage of the break and go to their homes. The
mild weather, however, also seemed to encourage a few students to run away from
St. Francis. In addition to the normal cases of run-aways, there were also a number
of children who decided to leave in order to participate in the Ghost Dances being
performed on both Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations.5

Running away was only one of a number of infractions that school authorities
believed should be met with disciplinary measures. Disciplining students was an
ongoing problem. Punishment (which generally involved a spanking, or some type

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4Digmann to Stephan, May 12, 1890 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 20, 195; Ibid., Digmann to
Stephen, April 7, 1890, 183-84; J.G. Wright, "Agent's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1891), 411; Prucha,
Indian Policy in Crisis, 270; Carl Schurz, Recommendation of Land in Severalty, in Prucha, ed.
Americanizing Indians, 83-84; Utley, Last Days, 23-25, 28-29.
5Digmann to Rev. George Willard, January 2, 1890 in BCIM, Correspondence, 1890, Reel 20, 163-
64.
of physical punishment) often encouraged children to run away. In addition, most Lakota parents strongly objected to the use of physical punishment. Among the Lakota it was unheard of to subject children to the brutality of physical punishment. When the staff at St. Francis attempted to administer such punishment, most parents and other family members protested. In 1890, Father Digmann noted that only a small minority of the parents permitted the school to punish their children.\(^6\)

The academic regimen established in 1886 was still adhered to in 1890. The children engaged in both academic and practical educational ventures. The boys learned about farming, gardening and stock raising. A few boys also received training in the blacksmith and carpenter's shop. To encourage agricultural pursuits, each boy was given his own small plot of land to garden (in addition to helping with the larger school fields). As an added incentive, the boys were free to decide what to do with the fruits of their labor. Many gave much of what they raised to their families who were often in need of food. In addition to the boys' gardens, nearly one hundred acres of St. Francis Mission land was being cultivated, with the help of student labor, to assist in feeding the pupils and staff of the school and mission.\(^7\)

The girls followed a similar routine, spending half their day in the classroom, and the other half learning skills that their well-meaning educators believed would benefit them and their people. The young girls learned the basics of sewing, while the older, more advanced girls worked on more difficult needlework and other


\(^7\)Digmann to Stephan, May 12, 1890 in BCIM, *Correspondence*, Reel 20, 197.
projects. To ensure all the girls were exposed to the various aspects of homemaking they rotated assignments in areas such as the laundry and kitchen.\(^8\)

Since it contracted with St. Francis Mission School, the federal government periodically sent inspectors to report on conditions at the school. In May of 1890, the Supervisor of Education among the Sioux, Elaine Goodale, came to look over the school. She noted that St. Francis had some difficulty with runaways. During her visit at the school there were six children absent from the school who were classified as runaways. She noted that the school lacked play or assembly rooms. Her report also stated that the existing wash and bathrooms were not adequate. Goodale expressed concern that although most of the school rooms were of sufficient size, and had good lighting, the boys' classroom was too dark and not well ventilated. St. Francis also utilized a series of Catholic Readers to educate the children that, according to the Inspector, were not, "up to the standard." An additional worry was that, although the teachers at the school spoke only English, she felt the English-only rule needed stricter enforcement among the children. Despite these problems, the report said that there were three school rooms being used and the work of the students and teachers, "show[ed] thorough and patient drill, and the results [were] creditable. . . ."\(^9\)

After the struggle of the initial years of operation with the water supply, the report also noted the school had two wells which provided plenty of water. The

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\(^8\)Ibid.; Ibid., Elaine Goodale, *Supervisor of Education Report on St. Francis*, excerpt in Digmann to Stephan, May 27, 1890, 204.

\(^9\)Digmann to Stephan, May 27, 1890, in BCIM *Correspondence*, Reel 20, 201, 203; Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 69-70.
Supervisor also noted the livestock kept at the school and mission: twenty-nine cattle, ten mules and horses, as well as a number of swine and various birds. She was pleased, not only with the academic work of the students, but also with their progress in the practical subjects (such as farming and sewing).\footnote{Elaine Goodale, \textit{Supervisor of Education Report on St. Francis}, excerpt in Diggmann to Stephan, May 27, 1890. BCIM, \textit{Correspondence}, Reel 20, 204; Ibid., 201, 203.}

After examining a copy of Supervisor Goodale's report, Father Diggmann openly agreed with most of her analysis of conditions at the school and agreed to make some changes. He was willing to adopt new readers in the classrooms, providing they did not hinder the goals of a Catholic education. Diggmann agreed with Goodale on the need for more bathing/washing facilities, as well as the need for a new boys' classroom and playrooms. He did say, however, that all the Whites present at the school conversed only in English with the students. The staff worked to encourage the students to speak only English, and corrected them when they did not.\footnote{Ibid., Diggmann to Stephan, May 27, 1890, 204.; Ibid., Diggmann to Stephan June 16, 1890, p. 207-208.}

Although St. Francis, and other mission schools, often operated in a very effective manner, T.J. Morgan, who assumed the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs in July of 1889, was dedicated to the proposal of eliminating all federal support for non-government schools. This meant the very existence of contract schools was in jeopardy. The discontinuance of government support and the subsequent projected closing of Mission schools would risk putting children out of school. In order to avoid this, the government would be forced to provide such
students with seats in government-run schools, or relocate them, if possible, in
public schools. Morgan believed attendance at public schools would work to further
children along toward the goal of assimilation. He firmly believed, "thai the true
purpose of the Government in its dealings with the Indians is to develop them into
self-supporting, self-reliant, intelligent, and patriotic citizens, and believing that the
public schools are the most effective means of Americanizing our foreign
population, I am desirous of bringing the Indian school system into relation with that
of the public schools." 12

In 1890, Morgan noted the need for a government boarding school on
Rosebud Reservation, a project long discussed but which had never managed to
take form. If he was going to withdraw support for the mission schools on Rosebud
and risk their closure, there would need to be some other type of educational facility
available to any displaced students. 13

While the Commissioner of Indian Affairs pondered his decision to cease
funding contract schools, reports on St. Francis Mission School continued to portray
it as a healthy institution which produced desirable results (as defined by the
federal government) among its students. Rosebud Agent J.G. Wright noted that
Father Digmann and the rest of the staff were performing admirable work. At a time
when Protestant groups increasingly questioned the quality of education provided at
Catholic schools, Wright said of St. Francis that, "it is questionable if any school

12 T.J. Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1890), xiv; Adams, Education for
Extinction, 61-70; Francis Paul Prucha, "Thomas Jefferson Morgan: 1889-1893," in Kvasnicka,
Commissioners, 193-202; Prucha, Great Father, 238-240.
13 T.J. Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1890), xii
could have made a better showing or more interesting exhibition with children of the same age or opportunity."^{14}

In 1890, operations at St. Francis were carried out by a staff of two Catholic Brothers, eleven Sisters, and Father Digmann. Their enrollment peaked at 104 students, and over the course of the school year, the average daily attendance was a respectable ninety-five. Considering the number of students, run-aways usually presented little trouble during the year, and the students were generally in good health. Regarding their academic progress, Father Digmann noted that although the children were learning English, they were often very shy about speaking the new language. The school managed to sustain itself, as it had in past years, with federal payments of fifty dollars per student, along with supplies and clothing owed the children as rations.^{15}

Government day schools did not meet with the same threat of cutbacks facing the mission schools. In 1890 thirteen day schools were in operation in various locations throughout Rosebud Reservation. In strong contrast to the educational efforts of earlier years, all of the day schools in 1890 were operated by the government. Federal policy, which initially created the dependency of Indian populations, now tried to begin breaking this dependency by getting Indian families to spread out over their reservations and take up farming or other pursuits designed to make them self-supporting. To facilitate such efforts, subissue houses were

^{14}Ibid., J.G. Wright, “Agent’s Report,” 60.; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, xi; Prucha, Great Father, 240-241; Prucha, Indian Policy, 246-248
established in several locations so families would not have stay near Rosebud Agency in order to collect their rations. Agent Wright mentions that by 1890 few students remained in the vicinity of the Agency. In contrast to eleven years earlier when nearly the entire population camped within five to ten miles of the Agency, by 1893 Wright claimed no Sicangu families lived within eight miles of the Agency.\(^{16}\)

The federal policy helps account for the relatively small number of children in and around the Agency. Of the thirteen day schools, only one was operating at the Agency. This one school reported an enrollment of forty-two, and an average attendance of thirty-two students. Most families had left the area surrounding the Agency in order to build homes and to try to supplement their rations with attempts at gardening, farming and/or stock-raising. The houses they built were made from logs with nails, doors, windows and some tools supplied by the government. Similar to most white homesteaders, the Sicangu constructed their homes with sod roofs, which were prone to leak in bad weather. It was from such log homes, where their families made attempts (in varying degrees) to grow crops, that many of St. Francis Mission School’s children came to learn more about white culture and practices.\(^{17}\)

While denying rations to Catholic Mission schools, by 1891, Commissioner

\(^{16}\)Ibid., (1890), 60; Ibid., (1891), 415; Ibid., (1893), 299.

\(^{17}\)J.G. Wright, “Agents Report,” in B.I.A., Reports, (1890) 60, 62.; ibid. (1893), 299. Although there were many such log dwellings constructed, the population on Rosebud Reservation was still relatively mobile. Families still utilized traditional style tipis when on the move and some still preferred to live in them full-time. Some families would stay a location for a year or two and then move on in order to stay near extended family members. As increasing numbers of families took land in allotment, however, they became more permanently settled.; For a discussion of the relationship between the federal government and the Indian peoples of the United States see: Francis Paul Prucha, *The Indians in American Society*. Prucha examines what he identifies as the four stages of U.S. - Indian relations: Paternalism, Dependency, Indian Rights, and Self-Determination. See also Prucha, *The Great Father*. 
Morgan also began to prepare for the eventual elimination of funding to contract schools. If funding was denied to schools like St. Francis, federal officials presumed the schools would be forced to cease operations, causing a decline in the number of Indian schools. Over the years, Congress had periodically increased appropriations for Indian education. The largest increase up to 1892, however, occurred between 1890 and 1892 when appropriations jumped from $1,364,568 to 2,291,650. Much of this funding increase was designed, not only to maintain existing government schools, but also to construct new government-run Indian schools. The new schools were built in anticipation of the demise of most of the secularly run schools. On the various Sioux reservations alone, the construction of thirty new day schools was sanctioned. The growing number of Indian schools also indicated an attempt on the part of the federal government to fulfill the promises made twenty-six years earlier in a treaty with the Sioux. The treaty stipulated that all Sioux children between the years of six and sixteen should attend school. In order to make this possible the Government promised to provide one school and teacher for every thirty children for twenty years. In 1889, since the treaty obligations of the United States had never been fulfilled, the educational obligations of the United States as found in the treaty were continued for another twenty years.\(^{18}\)

In spite of the government's supposed dedication to Indian education its

actual involvement had been a long time coming. Since 1868 the educational obligations of the federal government had been largely carried out by religious organizations. Federal involvement generally came in the form of funds to assist the religiously run schools. By 1890, under Commissioner Morgan, however, the government had clearly changed positions, and now preferred government run Indian schools. As preparations for eliminating the contract system were made, the contract schools were well aware of their position. If they intended to keep operating they would have to rely on the missionary, or other funds from their respective denominations.\footnote{Prucha, \textit{Churches and Indian Schools}, 37-38; T.J. Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., \textit{Reports}, (1891), 68-69.}

In addition to the construction of new government Indian schools, improvements in staff and existing facilities also became a priority. The government worked to improve its Indian schools by creating a standard course of study and by insisting that all school employees (especially the teachers) take civil service exams. Government officials were optimistic about the impact of these changes and claimed some contract schools were jealous of new and improved government schools.\footnote{T.J. Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., \textit{Reports} (1891), 54, 59-60, 137; ibid., 489-90; Adams, \textit{Education for Extinction}, 62-70. Many of the newly constructed government schools were equipped with the latest in heating, lighting and sanitary facilities/technology. The mission schools, established years earlier and operating on tight budgets, generally could not offer equivalent amenities.}

While Morgan was busy reforming the Indian educational system, Father Digmann was voicing his concern about a change in policy for St. Francis. The contract for the next academic year (1891) provided for a per capita payment of 108
dollars, but the school was now responsible for providing all the children's' clothing and other supplies. This new development flew in the face of established tradition concerning the distribution of rations. Since the beginning of the ration system, the government had given indirect support to mission schools by giving all the children the rations they would have received had they been living at home. The ration agreement on Rosebud Reservation was based on an 1876 treaty that allowed subsistence rations for the Sicangu in payment for lands they ceded to the United States, until such time as the people could support themselves. This change in ration policy heralded future conflicts over the issue. Opponents (using the same argument leveled against the use of the contract system) believed such assistance to secular schools amounted to direct government support and thus violated the edict of separation of church and state.\textsuperscript{21}

The BCIM and the staff at St. Francis protested the new policy. They argued the 108 dollars were not enough to make up for the loss of rations. They tried to get the contract amount raised to 125 dollars per student in order to cover their expenses, but to no avail. In addition to the loss of a supply of clothing, St. Francis's students would also be denied direct rationing of food items. Although adding to the burdens of the school, St. Francis was not as badly off as it might have been when it came to feeding its pupils. The school was often able to kill two birds with one stone when it came to providing meals. One of the goals of the school, teaching the boys to farm and garden, fit in nicely with the need to feed all

their students. By 1891, the school had fenced in 160 acres, and had about 100 acres being cultivated. In addition to working the larger fields, the boys also helped look after a ten acre garden that helped provide vegetables for the students and staff.\(^2\)

Commissioner Morgan decided in 1892 that while existing contract schools would still receive contracts, no new schools would be permitted to participate in the contract system. Any additional schools would either have to obtain independent funding, or be government schools. He noted widespread concern from Protestant denominations that the Catholic Church and its numerous contract schools received the majority of funds provided for contract schools. This uneven distribution was cause for considerable discontent among many Protestants. Such tension between Catholic and Protestant groups on Indian reservations was nothing new. Father Digmann noted that on Rosebud, some Protestants worked hard to recruit Catholic Indians into Protestant churches, sometimes offering Indians paying jobs in the Church if they would convert. Of course, the sentiment was a two way street, with the Catholics also working to encourage Protestant Indians to convert to Catholicism. In a letter to the head of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Digmann voiced his hope that, "If Almighty God gives us time and his grace, and our friends support us, I could have good hopes for both Reservations [i.e. Rosebud and

Pine Ridge] to turn Catholic, what they ought to have been from the beginning.\textsuperscript{23}

While denominational squabbling persisted, changes on Rosebud and at St. Francis continued. Five new day schools were being built during 1892 and a total of eighteen day schools were expected to be in operation among Sicangu in 1893. Agent Wright also noted his displeasure with the fact that no government boarding school had yet materialized. The residents of the reservation were, for the most part, strongly opposed to allowing their children to leave the reservation for educational purposes. Despite the thirteen day schools and the two existing boarding schools in 1892, approximately 485 children on Rosebud Reservation were still left without access to white style educational facilities.\textsuperscript{24}

As forces continued to move against the contract schools, St. Francis continued to report good progress among its students. By September of 1892, 116 students were reported enrolled at St. Francis, with an average attendance of about 96 students. In order for parents to appreciate the accomplishments of their children, various tests and "entertainments" were conducted on holidays. The school encouraged parents to attend these events, and according to Digmann, even those who could not understand English generally wanted their children to continue on in their education.\textsuperscript{25} Another change from previous years was the increasing

\textsuperscript{23}Digmann to Stephan, July 31, 1895, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 25, 59,60; T.J. Morgan, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A. Reports (1892), 56; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 2-9; Adams, Education for Extinction, 66. Digmann believed that under Grant's Peace Policy, which assigned specific denominations to each reservation, that both Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations should have been assigned to the Catholics, not the Protestants. Although officially assigned to the Protestants, the Catholics maintained a presence on the reservations and eventually received official permission to operate on the two reservations.


\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 463; Ibid., P.F. Digmann, "St. Francis Mission School Report," 468.
number of parents allowing the staff of the school to discipline/punish their children for infractions of school rules. Father Digmann was greatly pleased with this development, believing it would help in the process of assimilation. He firmly adhered to the idea that, "by and by we will be able to grip them tighter, which in the beginning we could not have done without alienating their minds and losing their confidence." The years of work by Catholic missionaries among the Sicangu seemed to be beginning to pay off as increasing numbers of families displayed more trust in the blackrobes and sought to enroll their children in the Catholic school.

With a growing number of students, the facilities at the school also had to expand to accommodate all the children. Plans were made and a new dormitory and play hall for the boys was constructed during the spring and summer of 1893. When completed, the new superintendent at St. Francis, Reverend Jutz (Father Digmann transferred to Pine Ridge to take charge of the Catholic school and mission there) reported that the new building (measuring 110 x 40 feet) would allow the school a capacity of 125 students for the coming year (beginning September 1893). This new building was three stories high and was intended to improve the housing situation of school employees in addition to an expected 125 children. Like all the buildings at St. Francis Indian School, the new structure was constructed with a wooden frame and plastered walls on the interior.

A considerable number of buildings occupied the grounds of the St. Francis

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26 Ibid., 463, 468.
27 Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, 12.; Jutz to Stephan, January 2, 1893 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 24, 306-307; Ibid., May 10 1893, 312-313.
Mission School, as compared to the single building with which the school started. By 1893, the original building, measuring ninety-four, by thirty-four feet, was a two story structure which housed three classrooms, a sitting room, a dining room and kitchen, play rooms for the children, and two rooms in which the Fathers lived. Two other small (twenty-four by thirty feet), two story buildings had been built to house the Sisters. In addition there were two buildings containing sleeping rooms for the pupils, a wash house, and work shops and quarters for the Brothers. Also on the grounds was an engine house, blacksmith shop, two stables, a granary, a bath house, and a church. Jutz estimated the value of the buildings (including the new three story building) somewhere between 40,000 to 50,000 dollars. Workers at St. Francis were able to provide such facilities largely due to the generosity of benefactors such as the Reverend Mother Catherine Drexel, the Rt. Reverend Bishop Marty, various benevolent societies and other private individuals.  

With the increase in capacity came an increase in financial concerns as well. The new boys' building cost $10,000 to construct. In order to finance the construction, the school had to rely on donations and loans. Additional students also meant an increase in the amount of meals, clothing and other supplies needed to properly provide for all the children. Due to this increase in enrollment at St. Francis, Reverend Jutz requested, and received, both food and clothing rations for

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28 Jutz to Stephan, May 10, 1893, BCIM, Correspondence Reel 24, 312-313; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 3, 48-56.
the additional students from Agent Wright.\textsuperscript{29}

The contract for the school year 1892-93 provided funds ($108 per student) for ninety-five students. Actual enrollment at the school was 100, and the average attendance was 98. Any students the school took in over the contract number, had to be provided for without government assistance. On the other hand, if attendance was lower than the contract number, only the number attending would be paid for through the contract. With optimism for the future of the school and the Sicangu running high among the staff of St. Francis, Reverend Jutz requested the contract for the 1893-94 school year be increased to provide for at least 150 students.\textsuperscript{30}

Keeping a consistent number of children in attendance was seldom an easy job. The Sisters working at St. Francis noted that once the children had been allowed to go home for the 1893 Christmas break, they had considerable difficulty getting a number of them to return. They observed, without explanation, that some children stayed away for several months while they attended Protestant schools on the reservation. Other children were taken ill and preferred to stay home with their families, instead of at the school, while they were unwell.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29}Jutz to Stephan, January 2, 1893 in BCIM, \textit{Correspondence}, Reel 24, 306-307. Because St. Francis was receiving no government money for the additional students, the federal bureaucracy decided to allow those children the rations they would have received if they were living with their families.


\textsuperscript{31}Sisters of St. Francis, \textit{Chronicle} (1893), 12. The attendance of a number of St. Francis students at Protestant schools on the reservation could very well be attributed to the ongoing tensions with the Catholic Church. White Protestants often worked to spread rumors detrimental to the interests of the Catholic Church and to convince Catholic Indians to become Protestant. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, also busily worked to convert Protestant Indians to Catholicism.
As St. Francis Mission School continued to expand, it remained heavily dependent on the funds from the government contracts to maintain their operations. During a time when the Commissioner of Indian of Affairs continued to move in the direction of decreasing federal support for contract schools, a number of non-Catholic denominations involved in operating Indian schools saw the handwriting on the wall. These denominations (whose schools generally supported a much smaller student population than St. Francis) decided to cease contracting with the government as a means of supporting their schools.32

In February of 1893, the Board of Indian Commissioners applauded the decision of denominations, such as the Episcopalians, to rely on other sources to fund their Indian school operations. At the same time the Board reiterated the important role played by mission schools in advancing the assimilation of Indian populations. The Board admitted such, "mission schools will be needed for a long time to come, for a large number of pupils who otherwise would have no opportunities for education, and the value of moral and religious training which the mission schools give can not be overestimated." The Board’s report continued on to praise the work of the mission schools by conceding that, "The best work that has been done for them [i.e. Native Americans] has been that of Christian missionaries; and, much as we prize secular education and industrial training, individual homes, and citizenship, the best results cannot be secured without a right education of the heart as well as of the hand and head. Make the Indians good Christians and they

32Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 30-31.
will be good American citizens."\(^33\)

In spite of the enthusiasm shown by the Board of Indian Commissioners for the mission schools, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Daniel Dorchester held firmly to his belief that the government schools provided a consistently higher quality education. Dorchester strongly supported a policy of locating Indian schools on reservations. In addition he acknowledged the existence of some very good contract schools, but stated that no contract school could be "quite equal to the best Government schools."\(^34\)

The declining number of mission schools relying on government contract funds did not serve to free up an increased amount of funds for those who chose to continuing contracting. In 1878, the initial appropriation made for Indian education was for 20,000 dollars. Fifteen years later, in 1893, that amount had increased over 100 times, to 2,312,385 dollars. As the number of contract schools began to fall, however, appropriations for contract schools, also began to decline.\(^35\)

In spite of government rumblings against continuing contract schools, St. Francis was granted a contract for the 1894-1895 school year, with the same terms as their previous contract. The government would provide 108 dollars per student, with an allowance of ninety-five students. St. Francis was still one of only two boarding schools on Rosebud Reservation (the other being the Episcopalian, St.

Mary's). The government, however, operated twenty-one day schools for school-aged children on the reservation. According to Agent Wright, a total of 813 Sicangu children were enrolled and attending school. Most of this number, 739, attended one of the reservation schools. In spite of such encouraging numbers, according to the census 358 children still were not attending school. Many of this number simply lived too far from any day school to attend, and the boarding schools could provide for only a limited number of children. An additional three schools were under construction, but the agent estimated these would be able to accommodate only about ninety of the 358 children not at school.\textsuperscript{36}

In an attempt to solve the lack of educational opportunities open to children living in remote regions of the reservations, Agent Wright supported a policy of having the boarding schools recruit or accept students from these regions. Students living in areas where day schools were available, should attend there. Wright was concerned that the if the boarding schools accepted children who might otherwise be attending day school, then the day schools might be lacking in students.\textsuperscript{37}

Although St. Francis's contract provided for ninety-five students, the school enrolled an additional forty students for a total of 135, with an average daily attendance of 127. With much labor and faith the school facilities had been expanded to the point that the school could, with sufficient funding, enroll between

170 and 200 pupils. Agent Wright thought highly of St. Francis and those who ran the school. He noted that, "the workers engaged at this school have certainly devoted their best energies for the benefit of the children, and deserve great credit for deportment and improvement of pupils."^38

In order to help provide for their students, the school cultivated about 100 of their 320 acres. The students helped to raise crops of oats, corn, wheat, potatoes and various other vegetables. In addition to these fields, a large garden, tended by the boys, continued to supply vegetables for the school. The fortunes of their agricultural ventures depended on the vagaries of mother nature, with some years yielding sizable crops, and other years forcing the school to increase their reliance on purchased foodstuffs. As opposed to most of the Sicangu on the reservation, St. Francis had the resources to dig wells and construct windmills, that not only supplied the students, staff and livestock with water, but also helped serve the needs of other local Indians and their horses. Since the two operating wells in 1894 were taxed to their limits by these demands, Reverend Jutz decided to invest in digging another well and building another windmill for the purpose of providing water to help irrigate the mission crops. The issue of irrigation was on Father Jutz's mind due to a drought during the summer of 1894. Although the mission managed to produce enough corn and small grains to feed their milk cows and horses, as well as enough potatoes and other vegetables for the school, several consecutive drought years would mean real hardship for the school and mission. During the

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1894-95 school year, the school had 169 students enrolled, with an average attendance of 160. These numbers meant, the school had to provide for seventy-four students beyond those in their contract. With so many additional mouths to feed, agricultural productivity at the school was of great concern. A well dedicated solely to irrigation would help ensure greater returns on their efforts during the dry summers.39

By 1894 St. Francis was bulging at the seams. Under Father Jutz's direction, a new building was constructed to ease the crowding. Measuring forty by 100 feet, the building was designed to house 100 boys and contained a recreation room and a stage which also served as a library. This building brought St. Francis's capacity up to 180 students. Jutz, however, was not satisfied because of the numbers of children he had to turn away, refusing them admission for lack of room. In an attempt to remedy the situation, Father Jutz was planning yet another building by August of 1895. His goal was to raise the school's capacity to 200 students. In order to help provide needed labor at the school, and jobs for some of the students, a few of the older students were hired by the school as paid employees. The boys worked on the school's farm, while the girls worked in the sewing room. One of St. Francis's goals, teaching their male students to garden and farm, was designed not only to enable them to make a living, but also to help provide them and their families with a better diet. Jutz noted that the usual diet, for all meals, of the Sicangu on Rosebud was beef, bread and coffee. He hoped that by encouraging the students

to raise and eat vegetables the practice might spread and eventually, improve the
health of the population.40

By 1895 it became clear that the policy of ending federal funding of religiously
affiliated contract schools went beyond Morgan's reign as Commissioner. His
successor's administration, Daniel Browning (1893-1897), continued to work toward
the goal of ending the system of religious contract schools. The Commissioners'
policy desires were finally reflected in the Indian Appropriation Act for 1895. During
the fiscal year 1895, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized to contract only
with existing contract schools for the coming year. The contracts issued for 1896,
however, could not exceed 80 percent of the amount granted in their 1895
contracts. The process of decreasing government funding of the contract schools
had officially begun. The Commissioner did have some discretion in implementing
the new policy. Instead of making across the board 20 percent cuts the new
Commissioner, Browning, decided to continue contracts for schools at the full rate
where the government had either no, or inadequate, school facilities to provide for
the education of Indian children. In regions where there were such facilities,
however, the number of students allowed for in contracts would be reduced. He
also encouraged many of the private schools to surrender control of their schools to
the government. Additionally, schools that had been receiving per capita payments
greater than average rates in most schools, would see their payments reduced. As
spending on secular schools declined, the government increased its spending on

While the federal government initiated changes in the financing of Indian education, the nearly constant process of change continued at St. Francis as well.

In August 1895, Father Digmann returned from Holy Rosary on Pine Ridge to St. Francis to resume the position of Superior. Reverend Jutz, departed to take over at Holy Rosary Mission. Since the new contract regulations did not effect the 1895 school year, St. Francis operated on a contract with the same provisions as the previous year: ninety-five students at 108 dollars per capita. Under Father Jutz's leadership in 1894-95, the school had averaged 154 students in attendance (total enrollment was 160), in spite of a contract providing for only ninety-five. The school was growing by leaps and bounds, and faced increasing financial problems due to its growth. Father Digmann wrote to the director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in Washington, D.C., Father Stephan and described his predicament.

Last year already F. Jutz had to refuse quite a number, not having sufficient accommodation for sleeping. The Sisters had every corner filled, and their first greeting was: Father, you have to build another dormitory. Now, F. Jutz has left to me a flourishing school but also over $5,000.00 debts. The crop is very poor, owing to the drought. In spite of three windmills in operation we cannot irrigate more than the garden. The potato crop will in all probability turn out a failure, that we can give them only once or twice a week. The rations we get for the surplus of 95 are by far not enough. Therefore we will have to buy more groceries. Under the circumstances I do not dare to contract new debts. And still, to build is almost a necessity.  

43Digmann to Stephan, July 31, 1895, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 25, 1895, 58-59.
Despite St. Francis's financial problems, Stephan was able to offer no financial assistance to the school. The BCIM, itself was often strapped for funds as it attempted to support the numerous Catholic Indian schools and missions in the United States. In September 1895 the school had 142 students in attendance, with more wanting to come. Digmann had a difficult time turning students away whose parents wanted them educated in the Catholic school. He believed if there were room for 200 students, he could easily get that number enrolled, so he went ahead and purchased the materials needed for another building. Seldom discouraged, Father Digmann pressed on and through private donations managed to raise half the 2,000 dollars needed for a new building by September 1895. At that stage, however he needed assistance to find further contributors or sources of funds to raise the balance needed. While Rev. Stephan did all he could to help, he could offer no assurances of additional financial assistance. On top of paying for the new building, all the crops had failed over the summer, and the school now had to purchase and transport food for both people and livestock at the school.\(^\text{44}\)

By October of 1895, enrollment at St. Francis had increased to 160 students, sixty-five over the number provided for by contract. In spite of previous refusals of the BCIM to assist St. Francis, Father Digmann wrote once again asking for help. The only help Stephan could give was to suggest contacting St. Francis's old benefactor, Mother Katherine. Even Mother Katherine had limited resources, and

\(^{44}\text{Digmann to Stephan, September 10, 1895, in BCIM, Correspondence Reel 25, 1895, 75, 76; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, 18; J.G. Wright, "Agent's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1895), 294; Ibid., J. Jutz, "St. Francis Report," 299.}\)
she could offer no immediate assistance to St. Francis. The only option for the school was to continue on in debt until more funds were found.45

Financial difficulties were not the only concern of Father Digmann. He began to see the increasing number of government day schools on the reservation, as a threat to families who wished to send their children to St. Francis. Commissioner Browning began to insist that in locations where a day school was available to students, it should be given first priority. Students should not be permitted to attend either contract or off-reservation schools until the day school was filled to capacity. Attendance at other schools was allowed only when the day school was "so nearly [full] that it will not interfere with its efficient operation, or where transfers of advanced pupils are made and their places filled by children who have not been in school."46

Digmann, and the BCIM, objected to this government policy that would deny families the right to decide which school their children should attend. He noted that Agent Wright had not enforced this policy in 1894, but in the coming year Digmann believed the policy would be enforced. Somewhere between thirty to forty students who had been in attendance at St. Francis would likely be forced to attend day schools during the new school year.47

In addition to simply keeping the day schools full, and not wasting the

45 Digmann to Stephan, October, 14, 1895 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 25, 76,78.; Ibid., June 8, 1896, 601.
46 Digmann to Stephan, August 20, 1895, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 25, 1895, 61-62.; D.M. Browning to Wright, October 26, 1894, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 24, 998; for more on the Browning Ruling, see also Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 57-64.
47 Digmann to Stephan, August 20, 1895, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 25, 62-63.
investment of the government in the schools, Digmann believed there was yet another more hidden agenda in their operation. Agent Wright was working to build a government boarding school on Rosebud Reservation. Digmann feared it would be easier for the government school to recruit students from day schools than from the mission schools. Having full day schools would, thus, ultimately benefit a government boarding school. In addition Digmann questioned the need of such a school, with two boarding schools (St. Francis and St. Mary's) already in operation on the reservation. He shared the sentiments of at least one Sicangu, who believed the existing schools should be expanded to accommodate more students, rather than build an entirely new school.48

While the Rosebud agent worked to see a government boarding school established on the reservation, Father Digmann continued his efforts to expand the capacity of St. Francis. The building materials, however, which helped to deepen St. Francis's debts still were not paid for in June 1896. In spite of the financial problems, Father Digmann made arrangements for the new building, a dormitory to house 100 girls, to be constructed and expected it to be completed by the first of September 1896.49

As St. Francis Mission School went further into debt, in 1896 the new contract restrictions went into effect. No government boarding school yet existed on Rosebud Reservation, and there were still more children than educational facilities.

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49 Digmann to Stephan, June 8, 1896, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 25, 591, 601; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, (1895) 18.
Thus, St. Francis's cutbacks were not as severe as they might otherwise have been. The 1896 contract for St. Francis represented only about a 5 percent cut in the number of students for whom the school provided. The government would pay 108 dollars per capita for ninety students during the 1896-97 school year at St. Francis. The cutback represented a loss of 540 federal dollars for the school. Receiving food rations and clothing from Rosebud Agency for the number of children over the contract, helped alleviate their situation somewhat. The rations and clothes, however, were not sufficient by themselves to provide for the additional children. Digmann noted that clothes, especially were in short supply considering the cold winter that lay ahead.  

The prospect of winter, surely began to feel even colder to those struggling to keep St. Francis Mission school in operation as information concerning government plans for the coming year began to reach them. The Indian Appropriation Act for the fiscal year 1896 stated the new government policy that no sectarian school was to be contracted with unless it was located in a region where, "non-sectarian schools cannot be provided for...and to an amount not exceeding fifty per centum of the amount so used for the fiscal year eighteen hundred and ninety-five." In addition to these further cutbacks, the long awaited and, for the Catholics, long-dreaded, government industrial and boarding school on Rosebud reservation was finally going to be built. In describing the new school, the Commissioner said it would have

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modern buildings with up-to-date appliances and systems including heating, lighting, sewer and ventilation systems. These provisions were to be made so the Indian children could be exposed, "to civilized life and accommodations." The new school was expected to open its doors in the spring of 1897.52

In June 1896, Agent Wright was replaced with a new agent, Chas. E. McChesney. Under his supervision the new government school, planned by Wright, was constructed and federal Indian policy continued to be implemented on Rosebud Reservation. Because the government school was not yet operating and there were more children than schools to educate them, St. Francis was granted a contract for ninety-five (instead of the previous year's ninety) students. The school's average attendance for the 1895-96 school year was 164 out of an enrollment of 177.53

In spite of the difficulties facing St. Francis Mission School, staff members remained strongly dedicated to their goals of educating, Christianizing, and civilizing the Sicangu. After his many years of labor to get St. Francis established, Father Digmann's 1896 report reflected an optimism for the progress being made among students and their families. In contrast to earlier years when parents prohibited school staff from physically punishing their children, most now acquiesced. As conditions worsened on the reservations due to crop failures and government policies, the schools served as a means of feeding the children of many families.

Keeping one’s children in school tended to lighten the burden on the rest of the family, and families now routinely returned run-away children to the school. Father Digmann tended to paint a bit different picture when discussing the reasons for the progress he perceived at the school.

The system of discipline at this school is firm and uniform, yet mild. The pupils are taught to comply with the rules more by a sense of honor and duty than fear of punishment. A good proof of how children felt at home is that we have hardly any runaways throughout the year. Formerly runaways were encouraged by their own parents. Now even the old Indians, seeing how well their children are taken care of, are anxious to keep them at school.\(^5^4\)

While some families undoubtedly discerned definite advantages to having their children educated in the government and religious schools, many others were simply concerned with finding a way to see their children well fed and clothed.

As the school matured, new ventures were undertaken to benefit the students. Digmann noted the beginning of a class on bookkeeping offered to the more the advanced students. With a large number of young children applying for admission, St. Francis also initiated a kindergarten class. The staff was generally eager to accept the younger students since they learned English much faster than the older children.\(^5^5\)

In addition to these new classes, the students were given the opportunity to expand their musical talents in a newly formed brass band. Under the direction of Father E. M. Perrig, (who still worked at St. Francis after helping found the school

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and mission nine years earlier) the band played at the 1896 commencement
ceremony. Father Perrig had managed to solicit donations of instruments, or funds
to purchase instruments, in order to make the band possible. 56

To further the school's goal of impacting the entire population of Rosebud
Reservation with their work, St. Francis began to have students practice their skills
to the benefit of the neighboring population. The male students trained in
woodworking, blacksmithing, shoemaking and other skills at the school. In order to
put their skills to good use they mended wagons and various other implements,
constructed cupboards, tables, bedstands, shoes and other such items. Residents
living near the school often brought items in to the school to be repaired by the
students, free of charge. It was a situation that benefited both students and nearby
families. The goal of school administrators not was only to train students in various
skills, but also to familiarize other Sicangu with the skills of their students. Once
this link was established, they were hopeful that communities would be formed
where their graduated students could establish businesses and earn a living. 57

In 1897, the new Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Jones was willing to
acknowledge the valuable contributions toward Indian education made by church-
run mission schools. He believed, however, that such schools functioned only as
adjuncts to the government schools, which bore the primary responsibility for the
bulk of educational efforts. While the government continued to contract with several
schools for Indian education, their numbers had significantly declined since 1892.

57 Ibid.
By 1896, only thirty-seven contract schools remained, the rest either voluntarily withdrew from the contract system, or were cut out by the B.I.A. Of this number of contract schools, only two Protestant schools remained in operation, the remainder were all Catholic schools. Appropriations for these schools totaled 159,526 dollars for the 1898 fiscal year. The Protestant schools received 2,760 dollars, with the balance split among the Catholic contract schools. The Appropriation Bill further specified that in areas where no government schools were available, the existing contract schools were to receive not more than 40 percent of what they had gotten from government funding in 1895.\(^\text{58}\)

In spite of its positive reputation, St. Francis was not immune to the impact of declining federal support. For the 1897-98 school year, their contract allowed for only eighty-one students, at 108 dollars per capita (or a total of 8,748 dollars). The explanation for this decline was the Commissioner's expectation that the new government boarding school on Rosebud would open its doors by the first of October. The new school, along with the twenty-one day schools and the two boarding schools (St. Francis and St. Mary's) would provide educational opportunity for the 1,192 school-age children on the Rosebud Reservation.\(^\text{59}\)

Although only ninety students were allowed by contract (during 1896-97) for St. Francis, the school had the capacity to take on 225. In spite of the fact that their contract fell short of the school's capacity, St. Francis still enrolled 208 children


(ninety-six boys and 112 girls) during the 1896-97 school year. During the year, the boys were kept busy with their school and practical work. They did house chores in their living quarters as well as working in their gardens and on the farm. In addition to the majority of boys who worked in the fields and taking care of livestock another group of boys were learning other skills. Father Digmann reported that four boys worked in the blacksmith shop, nine in the carpenter shop, eight in the shoemaker shop, and four in the bakery. He especially made note of the work of those in carpentry. Over the course of the winter, the “carpenter boys” assisted in tearing down the old cattle barn and constructing a new one, as well as building a new henhouse and working on cupboards, tables and other projects.60

The girls also kept busy outside the classroom learning various household skills. In addition to their labors in the kitchen and laundry, the girls’ sewing skills helped keep the students and staff of the school clothed and warm. Father Digmann was proud to report the accomplishments in the sewing room for the year. A total of 389 dresses had been sewn as well as 324 various aprons, 155 skirts, 150 pairs of assorted underwear, 130 pillow cases (both plain and worked), 200 sheets, seventy-five towels, 225 yards of lace, thread and woolen, forty-one ticks, forty comforters and various other clothes and bedclothes. In addition the girls also were responsible for doing all the mending and sewing for the boys at the school. In spite of the fact that their work was essential to keep the school going, Father Digmann noted that a number of girls seemed very devoted to their sewing. “Many of the girls

had to be kept back than to be encouraged in this line, as they seemed to grudge
themselves their recreation time to make time for needlework."\textsuperscript{61}

By 1898, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs still firmly believed that,
"Education is the greatest factor in solving the future status of the Indian."\textsuperscript{62} He
noted the valuable contributions made by the religiously-run Indian schools in
"civilizing" the Indian population. The decision was made for the 1899 fiscal year,
that the government would contract with such schools where they were needed (i.e.
where there was either no, or insufficient educational facilities provided by the
government). The amount allocated for contracts, however, could not be more than
30 percent of the amount used in 1895. This meant total funding available for the
contract schools came to 119,644.50 dollars. Only one Protestant contract school
remained in operation, and it received only 2,760 dollars, leaving the balance,
116,884.50 dollars to be distributed among the Catholic contract schools. The
decrease meant, once again, a reduction in federal funding for St. Francis Mission
School. For the 1899 year their contract allowed sixty-one students, at 108 dollars
each. This was down from their 1898 contract, which allowed for eighty-one
students.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid. Note that when I have found conflicting numbers, especially as relates to enrollment and
attendance at St. Francis Mission School, I have opted to rely on the numbers provided by the
records kept by the Catholic priests. They had firsthand knowledge of such numbers and with both
the federal government and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions looking over their shoulder, they
appear to have kept fastidious records.
\textsuperscript{62}W. Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1898), 2; W. David Baird, "William A.
Jones," in Kvasnicka, Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 211-218.
\textsuperscript{63}W. Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1898), 3, 15, 16; Prucha, Churches and
Indian Schools, 38, 59; W. David Baird, "William A. Jones," in Kvasnicka, Commissioners of Indian
Affairs, 211-218.
On Rosebud Reservation, the new government boarding school filled quickly for the 1897-1898 school year. In addition, another twenty government day schools were spread out over the reservation and St. Francis and St. Mary's continued their operations as well. Father Digmann had little fear that the government school would take students away from St. Francis. When the new school opened over 200 children on the reservation still had no school to attend. Also helping to ease any fears were reports stating the government school would be able to take on only 200 students. He had been further informed by Agent McChesney that the school planned to enroll mainly older boys in order to train them to make a living in various trades.

During the 1897-98 school year, Father Digmann's apparent lack of concern about competition with the government boarding school seemed well founded. St. Francis enrolled 233 students and maintained an averaged attendance of 209. He also noted that by 1897 parents, who had been students at St. Francis in its early years, began sending their young children to St. Francis to be educated. By 1898 St. Francis Mission School offered students the opportunity to be educated through the eighth grade. Some parents, eager to have their children begin their education, brought them to the school as early as five years of age. The average age of students at the school in 1897, however, was eleven years.

In order to house and educate the growing number of children, St. Francis

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64 C.E. McChesney, "Agent's Report" in B.I.A. Reports (1898), 282.
65 Digmann to Stephan, January 6, 1897, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 26, 155.
itself, had grown significantly from its earlier years. By 1898, St. Francis had three main buildings which housed classrooms, dormitories, a kitchen, playrooms, and a dining room. There were also two side buildings that served as laundry facilities, a carpenter shop, shoemaker shop, bath house, blacksmith shop and sawmill. Four stables had also been built (one each for horses, swine, cattle, poultry and butchery), and a granary. With such facilities students received training not only in academics, but also in household duties, husbandry and agricultural skills.67

In spite of the enthusiasm of some students, motivating the entire body of students to work at their lessons was often a difficult task. One method used at St. Francis was to offer rewards for academic achievement. At times the rewards offered were of considerable value. At the end of the 1897 school year Father Digmann mentions that two girls were awarded sewing machines for their achievements. Such an item was well beyond the means of most Sicangu families. In addition to being a valuable prize, at least one of the girls took advantage of her prize to earn money for herself and her family. By August 1897, this girl informed Father Digmann she was keeping busy sewing and earning money. Over the course of the summer, she managed to earn eight dollars.68

Although regular classes were often monotonous for the children, many students showed great enthusiasm when it came to taking music lessons and learning to sing and play various instruments. The demand was so high for such lessons, the school ended up assigning one of the Sisters as a full time music

67Ibid., 284.
68Ibid., 285.
Some of the musically inclined students performed at the closing ceremonies of the 1897 school year for the assembled parents and other visitors. Student talents ranged from singing to playing a variety of instruments such as the piano, guitar, organ, mandolin and violin.\(^6\)

While the staff at St. Francis worked to expand the opportunities and activities available to their students, the school faced continuing cutbacks in funding from the federal government. It came as no surprise when the Commissioner of Indian Affairs declared that the Indian Appropriation Act providing for contracts with secular schools had decreased funding once again. In areas where there were insufficient facilities provided by non-sectarian schools, the government could provide for contracts with secular schools with an amount that totaled not more than 15 percent of the funds used in 1895. For St. Francis Mission School this meant their federal contract for the 1899 school year provided for sixty-one students at 108 dollars per capita, or a total of 6,588 dollars.\(^7\)

The Commissioner considered the entire goal of Indian education to be the eventual elimination of the system of Indian reservations. He also held to the hope that during the course of the twentieth century Indian tribes would vanish completely within the United States. His goal was to see former tribal members become totally integrated into the larger society. As stated, the goal of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was to put itself out of business, an unlikely scenario for any governmental

\(^6\)Ibid.  
\(^7\)William Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Reports (1899), 16, 17, 23; Stephan to Digmann, May 8, 1899, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 27, 860; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 38, 59.
In spite of the government’s intention of assimilating the Indians, the work proceeded slowly on the reservations. The agent at Rosebud in 1899, Chas. E. McChesney reported nineteen government day schools, one government boarding school and two religious boarding schools in operation on the reservation. He observed that efforts to provide education to the Sicangu children continued in the twenty-two schools on the reservation. Such efforts were sometimes hampered by the outbreak of disease on the reservation. During the winter and spring of 1898 the advent of a measles epidemic threatened the Rosebud population. Father Digmann reported that about sixty of St. Francis’s students were taken ill with the measles. The Sister who worked as a full time nurse at St. Francis had her hands full. During the crisis a local doctor was called in. With the combined efforts of the doctor, nurse and several assistants, all the students recovered. The school did, however, lose two girls to meningitis over the course of the year.

Unlike the first years of the school, active recruitment of students for St. Francis was not needed. The school consistently found itself with more applicants than it was able to accept. Part of this change came about with a change in attitude by many adults on the reservation. Increasingly, the older generations began to view the education offered by secular groups and the government as a valuable asset for their children. In his report for 1900, Agent McChesney also noted that

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72 C.E. McChesney, “Agent’s Report,” in B.I.A., Reports (1899), 340, 240; Adams, Education for Extinction, 124-125. Student illness was a chronic problem at most boarding schools, on and off the reservation.
there was generally very little resistance from the Sicangu any more to the idea of sending their children to reservation boarding schools. In fact, some students were largely raised at the school. By 1899, St. Francis had several students who had begun school when they were six or seven years old and had continued their education until they were over eighteen years old. According to Father Digmann these students who had remained at the school for so long knew, "all they need, and more than they probably will ever use in their life."³³

The year 1900 was the last year the government was willing to contract with secular schools for the education of Indian students. In 1899, St. Francis had been allowed sixty-one students at 108 dollars per capita. The last of year of government contracting reduced that number to thirty students at 108 dollars per capita.³⁴

St. Francis now had to turn its attention to finding funding for the 1901 school year. Father Digmann was hopeful that the work of the students would help contribute to the support of the school. The girls received and filled orders for fancy needlework from friends of the school in Philadelphia and New York. Father Digmann saw the income from such work as a possible source of revenue. The girls also churned between twenty-five and thirty pounds of butter every week for use at the school, or for sale. Their labor helped in providing clothing, keeping the school clean, and providing meals for the student body. The girls continued to rotate their work assignments every two weeks to be sure they were trained in all

³⁴William Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A. Reports (1898), 16; Ibid., (1899), 17; Ibid., (1900), 27; Lusk to Digmann, June 25, 1898 in BCIM, Correspondence, 1087; Ibid., Stephan to Digmann, May 8, 1899, 860.
aspects of housework. The boys, of course, contributed to the school by their agricultural efforts in the fields and gardens and in managing livestock. The burden of purchasing foodstuffs was greatly reduced by the boys' efforts to produced crops for the school.

The handwriting had been on the wall for some time and the BCIM and their missionaries were very aware that federal funding for their mission schools was going to be eliminated eventually. This era was one of great uncertainty for St. Francis and other contract schools. Due to government policies rapid changes were taking place that, despite their best efforts, were beyond the control of the school and the BCIM. Changes in the funding of contract schools, the proliferation of day schools on the reservation, the construction of a government boarding school, and the constant mutual suspicion between Catholic and Protestant forces caused Father Digmann, and others, at St. Francis to believe the very existence of their school was at stake. The first few years of the twentieth century would prove to be a difficult and drawn out fight for the survival of the St. Francis Mission School.

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76 Ibid.
CHAPTER SIX
TREATY AND TRUST FUNDS:
ST. FRANCIS MISSION SCHOOL’S FIGHT FOR FUNDING

Two prominent historians of federal Indian policy, Prucha and Hoxie, have reached divergent conclusions concerning federal goals and expectations of Indian education after 1900. Prucha argues that even after the turn of the Century most educators remained focused on the goal of assimilation. He believes they hoped Indians would assimilate into the larger society on fairly equal terms. Hoxie, on the other hand, states that theories proclaiming the inferior or limited racial character of Indians gained influence among those who controlled Indian educational policy at the turn of the century. The emphasis in Indian schools, according to Hoxie, became a curriculum emphasizing practical or marketable skills over academic subjects. The philosophy of such individuals was aimed at producing a self-sufficient Indian population, but not necessarily one that would be assimilated on equal terms.¹ No matter the trends in Indian educational philosophy, the government remained committed to providing schooling for Indian children in government schools. As a result, the early years of the new century brought no softening of federal policy toward St. Francis or other beleaguered Catholic Indian Mission schools. In his annual report of June 1901, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, W.A. Jones voiced his general discontent with the use of boarding schools to

¹Coleman, Indian Children at School, 46; see also Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States and the American Indians (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984); Frederick Hoxie, A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press 1984).
educate Indian children. Any advancements in "civilization," Jones believed, should begin in the children's homes. The Commissioner adhered to the belief that Indian children should attend day schools to receive a basic education. In Jones's opinion, until Indian home life improved, there was no sense in making any sort of higher education beyond the day schools available to the children.\(^2\) Government responsibility toward Indians, according to Jones, included ensuring the Indians had:

> opportunity for self-support, and that [they are] afforded the same protection of [their] person and property as is given to others. That being done, [they] should be thrown entirely upon [their] own resources to become a useful member of the community . . . , or not, according as [they] exert [themselves] or fail to make an effort.\(^3\)

Even at the turn of the century, after numerous decades of interaction, the popular white conception of Indian life remained unchanged. The Commissioner wrote in his report that, "The entire history of these people is filled with legends against the dignity of work. Drudgery was the part of woman, and idleness of man. Even the women of the tribe bound their own chains tighter by pointing the finger of scorn at the reckless warrior who braved the traditions of his race by engaging in honest toil for the support of his family."\(^4\) Such tendencies, according to Jones, were responsible for the difficulty in educating and "civilizing" the Indian populations. Centuries of life in North America had certainly allowed the Lakota, and others, to develop cultures and belief systems that allowed them to survive, if not flourish, before white contact. Their culture, so strongly ingrained, was not easily lost.

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\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid., 13; Berkhofer, White Man's Indian, 171-175.
Especially tenacious was the continuance of oral traditions among many tribes. Jones complained that tribal elders often spoke to the children in their native language, telling them the history of their people and "the woes caused by the advent of the white man, the host of so-called broken treaties, discarded promises, and general bad treatment of the Government." The Commissioner bemoaned such tales as causing children to resist "civilization," and especially of encouraging the boys to disdain any type of labor.\(^5\)

In this climate, workers at St. Francis, doubtless saw themselves as fighting against such "evil" influences. Devoid of schools for many years, by 1901 Rosebud Reservation was occupied not only by the Catholic boarding school, St. Francis, but also by twenty-one government day schools, the government boarding school, and the Episcopalian boarding school, St. Mary's. The number of school age children living on Rosebud in 1901 was reportedly 1,238. In spite of the growth of schools on Rosebud they could still only accommodate 1,022 students, leaving over 200 children (primarily children living in remote regions of the reservation) without access to white style schooling.\(^6\)

Although the Commissioner described the mission schools as being a valuable asset in promoting Indian "civilization," the 1901 fiscal year made no

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\(^6\)Ibid., 23, 26.; C.E. McChesney, "Agent's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1901), 371. Digmann to Stephan, April 26, 1900 in BCIM Correspondence, Reel 28, 897.; Ibid., "Sisters of St. Francis to Lusk, April 18, 1900," p. 895. In 1901 the Commissioner reported the Government boarding school at Rosebud as having a capacity of 164 students, an enrollment of 223 and an average attendance of 210. The Government day schools had a capacity of 578, with 585 enrolled and an average attendance of 509. St. Mary's was quite small, with a capacity of 50, an enrollment of 55 and an average attendance of 50. St. Francis remained the largest school on Rosebud with a capacity of 230, and enrollment of 213 and an average attendance of 206.
provisions for appropriations for Contract schools. Schools formerly run as Contract schools, now received no government aid, and were on their own to sink or swim financially. The staff of St. Francis expressed considerable concern about the future of their school. Father Digmann, as well as the Sisters working at St. Francis, hoped that a way could be found to keep the school running. On the reservation there were rumors that St. Francis would be closed for the 1901 academic year. Such rumors, viewed as somewhat damaging by the Catholics, were generally blamed, not without cause, on hostile Protestant elements on the reservation.7

The end of the contract system was due in large part to the efforts of various Protestant groups. Although they had also benefited from the contract system, Protestants recognized that the government Indian schools employed almost exclusively Protestant staffs. Under such influence students were taught Protestant concepts of religion and most attended Protestant church services. Because of the outlook of the government schools many Protestant groups were satisfied to abandon their mission schools in favor of the government operated schools. Catholics, on the other hand, had become an obstacle to the goal of educating Indian children in government public schools. Catholic Indian mission schools helped spread Catholicism among the Indians and encouraged earlier converts to remain faithful to the Catholic Church. Accordingly, most Catholics believed that the

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7William Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1901), 23, 26.; ibid., C.E. McChesney "Agent's Report," 371; Prucha, Churches and the Indian Schools, ix, 42; Digmann to Stephan April 26, 1900 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 28, 897-898. Prucha notes that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, humanitarian reform groups set a goal of Americanizing Indians, destroying tribalism and promoting individualism. These goals were based upon the Protestant heritage of the groups involved and set the stage for conflict with Catholics who were also involved in mission and educational work among the various tribes.
government schools, which favored Protestantism, would corrupt the faith of Catholic students and families and they "fought valiantly to maintain the Catholic schools."^8

Father Digmann presumed that although the government would no longer contract with the sectarian schools, the schools would continue to receive the rations due the students. Previously, the arrangement provided that students attending sectarian reservation boarding schools received the rations they would have been issued had they been living with their parents. The additional food and clothing, although not completely meeting the needs of students, was of great help to St. Francis. Much to Digmann's dismay, he discovered the Rosebud Agent had been instructed to no longer issue school rations or clothing to children at the secular boarding schools under his jurisdiction. Although students at sectarian schools were to be denied rations, those attending the government boarding school, or day schools continued to receive food and clothing from the government. Father Digmann strongly protested such discrimination against families who wanted to send their children to sectarian schools.⁹

Commissioner Jones viewed the issue of denying rations to religiously run schools to be in line with the federal policy of giving no aid to such schools. He also believed that rations stood in the way of the promotion of Indian self-reliance. In August of 1901, Jones stated that:

⁸Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, x; Adams, Education for Extinction, 167-173.
⁹Digmann to Stephan, April 26, 1900, in BCIM, Correspondence (1900) 898.; Ibid., Digmann to Stephan, June 5, 1900, p. 902; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, July 28, 1900, 913; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 66.
Schools on the various reservations which are conducted by religious, philanthropic, or other societies, will, in the future, receive no supplies whatever from the Government for the Indian children therein whether the children would be entitled to such supplies or not if living as reservation Indians with their parents. Neither will the rations etc. be issued to the parents of such children as attend these or any other schools.¹⁰

Interestingly, Catholic voices were not the first raised against discontinuing rations. The Episcopal Bishop William H. Hare, a missionary among the Sioux, was the first to protest the Commissioner's decision. The Episcopals operated four boarding schools on the various Sioux reservations and relied heavily on the rations to keep their schools open. Withdrawing rations ultimately forced Bishop Hare to close two of the four Episcopal schools.¹¹

Although not the first to protest, Catholics also objected, in no uncertain terms, to the new policy. The BCIM argued that the rations were in no way an appropriation by the government for the support of religious schools. Instead, the rations represented payment due the Indians as compensation for land cessions. If the government withheld rations from the Indian children, they were, in essence, refusing to give the Indians their rightful payment for the ceded lands.¹²

The loss of rations was a financial burden to Catholic Indian schools. Father Ketcham, of the BCIM, admitted as much in a letter written in November 1903 concerning the slowness of the Attorney General to act upon the matter. He clearly

¹⁰Prucha, The Churches and Indian Schools, 66. This was an abrupt about face in policy. In 1900 the Commissioner had issued a statement on rations mandating the distribution of food and clothing to children at religious boarding schools as if they were living at home. Prucha notes that the exact reasons for this change are unknown.
¹¹Ibid., 66-67.
¹²Ibid., 69; Digmann to Stephan, June 5, 1900 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 28, 902; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, August 14, 1900, 913; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, September 30, 1900, 926.
stated that, "the delay means money to us every day. . . ."\(^{13}\)

Although the federal government turned a cold shoulder to funding and providing rations to secular Indian schools during the 1901 fiscal year, St. Francis continued its operations. Life went on at the school, much as it had in previous years. Some cutbacks had to be made, such as no longer paying cash to the Indians who hauled freight to the school. Many parents of St. Francis students voiced their concerns about the school's future. In the eyes of numerous Catholics, and other supporters of St. Francis, it was clear that children attending mission schools were being denied the same rights (i.e. rations and funding) as those attending government schools. The lack of government rations forced the school to make additional outlays of funds for food items. Father Perrig, of St. Francis, reported the school purchase of 160 beef cattle and nearly 30,000 pounds of flour in addition to other items to keep the school operational. Such purchases were in excess of any made during the contract years.\(^{14}\)

In spite of all the uncertainties, the BCIM instructed St. Francis to maintain 207 students for the upcoming year, (the average attendance for the 1899-00 school year) and promised support for that number. Accordingly, at the end of January 1901, St. Francis had 213 students enrolled, and reported an average attendance of 206.\(^{15}\)

In addition to financial problems, the staff of St. Francis continued to deal

\(^{13}\)Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 78.

\(^{14}\)Digmann to Ketcham, January 31, 1901, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 86; Ibid., Perrig to Stephan, September 4, 1901, 95.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, January, 31, 1901, 86.
with the daily challenges of running the school. Although more common in the early years of the school, by the early twentieth century there were still occasional cases of students fleeing the school. In March of 1901 Digmann noted that two students ran away from St. Francis. Both were over school age, however, and were thus simply dismissed, instead of being brought back to school. For most students the hardships of their families at home only served to encourage them to stay in school. While at school students received food, clothing and shelter giving their family one less mouth to feed and body to clothe.\(^{16}\)

Attendance at St. Francis soon became an increasing problem. The difficulty did not appear in the form of runaways, or problems of recruiting students, but rather in excessive numbers attempting to gain admittance. By September 1901, Father Perrig, (who was temporarily in charge of the school while Father Digmann attended to matters elsewhere) estimated attendance at 240 students. He explained to Father Stephan, at the BCIM, that “I do not refuse any child that is offered, but I have not asked anybody to send their children to us. If all that wish to come to St. Francis could have their own will about it, there might be 300 children here, provided we could lodge them.”\(^{17}\)

With such large numbers of children, however, providing for them became increasingly difficult. For the school year ending in June of 1900 the government provided for 30 children and, in addition, some rations were received by the school. Now, with the new school year beginning in 1901, St. Francis had more students

\(^{16}\) Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, March 31, 1901, 87
\(^{17}\) Ibid., Perrig to Stephan, September 4, 1901, 95-6.
than ever, no government funding, and no rations. Their problems appeared to be escalating precariously. Although the school's financial stresses might have been limited by reducing the number of pupils at the school, the staff made the decision to continue to accept ever larger numbers.¹⁸

In late September 1901, support for St. Francis was further clouded by the death of one of its long-time supporters, Father Stephan. Although he was a strong defender of the Catholic Indian schools, Stephan was not always the most tactful of men when dealing with people. Prucha notes that, "The death of Father Stephan in 1901 removed from the scene a man, who, although of undoubted zeal and dedication, was not a diplomat and whose intolerant outbursts hindered the Catholic cause. Father Ketcham, though no more willing to compromise than his predecessor, won the respect of those he dealt with."¹⁹ As the new Director of the BCIM, Father Ketcham carried on the work begun by Stephan and fought to protect the Catholic Indian schools. In spite of his enthusiasm, Ketcham advised Digmann that considering the realities of the situation, they may be forced to reduce the number of children at St. Francis. The Archbishops had to decide whether or not to continue their support of mission schools. If they decided to continue, they needed to determine the financial level of their support.²⁰

In spite of all the difficulties, Ketcham was optimistic that the Archbishops would decide to continue their funding of mission schools. Correctly anticipating

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¹⁸ Ibid., 96.
¹⁹ Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 44, 53-54.
²⁰ Digmann to Lusk, September 30, 1901, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 97; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 44; Ketcham to Digmann, November 9, 1901, in BCIM, Correspondence Reel 30, 100; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, November 11, 1901, 102.
their positive decision, he promised St. Francis at least $1,377 per quarter in addition to whatever other funds could be collected for its support. Father Digmann, although hopeful of a positive outcome, informed Father Ketcham that if the decision went against continued support of the school, the children would have to be sent home by the end of November, 1901. 

Father Digmann was grateful for the promise of assistance from the BCIM and fervently hoped the amount sent by the Bureau would allow St. Francis to operate at its current capacity, at least until the end of the December 1901. He also believed, with time, increasing numbers of Catholics would become aware of the plight of their mission schools. Awareness, he hoped, would translate into monetary support, allowing St. Francis, and the other Catholic mission schools, to continue their operations.

In addition to working within the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, Ketcham also actively campaigned on behalf of the schools among politicians. In a 1901 meeting with President McKinley, Ketcham listed four key points on which he requested action. The four points were an outline for changing the basic relationship between the federal government and Catholic Indians. Pursuing these four points consumed Ketcham's energy for over a decade. The two most prominent points on the list included allowing Indians to use their own funds (i.e. Indian trust and treaty funds) to support schools of their choice. Closely related to

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21 Digmann to Lusk, September 30, 1901, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 97; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 44; Ketcham to Digmann, November 9, 1901, in BCIM, Correspondence Reel 30, 100; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, November 11, 1901, 102.

22 "Digmann to Ketcham, November 12, 1901," in BCIM, Correspondence (Roll 30), 105, 107; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, November 11, 1901," p. 102.
the use of Indian treaty and trust funds was Ketcham's desire to see an end to the Browning Ruling of 1896, which forbade Indian parents from choosing which school their children would attend. The goal of the policy was to see to it that government schools would first be filled to capacity before allowing any students to attend private, religiously run schools.23

Father Stephan, and other Catholics, strongly objected to the enforcement of the Browning Ruling since it decreased enrollment at Catholic schools and violated the rights of Indian parents. Upon coming to office, President McKinley had promised the BCIM that the Browning Ruling would be abolished and assigned Secretary of the Interior E. A. Hitchcock to see to it. When no action was taken, increasing pressure was put upon Jones, and by August 1901 he began to back away from his support of the Ruling by suggesting a trial period without the Ruling being enforced. In late October of 1901, Secretary Hitchcock stepped in and informed Commissioner Jones, the Ruling was to be officially revoked. The Browning Ruling, which was so obnoxious to the Catholics, was officially ended on January 19, 1902.24

In spite of numerous other concerns, Ketcham believed Indian freedom to use tribal funds in support of schools they favored, should be the primary goal of

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23Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 45-46, 58-59; William Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in BIA, Report (1899), 6-7; William T. Hagan, "Daniel M. Browning, 1893-1897," in Kvasnicka, Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 207-208. The other two points in his note to President McKinley asked that Rule 202 of the Rules for the Indian School Service, be modified. Rule 202 stated that students enrolled in a government school could not legally leave the school unless given permission by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The second point was a request to allow Catholic priests to administer to the religious needs/instruction of Catholic students in government schools.

Catholic policy. The Director firmly held to his belief that among tribes where Catholic schools had been established, the Indians would support their continued presence. Ketcham’s argument to the federal government in support of the Catholic schools was based on several key factors. First, he pointed out the financial liabilities in disallowing the use of tribal and trust funds for the support of Catholic schools. If Indians were denied the right to use the funds to support Catholic schools, most of the schools (if not all) would be forced to close. Should that happen, Ketcham argued, the government would then have to spend huge sums to construct facilities to replace the closed schools. It would be far less expensive to simply see to it that the existing schools could continue to function.\(^{25}\)

Ketcham’s second argument was designed to address the objections of those who wished to deny any funding to the Catholic schools. He argued that the prohibition on funding to sectarian schools applied only to public funds. Since the trust and treaty funds were not specifically public funds, their use in the support of Catholic schools, Ketcham believed, should not legally be a problem.\(^{26}\)

President McKinley forwarded Ketcham’s requests to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Jones. Jones disagreed with the reasoning of the BCIM stating that it was his belief the policy of federal government was to make no more contracts or arrangements, whatsoever, with any religious groups for educational purposes. Such decisions caused continuing financial hardships for St. Francis, and other

\(^{25}\)Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 46-47.
\(^{26}\)Ibid.
Catholic Indian schools.\textsuperscript{27}

Although still functioning, the future of St. Francis was very much in question in 1902. The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions simply did not have the resources to go on indefinitely supporting all the Catholic Indian schools on its own. With the end of federal support for its Indian schools, the BCIM was left on its own to solicit support for its remaining thirty one boarding, and two day schools. At the largest of these schools, St. Francis, the average cost of supporting a single student for one year amounted to $106.24 The school reported, in 1902, an enrollment of 234 and an average attendance of 222 students. Digmann maintained his hope that the school could continue, "until the children of the mission schools enjoy again equal rights with their brethren of the same tribes in other schools."\textsuperscript{28} The Bureau did what it could to send funds to St. Francis, but more often than not the promised amount did not arrive when expected. It became relatively routine for Father Ketcham to inform Father Digmann the BCIM was short of funds. When this occurred, the Bureau sent what it could, and promised to make up the difference as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{29}

The annual Lenten collection for Indian and Negro Missions provided a small amount of help to the struggling Catholic schools, but donations were limited, and public interest was lacking. Father Stephan tried to address the problem by requesting that bishops assign Indian missionaries fund raising activities. He

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29}Ketcham to Digmann, February 5, 1902 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 61; Ibid., Ketcham to Digmann, April 26, 1902, 67; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, October 17, 1902, p. 85.
encouraged them to talk to church members, tell them what the missions needed and to talk in general about the work they were doing. A few bishops did send representatives to eastern congregations where they managed to collect some money for the support of Catholic mission schools. Other solutions were tried, such as the establishment of the Society for the Preservation of the Faith Among Indian Children and its accompanying publication, *The Indian Sentinel*. Membership levels, however, were disappointing and the hoped for financial independence of the BCIM did not materialize. Such efforts helped ease the immediate financial problems of the BCIM and its schools, but it was clear that in the long run, a more secure source of funding would be needed.\(^\text{30}\)

In addition to eliminating funding and rations for contract schools, the Commissioner also decided in 1901 to begin severing rations to Indians who were deemed by agents to be self-supporting. Cutbacks in rations had begun in 1900 when the government decided to decrease the amount of beef rations and eliminate clothing rations in an attempt to force Indian populations to become more self-sufficient. The government that had engineered Indian dependency, now tried to generate independence, generally at the expense of the Indian population.\(^\text{31}\)

The Indians allowed to stay on the ration list were to receive only the barest rations necessary for their survival, preferably in exchange for labor performed. On Rosebud Reservation, this policy translated into dropping about 10 percent of the people off the rations list. Rations were routinely withdrawn from able-bodied

\(^{30}\) Prucha. Churches and Indian Schools, 48-52.
Indians, even if they had no other means of support. Work on the reservation, such as building and maintaining roads and bridges was provided for some individuals. Father Digmann noted that the policy caused hardships not only for the students whose families suffered, but also among the general population. Reports reached St. Francis of cases where people were actually starving. Digmann was convinced that, "No White man could make his living under the circumstances the Indians are in; there is a decided progress in the line of self-support, but this shortening of rations, taking away of clothing, hides, and all at once, is too much."

Already facing difficulties in supplying their school, the priests and sisters of St. Francis School and mission felt the impact of the cutbacks as larger numbers of Indians turned to them for help.

While increasing numbers of adults were working either on or off the reservation, Commissioner Jones noted that many of the Indian students planned to return to their homes when their schooling concluded. The policy of limiting rations, he expected, would encourage all Indians to work their land and support themselves.

In accordance with the expectation that most pupils would remain on the reservation after their schooling, Catholic educators attempted to prepare them to be self-sufficient. At St. Francis, the boys were primarily trained in agricultural skills that would allow them to live successfully on their allotments. Girls, on the other

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32 Ibid.; Digmann to Stephan, June 5, 1900 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 28, 902; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, September 30, 1900, 926, 927.
33 Digmann to Ketcham, March 31, 1901 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 87.
hand, had much more limited opportunities when they finished school. They learned sewing and mending skills, cooking and other housekeeping chores. Some might find work as seamstresses or cooks. A few girls also received training as nurses. According to the Commissioner, many students did return to their homes and married other educated Indians. Jones was encouraged by such results. He firmly believed that without education (as dictated by white standards) Indians could never become "civilized."^35

The Commissioner perceived the policy of providing education to Indian children as vitally important. He fended off critics of the system who objected to the government providing "free" education to Indian children. Jones argued that,

the millions of American citizens who have been educated in the free schools of this country appreciate none the less the advantages given them by the State because they cost them nothing. It is the duty of the State to give all of its children a good common-school education; it is equally the duty of the General Government to give, . . . every Indian child the same opportunities, and even more, by reason of his history, his present condition, and its own protection, a chance to learn a useful trade, so that he may in time become a self-respecting, self-supporting citizen.^36

Although the government had withdrawn aid from the church supported reservation schools, federal policy still favored reservation based education. Many in the BIA believed both day and boarding schools on reservations had many benefits over off-reservation schools. By staying on the reservation, pupils could keep in touch with their school and teachers after completing their education. Being educated on their reservations also meant that children did not become as alienated

from their families as did those who left the reservation, sometimes for years, to be educated. Finally, reservation schools allowed children to be trained and educated in the conditions they would need to deal with as adults.\textsuperscript{37}

In order to provide their students with what they perceived as the proper academic and religious training, the BCIM and St. Francis continued their struggle to raise money. In 1901 the Sisters of St. Francis noted in their chronicle the Bishops had created a new organization. Dedicated to raising awareness of the plight of Catholic Indian students and money for their support, the Society for the Preservation of the Faith Among Indian Children was initiated. By early 1902 the organization boasted about 50,000 members. Father Digmann, and other Catholics involved in mission work, were distressed at such low figures. Digmann figured there were about 10 million Catholics, and thus believed membership numbers should be considerable higher. Catholics involved in mission work began efforts to publicize the society and recruit new members. In addition to knowing they were supporting Indian academic and religious education, members also received a publication entitled the \textit{Indian Sentinel}. Initially an annual publication, its pages contained poetry, articles by missionaries and students, specific needs of various missions and/or schools and other such items.\textsuperscript{38}

Organizations such as the Preservation Society, although of some assistance, never came close to supplying the needs of Catholic Indian schools.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid. 27, 30.
\textsuperscript{38} Lusk to Digmann, July 31, 1902, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 31, 70; Sentinel, 1; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, 23; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 49-52.
The BCIM continued to do what it could to foot the bill of its schools. In August of 1902, Father Dignann received word from the Bureau that they would again financially support the school for the coming school year. They promised support for 131 students at $108 per student. This level of assistance was valid only so long as the students attending St. Francis were denied rations by the government. Should rations be reinstated, the support would accordingly be decreased.39

Other problems besides finances also faced St. Francis Mission School during the early years of the twentieth century. Early in the 1902 school year the old issue of Indian parents' right to choose what school their children attended came under attack. On September 12, several policeman arrived at St. Francis with orders to take eleven children, who had previously attended the government boarding school, back to the government school. The government school was not operating near its capacity and very much wanted to increase the number of students in attendance. According to Father Ketcham, the children had transferred to St. Francis with the approval of their parents. When the staff of St. Francis refused to turn the children over, the police arrested the children and took them away. This action was representative of the Browning Ruling, (prohibiting Indian parents from determining what school they wished their children to attend) which had been overturned in January 1902. After hearing of the incident, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs ordered the children returned to St. Francis, so long

39 BCIM to Dignann, August 19, 1902, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 31, 71-72.
as their parents consented.\(^{40}\)

Another long-standing problem at St. Francis was a shortage of water. Providing water for over 200 students, the school and mission staff, livestock, and perhaps even for irrigating the garden was a difficult task in a dry climate. In order to help address the problem Father Digmann, and others decided to spend 2,000 dollars in order to construct a fourth large water tank. The tank had a capacity of 1,100 gallons and helped ease the water shortage at the school and mission. Needless to say, however, the construction of the tank required a large financial investment, at a time when St. Francis was already struggling to stay afloat.\(^{41}\)

Due to the financial problems faced by the BCIM and St. Francis, some members of the Catholic church began to question just how effective the mission and school were. Digmann answered such inquiries by highlighting what he perceived as the accomplishments of St. Francis Mission School. He pointed out that school and mission operations set an example for Rosebud residents. The missionaries strove to teach by example, such as growing vegetables in the school/mission garden and working to expand their farm operations every year. Digmann gave St. Francis School and Mission credit for the decline, among Catholic Indians, of faith in their medicine men. He also noted it was only the older Catholic Indians who still used blankets, instead of white style clothing. Many Catholic Indian families had their children baptized soon after birth, and called for a Catholic priest

\(^{40}\) Ibid., Ketcham to W. Jones, October 13, 1902, 74; Ibid., Lusk to Digmann, October 15, 1902, 75; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle (1902), 24; William T. Hagan, “Daniel M. Browning 1893-1897,” in Kvasnicka, Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 207-208; Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 57-64.

\(^{41}\)Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle (1901), 23.
when family members were ill or dying. The school itself, while having a "civilizing" influence on its students and their families, had been steadily growing. Since 1895 school enrollment exceeded 200 students, with growing numbers seeking admission.\footnote{Digmann to Ketcham, October 16, 1902, in BCiM, Correspondence, Reel 31, 77, 78, 79-80; Robinson, History of the Dakota, 507-508.}

According to Digmann, among the students who attended St. Francis most continued in the Catholic faith even after they left the school. Many of them failed, however, to attend mass regularly due to ration days, hauling freight, or the distance to a Catholic chapel. Digmann insisted that very few students totally abandoned Catholicism, and most who did, had attended St. Francis for only a short time.\footnote{ibid.}

Further supporting Digmann's positive view of the effectiveness of St. Francis in particular, and Catholic schools in general was a comment by Senator Vest who traveled through several western states near the turn of the century and observed the schools in operation. According to the Senator:

\begin{quote}
I did not see in all my journey, which lasted for several weeks, a single school that was doing any educational work worthy of the name of educational work unless it was under the control of the Jesuits. They establish a different system, separating the boys and the girls, teaching them how to work, for that is the problem, not how to read or spell, nor the laws of arithmetic, but how to work, and to get rid of the insane prejudice taught by the Indians from the beginning, that nobody but a squaw should work, and that it degrades a man to do any sort of labor, or in fact to do anything except to hunt and to go to war.\footnote{"Senator Vest on Catholic Indian Schools," in Sentinel (1902), 27.}
\end{quote}

Such positive reviews did not solve St. Francis' troubles. The school year began again in September 1902, with St. Francis still on uncertain financial footing.
By mid-October over 230 children were in attendance at the school, and Father Digmann expected more yet to come. Later in the fall, the Sisters of St. Francis reported a total enrollment of 249 students. They credited the high numbers to the fact that Indian parents, with the abrogation of the Browning Ruling, had the right to send their children to the school of their choice. Digmann noted that some of St. Francis's former students left Rosebud Reservation to attend non-reservation boarding schools where they could further their education.45

Father Digmann continued to bemoan the lack of funds for the mission schools. The BCIM still owed St. Francis funds from the last school year, and the school faced many debts that soon had to be paid. He believed if the mission schools had proper funding they could run the government schools out of business. Indian parents, according to Digmann, preferred sending their children to the mission schools, and with enough funding to take all who wished to attend, there would be few students left for the government schools. With such imposing attendance numbers it is clear that a good number of Catholic families wanted their children attending St. Francis instead of the government schools. Some of Father Digmann's optimism, however, (believing that a sufficient monetary supply would drive government schools out of business) was undoubtedly brought on by the need to defend the ongoing operation and cost of St. Francis Mission School.46

Father Digmann reported in 1902 a capacity of 250 students, an enrollment of 243 and an average attendance of 220. The staff of the school included ten men

45Digmann to Ketcham, October 17, 1902, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 21, 84, 85.
46Ibid.
and sixteen women, all white. Although the school was not operating at full capacity, the problem of supporting the entire staff and student body, was a daunting one. Mother Katherine, St. Francis's old benefactor, writing for Archbishop Ryan, helped alleviate the situation somewhat, by promising the school funds for an additional 50 students. Between the BCIM and Mother Katherine, St. Francis would receive funds for 131 students for the 1902-03 school year. Any students over that number would have to be supported in some other manner.47

Commissioner Jones and the BIA continued pursuing their goal of breaking up tribal life and affiliations and forcing Indians to adopt the norms of white society. Under this policy, educational emphasis came to rest upon a very practical curriculum. While acknowledging the need for Indians to have a command of the English language, be able to do simple reading and mathematics, any higher form of academic learning was generally frowned upon. Schools, especially government schools, were expected to focus on giving Indian students instruction in farming, husbandry, sewing, homemaking and other such skills that would allow them to make a living after their schooling. Mission schools, such as St. Francis, also tended look at what type of training might enable its pupils to support themselves after they left school. For the boys such an examination inevitably focused on agricultural pursuits or shop skills such as shoemaking, carpentry and baking. For

47Ibid.; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle (1902), 24. St. Francis's farming operations helped to provide for the students. By raising various crops, especially potatoes, the school was able to save considerably on food expenditures. In 1903, for example, the Chronicle of the Sisters records that over 2,000 bushels of potatoes were produced that year at the school. Students provided the labor for all agricultural pursuits at St. Francis, and during the potato harvest the entire school body, except the youngest students, worked in the fields to get the crop in.
the girls the educational focus tended to be on sewing and mending, cooking, cleaning and other skills needed by a homemaker in white society. The emphasis on practical training had led the school, from its inception to adopt a schedule of one half of the day devoted to academics and the other half devoted to labor.\textsuperscript{48}

At the federal level, Commissioner Jones found himself awash in a sea of controversy over the proper conduct of Indian affairs and education. Jones made note that,

\begin{quote}
Indian education is hampered on the one side by the misguided, sentimental friendship of those who place the Indian upon too lofty a pinnacle, who contend that the white man's treatment of him, in the present and in the past is cruel and inhuman, and, on the other side, by those who in their greed for his lands and money, act upon the old theory, 'No good Indian but a dead one.' . . . There is probably no department of the Government to which free counsel, abuse and criticism are so lavishly given as to that which is charged with the management of Indian affairs.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

As a result of pressures to undo what the United States Indian policy had created in the nineteenth century, (i.e. cultivating the deliberate dependency of Indian people upon the federal government for their survival) the BIA began to withdraw its support in various ways. Any aspect of Lakota culture that seemed to hinder their assimilation and "civilization" came under attack. The Sioux Act of 1889 allowed the Dawes Act of 1887 to be put into effect on the Great Sioux Reservation. The land would be allotted to individuals and the excess would be sold off to whites. This action, it was hoped would help destroy tribal communities. In addition, since the 1890s the system of issuing rations had come under attack as promoting Indian

\textsuperscript{48}William Jones, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A. Report (1903), 2,3; Digmann to Ketcham, September 30, 1903, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 1325; Adams, Education for Extinction, 30.

dependence. In May of 1902 all able bodied Indians were denied their rations and told if they wanted to support themselves and their families they would have to work. The government provided work on the reservation for those who wanted it. According to Commissioner Jones the Indian population was given the choice of either accepting "civilization" and supporting themselves or starving to death. Father Digmann supported the idea of making the Rosebud population work for their support instead of handing out rations as was done previously.50

While their other family members were being forced to try and scratch a living from the ground or work on odd jobs around the reservation in order to survive, the children continued their education. In 1903, St. Francis reported a record enrollment of 249 students. At 220, the average attendance was relatively low since many children were sent home due to illness. With such large numbers of students, and limited financial support from the BCIM, Father Digmann expressed his deep hope that Catholic "schools will not be looked upon as 'second class' and may in time be acknowledged and supported again as the rest in the same field."51

In 1904, St. Francis continued its operations without assistance from the government either in the form of rations or funds. Although, according to Agent McChesney, the total number of school age children on Rosebud Reservation totaled 1,245, many were absent from school due to illness. Father Digmann confirmed that even at St. Francis, illness was a problem among students in 1904.

51 Ibid., P.F. Digmann, "St. Francis Report," 320; Digmann to Ketcham, March 31, 1903, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 30, 1312.
Digmann reported an enrollment of 276 and an average attendance of only 232. He attributed the low average to many students being sent home with tuberculoses.\(^\text{52}\)

Although some children suffered from illness, Father Digmann reported that St. Francis still received more applicants than they were able to accept with their current facilities. In order to help accommodate the large number of students, the Sisters at St. Francis requested and received funding from their Superiors for an additional building. By March 1904, work had begun on the construction of the new building. The building measured 112 feet by fifty feet and served as a girls' dormitory. Father Digmann noted that the building had been needed for some time due to overcrowding in the two existing schoolrooms, and the lack of good accommodations for those who took ill. When completed in 1905, the building, which Digmann described as having a, “spacious and cheerful schoolroom, airy dormitories, infirmary and sewing room,” increased the school’s capacity to 300 students. A new laundry was also constructed to serve the needs of the school. Although the new laundry had electric washers, the staff planned to keep the washtubs for students to learn. The staff recognized the fact that most students would not have access to electric washers in their homes, and thus needed to learn how to wash in the tubs.\(^\text{53}\)

By 1904, officials at the BCIM headquarters in Washington, D.C. grew


increasingly concerned over their financial problems. The agency was facing the prospect of bankruptcy, and the subsequent closing of most, if not all, of its mission schools. Ever since the loss of government funding for their schools, BCIM officials, and other Catholics had been in search of an alternate method of funding. The option they seized upon was the use of tribal treaty and trust funds. The idea of using these funds met with considerable resistance, especially from various Protestant groups. The Commissioner himself was uncertain about the legality of using such funds for sectarian educational purposes.\textsuperscript{54} The Commissioner reported that on June 9, 1905 the Bureau of Indian Affairs, informed the BCIM that due consideration was being given to their request for the use of such funds, but the question whether both trust and treaty funds are 'monies belonging to the Indians themselves and not to the public, and therefore applicable for the use desired' [was] submitted to the proper authorities for a definite determination, and . . . if these moneys should be held to be applicable for the education of Indian pupils in mission schools petitions [will] be presented to the Indians at the several reservations affected so . . . they might express their wishes in the premises.\textsuperscript{55}

Two types of funds were involved in this debate: treaty funds and trust funds. The loophole allowing the use of these funds was the fact that they were not public funds, but rather funds that belonged to the Indians. In addition the schools were not proposing using the actual funds, but rather a portion of the interest being generated by the funds. By May 1904, both President Roosevelt and Commissioner Leupp agreed that mission schools could be funded through the use

of tribal funds, so long as tribal members agreed to such use of the funds.⁵⁶

Father Ketcham informed Father Digmann of the decision and advised him of the need for approval from the Indians. He sent a petition for Digmann to circulate among the Indian parents. The petition had to be accompanied by a statement from the Rosebud Agent McChesney stating that each signator understood what they were signing and what it meant. Only after the petition and Agent’s statement had been received by the BIA would a contract be granted.⁵⁷

Father Digmann complied with the requirements and presented the petition to parents at the school’s closing ceremony when they came to pick up their children in June. By the end of June, Digmann sent the petition with 170 signatures to Secretary Lusk at the BCIM. Not all the parents had a chance to sign the petition, since not all of them came to closing ceremonies. Father Digmann was confident he could obtain more signatures, if needed, but it would take time. As it turned out, the 170 signatures were sufficient for St. Francis to receive a contract. Due to Commissioner Leupp’s temporary absence from Washington, D.C., the granting of the contract was somewhat delayed, but by the twentieth of August Father Ketcham was able to announce the granting of a Contract for St. Francis.⁵⁸

The newly appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Francis E. Leupp, noted in his 1905 annual report, the receipt by his office early in 1904, of petitions with the

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⁵⁶Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 85-87; Ketcham to Digmann, May 24, 1904, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 33, 133.
⁵⁷Ibid.
⁵⁸Ketcham to Digmann, May 24, 1904, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 33, 133; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, June 11, 1904, 140; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, June 26, 1904, 141; Ibid., Lusk to Perrig, July 25, 1904, 144; Ibid., Ketcham to Digmann, August 20, 1904, 149.
signatures of, "a large number of Indians," requesting that money from the trust funds of the various tribes be allocated to specific religiously supported schools. He noted that, "based on these petitions, contracts for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1904, and continuing until June 30, 1905, were prepared by the Office and approved by the Department. . . .”

Included among the petitioners were the 170 Sicangu parents and guardians from Rosebud Reservation, a sufficient number to permit the granting of a contract to St. Francis Mission School. The contract provided for 250 students (the reported capacity) at 108 dollars per student for the school year. For the first time since 1900, St. Francis, and other Indian mission schools could worry a little less about where the funding was going to come from to keep their schools operating. The funds paid to St. Francis were taken from the Sioux Trust fund of three million dollars held in the United States' Treasury. According to Father Ketcham funds might also be taken from annual Congressional appropriations designed to fulfill various treaty obligations (Treaty Funds). Although St. Francis's contract provided for 250 students, Ketcham asked Father Digmann to inform him if the school's capacity increased, and he would try to negotiate a larger contract. In spite of the relief among the Catholics involved in operating St. Francis, not all went smoothly with the new contracts. There was increasing concern about and opposition to the

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60 F.E. Leupp, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1905), 35; Ketcham to Digmann, August 20, 1904, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 33, 149; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle (1904), 26.
new contracts among the inhabitants of Rosebud Reservation.  

Father Ketcham, naturally, evidenced some concern about the opposition to the contracts from the Indians. He asked Father Digmann whether the exact nature of the petitions was fully explained to all involved. He also wanted to know if any Indians received anything in return for signing the petition. Father Ketcham soon had the assurance of Digmann that every effort was made to make clear the details of the petition, and no Indian received anything from the Catholics for signing. In seeking the cause of resistance to the use of Indian funds for the school, the blame eventually fell to rest largely on an Episcopalian minister on the Reservation. Father Digmann believed the minister was spreading false rumors concerning the funding of St. Francis. The Episcopalian accused St. Francis of being paid twice for each student. In his frustration over the situation, Father Digmann accused the Episcopalians of desiring all the funds for themselves and working to do deliberate harm to St. Francis. While the Episcopalians may indeed, have wished for the demise of the St. Francis school, it is unlikely they had designs on the funds themselves. Even before the government ceased issuing contracts at the turn of the Century, many Protestant schools switched entirely to private funding through their denominations. Additionally, their protests over the use of the funds by the Catholics would have been openly hypocritical had they intended to seek the same

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61 Ketcham to Digmann, November 19, 1904, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 33, 177; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, November 28, 1904, 178.
62 Ketcham to Digmann, February 18, 1905, BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 34, 702; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, March 31, 1905, 707. The minister's accusation of double funding for St. Francis is unclear. He may have been implying that the school was being paid for its students by the BCIM as well as through the Indian funds, or he may have been implying the school was receiving full payment from both the Sioux Trust Fund as well as the Treaty Fund.
Two types of funds were involved in this new funding venture. The Trust Funds needed no appropriation by Congress. These were funds belonging to the various Indian tribes, but held in trust by the United States Government. Francis E. Leupp, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs beginning in 1905, perceived no problems in the use of Trust funds for the support of religious schools. The funds should be spent according to the desires of the Indians, with, "Each Indian . . . credited with [their] pro rata share of the funds, which" would be used for their school of choice.

The other source of money were the Treaty Funds. The Treaty funds presented a more complicated situation. Each year Congress appropriated funds to fulfill the treaty obligations of the United States toward the various Indian tribes. Some schools received funding from the Treaty funds, but because the money was perceived as government funding, such use was widely disputed. Commissioner Leupp decided in 1906 to permit the current contracts to be fulfilled, but he was determined to end funding from Treaty funds unless otherwise authorized by Congress.

The Sioux, including the Sicangu on Rosebud Reservation, made use of the interest on their three million dollar Trust Fund. The interest was divided between education and annuities. Although the government schools were financed from two Treaty Funds ("Subsistence and Civilization of the Sioux," and "Education, Sioux

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63Digmann to Ketcham, March 31, 1905, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 34, 707.
65Ibid.
they also received some money from the "Education" section of the Trust Fund. The "Annuity" portion was paid out on a per capita basis to tribal members. Funding for St. Francis was taken from the same sources used by the government schools for the 1904-05 and 1905-06 contracts. After Commissioner Leupp's determination to end the use of Treaty Funds to fund religious schools, however, St. Francis was forced to rely upon the interest of the Sioux Trust Fund. When Father Ketcham made his request to contract for 250 students at $108 dollars each for the 1907 school year, he knew the funds would be taken solely from the interest on the Sioux Trust Fund.  

In addition to the new, and seemingly secure source of funding for St. Francis, came the good news that Congress had authorized, in their 1906 appropriations, the distribution food and clothing rations to children at reservation mission schools. Such rations had been denied to mission school children for several years prior to 1906. The temporary denial of such rations was due to the influence of various groups involved in Indian Affairs who viewed the issuance of rations to children at religious school as government support of the religious schools.

In spite of years of financial uncertainty, by 1906 St. Francis was flourishing. Father Digmann reported an enrollment of 267 students (118 boys and 149 girls).

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66F.E. Leupp, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A., Report (1906), 52-54, 58-59, 60; Digmann to Ketcham, May 23, 1904, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 33, 131; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, December 18, 1906, Reel 36, 680; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, January 23, 1907, Reel 38, 1071; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham March 12, 1906, 1082-1083; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, October 8, 1907, 1130.
The average attendance was 229, with some children sent home due to signs of Tuberculosis or Scrofula (another form of TB). The girls at St. Francis cut and sewed their own dresses, using the twelve sewing machines available at the school. They also held the responsibility of darning and mending for the entire school. The new steam laundry relieved the girls of some of the work of hand washing all the clothing. While the girls labored in their academic and practical work, the boys did their share as well. In addition to their academic work, Father Digmann was proud to note the contributions and accomplishments of the boys in producing 1,400 bushels of corn, 1,350 bushels of potatoes, 450 bushels of turnips, about 1,000 heads of cabbage and 20 barrels of onions. In addition the school’s cattle (cared for by the boys) produced enough milk for 1,800 pounds of butter and 600 pounds of cheese made by the girls. Such self-sufficiency greatly aided the financial status of St. Francis, and could not have been achieved without the use of student labor.68

While St. Francis Mission School forged ahead opposition forces, aligned against the use of Treaty and Trust Funds for religiously supported schools, campaigned vigorously on Rosebud Reservation. According to Commissioner Leupp the Protestant forces involved in the movement, did not hesitate to use scare tactics in order to get the support of the residents on Rosebud Reservation. Their strategy proved effective as increasing numbers of Sicangu began to question the impact on their personal finances of allowing the use of the funds by the Catholics. As with most legal documents, the wording of the petition for St. Francis’s contract

was confusing, and many Indians were afraid that by signing they would lose their annual per capita payments. Others heard from the Episcopalians that the petition would lead to a five year contract, when, in fact, it was only for a one year contract. In addition to the Episcopal opposition, a second strike against getting the needed number of signatories was the timing of the petition. The petition was issued in the deepest months of winter (i.e. January, February, March), the time generally known as the “starving time” among those on the Reservation. In addition to adverse traveling conditions, making it difficult for many people to get to a location where they could sign, the Rosebud inhabitants were more reluctant to sign during the harsh months when fears of losing their per capita payments were running high. In spite of the confusion and opposition to the petitions, by February increasing numbers of Rosebud residents began to sign the petitions to allow the funding of St. Francis.69

By 1906, three residents of Rosebud had been convinced by the Protestant forces (backed by the Indian Rights Association) to test the legality of the use of the funds by filing suit in the District of Columbia Supreme Court. The three names appearing on the suit were Rueben Quick Bear, Ralph Eagle Feather and Charles Tackett. Filed in May 1906, the case was not heard by the Court until April 1907.70

While the funding issue went to court, the required petition for the use of the

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69 Digmann to Ketcham, January 31, 1906, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 36, 531; Ibid., Ketcham to Digmann, February 5, 1906, 531; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, February 7, 1906, 536; Ibid., Digmann to Mr. Anthony Matre, March, 1906, 569; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, February 12, 1906, 544-45; Ibid., Lusk to Digmann, July 3, 1906, 607.
Sicangu tribal funds had gotten a sufficient number of signatures, allowing the distribution of funds to St. Francis. Accordingly, a contract for 1906-07 had been duly approved for the mission school, however, because the suit against the use of tribal funds was pending the school was denied any payment until the issue was settled. In July 1906 the Secretary of the BCIM, Lusk, informed Father Digmann about the withholding of funds from the school. He estimated the case would probably not be heard until the fall of 1907. The question of financial support from either the Trust Fund or Treaty Fund (and therefore, the survival of St. Francis) depended on the outcome of the litigation.\footnote{F.E. Leupp, "Commissioner's Report," in B.I.A. Report (1907), 46; Lusk to James Cardinal Gibbons, May 14, 1906, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 36, 590; Ibid., Lusk to Digmann, July 3, 1906, 606.}

The BCIM continued to do all it could to help support the operation of St. Francis. Despite the Bureau’s best efforts, however, their payments to St. Francis were often late, and less than promised. In spite of the financial burdens of the school, Father Digmann reported 210 children enrolled in the school as of November 1906. Enrollment, according to Digmann, would have been greater had it not been for the controversy generated by the signing of the petition for the support of St. Francis. Adding to the difficulties of the school was the confusion over the issue of rations. The agent at Rosebud Reservation had given no rations to the children attending St. Francis, as he did not understand which children qualified for such assistance. From Washington D.C., Father Ketcham informed Commissioner Leupp of the situation. The Commissioner immediately informed the Rosebud
Agent that all children attending the mission school were entitled to the same rations received by children in attendance at the government school. The hitch, however, was the Congress had not yet made the necessary appropriations to supply the rations. Although clearly entitled to them the children at St. Francis had to wait until late January for the distribution of rations.\textsuperscript{72}

While St. Francis struggled to survive under the injunction put on the tribal funds, in the halls of justice, the lawsuit proceeded. The argument put forth in the lawsuit against the use of the Treaty and/or Trust Funds stated that payments to religious school made from the funds were illegal. The Indian Rights Association (a Protestant reform group) believed such use of the funds defied the Congressional policy of 1897 which stipulated there would be no more appropriations for religious schools. Those pursuing the lawsuit further argued that allowing such use of the funds would be injurious to the Indians by decreasing the amount of money available to them. Even Indians who had not signed the petitions, so the argument went, would lose out since the funds were held in common.\textsuperscript{73}

In April of 1907, Justice Ashley M. Gould of the Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals, ruled that Trust Funds could be used for contracting with religiously run Indian schools, but not Treaty Funds. Neither the IRA nor the BCIM felt satisfied with Gould's decision, and both sides appealed. The IRA wanted the Trust Funds

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., Lusk to Digmann, August 1, 1906, 612; Ibid., Digmann to Lusk, August 16, 1906, 614; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, November 13, 1906, 653; Ibid., Ketcham to Leupp, November 23, 1906, 659; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, December 7, 1906, 675; Digmann to Ketcham, January 23, 1907, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1071.

\textsuperscript{73}Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 152-53, 155-57; Ketcham to Digmann, April 4, 1907," in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1095.
put out of reach of the religious schools, and the BCIM, of course, wanted access to them. The appeals were filed in May 1907 in the United States Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia. The Court handed down its decision on November 29, 1907. The Court ruled that the Sioux Trust Fund was payment to the Sioux for land they had ceded to the United States. Although the money used was public money it was a payment (and thus, turned into private money) and the government had no right to dictate the uses to which the Indians put their money. Furthermore, the Court said that the Congressional declaration of 1896 was no longer valid since Congress had continued to make appropriations for the operation of religious Indian schools (on a declining basis) until 1901. In any case, the Congressional declaration applied only to gratuity funds, and not to Trust or Treaty Funds. It was a matter of freedom of religion that Indian peoples should be permitted to use their own money to provide religious education to their children if they desired to do so.74

Although a victory for the BCIM, schools such as St. Francis were struggling under the financial burden of the injunction which had blocked their funding since 1906. The BCIM lawyer requested that Attorney General Bonaparte ask President Theodore Roosevelt to allow the Treaty Funds to be paid to the various Catholic schools. Bonaparte agreed to be sure that the funds for the 1906 contract were paid, and he also agreed to make contracts for the 1907 school year, but he made no promises for 1908. Although the 1906 and 1907 funds helped relieve the financial burdens of the BCIM and its schools, the future was still uncertain. The

74Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 152-53, 155-57; Ketcham to Digmann, April 4, 1907, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1095.
IRA, outraged by the decision of the Court of Appeals decided to appeal the case to the Supreme Court. The appeal to the Supreme Court could easily take a year or more to be resolved, time during which the schools were unlikely to receive any further funding until the Court handed down its ruling.75

While Catholics involved in Indian education held their breath, the Supreme Court debated the issue of the use of tribal funds for religious education. Finally, on May 18, 1908, Chief Justice Fuller handed down the Court's decision. The Supreme Court decided to uphold the previous decision of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, and the Catholics were free to contract to receive money from the disputed funds.76

Among Catholics involved in Indian education and missions, there must have been much rejoicing at the Court's decision. The future of St. Francis in particular now seemed more secure than it had in years. The years leading up to the decision, however, had been difficult for the priests and nuns who ran St. Francis. Prior to the decision to allow payment on the 1906 contract and to permit a contract for the 1907 school year, St. Francis' staff stubbornly clung to their faith that way would be found to keep their school in operation.

In October 1907, Father Digmann again brought up concerns about the issue of rations. Although the agent no longer disputed the right of the students to receive rations, he claimed he needed to wait for the proper authority to purchase the

75Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 158-60; Ketcham to Digmann, December 10, 1907, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1144.
76Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 158-60; Ketcham to Digmann, December 10, 1907, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1144.
needed rations. Until that happened, St. Francis continued to struggle to feed and clothe all its students.\textsuperscript{77}

While the legal case worked its way through the Court of Appeals, Commissioner Leupp decided petitions should again be circulated to determine whether or not the Indians still supported the idea of funding St. Francis through the trust funds. The petition, if approved, would definitely provide funds for St. Francis for the 1907 year, as agreed. This new petition, however, was different from previous ones in that once signed and approved, it would be valid for a period of five years instead of one. Father Digmann disapproved of the idea of another petition on the reservation. The funding petitions always created a great deal of stress and division among the Indians as Protestant forces on the reservation worked to convince other Indians not to sign. Digmann wrote to Ketcham that,

\begin{quote}
I am sorry that the Commissioner persists in his idea of again circulating a petition, and had written to you my opinion about it before; not as if I feared a failure (i.e. a lack of signatures)--on the contrary--but because it is bound to tear up wounds not yet healed (from the signing of the last petition), and never lets our poor Indians come to rest.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

Throughout January and February of 1908 the petition signing took place on Rosebud. Father Digmann noted that there was some resistance, but by the end of February 363 signatures had been obtained. The relative lack of controversy over the signing was due in large part to the absence of the Episcopal minister, Reverend Clark, who in the past had organized the resistance to petitions for funding approval.

\textsuperscript{77}Digmann to Ketcham, September 13, 1907, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1119; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, October 8, 1907, 1130.

\textsuperscript{78}Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, December 7, 1907, 1149.
for St. Francis. Finally, in late March 1908 the contract for the 1907 school year was approved by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. It provided for 250 students at twenty-seven dollars per student, for each quarter of the school year.  

Although long-awaited for, the contract was a blessing for the financially beleaguered school. Although many of their financial problems could have been lessened by reducing the number of students accepted into St. Francis, the staff at the school and in the BCIM steadfastly refused to decrease the number of students at the school. The Catholics involved with St. Francis believed the Indians desiring a Catholic education for their children, if at all possible, should not be turned away. With an ever increasing enrollment at St. Francis, (including a few students from Pine Ridge and Yankton Reservations) Father Digmann began to consider trying to find enough money to build an additional boy’s dormitory over the summer of 1908. The school was overloaded with applicants trying to enroll. To top off a stressful school year at St. Francis, in February 1908 Father Digmann reported that, although most students were then healthy, the school population had had the mumps in "grand style" during January and February!  

Father Digmann, and the rest of the staff at St. Francis, surely breathed a sigh of relief when word came of the Supreme Court’s decision concerning the use of tribal funds. With the 1907 contract approved, the decision meant an additional  

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79Ketcham to Digmann, December 10, 1907 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 38, 1144; Ibid., Ketcham to Digmann, December 12, 1907, 38; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, December 7, 1907, 1149; Ibid., Ketcham to Digmann, March 26, 1908, Reel 41, 670. Many of those who signed the petitions to allow for funding St. Francis were members of families who had children attending St. Francis. Every person who signed represented a percentage of the Trust/Treaty funds. The goal of the Catholics was to get a sufficient number of signatures to allow for the funding of their school.  

80Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, February 29, 1908, 667; Ibid., Digmann to Ketcham, April 8, 1908, 673.
four years of funding before another petition would be needed to renew their funding. With the law behind them, most Catholics believed there would be a minimum of trouble when the time came for the next round of petitions.

After seven years of struggling to remain afloat without government or tribal funds, the staff at St. Francis seemed to have earned a reprieve from their difficulties. In spite of their new contracts which provided the school with funds, money remained a nearly constant issue for the flourishing school. The hard years of 1901-1907 helped cement the determination of St. Francis's staff to make their school a success. Although it obtained a stable source of funds, famines, fires, natural disasters, and, of course, federal policy all continued in the years to come, to bring challenges to the St. Francis Mission School. With a determined staff and strong leadership, however, the school continued operating under Catholic auspices well into the Twentieth Century.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

For centuries whites have held various preconceptions concerning Indian peoples. One such idea, which was widely believed, held that prior to white contact Indian people had no system for educating their children. Indians, however, had developed strong and effective educational methods that served to pass on essential values, knowledge and skills to the younger generations. As the two cultures came into increasingly close contact and began competing for land and resources conflicts inevitably erupted. The whites viewed their way as superior to that of their Indian neighbors. In what whites generally viewed as a benevolent spirit, they began efforts to provide a white, or European style, education to the Indians in an effort to "civilize" and eventually assimilate them. Although educational efforts were mainly conducted by religious organizations until the 1870s and early 1880s, the federal government official embraced and supported these groups who they believed were furthering the goal of assimilation.¹

Throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, the federal government continued to pursue a policy of promoting the assimilation of Indians into the larger national culture. The system of Indian schools that developed in response to this policy was considered a key element in achieving the goal of assimilation. Both religious and government schools devoted themselves to the idea that Indian religion, culture and values could be eradicated, the reservations

¹DeJong, Promises of the Past, 3-6, 24, 57-58.
abolished, and Indians, as a distinct population, could be made to vanish.  

Schools, such as St. Francis Mission School, worked toward the goal of assimilation by insisting that only English be spoken by students, by devaluing native traditions and beliefs and by working to instill the values and traditions of the dominant white society in pupils. Federal policy played a key in the operation of Indian mission schools. Mission schools, under the contract system, were financially dependent on the government. As Protestant reformers increasingly protested the large sum of federal funds going to Catholic mission schools, however, the government began to change its policy. By the 1880s and especially during the 1890s the federal government shifted away from encouraging the establishment of mission schools. Government schools now became the preferred educational institutions of Indian children. In the mid-1890s appropriations for religious contract schools began to decline, and by 1901 ceased altogether.

Although not unexpected, the end of federal contracting with religious schools was a blow to St. Francis Mission School. In order to fund St. Francis, and other schools, the BCIM turned their attention to Indian treaty and trust funds. After a drawn out battle with Protestant forces the BCIM managed to keep St. Francis Mission School in operation by using money from the Sicangu treaty and trust funds.

After the 1920s a new reform movement was underway that impacted the

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2Prucha, Indians in American Society, 55-56.
3Adams, Education for Extinction, 6, 149-154.
4Prucha, Churches and Indian Schools, 29, 32, 34-35, 40, 42.
5Ibid., chapters 7 and 8.
American public and the Indian schools. The movement gained influence when John Collier was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933. The idea that Indian culture, language and art were of no value began to fade as increasing numbers of Americans started to voice support for the preservation of such elements. Collier, himself, in the 1920s criticized the government's Indian policy of banning various Indian dances and pursuing the policy of allotment in order break up tribal communities. Collier's concerns helped prompt the Secretary of the Interior to authorize a private investigation of conditions among Indians and the Indian bureau. The report was issued in 1928 and became known as the Meriam Report. The Report revealed appalling conditions on the reservations and cited widespread problems of disease and inadequate education and housing.6

When Collier came to office he pushed for a number of reforms including the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which encouraged tribal self-government and the ended the policy of allotting reservation lands. He also helped establish an Indian Arts and Crafts Board that assisted in marketing Indian crafts to the public. Collier also opposed the use of boarding schools and promoted the construction of day schools on reservations.7

In spite of all the changes, St. Francis continued to operate and educate many children on Rosebud Reservation. In 1916 the school suffered a tremendous loss when the entire campus, (except the boys' dormitory which was concrete)

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6Kenneth R. Philip, "John Collier, 1933-1945," in Kvasnicka, Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 275-76.
7Ibid.
burned to the ground. The fire, which Father Digmann believed had started due to a crack in the chimney in the girls dormitory, would have meant the end of St. Francis except for Sister Katherine Drexel. Sister Katherine had for thirty years paid for an insurance policy for St. Francis in case of just such a disaster. Between the insurance money and donations to the school, St. Francis was rebuilt. The new facilities were larger and more modern, and were constructed with concrete to help ward off any future fires.®

When Collier took office in 1933 there was some concern among the staff of St. Francis who had heard rumors that all reservation boarding schools were to be closed in favor of day schools. The superintendent of St. Francis in 1933, Father Schiltz stated that, "In theory we recognize that the co-operation of home and school are indeed best for the child, but since the greater majority of the Indians have no home, the boarding school is an absolute necessity."® In spite of their fears, Father Schiltz later noted that Commissioner Collier was pleased with the education provided at St. Francis. Collier's main objection was that the children could not return home at night to spread the influence of the school to their families.®

In spite of the Commissioner's new policies, old beliefs and habits died hard and the staff at the BCIM and St. Francis were reluctant to give approval to tribal dances and other customs. Many Indian dances lasted for days and diverted peoples' attention from their work for extended periods of time. In addition dances

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®Digmann to Ketcham, January 24, 1916 in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 77, 1167; H.E. Bruce, Rosebud, S.D., Special to the Sioux City Journal, November 11, 1925. in BCIM Collection, Marquette University Archives, S. 1/1:1:2.
®Schiltz to Hughes, September 28, 1933, in BCIM, Correspondence, Reel 184, 900.
®ibid., October 31, 1933, 908.
were often accompanied by the liberal consumption of alcohol. Opposition to Collier's policies was not limited to the Catholic missionaries. Father Schiltz noted that after he received a copy of the plan for Indian self-government, he met with several Indian agents and other men involved in Indian affairs, all of who were, "simply shocked," by the new program.

In addition to impacting the general population on Rosebud Reservation, Collier also mandated that only children with special needs, such as orphans, children with problems at home, those who lived in areas with no day school or high school students who wanted special vocational training would be permitted to attend St. Francis. In spite of the new regulations, the school was still able to find plenty of students who qualified.

St. Francis survived the years of the Great Depression and by the early 1940s still enrolled about 300 students. In keeping with Collier's emphasis on day schooling, St. Francis also began to take on day scholars who lived near the school as well boarders. While the school continued to provide vocational training, they also expanded their academic offerings as well. With more academic emphasis a limited number of students began to gain admittance to various colleges.

As the community in the vicinity of St. Francis continued to grow, the school was able to take increasing numbers of day students. By 1964 the staff at St.

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11Ibid., Goll to Collier, December 15, 1933, 925-926.
12Ibid., Schiltz to Hughes, February 3, 1934, 363.
13Ibid., Hughes to Schiltz, April 2, 1934, 375; Ibid., Schiltz to Hughes, May 8, 1934, 386; Ibid., May 11, 1934, 430.
14Ibid., Tenny to Collier, April 14, 1941, Reel 223, 1007; Ibid., Tenny to Connell, October 7, 1941, 1038; Sisters of St. Francis, Chronicle, 1950-1951, BCIM Records, 100, S. 2/1:3:1.
Francis committed to the decision to gradually turn St. Francis into a day school. They planned to operate an increasing number of school buses every year, until September of 1969 when they would complete the transition into a day school.\(^\text{15}\)

By 1970 the final stage of the Catholic operation of St. Francis Mission school was at hand. Many Sicangu now lived in towns on the reservation and access to school buses made a boarding school unnecessary. St. Francis was not lacking for students and achieved an enrollment of almost 500 day students.\(^\text{16}\)

The national movement in the 1960s for self-determination led the staff of St. Francis to encourage increased Indian involvement and input concerning the operation of the school. The Jesuit missionaries at St. Francis helped establish a lay advisory board composed of Indian parents and other Indians with an interest in the school and education. When this advisory board was formed the priests made clear that, if they wished, the board could begin to move toward control of the school, especially if they found a way to finance some, or all, of its operations. Many members of the school board became committed to the idea of tribal control of St. Francis. The board was incorporated as Sicangu Oyate Ho, Inc (SOH), or the Voice of the Burnt Thigh People.\(^\text{17}\)

Under the Nixon administration, the Bureau of Indian Affairs began to fund Indian school boards in order to allow them to control Indian schools. The SOH took advantage of this and in the Spring of 1972 they approached the Bureau of


\(^{16}\)St. Francis Notes, Jesuits Support Rosebud Sioux in "Take Over" of St. Francis Indian School, circa. 1975, 1,2 in BCIM, Records, S. 2/1:3:1.

\(^{17}\)Ibid.
Indian Affairs with a request for funding. The BIA agreed that if the SOH had full control of the school they could receive funding. Because BIA funding was not initially sufficient to run the school, Catholic funding of St. Francis was only gradually phased out. While they had no say in school operations, the Catholics agreed to make decreasing payments to St. Francis until 1980, after which (although they could make voluntary contributions) they would have no further obligation to the school.  

The Catholic missionaries continued to maintain a presence in the vicinity of St. Francis in order to provide religious ministry, outside the school, to those who desired such services. Increasing numbers of Indians were represented among the faculty and administration at St. Francis and the curriculum was re-designed to include not only traditional academic subjects, but also to help create among the students an appreciation of Sicangu heritage and culture. Tribal elders contributed their time and skills in order to pass on their knowledge of the Lakota language, Sicangu stories, crafts and other cultural traditions.

Throughout its existence, St. Francis attempted to serve the Sicangu population of Rosebud Reservation. For much of its history the school's curriculum was designed to promote the assimilation of the students into the dominant white culture. It is only in the past two decades, however, that the Sicangu themselves have been permitted to develop and implement the school curriculum of St. Francis. By returning some control of education to the members of the tribe, they can again

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\(^{18}\) Ibid., 2,3.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 3,4.
begin to define for themselves what elements should be included in the education of Sicangu children.
APPENDIX A

SIOUX LAND REDUCTION BY TREATY

These maps illustrate the systematic reduction of Sioux lands by the United States government.

TREATY OF 1868

AGREEMENT OF 1876

ACT OF 1889
APPENDIX B

REDUCTION OF THE GREAT SIOUX RESERVATION


This map shows the reservations and their boundaries which resulted from the breakup of the Great Sioux Reservation in 1889-1890.
APPENDIX C

ROSEBUD RESERVATION: MISSIONS AND CAMPS: 1878-1890


This map shows the location of various Sicangu camps and missions on the Rosebud Reservation during the period 1878-1890. St. Francis Mission School is located just southwest of the Rosebud Agency. The Episcopal mission school, St. Mary's is located to the northeast of Rosebud Agency.
APPENDIX D

ROSEBUD RESERVATION AND EDUCATION 1882
Source: Rosebud Agency General Correspondence, Box A-357: Rosebud 1883, Correspondence, #1, National Archives, Kansas City.

The following is a report written by Rosebud Agent J.G. Wright in 1882 when he first came to Rosebud. In this segment he details the condition of education on the reservation and makes clear his plans to advance the cause of education through day schools and reservation boarding schools.

Schools and Education

I was surprised to find no school at the Agency and more so to learn the opinion advanced by my predecessor in his report, and to myself, that “there is no disputing the fact that day schools on a reservation are and will be a failure,” and notwithstanding this opinion has been endorsed by others. I am loath to believe it correct. Fully realising [sic] that my own ease would induce me to adopt and act upon this opinion. I feel it a duty to make an effort and by so doing, prove the truth or error of this statement. I have converted the old Dispensary building into a school with two school rooms, with a capacity for 30 scholars in each. One of these was furnished ready for use in June, being late it was thought better success might attend its opening if delayed till cooler weather in September. If the attendance is what I hope it may be, the second room will be prepared and furniture asked for. I have authority to build two School Houses to be located where likely to be most useful to the Indians; these are in course of construction. I hope to have them built and furnished, ready for occupancy during September should I succeed in obtaining
suitable teachers who would interest themselves in the welfare of the Indians in the vicinity. I have little fear of failure if I am to judge by the desires of Indians of different localities to have these schools built in their vicinity with the promise that their children shall attend. It is doubtless the most efficient way to instruct Indian youths to send them to Carlisle or other industrial schools off the reservation, if possible, or in boarding schools of like character on the reservation, in every case, away from home influences. At best but a small percentage of the children and youths of the Agency can be accommodated at such schools and I see no reason why day schools under proper management should not be provided as preparatory to the boarding school. If the treaty stipulations with these Indians were complied with (one teacher for every 30 children of school age, between 6 and 16) many schools would have to be erected and many teachers employed, and as I believe, with much good to this people. No expenditure having been made at this Agency in that direction, while large sums have been spent at every other Agency for like purposes. I hope that liberal appropriations may be allowed and that the long projected and talked of boarding school for which plans have been mad and remodeled several times during the last two or three years, but as yet not finished, may soon become adopted and the building ordered built. I see no reason why industrial schools should not be adopted at an Agency where boys maybe taught trades and girls household work, as elsewhere with less expense and more benefit by bringing the several industries taught, to the notice and attention of the other Indians, old and young. There have been kept at this Agency the past winter and spring two Mission day schools with two teachers and an average attendance of 15
scholars in each. Twenty nine students came home from Carlisle one year ago; twelve of these returned with twenty one others, in all thirty three, going from here in November last. One of this number died en route, returning home. There were in addition thirty five at the different Missionary Schools during the past year. The great reluctance of Indians to send their children a long distance away to school, largely on account of the liability to sickness by the change, often gives rise to the question, “why cannot this Agency have a good boarding or other school, as others have?” and “how long will it be before we have such schools here?”
After much effort, the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions gained permission from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to build a boarding school on Rosebud Reservation. From modest beginnings in 1886, St. Francis Mission School eventually became the largest Catholic boarding school in the nation.

Office of Indian Affairs
October 9th, 1885

James G. Wright Esq.
U.S. Indian Agent
Rosebud Agency Dak. Ter.

Sir:

Upon the application of the Bureau of Catholic Missions, this city in a communication to this Office, dated September 9, 1885, I recommended to the Department, the 6th instant, that you be authorized to permit the Catholic Church authorities of the Territory of Dakota to select a suitable tract of unoccupied land, not exceeding 160 acres in extent, on that portion of the Great Sioux Reservation under your charge, and thereupon to set apart said tract for the establishment and maintenance of an Indian school thereon, with the understanding, however, that no rights should rest in the said church, or any one else, to said lands under such authority, either against the Indians or the public domain, other than the right of temporary occupancy for the purpose above stated. The authority asked for has
been granted, and you will be governed accordingly.

When the tract shall have been selected and set apart you will forward a description of the same for the information of this Office, giving the legal subdivisions, if the land has been surveyed, or if not surveyed, by natural objects, giving distance and direction from Agency and if upon a stream of water, the name of the stream, etc. etc.

A copy of the Department letter of authority is herewith enclosed.

Very respectfully,

A.B. Upshaw
Acting Commissioner
APPENDIX F

THE DAWES ACT AND ROSEBUD RESERVATION
Source: Rosebud Reservation, General Correspondence, B. A-357: Rosebud Correspondence, 1888 in the National Archives, Kansas City.

The following is a letter from the Secretary of the Interior to Rosebud Agent L.F. Foster concerning the implementation of the Dawes Act in the vicinity of Rosebud Agency. The goal of the government was to break the Great Sioux Reservation into six smaller reservations (Rosebud, Pine Ridge, Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Lower Brule, Crow Creek). The reservation lands were then to be allotted to the Indians and the remaining lands would be put up for sale.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Washington, July 9, 1888

L. Foster Spencer, Esq.,

Indian Agent, Rosebud Agency, Dakota,
via Valentine, Nebr.

Sir:

In the execution of the authority conferred upon the Secretary of the Interior by the Act of Congress approved April 30, 1888, entitled "An Act to divide a portion of the reservation of the Sioux Nation of Indians in Dakota into separate reservations and to secure the relinquishment of the Indian title to the remainder," I have appointed a commissioner consisting of Captain R.H. Pratt, 10th Cavalry, U.S.A., chief commissioner, and Rev., William J. Cleveland and Honorable John V. Wright associate commissioners, to submit the said act, for the purpose of procuring the acceptance thereof, and consent thereto, by at least three-fourths of
the adult male Indians, as required by the twelfth article of the treaty between the United States and said Indians, concluded April 29th 1868.

You are also hereby associated with said commission and will co-operate with them in presenting the act to the Indians residing upon the lands appertaining to your agency or receiving rations thereat; will contribute under direction of the chief commissioner your services and aid to the accomplishment of the purposes of Congress and the Department in this business. The general instructions to the Commission have been furnished to the members thereof mentioned, and a copy is hereby transmitted to you for your information.

You will take timely measures to assemble the male Indians of the age of eighteen years or upwards at the agency, at such time as the commission shall require, so that no unnecessary delay shall be sustained by them in the prosecution of their duties; and you will also make such special provision, if any, as may be necessary to properly care for and feed the Indians when assembled during the period of the council, as well as such other measures as may be found necessary or required by the Commission.

Yours respectfully,

Wm. Milas

Secretary
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