

Coercive Assimilation Policy and Ethnic Identification Across Generations

Evidence from American Indian Boarding Schools

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States have often sought to reshape the culture and identities of their subjects



Source: Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers.

The most coercive assimilation effort in U.S. history?

*“A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one... I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. **Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.**”*

- R. H. Pratt, Annual Conference of Charities and Correction, 1892

The policy: removing Native American children from communities (reservations) to distant ‘off-reservation’ boarding schools.

The off-reservation school system

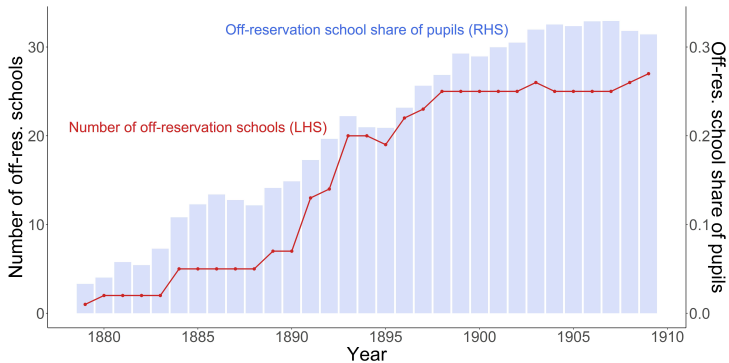
- Nation-wide in scope.
- Children removed for long periods.
- Western customs promoted over tribal ones.



Source: Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center.

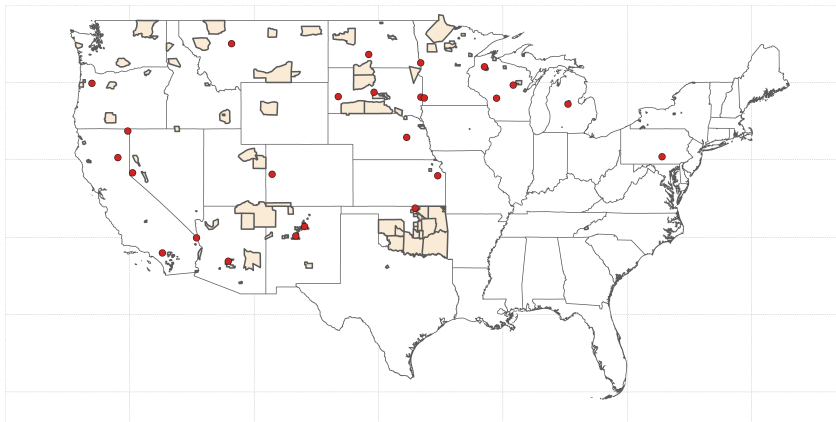
Rise of off-reservation schools

- First school opened in 1879 in Carlisle, PA.
- 27 schools in operation at peak of the programme.



Source: Own calculations using data from Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs

Distribution of off-reservation schools, 1910



Note: Red points represent off-reservation schools, and polygons represent reservation boundaries as at 1889.

Off-reservation schools differed from (on-)reservation alternatives

- 1 Located outside Native American communities.
 - Family visits rare, if at all.
- 2 Students remained in schools for 3 - 5 years.
 - Typically did not return home for summers, as in reservation boarding schools.
- 3 Schools were (deliberately) intertribal.
 - Students forced to use English.

This paper: Did off-reservation schools change the culture and identities of Native Americans?

Matching Native Americans to reservations

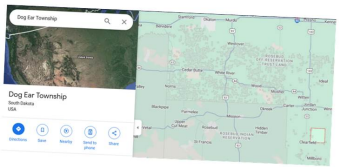
1. Start with location reported in 1910 census

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1910—INDIAN POPULATION

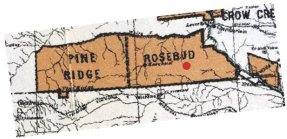
STATE *South Dakota*
COUNTY *Sioux*
TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY *Dog Ear* RESERVATION *None* NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE _____

NAME OF INSTITUTION _____ NAME OF INDIAN RESERVATION _____ ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE _____ DAY

SEX	AGE	COLOR	INDIAN BLOOD	INDIAN NAME	RESERVATION	TOWNSHIP	COUNTY	STATE	INDIAN BLOOD		INDIAN NAME	RESERVATION	TOWNSHIP	COUNTY	STATE
									PERCENTAGE	INDIAN NAME					
M	25	W	1/2	John	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	John	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
F	20	W	1/2	Mary	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Mary	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
M	18	W	1/2	James	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	James	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
F	15	W	1/2	Elizabeth	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Elizabeth	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
M	12	W	1/2	William	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	William	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
F	10	W	1/2	Anna	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Anna	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
M	8	W	1/2	Charles	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Charles	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
F	6	W	1/2	Lucy	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Lucy	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
M	4	W	1/2	Robert	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Robert	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
F	3	W	1/2	Martha	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Martha	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
M	2	W	1/2	John	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	John	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	
F	1	W	1/2	Elizabeth	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	100	Elizabeth	Sioux	Dog Ear	Sioux	South Dakota	



2. Geocode using Google Maps



3. Overlay on historical reservations

I match 75 per cent of Native Americans to a reservation.

Determining reservation treatment years

1. Identify tribes / reservations in school reports or attendance records

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR INDIAN YOUTH,
Genoa, Platte County, Nebraska, August 20, 1884.

SIR: I have the honor to report the opening of this school on the 20th of February, 1884, with 71 pupils from the Rosebud Agency, Dakota. On the 24th of the same month 13 arrived from the Yankton agency, Dakota. March 1, 27; March 30, 13; April 17, 5, and July 17, 2, all from the Rosebud Agency, joined the school; making an aggregate of 136. One not accepted, and sent back; 2 have since died; 1 removed to another school; 3 have run away, and not yet brought back, leaving 100. On 1st and 40 girls attending school.

STATEMENT OF FACTS WITH REFERENCE TO WORK ACCOMPLISHED

School filled to one more than the maximum allowed, viz, 76; of this are boys and 28 are girls, divided as follows: Puyallups, 20; Warm Springs, 13; Putes, 1; Pitt Rivers, 2; Spokanes, 19; Chehalis, 4; Nesquallys, 1; Oyster Bays, 2.

Form 10
Name Wife BlueSeeth No. 3158
 Tribe Siox Age 17 Sex 2
 Agency Rosebud S.D.
 Father BlueSeeth
 Arrived 11-4-83 Departed 7-8-89
 Cause entered _____
 Cause left _____
 Cause out _____
 Disposed Wm. Roche Disposed _____
 Address W. Rosepine, 5. Neb.
 Date 3-12-83

Schedule showing names of Indian reservations in the United States, agencies, tribes occupying or belonging to the reservation, etc.—Continued.

Name of reservation.	Agency.	Name of tribe occupying reservation.	Area in acres.	Approximate value.	Date of treaty, law, or other authority establishing reservation.
UTAH TERRITORY.					
Utah Valley	Utah	Great Ute, Paria, Ute, Yampa, and Grand	2,413,070	2,338	Executive order, October 2, 1861; act of Congress approved May 5, 1862, vol. 11, p. 82.
Ute	Utah	Ute	1,803,440	2,625	Executive order, January 8, 1862.
Total			3,216,510	4,963	
WASHINGTON TERRITORY.					
Columbia	Nisqually and Skokholm	Klaskanine, Taholah, and Tokeah	41,225	50	Order of the Secretary of the Interior, July 6, 1864.
Columbia		Chief Moses and his people.	2,263,440	3,000	Executive order, April 18, 1859; March 4, 1860, and Feb. 4, 1864, 33 Stat., p. 73.
Columbia	Columbia	Coeur d'Alene, Colville, Kalispell, Klaskanine, Lake Methen, Nespelem, Pong's, and Okanogan.	2,808,900	4,225	Indian appropriation act of July 1, 1854, 10 Stat., p. 73.
Issaquah	Tulalip	Spokane, Okanogan, Lemah, and Okanogan.	415,275	136	Treaty of Point Elliott, January 22, 1855, vol. 11, p. 827.
Makah	Neah Bay and Quinalai	Neah, Klaskanine, and Klaskanine.	20,440	30	Executive order, October 25, 1852, January 2, and Feb. 27, 1853.
Mackinac	Tulalip	Mackinac.	41,225	50	Executive order, January 10, 1857, and April 8, 1857.
Naselle	Nisqually and Skokholm	Mackinac, Nisqually, Puyallup, Skokholm, and Puget.	41,225	50	Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 26, 1851, vol. 11, p. 1107.
Port Madison	Tulalip	Duwamish, Nisqually, Puyallup, Skokholm, and Puget.	41,225	50	Executive order, January 25, 1857.
Puyallup	Nisqually and Skokholm	Mackinac, Nisqually, Puyallup, Skokholm, and Puget.	41,225	50	Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 26, 1851, vol. 11, p. 1107.
Quinalai	Neah Bay and Okanogan	Hoh, Kwiat, Kwiakwilt, and Kwiakwilt.	20,440	30	Treaty of Olympia, July 1, 1855, and January 25, 1856, vol. 11, p. 1107.

2. Match to reservations using schedules in Indian Office Annual Reports

I identify treatment years of 131 reservations or settlements.

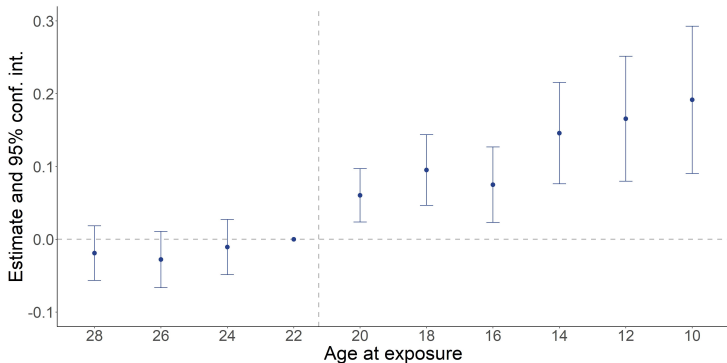
Empirical strategy

- Define **age at exposure**: age when reservation first treated.
 - For individual i from reservation r and birth cohort c :

$$age_at_exposure_i = year_treated_{r(i)} - birth_year_{c(i)}$$

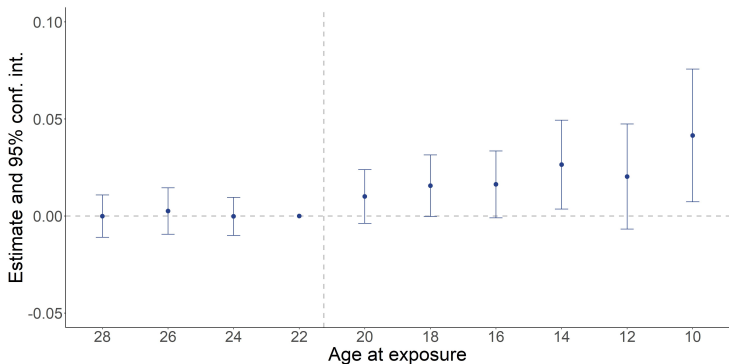
- Older individuals past schooling age unlikely to be recruited.
- I show that the age of 20 was a de facto cut-off.
- Two event studies (reservation + cohort FEs):
 - First gen. (head in 1910) → grew up during roll-out.
 - Second gen. (child in 1910, linked to 1940) → **father** grew up during roll-out.

First gen. – Off-reservation schools improved English proficiency



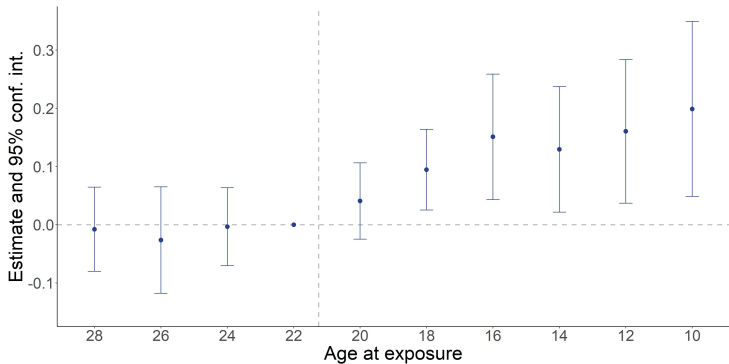
- Average effect = 0.122 (0.029)
- Dep. var. mean = 0.629

... increased rates of intermarriage with white Americans



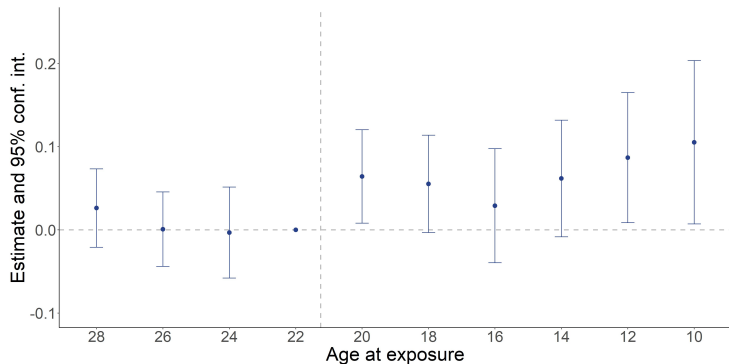
- Average effect = 0.022 (0.010)
- Dep. var. mean = 0.015

... led to 'western' name choices for children



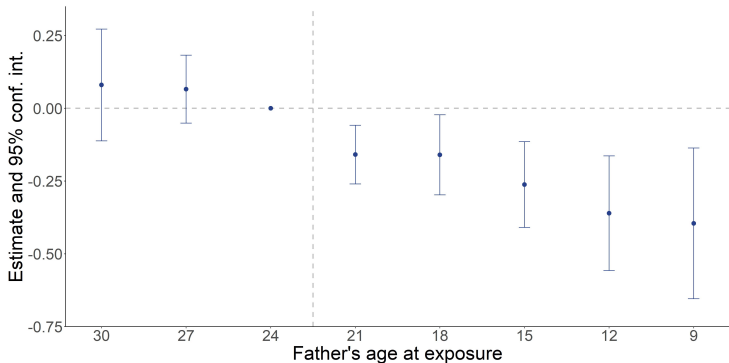
- Average effect = 0.123 (0.042)
- Dep. var. mean = 0.528

... increased prob. of being 'White' in 1920



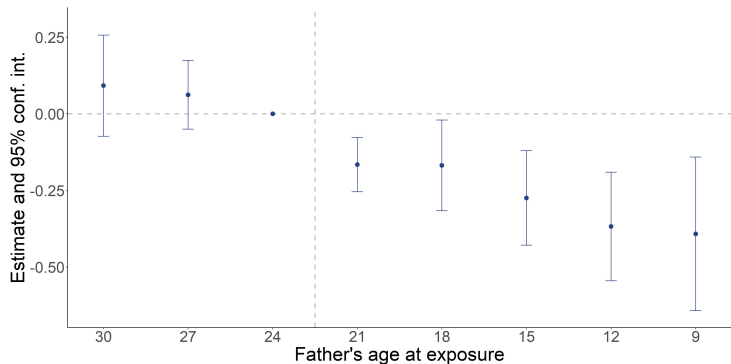
- Average effect = 0.093 (0.034) [0.006]
- Dep. var. mean = 0.144

Second gen. – Less likely to intermarry



- Average effect = -0.271 (0.094) [0.031]
- Dep. var. mean = 0.383

... and less likely to be counted as 'White' in 1940



- Average effect = -0.298 (0.101) [0.021]
- Dep. var. mean = 0.343

Mechanisms – community- and individual-level resistance

Community-level resistance

- Reversal only occurred on ethnically-homogeneous reservations.
(Where coordinated resistance was likely easier to achieve)

Individual-level resistance

- Attendees more likely to be members of first Native American-run civil rights group.
- ... and to maintain an attachment to reservation 20 years later.
(As did their adult children)

Summary and takeaways

- I study the effects of a highly-coercive attempt to assimilate Native Americans into western society.
- My paper is the first to examine indigenous boarding school programmes in their historical context.
- In doing so, I highlight the nuanced effects of the policy across generations.
 - Substantial assimilation in first generation.
 - Reversal of effects in second generation.

Ultimately, off-reservation schools seem to have strengthened the identities they sought to erase.

Thanks!

If any comments / suggestions come to mind, please get in touch at:
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