

XIV

The End of the Trail

FIRST ENCOUNTERS

Much has been written about the genocide practiced by Whites upon Indians by warfare and by the deliberate spread of smallpox; by physically removing large populations to desert wastes and by psychologically breaking their spirit; by destroying their bison to empty their stomachs and by tearing apart their cultures to empty their hearts of any hope. It is not the purpose of this book to add to that vast literature. But in order to understand the total experience of primeval man in North America—and also to understand the last two chapters of this book, which explore what happens to cultures as they disintegrate—something must be said about the changing relations between Whites and Indians.

The first record of an encounter with Indians is by Columbus; he described the Arawak Indians who inhabited the Caribbean islands as "a loving people, without covetousness . . . Their speech is the sweetest and gentlest in the world."‡ But in their haste to exploit the new abundance of the Americas, the Spaniards set the loving and gentle Arawak to labor in mines and on plantations. Whole Arawak villages disappeared through slavery, disease, and warfare, as well as by flight into the mountains. As a result, the native population of Haiti, for example, declined from an estimated 200,000 in 1492 to a mere 29,000 only twenty-two years later.§

The earliest contacts between the Indians and the Whites were inquisitive, yet wary, on both sides. Some Europeans at first were not certain that the Indians were true human beings: King Ferdinand of Spain approved

the importation of White women into the West Indies to prevent the Spaniards from mating with native women "who are far from being rational creatures." Nor were the Indians certain what to make of the Whites. A Spanish chronicler of the time reported that Indians in the Caribbean islands drowned any Whites they could capture. They then stood guard over the corpses for weeks—to determine if the dead were gods, or if they were subject to putrefaction like other mortals. The contrasting attitudes of King Ferdinand and the Indians point up the basic difference in expectations between the two cultures. The Whites treated the Indians like animals; the Indians suspected the Whites might be gods. Both were wrong, but the attitude of the Indians was more flattering to mankind.‡

Wherever the Whites penetrated, the Indian populations went into drastic decline, and probably no one will ever know for sure what the primeval population of the New World was. Traditional estimates have been unduly conservative. Until recently, it was firmly believed that fewer than a million Indians lived north of Mexico in 1492; but recent research shows that North America was by no means so sparsely settled when the Whites arrived. Traditional estimates acknowledged that Mexico was more densely occupied, and figures ranged from about three million people in the area between the Rio Grande River and Costa Rica up to fifteen million people inhabiting Mexico alone. In recent years old evidence has been re-evaluated and new evidence has come to light, with the result that there has been a steady tendency among anthropologists to raise these figures considerably. Several recent attempts to estimate the total native population of Mexico just before the Spanish conquest, using a variety of techniques that have been cross checked, give a figure between thirty million and about thirty-seven million. And estimates now number the Indian and Eskimo population between the Rio Grande River and the Arctic from 9,800,000 to 12,500,000.‡ The early explorers found a continent that was densely inhabited in its many environments by a wide variety of Indian groups.

The extent of the Europeans' destruction of Indian numbers and cultures is attested to by the long roll of groups that have become extinct, and by the pitifully few survivors, many of mixed blood. The Aleut, who inhabit the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, numbered upward of 20,000 people before they came into contact with White trading ships. Today a few thousand survive, living in scattered villages at river mouths, and their decline continues. For the Indian populations in the area comprising the forty-eight contiguous United States, the low point was reached in 1850 when the number probably fell to less than 250,000. Since then the Indians have

made a remarkable comeback—in numbers, if not in social and economic gains. The 1960 census puts the Indian population at 551,669, but this does not take into account the several hundred thousand others of mixed blood who do not wish to be classified as Indians. In addition, a total of approximately 225,000 Indians and Eskimos have been registered by various Canadian agencies.

Many people have wondered what it was that caused the Indian population to plummet so drastically. Part of the answer can be found in murder, starvation, and disease—and part also in the physical and emotional stress to which the Indians were submitted by Whites. The effects of stress on human populations still are not completely understood, but it is known beyond doubt that these effects are deleterious. World War II provided clear evidence. About 25,000 American soldiers became prisoners of the Japanese; they were much more inhumanely treated than the American prisoners in European camps. The Japanese abused them mentally and physically, and sapped them of all human dignity; more than a third of the Americans died in prison whereas less than one percent of the American prisoners in Europe died. Six years after their liberation from the Japanese camps, a group of former prisoners was studied. Their death rate was twice that of males of the same age, race, stature, and so forth who had not been imprisoned—but the causes of their deaths were not related directly to imprisonment. Twice the anticipated number had died of cancer; more than four times the expected number succumbed to gastrointestinal diseases; nine times the norm died of tuberculosis. There is no reason to believe that American Indians—herded into crowded reservations, torn from their families, submitted to indignities—suffered any less from the effects of stress.‡

THE NOBLE RED MAN AND THE BLOODTHIRSTY SAVAGE

Two contrasting images of the Indian—as Noble Red Man and as Bloodthirsty Savage—have prevailed in the minds of Whites in the past five hundred years, and feelings have tended to shift back and forth between the two. Columbus brought home six Indians to show to Queen Isabella, and, dressed in full regalia and decorated with war paint, they quickly became the curiosities of Spain. In England, Sir Walter Raleigh brought Chief Manteo to visit Queen Elizabeth; she was so delighted with the

Indian that she dubbed him Lord of Roanoke. An Indian craze took hold in Elizabethan England, and Shakespeare complained about it in *The Tempest* when he wrote: "They will not give a doit [a small coin equal to about half a farthing] to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."

After the initial confusion as to what to make of these inhabitants of the New World, certain philosophers—principally French—entertained a romantic view. Europeans had often thought that somewhere in the world must dwell a noble race, remnants of that golden age before man became corrupted by civilization. As reports of Indians filtered back to Europe, a distinguished French philosopher of the late sixteenth century, Michel de Montaigne, took the trouble to talk with explorers, to read all the travelers' chronicles, and even to meet three Indians who had been brought as curiosities to the Court of Versailles. He concluded that the Noble Savage had at last been found, for the Indian "hath no kind of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politics, no use of service, of riches, or of poverty; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle, no apparel but natural, no manuring of lands, no use of wine. The very words that import a lie, falsehood, treason, covetousness, envy, detraction, were not heard among them."‡ Montaigne presented an idealized notion about the aborigines of the New World that foreshadowed the Noble Savage of Jean Jacques Rousseau.

By the seventeenth century, observers had reached the firm conclusion that American Indians were in no way inferior to Whites, and many writers took special pains to salute the Noble Red Man. The Jesuit missionary Bressani, who served in Canada from 1645 to 1649, reported that the inhabitants "are hardly barbarous, save in name. There is no occasion to think of them as half beasts, shaggy, black and hideous." He goes on to comment on the Indian's tenacious memory, his "marvelous faculty for remembering places, and for describing them to one another." An Indian, Bressani states, can recall things that a White "could not rehearse without writing."‡ Another Jesuit enthusiastically corroborates him by stating that Indians "nearly all show more intelligence in their business, speeches, courtesies, intercourse, tricks and subtleties, than do the shrewdest citizens and merchants in France."‡

The Noble Red Man captivated Europe, but for those colonists living a precarious life along the fringes of the New World, the widespread opinion was that the Indians were of an inferior race. That did not prevent

the colonists from believing, at first, that the Indian might seek salvation, and that civilization, European-style, could be conferred as a blessing upon him. Only a few years after the permanent settlement of Virginia, some fifty missionaries arrived to begin the massive task of converting the heathen. The Indians, for their part, did not respond with alacrity to the idea of adopting a culture that to them, in many cases, seemed barbarous indeed. Furthermore, they increasingly resented encroachments by Whites upon their lands: As early as 1622 the Indians of Virginia rose against the colonists and killed about 350 of them.

The Puritans in New England were not immediately presented with an Indian problem, for diseases introduced earlier by trading ships along the coast had badly decimated the Indian population. Yet when the Pequots resisted the migration of settlers into the Connecticut Valley in 1637, a party of Puritans surrounded the Pequot village and set fire to it. About five hundred Indians were burned to death or shot while trying to escape; the Whites devoutly offered up thanks to God that they had lost only two men. The woods were then combed for any Pequots who had managed to survive, and these were sold into slavery. Cotton Mather was grateful to the Lord that "on this day we have sent six hundred heathen souls to hell."

The Puritans failed miserably in their dealings with the Indians of New England, with scarcely a glimmer of kindness to illuminate black page after black page of cruelty and humiliation. There were many reasons why the Puritans were so much less successful with Indians than were the Spaniards or the French or even other Englishmen. The Puritans insisted upon a high standard of religious devotion that the Indians were unable or unwilling to give. The Puritans lacked any way to integrate the Indians into their theocracy, for they did not indulge in wholesale baptisms (as they charged the French did), nor were any Puritans specifically assigned to missionary tasks. The heart of the matter, though, is that conversion of the heathen was not one of the compelling motives—or justifications—for the Puritan settling of New England, as it was for the Spaniards in the Southwest. The contempt with which Puritans regarded Indians is revealed in this order from the General Court of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay in 1644:

It was ordered that noe Indian shall come att any towne or howse of the English (without leave) uppon the Lords day, except to attend the publike meeteings; neither shall they come att any English howse uppon any other day in the weeke, but first shall knocke att the dore, and after leave given, to come in (and not otherwise) . . . ‡

The desire of Whites to occupy Indian lands, and the constant rivalry between French and English traders for the furs gathered by the Indians, led to many skirmishes and several bloody wars, all of which involved Indians on both sides. The Whites were determined to fight it out with each other—down to the last Indian. These battles culminated in the French and Indian War of 1763, which represented a disaster to many Indian groups in the northeastern part of the continent. In May, 1763, an Ottawa warrior by the name of Pontiac fell upon Detroit and captured the English forts, one after the other. Lord Jeffrey Amherst, who commanded the British military forces in North America at the time, debated with his subordinates the relative advantages of hunting Indians down with dogs or infecting them with smallpox. Dogs were not available, so officers distributed among the Indians handkerchiefs and blankets from the smallpox hospital at Fort Pitt—probably the first use of biological warfare in history. Clearly, a sharp turn away from the admiration for the Noble Savage had taken place.

The Indian came to be regarded as a stubborn animal that refused to acknowledge the obvious blessings of White civilization. The idea of the Bloodthirsty Savage took hold, and the same relentless pattern was repeated—across Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Kentucky, across the whole western frontier as the new United States came into being. Hugh Henry Brackenridge, a modest literary figure of the young nation, stood for the changed attitude when he wrote in 1782 of “. . . the animals, vulgarly called Indians.” Rousseau's Noble Savage was laid to rest when John Adams stated in 1790: “I am not of Rousseau's Opinions. His Notions of the purity of Morals in savage nations and the earliest Ages of civilized Nations are mere Chimeras.” Even that man of enlightened homilies, Benjamin Franklin, observed that rum should be regarded as an agent of Providence “to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth.”

THE GREAT REMOVAL

Following the War of 1812, the young United States had no further need for Indian allies against the British, and as a result the fortunes of the Indians declined rapidly. By 1848, twelve new states had been carved out of the Indians' lands, two major and many minor Indian wars had been fought, and group after group of Indians had been herded westward, on forced marches, across the Mississippi River.

As in other inhumane and deceitful chapters in the history of the United States, the justifications of God and civilization were invoked. To Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri it was all very simple: The Whites must supplant Indians because Whites used the land “according to the intentions of the Creator.” Some spoke of the benefits to the Indian of removing him from contact with Whites, which would give him the time to assimilate at his own pace the blessings of civilization. A senator from Georgia, hoping to expedite the removal of Indians from his state to what later became Oklahoma, glowingly described that arid, treeless territory as a place “over which Flora has scattered her beauties with a wanton hand; and upon whose bosom innumerable wild animals display their amazing numbers.”

Such statements do not mean that the Indians lacked defenders, but the intensity of the indignation was in direct proportion to a White's distance from the Indian. On the frontier, the Indian was regarded as a besotted savage; but along the eastern seaboard, where the Spaniards, Dutch, English, and later the Americans had long since exterminated almost all the Indians, philosophers and divines began to defend the Red Man. In response to Georgia's extirpation of her Indian population, Ralph Waldo Emerson protested: “The soul of man, the justice, the mercy that is the heart's heart in all men, from Maine to Georgia, does abhor this business.” Presidents such as Jefferson, Monroe, and Adams, who came from the East, occasionally displayed some scruples about the treatment the Indian was receiving. Thomas Jefferson, though, was hoodwinked, or else he deluded himself, when he wrote shortly before his death of the civilization Whites had brought to the Indian:

Let a philosophic observer commence a journey from the savages of the Rocky Mountains, eastwardly towards our seacoast. These he would observe in the earliest stage of association living under no law but that of nature, subsisting and covering themselves with the flesh and skin of wild beasts. He would next find those on our frontiers in the pastoral state, raising domestic animals to supply the defects of hunting. Then succeed our own semi-barbarous citizens, the pioneers of the advance of civilization, and so in his progress he would meet the gradual shades of improving man until he would reach his, as yet, most improved state in our seaport towns. This, in fact, is equivalent to a survey, in time, of the progress of man from the infancy of creation to the present day.‡

But President Andrew Jackson had been reared on the frontier and he was utterly insensitive to the treatment of the Indians. He denounced as an “absurdity” and a “farce” that the United States should bother even to negotiate treaties with Indians as if they were independent nations with a

right to their lands. He was completely in sympathy with the policy of removal of the Indians to new lands west of the Mississippi. He exerted his influence to make Congress give legal sanction to what in our own time, under the Nuremberg Laws, would be branded as genocide. Dutifully, Congress passed the Removal Act of 1830, which gave the President the right to extirpate all Indians who had managed to survive east of the Mississippi River. It was estimated that the whole job might be done economically at no more than \$500,000—the costs to be kept low by persuasion, promises, threats, and the bribery of Indian leaders. When U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall ruled in favor of the Cherokee in a case with wide implications for protecting the Indians, Jackson is said to have remarked: "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it."

During the next ten years, almost all the Indians were cleared from the East. Some like the Chickasaw and Choctaw went resignedly, but many others left only at bayonet point. The Seminole actively resisted and some retreated into the Florida swamps, where they stubbornly held off the United States Army. The Seminole Wars lasted from 1835 to 1842 and cost the United States some 1,500 soldiers and an estimated \$20,000,000 (about forty times what Jackson had estimated it would cost to remove all Indians). Many of the Iroquois sought sanctuary in Canada, and the Oneida and the Seneca were moved westward, although fragments of Iroquois tribes managed to remain behind in western New York. The Sac and Fox made a desperate stand in Illinois against overwhelming numbers of Whites, but ultimately their survivors also were forced to move, as were the Ottawa, Potawatomic, Wyandot, Shawnee, Kickapoo, Winnebago, Delaware, Peoria, Miami, and many others who are remembered now only in the name of some town, lake, county, or state, or as a footnote in the annals of a local historical society.

All in all, an estimated seventy thousand Indians are believed to have been resettled west of the Mississippi, but the number may have been closer to one hundred thousand. No figures exist, though, as to the numbers massacred before they could be persuaded to leave the East, or on the tremendous losses suffered from disease, exposure, and starvation on the thousand-mile march westward across an unsettled and inhospitable land.

THE CHEROKEE

Some of the Indians who were forced west of the Mississippi might with justification be regarded as "savages," but this cannot be said of the

Cherokee. About 1790 the Cherokee decided to adopt the ways of their White conquerors and to emulate their civilization, their morals, their learning, and their arts. The Cherokee made remarkable and rapid progress in their homeland in the mountains where Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina meet. They established churches, mills, schools, and well-cultivated farms; judging from descriptions of that time, the region was a paradise when compared with the bleak landscape that the White successors have made of Appalachia today. In 1826 a Cherokee reported to the Presbyterian Church that his people already possessed 22,000 cattle, 7,600 houses, 46,000 swine, 2,500 sheep, 762 looms, 1,488 spinning wheels, 2,948 plows, 10 saw mills, 31 grist mills, 62 blacksmith shops, and 18 schools. In one of the Cherokee districts alone there were some 1,000 volumes "of good books." In 1821, after twelve years of hard work, a Cherokee named Sequoia (honored in the scientific names for the redwood and the giant sequoia trees in California, three thousand miles from his homeland) perfected a method of syllabary notation in which English letters stood for Cherokee syllables; by 1828 the Cherokee were already publishing their own newspaper. At about the same time, they adopted a written constitution providing for an executive, a bicameral legislature, a supreme court, and a code of laws.

Before the passage of the Removal Act of 1830, a group of Cherokee chiefs went to the Senate committee that was studying this legislation, to report on what they had already achieved in the short space of forty years. They expressed the hope that they would be permitted to enjoy in peace "the blessings of civilization and Christianity on the soil of their rightful inheritance." Instead, they were daily subjected to brutalities and atrocities by White neighbors, harassed by the state government of Georgia, cajoled and bribed by federal agents to agree to removal, and denied even the basic protection of the federal government. Finally, in 1835, a minority faction of five hundred Cherokee out of a total of some twenty thousand signed a treaty agreeing to removal. The Removal Act was carried out almost everywhere with a notable lack of compassion, but in the case of the Cherokee—civilized and Christianized as they were—it was particularly brutal.

After many threats, about five thousand finally consented to be marched westward, but another fifteen thousand clung to their neat farms, schools, and libraries "of good books." So General Winfield Scott set about systematically extirpating the rebellious ones. Squads of soldiers descended upon isolated Cherokee farms and at bayonet point marched the families off to what today would be known as concentration camps. Torn from their



*Sequoyia, the son of a white trader and a Cherokee woman, was a cripple who excelled as both mechanic and artist, as well as an intellectual giant who invented a system of syllabary notation for the Cherokee language. Starting in 1821, thousands of Cherokee learned to read and write their language. After the forcible removal of the Cherokee to the Arkansas Territory, Sequoyia joined his people there. Still restless, his ideals undiminished by privation, he set out to visit Indians of various language stocks in a fruitless quest for a common Indian grammar. He also hoped to find a group of Cherokee who, according to tradition, had crossed the Mississippi and disappeared some place in the West. It was during this last quest that he took sick in the Sierra of Mexico in about 1843 and died. Several years later, an Austrian botanist who admired the American Indian felt that the coast redwood should be named after a Red man, so he called it *Sequoia sempervirens* or "ever-living Sequoia." Later, when the closely related giant sequoias of the California mountains were discovered, they were named *Sequoia gigantea*. The name of one of the greatest intellects the Indians produced would be totally unfamiliar to most Whites had not two trees in California been named in his honor.*

homes with all the dispatch and efficiency the Nazis displayed under similar circumstances, the families had no time to prepare for the arduous trip ahead of them. No way existed for the Cherokee family to sell its property and possessions, and the local Whites fell upon the lands, looting, burning, and finally taking possession.

Some Cherokee managed to escape into the gorges and thick forests of the Great Smoky Mountains, where they became the nucleus of those living there today, but most were finally rounded up or killed. They then were set off on a thousand-mile march—called to this day "the trail of tears" by the Cherokee—that was one of the notable death marches in history. Ill clad, badly fed, lacking medical attention, and prodded on by soldiers wielding bayonets, the Indians suffered severe losses. An estimate made at the time stated that some four thousand Cherokee died en route, but that figure is certainly too low. At the very moment that these people were dying in droves, President Van Buren reported to Congress that the government's handling of the Indian problem had been "just and friendly throughout; its efforts for their civilization constant, and directed by the best feelings of humanity; its watchfulness in protecting them from individual frauds unremitting." Such cynicism at the highest level of government has been approached in our own time by the solemn pronouncements by President Lyndon B. Johnson about the Vietnam War.

One man who examined the young United States with a perceptive eye and who wrote it all down in his *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville, happened to be in Memphis during an unusually cold winter when the thermometer hovered near zero. There he saw a ragged party of docile Choctaw, part of the thousands who had reluctantly agreed to be transported to the new lands in the western part of what was then the Arkansas Territory. Wrote de Tocqueville:

It was then the middle of winter, and the cold was unusually severe; the snow had frozen hard upon the ground and the river was drifting huge masses of ice. The Indians had their families with them, and they brought in their train the wounded and the sick, with children newly born and old men upon the verge of death. They possessed neither tents nor wagons, but only their arms and some provisions. I saw them embark to pass the mighty river, and never will that solemn spectacle fade from my remembrance. No cry, no sob, was heard among the assembled crowd; all was silent. Their calamities were of ancient date, and they knew them to be irremediable.‡

De Tocqueville was a discerning observer of the methods used by the Americans to deal with the Indians, and he described with restrained

outrage how the Indians were sent westward by government agents: ". . . half convinced and half compelled, they go to inhabit new deserts, where the importunate whites will not let them remain ten years in peace. In this manner do the Americans obtain, at a very low price, whole provinces, which the richest sovereigns of Europe could not purchase." Reporting that a mere 6,273 Indians still survived in the thirteen original states, he predicted accurately the fate of the Indians in their new homes across the Mississippi:

The countries to which the newcomers betake themselves are inhabited by other tribes, which receive them with jealous hostility. Hunger is in the rear, war awaits them, and misery besets them on all sides. To escape from so many enemies, they separate, and each individual endeavors to procure secretly the means of supporting his existence.

Long before the science of anthropology and the study of what today is politely called "culture change," de Tocqueville understood how an entire culture might become raveled like some complexly woven fabric:

The social tie, which distress had long since weakened, is then dissolved; they have no longer a country, and soon they will not be a people; their very families are obliterated; their common name is forgotten; their language perishes; and all traces of their origin disappear. Their nation has ceased to exist except in the recollections of the antiquaries of America and a few of the learned of Europe.

The great removal was not the panacea that its advocates in Congress had maintained, in the names of God and civilization, it would be. Families had been separated, and many Indians had died en route. The new lands were much less hospitable to farming than those the Indians had been forced to evacuate, and the different game animals required new skills to hunt. To make matters worse, there was the hostility of the Plains Indians, who had been inveigled into giving up some of their lands to make room for the eastern Indians. The Plains Indians asserted that the bison had been driven away by the newcomers, and clashes between various groups became increasingly common. The Chickasaw, who had dutifully agreed to removal, said they could not take up the land assigned to them because of their fear of the "wild tribes" already inhabiting it. The United States government no more honored its obligation to protect the Indians in their new territory than it had honored any of its previous obligations toward them. In 1834 fewer than three thousand troops were available along the entire frontier to maintain order and to protect the newcomers against the Plains tribes. The result was that the very Indians whose

removal had been ordered ostensibly to pacify and to civilize them were forced once more to take up their old warrior ways to defend themselves. So the result of the great removal was that once again, as in earlier years of competition between French and English, Indian was pitted against Indian for the benefit of the Whites.

THE LAST STAND

The plight of the Indian west of the Mississippi River was only a sad, monotonous duplication of what had happened east of it—warfare, broken treaties, expropriation of land, rebellion, and ultimately defeat. No sooner were the eastern Indians dropped down on the plains than the United States discovered the resources in the West, and miners and settlers were on the move. Emigrant trains rumbled across the plains, and once again the aim of the frontiersman was to get the Indian out of the way. A Kansas newspaper summarized the general feeling about Indians in the middle of the last century: "A set of miserable, dirty, lousy, blanketed, thieving, lying, sneaking, murdering, graceless, faithless, gut-eating skunks as the Lord ever permitted to infect the earth, and whose immediate and final extermination all men, except Indian agents and traders, should pray for."‡ The "final extermination" was hastened by epidemics that swept the West and sapped the Indians' power to resist the Whites. A mere hundred Mandan out of a population of sixteen hundred survived a smallpox epidemic (they are extinct today); the same epidemic, spreading westward, reduced the total number of Blackfoot Indians by about half. The majority of Kiowa and Comanche Indians were victims of cholera. The Indians would have been crushed by Whites in any event, but smallpox and cholera made the job easier.

Up to 1868, nearly four hundred treaties had been signed by the United States governments with various Indian groups, and scarcely a one had remained unbroken. By the latter part of the last century, the Indians finally realized that these treaties were real-estate deals designed to separate them from their lands. In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Indians and Whites skirmished and then fought openly with ferocity and barbarity on both sides. Group by group, the Indians rose in rebellion only to be crushed—the southern Plains tribes in 1874, the Sioux in 1876, the Nez Percé in 1877, the Cheyenne and Bannock in 1878, the Ute in 1879, and the Apache throughout much of the 1880's, until Geronimo finally surrendered with his remnant band of thirty-six survivors. These wars

represented the final spasms of a people who had long before been defeated logistically and psychologically. General William Tecumseh Sherman attributed the final victory of the United States Army to the railroads, which were able to transport his troops as far in one day as they had been able formerly to march in a month. General Phil Sheridan, on the other hand, had urged the destruction of the bison herds, correctly predicting that when they disappeared the Indians would disappear along with them; by 1885 the bison were virtually extinct, and the Indians were starving to death on the plains. One way or another, the Indian Wars finally ended; and with the enforced peace came an economic recession in the West, for the United States government had spent there about one million dollars for every Indian killed by 1870.

For nearly three centuries the frontier had lived under both the myth and the reality of the scalping knife and the tomahawk, and now the Bloodthirsty Savage was nearly gone. The Whites were in full control of the Indian situation, and the remnants were shifted about again and again, as many as five or six times. All of which led the Sioux chief Spotted Tail, grown old and wise, to ask the weary question: "Why does not the Great White Father put his red children on wheels, so he can move them as he will?"‡

In the eastern part of the country after the Civil War, a concern for the plight of the Indian replaced concern for the Negro. The sincere efforts of humanitarians were immediately seized upon by opportunists who developed a plan to use the Indian as a means of plundering the public coffers. A well-intentioned movement had gained support to give the remnant Indian populations the dignity of private property, and the plan was widely promoted in the halls of Congress, in the press, and in the meetings of religious societies. As a result, Senator Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts sponsored the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887; he hoped it might salvage something for the Indians, who, he felt, would otherwise lose everything to voracious Whites. When President Grover Cleveland signed the act, he stated that the "hunger and thirst of the white man for the Indian's land is almost equal to his hunger and thirst after righteousness."‡ The act provided that after every Indian had been allotted land, any remaining surplus would be put up for sale to the public.

The loopholes with which the Dawes Act was punctured made it an efficient instrument for separating the Indians from this land. The act permitted Indians to lease their allotments, and many did so, ignorant of their true worth. Gullible Indians were persuaded to write wills leaving

their property to White "friends." After this ploy became widespread, there was a suspicious increase in the number of Indian deaths from undetermined causes; in some cases murder was proved. The plunder was carried on with remarkable order. The first lands to go were the richest—bottom lands in river valleys, or fertile grasslands. Next went the slightly less desirable lands, such as those that had to be logged before producing a bountiful crop. Then the marginal lands were taken, and so on, until all the Indian had left to him was desert that no White considered worth the trouble to take. At this time the Indian birth rate had become higher than the mortality rate, and so there were more and more Indians on less and less land. The Indians did what they had always done: They shared the little they had and went hungry together. Between 1887, when the Dawes Act was passed, and 1934, out of the 138 million acres that had been their meager allotment, all but 56 million acres had been appropriated by Whites. The Bureau of Indian Affairs examined these remaining lands and concluded that 14 million acres were "critically eroded," 17 million acres "severely eroded," and 25 million acres "slightly eroded." Of the 56 million acres of land the Indians managed to hang on to, not a single acre was judged uneroded by soil conservationists.

The victory over the Bloodthirsty Savage—reduced in numbers, deprived of lands, broken in spirit, isolated on wasteland reservations—was complete except for one final indignity. That was to Americanize the Indian, to eliminate his last faint recollection of his ancient traditions—in short, to exterminate the cultures along with the Indians. There was not much Indian culture left to eradicate, but at last zealous Whites found something. Orders went out from Washington that all male Indians must cut their hair short, even though many Indians believed that long hair had supernatural significance. The Indians refused, and the battle was joined. Army reinforcements were sent to the reservations to carry out the order, and in some cases Indians had to be shackled before they submitted.

Most of the attention of the Americanizers was concentrated on the Indian children, who were snatched from their families and shipped off to boarding schools far from their homes. The children usually were kept at boarding school for eight years, during which time they were not permitted to see their parents, relatives, or friends. Anything Indian—dress, language, religious practices, even outlook on life (and how that was defined was up to the judgment of each administrator of the government's directives)—was uncompromisingly prohibited. Ostensibly educated, articulate in the English language, wearing store-bought clothes, and with their hair



The encounter between an Indian and a White bureaucrat is shown bitterly satirized in these early twentieth-century carvings by a Salish Indian of the Northwest Coast. The artist said that the figures tell the story, all too typical, of the starving "Suppliant Indian" who goes to the "Indian Agent" for help. The agent looks very severe as he reprimands him with a long lecture on how he should have saved his money. Reluctantly, the agent gives the Indian some paper scrip that entitles him to flour and potatoes.

short and their emotionalism toned down, the boarding-school graduates were sent out either to make their way in a White world that did not want them, or to return to a reservation to which they were now foreign. The Indians had simply failed to melt into the great American melting pot. They had suffered psychological death at an early age.

This is the point at which to halt the story of the changing relationships between Whites and Indians, for to all intents and purposes the Indian civilization disappeared early in the twentieth century. The conquest has been complete: The Indian was remade in the White's image or else safely bottled up on reservations. It is for another book by someone else to describe the plight of the Indian in American society today—his median family income of about \$30 a week, his average age at death a mere 43 years, his infant mortality rate about twice that of his White neighbors. And of the Indian infants that survive, one study shows that about 500 of every 1,700 will die in their first year of "preventable diseases."[‡]

In the story of the American Indian, there is much room for compassion and charity, but the Indian experience is not unique. It has been repeated endlessly wherever one people conquered another. It was already an old story in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, among the Hebrews and the Canaanites and the Philistines. In modern times, it has been reenacted almost wherever Eurasian colonialism penetrated. Nor has the story ended, for even today the Japanese are still faced with the problem of what to do with their native people, the disappearing Ainu, the Indonesian leaders are trying to Indonesianize their Dyaks, and the Filipinos to Filipinize their Negritos.

Page 224 The classic study of the Mississippian is Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951). See also Caldwell (1962).

CHAPTER XIII

A good brief article on physical anthropology in the Americas is T. D. Stewart (1960); also valuable are Newman (1953, 1962). Excellent readings on human evolution are Hulse (1963), Buettner-Janusch (1966), and Howells (1967, revised edition). For general background in linguistics, and for delightful reading in other fields of anthropology as well, consult Sapir (1963).

Page 226 The information on the San Diego skull is a personal communication from Lewis Binford.

Page 227 I am indebted for this conclusion to T. D. Stewart (1960), pp. 267-269.

Page 228 Neumann (1952) originally postulated eight different varieties of man in North America resulting from separate migrations. In 1960 he concluded that there were only two major migrations.

Page 228 Boyd (1950) has placed American Indians in a separate race, as have several other anthropologists.

Page 228 Information on genetic traits can be found in the basic sources on physical anthropology and evolution listed above and, in particular, in Mourant (1954).

Page 230 Facts on the number of languages, plus much else of interest, can be found in Voegelin and Voegelin (1944) and McQuown (1955).

Page 231 Mumford (1967) discusses the Yahgan and many other aspects of language; although provocative of thought, several of his conclusions are very much open to dispute.

Page 235 The literature on glottochronology is immense. The pioneering papers are Swadesh (1952) and Lees (1953). The question of validity is raised by Bergsland and Vogt, with comments by several specialists (1962). See also Hymes (1960). An excellent summary of the implications of glottochronology and other linguistic studies for knowledge about aboriginal man in America is Swadesh (1964).

Page 237 The quotation is from Sapir (1929). See also Whorf (1956). Various views of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis are contained in the papers in Hoijer (1954).

CHAPTER XIV

A brief and excellent discussion of Indian-White relations, representing an assault upon a nation's conscience, is Hagan (1961). Other valuable summaries are Pearce (1953), Fey and McNickle (1959), McNickle (1962), and Oswalt (1966). Primary sources are documented in Washburn (1964).

Page 243 *The Writings of Christopher Columbus*, edited by P. L. Ford, 1892, p. 165.

Page 243 The figures on the decline in populations in Haiti are from McNickle (1962), p. 10.

Page 244 These facts and observations come from Lévi-Strauss (1961), pp. 79-80.

Page 244 Revised population estimates are from Dobyns, Thompson, et al. (1966).

Page 245 The World War II study was reported by Alexander Alland, Jr., of

- Columbia University at the 1967 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association.
- Page 246 Montaigne's comments are from "On Cannibals," chapter 31 of Book One of the *Essays* (Heritage Club edition).
- Page 246 The Bressani quote is from Thwaites (1906), vol. 38, p. 257.
- Page 246 The second Jesuit quote is from Thwaites (1906), vol. 29, p. 281. From here until the end of the chapter I am indebted to the following for so many quotations and facts that it would be impractical to cite individually: Fey and McNickle (1959), Hagan (1961), Washburn (1964), and chapter 12 of Spencer, Jennings, et al. (1965).
- Page 247 Quoted in Washburn (1964), p. 183.
- Page 249 Quoted in Smith (1950), p. 219.
- Page 251 Fey and McNickle (1959), p. 30.
- Page 253 The quotes from de Tocqueville are from the Knopf edition (1945), vol. 1, pp. 339-341.
- Page 255 Quoted in Spencer, Jennings, et al. (1965), p. 498.
- Page 256 Quoted in Hagan (1961), p. 121.
- Page 256 Quoted in Hagan (1961), p. 141.
- Page 259 Such a book has just appeared as this one is going to press. It is *The New Indians* by Stan Steiner, 1968, New York: Harper & Row—and it is highly recommended.

CHAPTER XV

Much valuable comment on acculturation will be found in sections 162-182 of A. L. Kroeber (1948). Two valuable symposium volumes on acculturation in several Indian societies are Spicer (1960) and Tax (1952 B). For a thorough documentation of the impact of Whites upon Indians in one specific area, the Southwest, see Spicer (1962). For the same sort of treatment for Mexico, see Tax (1952 A). Unfortunately, there was insufficient space in this chapter to discuss the problems of Indian-White and Indian-Negro mixed races, but this material is covered well by Berry (1963).

- Page 261 Additional information on the debt of our culture to the Indian can be found in Driver (1961), chapter 26, and Hallowell (1957, 1959).
- Page 262 The de Crèvecoeur quote is from the Dutton edition, 1957, p. 209.
- Page 263 Swanton (1926).
- Page 264 My discussion of Indianization is based largely on Hallowell (1963). See his excellent bibliography for further sources.
- Page 271 Much of the material on the Navaho came from Vogt (1960). I am also indebted to several papers by Hill (1940 A, 1940 B, and 1948). See also Underhill (1956), and Kluckhohn and Leighton (1946).
- Page 271 The potlatch example is from Drucker and Heizer (1967), pp. 27-34.
- Page 274 The story of the Navaho and Zuni veterans is based on the study by Adair and Vogt (1949). See also Goldfrank (1952).

CHAPTER XVI

This chapter owes its primary debt to two books I enthusiastically recommend: Lanternari (1963) and Mooney (1896). Other important basic sources appear in the notes below.