

Henry Roe Cloud, A Winnebago Indian Reformer: His Quest for American Indian Higher Education

by Steven J. Crum

IF THERE WAS AN HONOR roll identifying "Who's Who of Indian reform" in early twentieth-century America, Henry Roe Cloud would certainly be included.¹ He was a full-blood Winnebago Indian born in Nebraska in 1884. As a young man Roe Cloud was educated in a number of schools and earned more than one degree, including a bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1910 and a divinity degree in theology from the Auburn Theological Seminary in 1913. This background allowed him to become an ordained Presbyterian minister.² As an Indian leader, educator and reformer, Roe Cloud bridged the gap between two reform periods of early twentieth-century America, the pre-World War I Progressive period and the New Deal period of the 1930s.³

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1. For information about twentieth-century Indian leaders, see: Walter Williams, ed., *Indian Leadership* (Manhattan: Sunflower University Press, 1984); L. G. Moses and Raymond Wilson, *Indian Lives: Essays on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Native American Leaders* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985); R. David Edmunds, ed., *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). Unfortunately, these sources do not include Henry Roe Cloud.

2. "Department of the Interior Release," January 26, 1932, Kansas State Historical Society (hereafter cited as KSHS). I am indebted to (Anne) Woesha Cloud North, the daughter of Henry Roe Cloud. She provided valuable insight about her father's public life, and I relied upon her paper more than once. See Woesha Cloud North, "Autobiography of a Winnebago-Ojibwa Family," (unpublished paper, Fall 1979, copy in possession of author). I also am indebted to Thomas Sorci, advisor of American Indian students at the Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, who took the time to read this study and make comments. Sorci is now working on a full-scale biography of Henry Roe Cloud.

3. For an in-depth study of the Progressive and New Deal reform time periods, see Otis L. Graham, Jr., *An Encore for Reform: The Old Progressives and the New Deal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

Henry Roe Cloud's progressive stance was highly evident in 1911 when the Winnebago reformer and other Indians founded the Society of American Indians (SAI). Its members advocated many reforms in an effort to improve the socio-economic status of the American Indians. One reform pushed by the SAI, especially by Roe Cloud, the organization's vice-president of education in 1915 and 1916, was higher educational opportunities for young American Indians. Roe Cloud considered a college education essential because it was a means of making self-sufficient individuals of Indians. It was a way of helping them to adapt to the white man's world. To him education was the key to American Indian survival in an ever-changing and complex American society.⁴

Roe Cloud's progressive and reformist stance was also evident at the Thirty-Second Annual Lake Mohonk Conference of reformers, held in 1914 in upper New York. In addressing the audience he was critical of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), because it had given Indian students a limited education. Indian boys were taught printmaking and carpentry; girls were taught cooking and sewing. This education, which placed emphasis on vocational subjects and de-emphasized the academic, was equivalent to an eighth-grade education. Roe Cloud maintained that such an education made it impossible for Indian school graduates to pursue higher education. Although he did not recommend that the high school grades be added to the Indian schools run by the BIA, Roe Cloud did assert that at least five

4. Henry Roe Cloud, "Education of the American Indian," *The Southern Workman* 44 (January 1915):15-16. For information about the Society of American Indians, see Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 31-209.



A young Henry Roe Cloud is shown in this 1906 photograph as a senior at Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts. Four years later he had received a bachelor's degree from Yale University.

hundred Indians should be given the opportunity to attend college.⁵

Actually, even before the establishment of the SAI in 1911 and the annual Lake Mohonk conference in 1914, Roe Cloud already had an Indian education plan in mind. While a student at Yale University in 1908, he united with other individuals, including Dr. Walter C. Roe, a longtime white missionary to the Indian tribes in Oklahoma, and requested that Yale provide funds for the establishment of an Indian high school, or college preparatory school. Roe Cloud and the others had in mind an educational enterprise similar to the "Yale-in-China," the Chinese high school that was supported by Yale University. Such an Indian school, if established, would have the overall purpose of training Indian leaders who could grapple with the religious, economic, and health conditions among the Indians. Additionally,

5. *Report of the Thirty-Second Annual Lake Mohonk Conference on the Indian and other Dependent Peoples, 1914* (New York: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1914), 85-86. For a general overview of the history of Indian education, see Margaret Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928-1973* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977).

it would be a "center for Indian research," or a school to study the socio-economic conditions of the Indian tribes.⁶ Unfortunately, Anson Phelps Stokes, the secretary to the president at Yale, rejected their request, asserting that it would not be wise for his university to sponsor additional educational experiments.⁷

It was difficult for Henry Roe Cloud to raise funds to carry out his idea while a student at Yale University. So in the early years, the fund raising efforts were carried out by Walter C. Roe. Before his death in 1913, Roe had collected five thousand dollars for the enterprise. After 1913 the entire effort was taken over by Roe Cloud who had, by this time, completed his own higher education. In September 1915 the Winnebago reformer established the Roe Institute in Wichita, Kansas. Its name, in honor of Walter C. Roe, was later changed to the American Indian Institute (AII). The fact that this school was established represents a watershed in Indian educational history, for it was one of the first all-Indian high schools established in twentieth-century America. Furthermore, it was established at a time when the BIA did not provide high school training for young Indians. In fact, the Indian Bureau did not establish Indian high schools until the 1920s.⁸

One might ask why Henry Roe Cloud selected Wichita, Kansas, as the campus site for his Indian high school. He selected it because Wichita, at least to the Winnebago reformer, was considered to be the most centralized location among the Indians in the United States (roughly ninety-five percent of the Indian population lives west of the Mississippi River). He also selected the midwestern town because it was part of America's farm belt, and Roe Cloud wanted his students to acquire an understanding of agriculture, something that could make Indians self-sufficient. The campus of AII therefore consisted of three hundred acres of agricultural land.⁹

The American Indian Institute was an autonomous institution, having its own full-time staff and faculty who

6. Roe Cloud and others to Stokes, July 17, 1908, MSS. YRG 4-A, Box 23, Administrative Papers, Sterling Library, Yale University. Roe Cloud also wanted to establish a school modeled after the Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, a college preparatory school for young men.

7. Roe Cloud, "New Work for Indian Young People," *Women and Missions* 4 (September 1927):209; *Wichita Beacon*, March 25, 1928.

8. Roe Cloud, "From Wigwam to Pulpit" (unpublished paper, American Indian Institute Papers, Presbyterian Historical Society (hereafter cited as AII Papers, PHS), Philadelphia); *Wichita Beacon*, March 25, 1928; "Facts about the American Indian Institute," (Wichita: McCormick-Armstrong Press, n.d.), 1; "American Indian Institute," n.d., chronological sketch of AII, AII Papers, PHS.

9. "Facts about the American Indian Institute," 1; North, "Autobiography of a Winnebago-Ojibwa Family," 6.

taught high school courses along with instruction in religion and agriculture. Roe Cloud adopted a policy of hiring qualified and educated Indians because of his belief in an Indian "intelligence-trained."¹⁰ Three of the AII faculty were Indians: James Ottipoby (Comanche), a graduate of Hope College in Michigan who taught history; Roy Ussery (Cherokee), who taught science; and Robert Starr (Cheyenne-Arapaho), a graduate from Oklahoma State University, who taught agriculture.¹¹ In essence, Roe Cloud had inaugurated a policy of "Indian preference," something that the BIA did not implement until the decade of the 1930s and after.

Although Roe Cloud expressed an interest in the education of Indian females, his school, in existence in an age of the segregation of the sexes, was open only

to Indian males. Six students initially enrolled in the school in 1915. Enrollments gradually increased over the years, reaching an all-time high of forty-six in 1931. The majority of the students came from nearby Oklahoma because this state had the largest Indian population in the early twentieth century. The institute graduated its first student in 1919. The number of graduates always remained low because of the school's small size. Only six received high school diplomas in 1926 and nine graduated in 1932.¹²

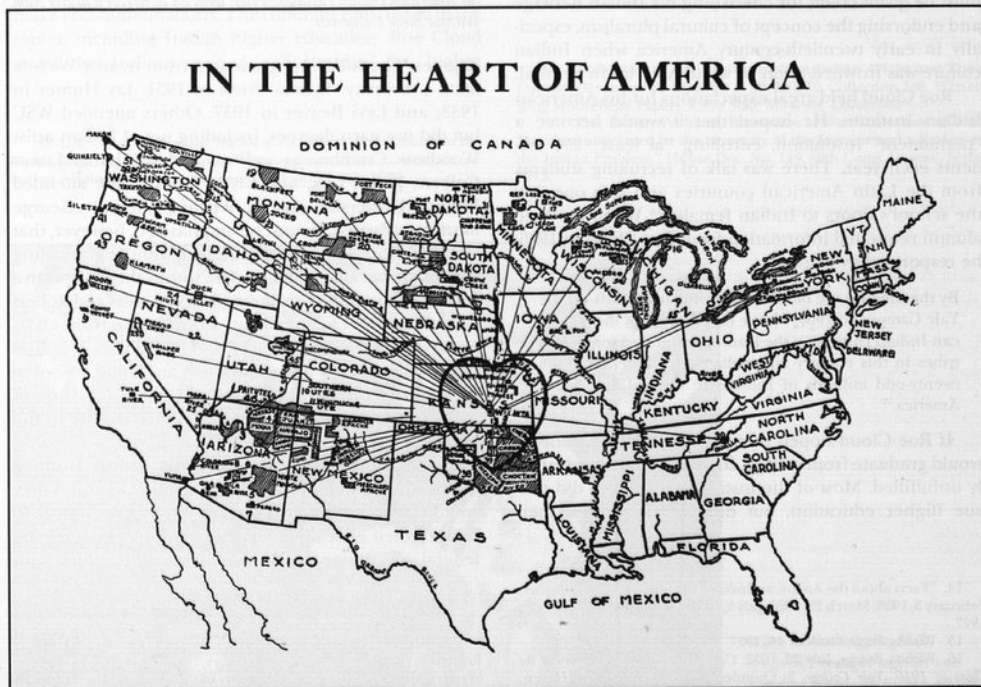
Initially, Roe Cloud insisted that Indian people, including his students, must not depend on the federal government as "wards," a status that had existed since the early nineteenth century.¹³ For this reason he did

10. "Conference of the Society of American Indians," *The Indian Leader* 29 (October 1915):5.

11. *Wichita Beacon*, July 5, 1931, February 3, 1926; "An Indian, An Educator, And a War Veteran," *Indians At Work* 9 (December 1941): 12.

12. *Wichita Daily Eagle*, December 5, 1920, May 21, 1926; *Wichita Eagle*, September 29, 1931; *Wichita Beacon*, March 25, 1928; "Graduating Class 1932 Commencement Exercises," 1932, AII Papers, PHS; "Statistical," *The Chieftain* 1 (1931-32):1.

13. William C. Canby, Jr., *American Indian Law in a Nutshell* (St. Paul: West Publishing Company, 1981), 15.



In a post-World War I pamphlet published by the American Indian Institute, this map was used to illustrate the school's location in relation to Indian reservations and potential students around the country.

not seek federal subsidies for his school in its earliest years of existence. To keep the AII in operation, Roe Cloud relied on the private sector. Funding for the school, as well as student financial aid, came from numerous sources, including some leading Wichita families, a few wealthy Indians, the Kansas Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and various church denominations such as the Methodists and Presbyterians.¹⁴

Although Roe Cloud accepted the white man's way-of-life, he remained native at heart and mind, speaking his tribal Winnebago language whenever the opportunity arose. In fact, one objective of his American Indian Institute was "to conserve and perpetuate native Indian arts" and other aspects of Indian culture. He told his students to take "pride in their heritage" and to collect Indian arts and crafts as a means of decorating their dormitory rooms. Roe Cloud and his staff sponsored annual campus Indian "pow-wows," an intertribal festivity consisting of Indian singing, dancing, and the eating of traditional foods.¹⁵ The Winnebago reformer must be given credit for cherishing his Indian heritage and endorsing the concept of cultural pluralism, especially in early twentieth-century America when Indian culture was frowned upon by white America in general.

Roe Cloud held great expectations for his American Indian Institute. He hoped that it would become a "permanent" institution, enrolling "at least" 250 students each year. There was talk of recruiting students from the Latin American countries and also opening the school's doors to Indian females.¹⁶ When the Yale alumni requested information from Roe Cloud in 1926, he responded by writing:

By the time we are old and grey, shaking hands on the Yale Campus in 1960, I hope to tell you that the American Indian Institute is the leading institution for Indian tribes in this country and radiates its influence to the twenty-odd millions of Indians in Central and South America.¹⁷

If Roe Cloud hoped that many of his AII students would graduate from college, his dream remained largely unfulfilled. Most of the institute's graduates did pursue higher education, but only a few earned their



Lyman Priest (left) and Russell Hunter were among the students at the American Indian Institute; Priest went on to receive a degree from Wichita State University.

degrees. The following graduated from nearby Wichita State University: Lyman Priest in 1931; Jay Hunter in 1933; and Levi Beaver in 1937. Others attended WSU but did not earn degrees, including noted Indian artist Woodrow Crumbo, as well as Richard Long, James Colbert, James Cox, and Clyde Davis. Some attended Friends University, also in Wichita, but only George Martin graduated. It must be emphasized, however, that many of those who attended college without graduating eventually became tribal leaders within their respective Indian communities, including Harry Coons and Robert Chaat.¹⁸ In the case of Chaat, a Comanche from Oklahoma, he attributed his success to his education at Roe Cloud's school: "It was while I was attending school at the American Indian Institute that I first got a vision of the great need and had a desire to give my life to the service of my own race."¹⁹

The major reason for American Indian Institute graduates not obtaining college degrees was that they could not muster enough funds from private sources to finance their education. Some of the students urged the federal government to provide them scholarships. John

14. "Facts about the American Indian Institute," 8; *Wichita Beacon*, February 3, 1926, March 25, 1928, July 5, 1931; *Wichita Eagle*, October 16, 1927.

15. *Wichita Eagle*, October 16, 1927, May 5, 1933.

16. *Wichita Beacon*, July 22, 1932; Carl A. Lohman, *A History of the Class of 1910, Yale College*, 3, *Quindecennial Record* (New Haven: Published under the Direction of the Class Secretaries Bureau, 1926), 109.

17. Lohman, *A History of the Class of 1910*, 109.

18. *Wichita Daily Eagle*, December 5, 1920, October 11, 1927; Robert P. Chaat, "Educational History," Robert P. Chaat Papers, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma; "The American Indian Institute Bulletin," 1926, AII Papers, PHS; "Lyman Priest," *The Indian Outlook* 9 (January-February 1932):4.

19. Chaat, "Educational History."

Charles (Navajo), a former AII student, testified before a congressional committee, stressing the need for federal support for Indian higher education:

I want to say that there ought to be provisions by the Government to help the Indian youth to continue toward an education in universities and colleges....As I said before, I have tried to go through college but for the lack of funds I could not go on....Unless the Government will help us along the line suggested I do not believe very many of us will be able to go through college.²⁰

In the end, Henry Roe Cloud, who for several years opposed federal financial support for Indian higher education, changed his mind. By the early 1920s he decided that Indian students, whose parents could not provide for their off-springs' education, needed government aid. In 1923, Roe Cloud, because of his prominence as an Indian leader, was asked to serve on the federal Committee of One Hundred. This reform group was organized and selected by Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work to study the "Indian problem" and to make recommendations. The committee discussed many topics, including Indian higher education. Roe Cloud stated that Indians needed "scholarships" for "higher

education."²¹ As a result, in its final report to the secretary of the interior, the committee made one recommendation dealing with higher education: "Furthermore, the Government should, where necessary, provide scholarships for able students who desire further education in high schools and colleges with a view of fitting them for positions of native leadership."²²

Obviously, the brief report produced by Henry Roe Cloud and the other members of the Committee of One Hundred was not taken seriously by public officials, including congressmen. None of its recommendations were carried out, and Hubert Work, Roe Cloud, and others were disappointed. However, Secretary Work was unwilling to give up. In 1926, three years after the 1923 report, he was still eager to publicize the Indians' plight and to deal with the "Indian problem." Work therefore requested that the Institute for Government Research, under the Brookings Institution, a privately run research firm in Washington, D.C., carry out a major investigation of Indian affairs. Lewis Meriam, employed by the

20. U.S. Congress, Senate, *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States*, Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs, 71st Cong., 3rd sess., 1931, pt. 18, at p. 9700.

21. Conference of Advisory Council on Indian Affairs and Their Friends, December 12-13, 1923, p. 30, Box 70, Collection 106, Warren King Moorehead Papers, Ohio State Museum, Columbus.

22. "The Indian Problem, Resolution of the Committee of One Hundred appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and a Review of the Indian Problem," House Doc. No. 149, 68th Cong. 1st sess., Serial 8273.



When a Washington, D.C., conference brought together one hundred experts on Indian affairs, Roe Cloud (left) was photographed with President Calvin Coolidge.



This 1930 view of the American Indian Institute in Wichita shows the campus looking south.

institute, was appointed to organize and head a ten-member research team in late 1926.²³

The Meriam survey staff included one American Indian, Henry Roe Cloud. He undoubtedly was selected because of his reformist stance and his role as an American educator. While conducting its investigation, the staff placed importance on Indian education. This was a result of Roe Cloud's influence. It was also a result of the fact that seven of the ten members were from the academic community: six were employed as college professors and, of course, Roe Cloud was principal of the American Indian Institute.²⁴

While visiting Indian agencies, reservations, and Indian communities from November 1926 to June 1927, Roe Cloud and the others encouraged young Indians to pursue a higher education. As a case in point, in November 1926, the staff visited the Indian students at the University of Oklahoma. The visit was undoubtedly arranged by team member Edward E. Dale, professor and chair of the university's history department. One observer pointed out that Henry Roe Cloud "impressed up [*sic*] the Indians' minds the value of a university education and urged all those able to take advantage of the opportunities offered them."²⁵ In the same month the team visited the Northern Paiutes living in the Owens Valley region of California. Roe Cloud and Dale encouraged a young local Paiute, William Buff, to attend

the American Indian Institute and then pursue further study at the University of Oklahoma.²⁶

In 1928 the lengthy report written by the Meriam survey staff was published under the title of *The Problem of Indian Administration*. The "Meriam Report," as it is popularly known, covered the broad spectrum of Indian affairs. Owing to Roe Cloud's influence, coverage was given to the subject of higher education. The staff was convinced and provided evidence that the Indian race was intellectually "capable" of being educated at the highest levels; many graduates of Roe Cloud's American Indian Institute had pursued a college education, and there were approximately two hundred Indian students attending the University of Oklahoma. The Meriam staff emphasized in its report that "more and more Indian youth will go on for education of college and university grade" in the years to come. The staff favored this trend and encouraged Indians to pursue it. Yet, they were fully aware that Indian people were poor and could not provide for the education of their children. The staff members therefore recommended that Indian students desiring higher education be provided with federal "scholarships and loans."²⁷

The Meriam survey staff made other recommendations concerning Indian higher education in its published report. The members opposed those reformers who wanted one of the BIA's schools converted into an Indian college or university. Instead, they stressed that all BIA schools remain as high schools, offer Indian students a quality education, and prepare them to enter standard Anglo-American colleges and universities. The staff favored the Indian Bureau's newly established

23. *The Problem of Indian Administration*, Institute for Government Research (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928), vii-x, 56-85. For an overview of the Meriam Report, see Donald T. Critchlow, "Lewis Meriam, Expertise, and Indian Reform," *The Historian* 43 (May 1981): 325-44.

24. *Ibid.*; "Indian Commission Visits Indians Attending University of Oklahoma," *The American Indian* (Tulsa, Okla.) 1 (November 1926): 5.

25. "President of the American Indian Institute Speaks to O.U. Students," *The American Indian* (Tulsa, Okla.) 1 (December 1926): 14.

26. Donald L. Parman, ed., "Lewis Meriam's Letters During the Survey of Indian Affairs, 1926-1927 (Part II)," *Arizona and the West* 24 (1982): 345.

27. *The Problem of Indian Administration*, 352-53, 419.



Henry Roe Cloud and his wife, Elizabeth Bender Roe Cloud, are shown with their daughters Elizabeth Marion, Ramona Clark, Lillian Alberta, and Anne Woesha.

policy of allowing Indian students to stay in the BIA schools while attending nearby colleges. It also recommended that "wealthy Indians," interested non-Indians, private organizations, tribal groups, and colleges and universities provide Indian students with scholarships and loans for higher education. Upon graduating from college, these Indian college graduates could be allowed to work in the BIA system as teachers, doctors, engineers, and other professionals. The staff also recommended that the BIA hire a "guidance and placement specialist" who would collect and disseminate information regarding higher education opportunities for Indian students.²⁸

The Meriam Report staff took a deep interest in the education of Indian females, again because of the influence of Henry Roe Cloud. They identified Indian female students who had expressed an interest in higher education, some of whom were staying in the BIA schools while attending nearby colleges. The staff encouraged this development and specified that "Indian women doctors, nurses, teachers, and social workers with thorough professional training could do more for their people." Knowing that Indian females, like their male counterparts, came from poor families, the staff recommended that they be given financial assistance from the federal government, women's clubs, and private organizations.²⁹ The fact that Indian women were given attention in the Meriam Report is significant because this was the first time in the twentieth century

that a reform group took a major interest in the status of Indian females. In this respect, Henry Roe Cloud's influence was highly evident. And it must be stressed that his four daughters later attended or graduated from college: Elizabeth Marion (Mrs. Edward Hughes) from Wellesley College; Lillian Alberta (Mrs. Leo Freed) attended the University of Kansas for two years; Anne Woesha (Mrs. Robert North) from Vassar College; and Ramona Clark (Mrs. Raleigh Butterfield), also from Vassar.³⁰ Some years later, in 1979, daughter Anne Woesha, who had earned two masters's degrees, including one from Stanford, and a Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska, reminisced on the impact that her father, as well as mother, had upon her life:

My parents wanted their children to have the best education possible for them, and these were the eastern women's colleges which served women, as Yale and Harvard served the men. . . . I had received the message during my upbringing that I should assume the leadership role for my people. More than that, I should work to "save my race." The roles my parents lived out, their leadership for Native Americans, their examples as Christians, their participation in the Wichita community as exemplary citizens, and their recognition even on the educational efforts. . . . My personal experiences as a Native American reflect the devotion to education of my parents who were well educated themselves.³¹

The impact of the Meriam Report of 1928 soon became apparent. Beginning in 1929 the Hoover Admin-

28. *Ibid.*, 419-21, 642-43.

29. *Ibid.*, 641-44.

30. *Wichita Eagle*, April 28, 1950; *Sunday Oregonian*, Portland, Ore., August 20, 1944.

31. North, "Autobiography of a Winnebago-Ojibwa Family," 1, 7.

istration, in office from 1929 to early 1933, and deeply influenced by the report, initiated reforms to improve the socio-economic status of the American Indians. Specifically, the administration made Indian educational reform, including opportunities to pursue a college education, a major objective. In 1930, Congress established an annual \$15,000 educational loan fund for Indian college students majoring in "nursing, home economics, forestry," and other disciplines. And in 1932 it established an annual \$15,000 tuition fund to defray their tuition.³²

In addition to the funds for Indian students, the Hoover Administration established a policy of hiring college educated Indians in 1931. One such person was Ruth Muskrat Bronson, an Oklahoma Cherokee who graduated from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. She held the position of guidance and placement officer, a position created as a result of the Meriam Report. Her responsibilities were to administer the higher education loan and grant funds for Indian students and to advise these students with respect to their academic goals.³³ With the backing of the Indian Bureau and the Brookings Institution, the same private organization that produced the Meriam Report, Bronson, in October 1931, initiated the first major investigation of Indian higher education. In her report, finished in May 1932, entitled "Survey of the Opportunities for Advanced Education of Promising Indian Youth," she gave detailed information about several Indian schools visited, including Henry Roe Cloud's American Indian Institute. Bronson noted that several AII students possessed deep aspirations of pursuing a higher education. She noted that one "wishes to go to Wichita University," another "would like to go to Bacone," a third "plans to go next year to Oklahoma University," and another student "wishes to go to the College of Emporia or the University of Wichita."³⁴ As already specified, the institute was a preparatory school to encourage and prepare young Indians for college.

Ironically, it was federal support for Indian higher education which contributed to the demise of Henry Roe Cloud's American Indian Institute. In carrying out its policy of hiring educated Indians, the BIA hired Roe

Cloud in September 1931.³⁵ The Winnebago reformer no longer had the time to give to his school, so he turned it over to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. However, he remained indirectly involved in the school's

35. "Department of the Interior Release," KSHS; Memorandum, Mary Steer to E. Graham Wilson, November 22, 1927, AII Papers, PHS.



This drawing, combining a traditional white view of the American Indian with a scene of economic growth in early twentieth-century America, appeared on the back cover of an American Indian Institute pamphlet that was intended to raise funds for the school. Accompanying text stated that as part of the institute's "vision of the future" graduates would be "... a force for the conservation of the truest of Americanisms,—the aboriginal American."

32. *U.S. Statutes at Large* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931), 46:876; *ibid.* (1933), 47:103; *ibid.* (1934), 48:371-72.

33. Marion E. Gridley, *Indians of Today* (Chicago, 1947), 14; Alison Bernstein, "A Mixed Record: The Political Enfranchisement of American Indian Women During the Indian New Deal," in Williams, *Indian Leadership*, 13-20.

34. "Survey of the Opportunities for Advanced Education of Promising Indian Youth," Central Classified Files (hereafter cited as CCF), 10972-33-General Services-800, Record Group 75, National Archives, Washington, DC.

affairs after 1931. Roe Cloud supported the Presbyterian Church's proposal to end the high school program and turn the school into a hostel or boarding place for students attending local Wichita high schools and colleges. He encouraged the BIA to provide federal funds to those institute students accepted into various colleges. He supported the idea of having the school headed by another college educated Indian. He wanted the school to become coeducational.³⁶ But no longer being directly connected to the school, Roe Cloud's suggestions had little if any impact.

It was also the inclusion of the high school grades in the BIA schools, something supported by the Meriam Report, which brought Roe Cloud's institute to an end. Up to 1923 the AII was only one of three Indian high schools in the nation. Indians graduating from the federally operated Indian schools transferred to the AII to prepare for college. But beginning in 1923 the BIA added the high school grades to six of its large off-reservation schools.³⁷ There was no longer the need for Indian students to attend the AII when they could go elsewhere closer to home. As a result, the AII high school program was eliminated in 1933 and the campus became a boarding place for Indians attending the public high schools and colleges of Wichita, Kansas. As already pointed out, at least four students graduated from local Wichita colleges in the 1930s after receiving federal support. The American Indian Institute, undergoing financial problems in the 1930s, finally closed its doors in 1939.³⁸

Henry Roe Cloud's first position as a federal employee was that of "Field Representative" of the BIA from September 1931 to August 1933. His task was to strengthen ties between the BIA and the reservation-based Indian communities.³⁹ He went beyond this assignment, however, and inaugurated his own Indian education policy called the "education program" which placed emphasis on advanced education for Indians and the hiring of college educated Indians by the government. In April 1932, Roe Cloud suggested that the BIA build

two dormitories in Browning, Montana, so that homeless Blackfeet Indian students could attend local public high schools. In August 1933 he encouraged the BIA to hire Earle Boyd Pierce, a highly educated Cherokee attorney who had graduated from the University of Oklahoma.⁴⁰

Henry Roe Cloud's employment in the federal government did not end with the Hoover Administration in 1933, for it extended into the New Deal administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt from 1933 to 1945. Because of his involvement in Indian education, the Winnebago reformer was chosen in August 1933 as superintendent of Haskell Institute, the largest off-reservation high school run by the BIA. He therefore became the first full-blood Indian to head such a school.⁴¹ While serving as superintendent, Roe Cloud carried out the principles established in the American Indian Institute. He encouraged Haskell students to take pride in their Indian heritage. Because the Roosevelt Administration did not oppose cultural pluralism, Roe Cloud went as far as to introduce Indian oriented courses into the school's curriculum, including Indian history and art. He also encouraged the students to pursue a higher education. By 1935 twenty-eight students were attending the nearby University of Kansas while living on the Haskell campus, and financing their education with federal educational loans and other assistance.⁴² At least one Indian leader assumed that Haskell might become an Indian college under Roe Cloud's direction. But Roe Cloud maintained that Haskell should remain a high school to prepare those few highly motivated students to enter already existing colleges and universities.⁴³ Overall, while serving as superintendent, Roe Cloud was committed to the training of "Indian leadership" and argued repeatedly that "Haskell Institute is definitely committed to the preservation of Indian race culture."⁴⁴

While serving under the Roosevelt Administration, Roe Cloud adhered to his reformist stance that Indian

36. Roe Cloud to Edna Voss, March 12, 1932; Roe Cloud to Mary Stewart, June 29, 1932; Roe Cloud to William Pouch, August 11, 1933, AII Papers, PHA; Roe Cloud to Voss, December 12, 1934, Haskell Records, Box 161A, Record Group 75, National Archives-Kansas City Branch, Kansas City, Mo. (hereafter cited as NA-KCB).

37. U.S. Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1926* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1926), 7, and *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1929* (1929), 33-37.

38. *Wichita Eagle* (evening), May 4, 1939.

39. Department of the Interior Release, KSHS.

40. Roe Cloud to Rhoads, April 20, 1932, CCF, 21991-32-Blackfeet-150, RG 75, National Archives; Roe Cloud to Collier, August 11, 1933, Haskell Records, NA-KCB.

41. Roe Cloud, "Haskell and Her New Frontiers," *The Indian Leader* 37 (June 8, 1934):16; "Henry Roe Cloud New Superintendent of Haskell Institute," *The Indian Leader* 37 (September 8, 1933):6.

42. Loretta Granzer, "Education at Haskell Institute, 1884-1937," (master's thesis, University of Nebraska, 1937), 219, 229-31.

43. A. A. Exendine to Roe Cloud, August 23, 1933; Roe Cloud to Exendine, September 1, 1933, Roe Cloud Correspondence, Haskell Records, NA-KCB.

44. Roe Cloud, "Haskell and Her New Frontiers," 16.

people must "adapt" to changing times and accept new ideas. He therefore favored the Roosevelt New Deal of the 1930s.⁴⁵ One reform endorsed by Roe Cloud was the Wheeler-Howard Bill of 1934. It was the work of John Collier, the commissioner of Indian affairs of the BIA under Roosevelt from 1933 to 1945. Of course, Collier was influenced by the Meriam Report. The bill had four titles. Title I, "Indian Self-Government," pro-

posed that the tribes organize strong, viable tribal governments and incorporate themselves. These incorporated governments could then borrow from a revolving credit loan fund and develop tribal economic enterprises. Title II, "Special Education for Indians," encouraged the "study of Indian Civilization." In addition, it specified that Congress would appropriate \$15,000 to create a scholarship fund. Indian college students having one-fourth or more Indian blood could apply for the scholarships to major in professional/technical areas such as forestry, engineering, law, and medicine. Furthermore, each recipient also would be provided

45. Roe Cloud, "Indian Recovery," *The Indian Leader* 37 (December 15, 1933):1.



Roe Cloud supported the New Deal's controversial Wheeler-Howard Bill, which eventually was passed by Congress as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Roe Cloud is shown casting the first Winnebago vote for the IRA.

with an educational loan to be repaid in increments after graduation. Title III, "Indian Lands," proposed the elimination of the land allotment policy of the Dawes Act of 1887, a policy which caused the tribes to lose millions of acres of land. Any remaining "surplus land" under the Dawes Act would be returned to the tribes. New reservation land also would be purchased for homeless Indians and those who lost land under the Dawes Act. And Title IV, "Court of Indian Affairs," advocated the formation of the Indian court system to handle legal problems arising on Indian reservations.⁴⁶

It was no surprise that Henry Roe Cloud stood behind the Wheeler-Howard Bill, especially the higher education section. In fact, at more than one Indian meeting in early 1934, he emphasized the importance of higher education. Roe Cloud stated at the Northwest Indian Congress, held in Portland in March 1934, that the legislation would make it possible to send Indians "to universities, colleges, and schools of medicine, of law, engineering, agriculture, and other institutions."⁴⁷ At the Hayward, Wisconsin, meeting of April 1934, he stated: "the aim being to see that the Indian children get the standard training that is afforded the white children to enable them to enter universities and colleges."⁴⁸ And at the meeting in Martin, South Dakota, also in April, he pointed out to the Sioux: "Your young people will receive scholarship loans in the best universities in America."⁴⁹

As pointed out by critics in the 1930s, as well as by recent scholars, the Wheeler-Howard Bill was a highly controversial piece of legislation, especially its land and court provisions. It received mixed reactions from both Indians and non-Indians. In an effort to reduce or eliminate the criticism and to gain support for the bill, Collier sponsored regional Indian congresses and smaller Indian meetings throughout Indian country in early 1934.⁵⁰ Because Roe Cloud favored the bill, Collier called

upon him to serve as moderator at several of these meetings and also to campaign on behalf of the legislation. At one of these gatherings, held in South Dakota in May 1934, Roe Cloud supported the bill in its entirety, stressing the importance of higher education for Indians, tribal "self government," the acquisition of land for landless Indians, the need for an Indian court which could rely on professionally trained Indian attorneys, the preservation of "Indian customs," and, of course, the elimination of the land allotment policy under the Dawes Act.⁵¹

Eventually, the Wheeler-Howard Bill, after its controversial aspects were eliminated, passed both houses of Congress. What emerged from this legislation was the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), signed into law on June 18, 1934, by Franklin D. Roosevelt. The IRA had a higher education provision, but it was different from the original bill. Congress was given the authority to appropriate \$50,000 annually for educational loans for Indian students. Of course, this was much more than the \$15,000 scholarship fund specified in the bill. Deleted from the law was the provision to provide scholarships for Indian students. Obviously, during the Great Depression in the 1930s, Congress was not in the mood to make outright grants to Indians. However, the IRA, with its \$50,000 educational loan fund, provided another source of aid to Indian college students.⁵²

One might ask why Roe Cloud stood behind John Collier who turned out to be one of the most controversial commissioners in the history of the BIA. It was because many of his reformist ideas coincided with those of Collier, as well as other Roosevelt Administration policies. In fact, well before the Indian Reorganization Act, Roe Cloud was emphasizing some of its provisions. As already specified, while serving as a member of the Committee of One Hundred in 1923, as well as the Meriam Report staff of 1926 to 1928, he favored federal support for Indian higher education. While still serving as principal of the American Indian Institute in 1931, Roe Cloud took time out of his administrative schedule to severely criticize the Dawes Act of 1887, calling it one of the "economic blunders of our Government."⁵³ Of course, Roe Cloud, who kept in touch with his people and spoke the Winnebago language fluently, encouraged his students to believe in their own Indianness, another concept stressed by Collier. In general, Roe

46. "A Bill, S. 2755 (73rd Cong., 2nd sess.)," John Collier Papers, microfilm, reel 29, Yale University. There are several good sources on the Indian New Deal, including the following: Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); and Lawrence C. Kelly, "The Indian Reorganization Act: The Dream and the Reality," *Pacific Historical Review* 46 (August 1975):291-317; Vine Deloria, Jr., and Clifford M. Lytle, *The Nations Within: The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

47. "Minutes of the Northwest Indian Congress," March 8, 1934, Collier Papers, microfilm, reel 30, frame 0546, Yale University.

48. "Testimony Taken at Hayward, Wisconsin," April 23, 24, 1934, Collier Papers, microfilm, reel 30, Yale University.

49. "Supt. Roe Cloud's Address to the Sioux," *The Indian Leader* 37 (May 4, 1934):1.

50. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform*, 145.

51. "Supt. Roe Cloud's Address to the Sioux," 1-5.

52. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade*, 145-159; *U.S. Statutes at Large* (1934), 48:986.

53. Roe Cloud, "Economic Background for Self-Support," *The Indian Outlook* 3 (February 1931):3.

Cloud spoke favorably of Collier and the (Indian) New Deal. When asked about his assessment of the commissioner in May 1934, Roe Cloud responded:

I think that John Collier is maneuvering the Indian race and our Government in such fashion as to bring about a situation where the deep-seated characteristics and the nobilities of the Indian can be molded anew into a fresh vigor and life. Somehow, if I cannot explain it in words or define it in specific terms, I feel that John Collier has got a real program.⁵⁴

By accepting the major ideas and policies advanced by Collier, Roe Cloud had become a New Dealer. In fact, he was one of several "Old Progressives" of the pre-World War I era who accepted the Rooseveltian New Deal in the 1930s.⁵⁵ In examining Henry Roe Cloud as a Progressive and as a New Dealer, it can be seen he made only one marked change. He gave up his Progressive laissez-faireism stance and accepted the New Deal position of federal intervention into the American economy, including federal support for Indian higher education. He made this change because of his reformist stance—that Indian people must "adapt" to changing times and accept new ideas.

In his later years Roe Cloud firmly believed that the federal government had a responsibility to assist American Indian people. For this reason he chose to spend his remaining years as a BIA educator and employee. From 1935 to 1940 he held the position of "Representative-At-Large" of Indian education. One of his tasks was to urge Indian tribes to accept the (Indian) New Deal and to vote in favor of the IRA. From 1940 to 1950 he served as superintendent of the Umatilla Agency in Oregon, assisting the Umatilla Indians to adapt to the policies of the Collier administration. It was in Oregon where Roe Cloud died in 1950, serving his Indian race, a quest which he started in the pre-World War I Progressive period.⁵⁶

In conclusion, what can be said of Henry Roe Cloud, the leader, educator, and reformer? During his lifetime he was recognized for his accomplishments. In 1932, Roe Cloud was awarded an honorary doctorate by the College of Emporia in Kansas.⁵⁷ In 1935 the Indian Council Fire, an urban-based organization in Chicago,

consisting of both Indians and non-Indians, awarded him the Indian Achievement Medal.⁵⁸ This Who's Who award was given to the individual who contributed significantly to the Indian people. It must be emphasized that Roe Cloud out-pollled other notables for this award, including John Collier and Sen. Lynn Frazer of North Dakota.

Because of his involvement in Indian reform, Roe Cloud has been regarded as one of the foremost Indians in early twentieth-century America. One can find many positive comments about him. In 1928, Lewis Meriam, director of the Meriam Report, praised his input and involvement by stating: "Everyone learned to look to Henry Roe Cloud for friendly criticism and advice. . . . It is impossible for me to express in words the extent of our obligations to Mr. Cloud."⁵⁹ In 1935 the *Indian Leader*, the official newsletter of Haskell Institute (now Indian Junior College), stressed that Roe Cloud was the "foremost Indian educator" in America and "has a long record of tenure in educational and governmental fields to his credit."⁶⁰ Even recent commentators have made positive assessments of Roe Cloud. In their book, *The Nations Within*, political scientists Vine Deloria, Jr., and Clifford Lytle have labeled Roe Cloud as a "prominent" and "widely known and respected Indian figure."⁶¹ At a conference held in Sun Valley, Idaho, in 1983, Benjamin Reifel, a former U.S. congressman from South Dakota, said the following about Roe Cloud: "I was quite impressed with him."⁶²

Because of his recognized status as an Indian leader, more than one person maintained that Roe Cloud should be commissioner of the BIA. Just after the completion of the Meriam Report, Lewis Meriam suggested the possibility of Roe Cloud for this position.⁶³ About the same time, Edward Dale, Oklahoma historian and another member of the Meriam Report staff, wrote to Roe Cloud and stated: "I have long thought of the

58. "Doctor Henry Roe Cloud, Winner of Indian Achievement Medal," *Indians At Work* 3 (November 15, 1935):31-32.

59. Lewis Meriam to All Board of Trustees, April 30, 1928, Hugh Scott Papers, Box 50, Library of Congress.

60. "Dr. Roe Cloud Wins Achievement Medal," *The Indian Leader* 39 (October 11, 1935):3.

61. Deloria and Lytle, *The Nations Within*, 41, 95.

62. Quoted in Kenneth R. Philp, *Indian Self-Rule: First-Hand Accounts of Indian-White Relations from Roosevelt to Reagan* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1986), 55.

63. Lewis Meriam to E. E. Dale, September 25, 1928, Edward E. Dale Papers, Box 45, Folder 11, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma (hereafter cited as WHC).

54. Roe Cloud to Mary Louise Mark, May 8, 1934, Haskell Records, Box 161A, NA-KCB.

55. Otis Graham, *An Encore for Reform*.

56. *Wichita Eagle*, July 30, 1939, October 30, 1950.

57. Lohmann, *History of the Class of 1910*, Yale University (1935), 55.



In 1935, Henry Roe Cloud was honored by the Indian Council Fire with the Indian Achievement Award.

possibility of 'catapulting' you into the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs."⁶⁴ But in the end, his associates felt that Roe Cloud should not head this office, specifying that he was too young and did not have the necessary administrative experience. Additionally, one of the Meriam staff members aspired the position for himself.⁶⁵ Later, in February 1933, just before Franklin D. Roosevelt stepped into office, several Navajo leaders of the Navajo Returned Student's Association favored Roe Cloud for the position of commissioner.⁶⁶ Roe Cloud never held this office, however. America was not ready for an American Indian to head the BIA in the early twentieth century. In fact, it was not until the mid-1960s that the government allowed highly

qualified Indians to be commissioner of the BIA, an agency in existence since 1824.⁶⁷

As a public figure Roe Cloud, on occasion, received criticism. In 1914, Richard Pratt, the founder of the BIA boarding school system and an advocate of assimilation of the Indians, criticized Roe Cloud for wanting to establish what later became the American Indian Institute. Pratt felt that Indians aspiring to higher education would be better off attending integrated schools.⁶⁸ Nearly all the criticism Roe Cloud received was because of his association with John Collier and the (Indian) New Deal. While the Wheeler-Howard Bill was being discussed in early 1934, one tribal leader, George Whirlwind Soldier, asserted that Collier was using Roe Cloud: "The

64. Dale to Roe Cloud, October 26, 1928, Dale Papers, Box 45, Folder 11, WHC.

65. Meriam to Dale, October 29, 1928; Dale to Meriam, February 21, 1929; Dale to Meriam, November 1, 1928, Dale Papers, Box 45, Folder 11, WHC.

66. *Gallup Independent*, Gallup, New Mexico, February 4, 1933.

67. Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola, eds., *The Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824-1977* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979). The lone exception, before the mid-twentieth century, was Eli S. Parker from 1869 to 1871.

68. Pratt to Carlos Montezuma, October 24, 1914, Richard Pratt Papers, S-1174, Series 1, Box 15, Folder 363, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Government officials seem to be trying to force this Collier program upon the Indians. Collier has taken Roe Cloud away from his duties as superintendent at Haskell and is making a campaigner of him, the same as the politicians do before elections."⁶⁹ Then there were those Christian Indians who felt that Collier was trying to revive "heathenism," and because Roe Cloud stood behind Collier, these Indians also opposed the Winnebago leader. In April 1935 some Christian Indian leaders wrote: "If there is a possibility of John R. Collier being removed, and a possibility of Henry Roe Cloud being appointed in his place, we now make a vigorous protest against Mr. Roe Cloud as Commissioner of Indian Affairs."⁷⁰ Of course, Roe Cloud defended his own position and made the following written comment in 1935:

Shall the missionary stand apart and aloof from this Indian Reorganization Act or accept it gracefully and work along with it to influence its development and its direction until the whole movement shall become hospitable to the great purpose of the long hoped-for coming of the Kingdom of God on earth?...Some missionaries are coming out openly to fight against the

Indian Bureau, especially the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for his pronounced views on anthropology and the like. I personally believe that this is a great mistake....Pray that the Indian Reorganization Act may be an economic blessing to every tribe that participates in its benefits.⁷¹

Henry Roe Cloud's ideas as well as his visibility far outlasted his death. In 1977 the Navajo nation established a special college preparatory school called the Navajo Academy. This school still exists for highly motivated Navajo students.⁷² In 1977 the Hopi tribe laid the groundwork to establish its own all-Hopi high school.⁷³ Of course, Roe Cloud advocated both a high school education and college preparatory courses for young Indians. In honor of Roe Cloud, the Indian students at the Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts, where Roe Cloud completed part of his college preparatory courses, started raising money in 1986 to create a scholarship fund in his name.⁷⁴ In a life devoted to Indian reform, Roe Cloud left his greatest impression on American Indian higher education.

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69. Quoted in Deloria and Lytle, *The Nations Within*, 95.

70. James Joseph Miles to Joseph Bruner, April 19, 1935, Arthur C. Parker Papers, New York State Museum.

71. Roe Cloud, "Conditions Among the Indians," *Women and Missions* 12 (April 1935):9.

72. *Navajo Times*, Window Rock, Ariz., March 31, 1977.

73. *Navajo Times Today*, Window Rock, Ariz., August 10, 1984.

74. "Native Americans Sponsor Scholarship," *The News* (Northfield, Mass.) 26 (Winter 1987):23.