

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (the Wheeler Howard Act)

“They made us many promises, more than I can remember, but they never kept but one. They promised to take our land, and they took it.”

--An Anonymous Native American

I. Introduction

Historians agree that slavery is the original sin of American society. The establishment of the Peculiar Institution, like the act of eating the apple in the Garden of Eden, had a pervasive and timeless effect. It conditioned every act and condemned all relations between black and white people to a struggle for the soul of the nation for its entire history. It led to the often-brutal oppression of a blameless group within the American community, to the near destruction of the Union, and to seemingly endless struggles—legal, philosophical, social, physical—over the meaning of freedom, civil rights, and human dignity, concepts considered among the members of the dominant culture settled forever with the promulgation of the constitution of the United States.

But if slavery was the founding flaw in America’s soul, how should we characterize the over three-hundred-year encounter of white people with the indigenous peoples of what became the United States? This relationship, too, included domination, repression, and duplicity, but also episodes of extermination, monumental fraud, cultural genocide, and dispossession by whites against natives. Perhaps in the end no metaphor as powerful as original sin can be identified to characterize the saga of Indian-white relations, yet the stain on the American experience is as indelible and as dispositive concerning the national identity as that of slavery.

One important difference between white-black and red-white relations in American history is that whites encountered the native peoples as free, culturally and socially grounded, and in that sense uncomfortably equal to themselves, although, of course, they labeled them as savages. Indians were not generally amenable to white domination. On the other hand, with minor exceptions in the very beginning of white settlement, blacks were imported to these shores as un-free, culturally and socially unmoored, and so were easily subjugated.

Precisely because Indians had their own long established cultures, social organizations, traditional patterns of governance, and often formidable military establishments, whites who felt no less racially and culturally superior to them than they did to the Africans under their control, struggled to find ways to relate to them. The easiest method was simply through conquest, but this was not always possible. Indeed, the history of Indian-white relations became an ongoing test of relational modalities: for whites to achieve control of these (to them, alien) peoples who were obstacles to their goals; for Indians, over time, simply to survive in the face of the ever-growing white presence and power.

From initial contact, whites, in their attempts to dominate Indians, were beneficiaries of such accidents of fate as the susceptibility of the natives to European diseases, which decimated them. Superior technology similarly conferred advantage in war and allowed whites to bring to bargaining tables products much desired by Indians, such as guns and metal utensils. Inexorably white domination became the motif of red-white relations. But these advantages did not change the basic

independence of Indian peoples nor relieve whites of the responsibility to deal with their tribes as autonomous entities.

Thus, from the beginning of the United States, whites grappled with the mechanics of the relationship. Should Indians be treated like conquered peoples? Like sovereign nations within a nation? Internal dependent nations? Were they simply wards of the government?

Neither the answers to these questions nor the denouement of this troubled history have ever fully crystallized. Instead, red-white relations have been a long and muddled tragedy of error, misconception, malice, and occasional honest attempts at reform, redress, and accommodation. Accordingly, the Wheeler-Howard Act, or Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, or the Indian New Deal, was not a turning point or “Great Decision.” Rather, it was a rare attempt to rectify on Indian terms injustices and miscalculations of the past that had harmed native peoples far more than they had helped them. Unlike other such attempts, its successes were greater than its failures. Before it and after it sprawled a chronicle of unremitting tragedy. But, coming in the depths of depression, and given the enormity of the problems it was to address, the IRA was a gallant attempt.

II. Context

Beyond the broad contours laid out above, there are some specific events and episodes—by no means, the entire catalogue of possibilities—that bear illumination if we are to understand the tangled skein of red-white relations over the length of American history and the position the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 occupies in it.

“And with the Indian tribes...”

Article I, section 8 of the US Constitution states:

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States...

To regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes....

With those words, Congress placed Indian tribes in the position of legal entities with which the United States would have to deal on a formal basis. The question was, what was that basis?

The Northwest Ordinance

A partial answer followed quickly. After the constitution, the Northwest ordinance of August 1789 was the most important state document to emerge from the legislative machinery of the new republic. It was (seemingly) explicit, if not prescient, about the status of the native peoples in the rapidly settling up land it was meant to govern. "The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed," the law said sincerely. But many of the Indians in Ohio, which was the most important area to which the Ordinance applied, resisted adherence to post-Revolutionary War treaties that ceded to the

federal government their traditional lands north of the Ohio River. They lived there, moreover, in relatively large numbers. In a confrontation often called the Northwest Indian War, the Shawnee and the Miamis joined together to halt white confiscation of their land. The conflict proved costly to the Army, which lost some 800 soldiers in the course of two battles. A new force under General Anthony Wayne was sent into the field by President George Washington and defeated the Indians, and ensured that whites would be able to settle the land, as it were, unmolested.

Indian Removal Act, 1830

In 1825, President James Monroe discussed with Congress the possibility of comprehensive removal of Indians in the east across the Mississippi River, with the area between the Missouri and Red rivers as a kind of Indian Country. With the 1828 election of Andrew Jackson, an implacable foe of Indians, as president, the idea that such a policy could be translated into reality became much more possible. In fact, Jackson presented to Congress in 1830, an Indian Removal Bill giving the President of the United States the power to “provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi.” Although there was heavy opposition to the bill, the muddled state of understanding of Indian affairs made even some reformers and humanitarians support it on the view that the southern Indian groups in particular were in the direct path of the onrushing white immigrants clamoring for frontier land. Together with the menace to peace they represented, the callous attitude of the states toward their indigenous populations made it clear to those sympathetic to the Indians that removal was the only alternative to a calamitous confrontation. In some sense, then, the subsequent statute can be seen, as one historian put it, as “a cruel land grabbing device or an attempt to aid the native population.”

Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, 1831 and Worcester v. Georgia, 1832

Two landmark Supreme Court cases, occurring within a year of each other, demarcated the attitude toward Indians that the federal government would be taking. Equipped with the Indian Removal Act, the Jackson administration was mounting a campaign to kick the Cherokees out of Georgia. The Cherokees had done everything they could to adapt to the ways of white society and the American legal system. However, nothing could forestall the inexorable pressure on the tribe to give up their lands to white settlers. As removal loomed, the tribe took the state of Georgia to law. At the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Marshall held out a shred of hope to the tribe, but also further confused their status when he said that the Cherokees were “a political entity capable of managing its affairs,” and in the same breath, “a domestic dependent nation,” (as opposed to a distinct foreign state able to test Georgia’s extended jurisdiction). In his majority opinion, he said the Cherokee were “domestic dependents,” “wards” of the federal government, which was their “guardian.” Nonetheless, he ruled in 1832, in *Worcester v. Georgia* that the Cherokee nation was a political community immune to the laws of Georgia, and into which Georgians could not go without permission. The attitude of whites toward such hair splitting on the part of the Chief Justice was summed up by Andrew Jackson’s response to the *Cherokee Nation* opinion: “John Marshall has made his decision. Now let him enforce it.”

The ultimate goal was to relocate various tribes from their ancestral homes to parcels of lands established specifically for their habitation. In 1851, Congress had passed the Indian Appropriations Act authorizing the creation of Indian reservations in what is now Oklahoma. Relations between

settlers and natives had grown increasingly worse as the settlers encroached on territory and natural resources in the West.

Reservation treaties sometimes included stipend agreements. In such agreements, the federal government granted a certain amount of goods to a tribe yearly. The implementation of the policy was erratic, however, and in many cases the stipend goods were not delivered.

The Reservation “System”

The name "reservation" comes from the conception of the Indian tribes as independent sovereigns at the time the U.S. Constitution was ratified. Thus, the early peace treaties (often signed under the extreme pressure of military defeat) in which Indian tribes surrendered large portions of land to the U.S. also designated parcels which the tribes, as sovereigns, "reserved" to themselves, and those parcels came to be called "reservations." The term remained in use even after the federal government began forcibly to remove tribes from their ancestral lands and relocate them to soil far from their historical roots, often to places thought to be economically worthless. Such evaluations were, however, subject to change in the event that the reservation land was discovered to have, say, previously unknown mineral deposits. Then, of course, white needs would usually be found to trump Indian title—whether granted by treaty or statute—to the land.

Grant’s Peace Policy and the Reformers

Ulysses S. Grant served as president from 1869 to 1877. Although he has generally been regarded as inept and ineffective in office, his reputation has, in recent years, been rehabilitated, until, in some eyes, he has gained a good deal in stature. One area where regard for his competence has climbed is in Indian affairs. When he took office Grant began a strategy to deal with tribes known as the "Peace Policy," as a possible solution to the white-Indian strife and corruption long associated with the management of white-Indian relations.

The policy began with a reorganization of the federal Indian Service, long a sinkhole of corruption and incompetence, replete with venal agents, surrounded by land speculators, traders, eager white settlers, and others looking to make easy money from the government’s largesse. The policy called for the replacement of government officials by religious figures nominated by churches, to run the Indian agencies on reservations. Partly, the intent was to bring sensitive and ethical management to the enterprise, but also to teach Christianity to the native tribes. This aspect of Grant’s design, known as the "civilization" policy, was to prepare the tribes for American citizenship. Perhaps the president and his advisers, in light of the terrible abuses visited on the native peoples by corrupt Indian agents, rapacious traders, and land-hungry settlers, were past caring about constitutional principles, but the policy was an unconstitutional violation of the separation of church and state.

Grant drew mainly from the ranks of Quaker and later Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, and other clergy (this idea was actually known as the Quaker Policy) to staff the agencies, but if they were more honest and ethical than their predecessors, they were usually no more successful in running the reservations, so that the same old problems pervaded the system. In any case, the effort collapsed over time because of the pervasive corruption in the government—it was the age of the Spoilsmen, to use Richard Hofstadter’s colorful term—and

continued military encounters with some recalcitrant bands made the public skeptical that a less bellicose relationship could actually lead to peace. This was a perspective shared by many in Congress, especially those who represented states and districts in the west where the pressures of settlement and commercial exploitation of the land on which Indians dwelled could not be ignored by any politician.

Though the Peace Policy slowly disintegrated during Grant's presidency, its major premise remained somewhat vibrant. The animating idea had been not better, corruption-free management of Indian affairs alone, but also that better management would stabilize interactions introducing more trust into relations, eventually opening a pathway toward "civilization" for individual Indians and tribes. In the minds of the reformers inside and outside the government, this meant that rather than sharing reservation lands as in their traditional cultures, each Indian would be given a portion of land for his own use; that Indian children would be educated in reservation and boarding schools to white norms; and, above all, that Indians would be Christianized. The hope and goal was to eliminate conflict by making Indians, in effect, "red white men." The theorists and activists, including people like Helen Hunt Jackson of *Council Fires* magazine and author of the book *A Century of Dishonor*, a ferocious critic of the government's treatment of the native peoples, and William Welsh, an ardent Christianizer, were on the whole sincere in their beliefs. They were genuinely mortified by the treatment of Indians by the government and wanted to ameliorate the conditions in which they lived. They believed the civilizing policy to be both practical and humane. The term cultural imperialism had not yet been coined, but they were practicing it with a vengeance that would have dire consequences for those they wanted to help.

The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887

The rationale that underlay the civilizing mission of the reformers led directly to the Dawes Severalty Act, as many in Congress became convinced that the reformers were right, that Indian affairs could not continue to be managed as they traditionally had been.

The act was a pivot point in native-white relations because in promulgating it, Congress looked backward to the very beginnings of Indian-white relations in the seventeenth century, through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and saw nothing but misunderstandings, tensions, and wars. Believing it had reached in 1887 a sophistication and sensitivity about the nature of Indians and hoping to redress the legitimate grievances of a long suffering group, some politicians and advocates for Indians outside of Congress projected a future in which the red peoples would be reflections of ordinary white citizens in a rising land, sharing in the abundance and prosperity that numerous whites were already enjoying and which was just over the horizon for many more. In the end, the decision to create the Dawes Act unleashed one of the foremost instances in American history of a disaster of unintended consequences—at least as far as its intended beneficiaries were concerned.

The Indian General Allotment Act of 1887 (24 Stat. 388), better known as the Dawes Act after its main sponsor, Senator Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts, authorized the division of Indian reservations into separate tracts of land to be allotted to individual tribal members. The tracts were intended to be used for farming and cattle grazing. The tribes were not asked to consent to the new law nor were they consulted in its construction. It was made and implemented by whites alone. Under the Dawes Act, Native American heads of household were given allotments of 160 acres. Single adults received 80 acres; minors 40 acres. The amount of land given was doubled if the acreage was appropriate only for grazing. Married Native women were ineligible to receive land.

The act also allowed the government to negotiate with tribes for the sale of all tribal lands remaining after allotments were made to individual members. These so-called “surplus” lands, for which the US Government frequently paid less than \$1.00 per acre, were then sold to white homesteaders and corporations. A critical aspect of the act, and one of the primary reasons for its enactment, was the desire of its sponsors to clear up the citizenship status of Indians, an issue that had plagued relations between natives and whites from the beginning of the republic. Under the Dawes Act, the device used to resolve the issue was to confer citizenship on Indians who accepted allotments or lived apart from their tribe. However, from the first, the courts were at odds about the meaning of this aspect of the law. Were Indians who took allotments citizens as soon as they accepted them, or did they become citizens only after the twenty-five-year period during which their land was held in trust for them by the federal government? Some courts held to the former interpretation, others the latter.

When passed, the Dawes Act had flaws that Congress subsequently tried to remedy. For example, the act was amended in 1891 to treat all Native-American adults equally, regardless of their sex or familial status. However, the size of the allotments was cut in half. In another case, under the original law, some tribes were not covered by the Dawes Act. But, many of the tribes not covered by the act were subjected to allotment by later acts of Congress, such as the Curtis Act of 1898. This statute amended Dawes and authorized the allotment of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, and Creek reservations in Oklahoma. The Burke Act 1906 attempted to clarify the citizenship status of allottees, mandating that citizenship could only be attained at the expiration of the twenty-five year trust period or until he or she received a fee patent from the secretary of the interior. Also, any Indian who had taken up residence apart from the tribe and who had “adopted the habits of civilized life” was declared a citizen who was entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of citizenship.

The Burke Act bestowed on the Secretary of the Interior great power over the lives of the individual Indians who received allotments. It was he who decided if an Indian was competent to manage his own affairs. If he found in the negative, the individual would not be granted an allotment. The secretary was also empowered to adjudicate whom the legal heirs of a deceased allottee were and if he found that there were none, the allotted land could be sold.

III. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934

The Meriam Report

By the 1920s, everyone associated with Indian affairs was aware that the Dawes Act had created vastly more problems for individual Indians, tribes (such as they were), and, for that matter, the federal government, than it had resolved. Far from turning Indians into productive, upstanding citizens in the mold of whites, it had succeeded in making most of them more dependent on government than ever, and creating more occasions for corruption than even the old system had, because now there were many more avenues for individual whites to bilk individual Indians.

In 1926, the Institute for Government Research, known also as the Brookings Institution, sponsored a study of Indian affairs in the United States. The study group was headed by Lewis Meriam, an expert in government operations and efficiency. It also included experts in a variety of fields including law, economics, health, and agriculture. The Rockefeller Foundation rather than the federal government funded the report, which was an earnest attempt at unbiased analysis. Meriam submitted the final 847-page report to Hubert Work, Calvin Coolidge’s Secretary of the Interior, in

1928. The study, the first comprehensive report on the condition of the Indian peoples since the 1850s, was a damning indictment of the federal government's efforts to protect the native peoples and their land and resources. Commenting on Indian health, the report described alarming general death and infant mortality rates, as well as the prevalence of deadly diseases such as tuberculosis and serious ones like trachoma, both on and off reservations. It was severely critical of Indian health services and institutions such as hospitals and sanatoria.

On the Indian economy, the Meriam Report was scathing, noting that earned income was extremely low among native families. Making the connection between Indian poverty and the Dawes Act, the report asserted that the loss of land due to the statute was a significant factor of the poverty of the reservations, especially since the land left to the Indians was valueless. Indeed, the investigators said, "In justice to the Indians it should be said that many of them are living on lands from which a trained and experienced white man could scarcely wrest a reasonable living." They concluded that the economic basis of Indian culture had been "destroyed by the encroachment of white civilization."

The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, The Wheeler-Howard Act, or the Indian New Deal

The Wheeler-Howard Act, also known as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and often informally as the Indian New Deal, was the work largely of a reformer named John Collier, who was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Collier came from a prominent Atlanta, Georgia family. Educated at Columbia University and at the Collège de France in Paris, Collier began to think seriously while in school on the negative impact of industrialization on mankind. He criticized the materialism and individualism he observed around him. He asserted that Americans should work to reestablish a sense of community and responsibility. Thereafter, his career was animated by the attempt to realize the power of social institutions to make change in individuals and society. He tried his hand at magazine journalism, but in 1919 he went to California where he worked for the state Housing and Immigration Commission. At that post, he organized institutes to train settlement house workers who would teach Americanization to immigrants. In the 1920 Collier involved himself in one of the major fights of the day for Indian rights, the Pueblo land battle. Working on behalf of the members of the Taos Pueblo in northern New Mexico, he, the Indians, and other reformers fought through dubious machinations of the Interior Department, the U. S. Senate, and the town of Taos to get clear title to its lands restored, among which were sacred places, such as Blue Lake. The Pueblo won what turned out to be a pyrrhic victory, but the episode seems to have sealed Collier's devotion to the cause of reform in Indian country. He chaired the Indian Defense Association and served in other reform organizations.

As damning as the Meriam Commission report was, the Hoover Administration did nothing to rectify the problems it highlighted. In the teeth of the depression, there was little it could actually do. But when Franklin Roosevelt won the presidency in 1932, he named Harold Ickes, also an Indian affairs reformer, to be his Secretary of the Interior and John Collier to head the BIA. The naming of these two activists to key such key jobs, signaled that FDR was sympathetic to the reform agenda.

Collier wasted no time in implementing his ideas for reform. He and Ickes abolished the Board of Indian Commissioners, a body that clung to the assimilationist policies of the past. He closed twenty boarding schools. He prevailed on FDR to issue an executive order that reduced the influence of missionaries' influence over Indian education and putting Indian spiritual traditions on the same

level as Christian denominations. He called for the suspension of the Dawes Act which, he could see, had created a disaster of tragic proportions in Indian country: two-thirds of all Indians were either landless or owned pieces of land so small that it was impossible to make a living; in 1887, natives owned 138 million acres, but by 1934, they possessed only 52 million.

Collier crafted and Congress passed in June of 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act. This was the centerpiece of Collier's reform agenda. The act formally ended the policy of allotment and all remaining surplus lands were remitted to the control of Indian tribes. The trust period for Indian lands, 25 years under Dawes, was extended indefinitely, meaning that henceforth the federal government would protect Indian lands. The act promoted the idea that tribes should create written constitutions and by-laws, and to incorporate, which would enable them to own and manage property and do other kinds of business. In addition, the act authorized the tribes to establish their own governments with authority vested in elected councils and tribal chairmen. Also, the act provided for a revolving credit fund which tribes could draw on to capitalize their ventures. It tried to expand educational opportunities by providing funds for the improvement of schools in Indian country. The act also called for the preferential hiring of native peoples in the BIA.

While the IRA seemed to extend the prospect of a revolution in Indian affairs, it was by no means universally embraced. Conservative politicians and western interests began militating against it without delay. Perhaps more unsettling, there was widespread resistance to the IRA among Indians themselves. Some regarded it as yet another imposition of a white vision of what Indians should be on the people. Others saw it as a step backward in the advancement of Indians—a "back to the blankets" policy they called it. Still others recognized that even if they adopted constitutions, by-laws, tribal councils and the like, when all was said and done, their fate could still ultimately be controlled by a white man, the secretary of the interior.

While it can't be denied that the legislation was largely the brainchild of a white man with all the cultural baggage that implies, Collier's statute was anything but an attempt to diminish Indians, impede their advancement, or impose a white vision on them. First of all, it was ultimately the product of countless hours of testimony and debate among Indians themselves at venues across the country on the value of the proposed legislation. Second, what had emerged in draft form from Collier's brain was not informed by an attitude of cultural superiority, but of genuine respect for Indian peoples and their traditions and cultures. He had always encouraged traditional native crafts and arts and saw in their preservation not only economic possibilities, but the opportunity, when combined with progressive measures and outlook, the opportunity for Indian cultures to revive and offer a strong alternative to white culture.

Similarly, on education, Collier was contemptuous of the goal of the boarding schools to turn Indian children into whites. He told a group of students at the Haskell Institute in Kansas in 1934, that they need not look to the "shallow and unsophisticated individualism" of the modern white world. Rather they "should embrace the tribe, the nation, and the race," where they would find "ideas and passions that mattered." The eventual law contained a provision to funnel money to education.

Ultimately, 174 tribes consisting of about 130,000 voted to accept the IRA. Seventy-eight tribes, numbering about 86,000 individuals, rejected the legislation. Nevertheless, as noted, it was affirmed by Congress and signed by the president.

In the sweep of the history of the Great Depression, the Indian Reorganization Act does not stand out as an enormous achievement, in contrast to say, the Wagner Act, which brought the right to bargain collectively to millions of workers, or the WPA, with its many monumental public works projects that unleashed the enormous economic potential in various parts of the nation. In this, it was much like the other initiative aimed at bettering the lot of a specific minority group, African Americans. The so-called Negro New Deal, like its Indian counterpart, was too little, too late. If proof were needed, just two facts show how inadequate a basis for Indian success the IRA has been over the seventy-six years since its passage: Native Americans consistently have the highest poverty and unemployment rates of any group in the United States and they also have the highest rates of alcoholism.

Yet, remarkably, the IRA was a decisive break with the past and a long step forward in Indian-white affairs. For one thing, it offered a pathway to the recapturing of tribal cultures. Perhaps more important, it created a blueprint for tribal self-government, as well as a clearer relationship with the federal government, with the tribes holding some cards in terms of sovereignty and legal standing, the issue that had plagued both sides for a century and a half, to that point. The legal battles to come would suggest that nothing much was resolved by this aspect of the IRA, but, ironically, they testify to the fact that Indians now had standing to challenge the government—and in many cases, could prevail. This was a major achievement.

The IRA also lit a pathway for fragmented bands and individuals adrift in American society to re-tribalization and the warmth and safety of togetherness with one's own people and culture. The struggles of Native peoples in American society have continued unabated, testimony to the fact that no single piece of legislation, policy, or court decision could wipe away the decades of misunderstanding and alienation that characterized red-white relations for our entire history. But John Collier, through the IRA, was able to change the game enough to give help to some and hope to many. The IRA may not have been a great decision, but it was a good one.

IV. The Indian New Deal in Oregon

The same undercurrents of mistrust of the government, worry that their lack of worldliness would make them weak in dealing with the white world, and the fear that they might not be able to govern themselves, which had surfaced in other parts of the country, surfaced in Oregon when meetings were held to discuss the proposed legislation. In March of 1934, in excess of 500 tribal delegates representing 75 tribes in and outside of Oregon converged on the Chemawa Indian School near Salem for a field hearing on the proposed IRA. Newspaper accounts suggest that opinion on the law broke into two distinct camps: Elders and chiefs were mostly wary of the draft statute, arguing that it was another in a succession of feeble attempts at redress by whites. Younger Indians, however, were less skeptical and more optimistic that the IRA could unify Indians and bring them into modern American life. The officials who called the meeting—reputed to be the largest gathering of Indians more than 500 attended)—left with many ideas for improvement of the law.

Earlier, in February, leaders of the Siletz Confederated Tribes met to discuss the IRA and what their response to it should be. Ultimately, they adopted twelve stipulations that had to be met before they would embrace the IRA. Their core issues revolved around protecting the right of individual allottees to retain their lands and will them to their heirs, rather than to have such assets revert to the government after their death and then become community property. While there were other significant issues raised—the demand for money to establish self-government and the need for funds

to hire a doctor and build a hospital were two—there was also an underlying current of self-doubt, expressed as fear that the Indians would never be able to govern themselves. The final vote on acceptance was 37 endorsing the IRA, with 63 against it. The Siletz never organized under the IRA, a decision they would come to regret in later years.

The same lack of clarity about the future under the IRA, especially with respect to landholdings, plagued the deliberations of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. After a series of meetings across the reservation, a final one of the Tribal Business Council was held to determine whether or not the Warm Springs could support the law. It emerged here, as elsewhere, that there was great trepidation about the responsibilities of self-government and a definite concern about being charged with carrying out the tribal agenda in the wider world, a place with which few of the people present had much experience.

In the end, the issue of land and its disposition under the act was decisive. Should individuals be able to retain ownership of their plots or should all land revert to community property. In some cases, Indians had kept their allotments in trust, safeguarding them for the future. In other cases, people had sold their land, spent the proceeds. They depended on income from the lands to make up for shortfalls in their own earnings. The IRA's intention to reconstitute the reservation lands was appealing to such people, but anathema to those who had husbanded the resource. In the only one of seven votes favored Warm Springs support of the IRA.

Selected Bibliography

Beckham, Stephen Dow, ed. *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries* (2006)

Biolsi, Thomas. *Organizing the Lakota: The Political economy of the New Deal on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations* (1998)

Buan, Carolyn, et al. *The First Oregonians* (1991)

Marks, Paula Mitchell. *In a Barren Land: American Indian Dispossession and Survival* (1998)

Nabokov, Peter, ed. *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present* (1991)

Oberg, Michael Leroy. *Native America: A History* (2010)

Prucha, Francis Paul, ed. *Documents of United States Indian Policy* (1975)