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Myriam Vučković. *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students between Two Worlds, 1884-1928.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008. ix + 330 pp. $34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7006-1617-6.

Reviewed by Christopher J. Frey (Bowling Green State University)
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Onward Ever, Backward Never

As the motto of Haskell Institute suggests, boarding schools for Native American students have long been sites of unidirectional teaching and learning. *Voices from Haskell* is an important contribution to readers' understanding of how Native American students understood and acted on the choices they faced as they navigated "White" and "Indian" worlds at the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas. Organizing her book thematically into eight chapters, plus an introduction, Myriam Vučković uses a wide variety of primary source documents to illuminate the lives of Haskell students during and after their tenure at the school.

Vučković's background in public health is evident in the nuanced discussion of student wellness. This is apparent in the first chapter, where she details the deaths of eleven children, the establishment of a school cemetery, and the construction of a two-story hospital on campus in the years after the school opened as the U.S. Indian Industrial Training School in September 1884. Administrative turnover and funding troubles plagued the school in its first decade, but by 1900 the school's programs and infrastructure had vastly expanded and improved. Chapter 2 focuses on the choices and challenges Native American students faced when deciding to attend Haskell. For some, like Esther Burnett, "poverty was as much a coercive factor as federal authority" in determining who enrolled (p. 31). For others, personal motivations, cultural factors, and the advice and personal experience in school of family members influenced their decisions. In general, extant letters suggest that many young Native Americans found the opportunities at Haskell appealing, while their parents and Elders were more often than not suspicious of the deleterious effects of distance and disease. Vučković deftly couples these difficult decisions with the necessity to keep enrollments high at Haskell in order to maintain funding as well as the contested racial borderlands that led to dismissal of almost one hundred "white Indian" students with "less than 1/8 Indian blood in their veins" in 1905 (p. 41).

In chapter 3, Vučković delves into the students' adjustment to the rules and regulations at Haskell. "Laid out like a military camp," Haskell was filled with "squares, corners and lines" that exemplified "the Western concept of human dominance over nature" (p. 60). The physical organization extended to student discipline: Haskell's second superintendent, Colonel Arthur Grabowskii, established a school prison and a platoon system "to organize mass movements of children" around campus (p. 61). The attention to order was, ironically, an aspect of life at Haskell that some students fondly remembered in their later years. Vučković populates this chapter with short discussions about the use of English, school food, and students' preferences for friendships along tribal lines.

The most intriguing parts of chapter 4, "The Curriculum," come at the end when the reader hears from students about their decision to enroll at Haskell. Understanding the limited utility of agricultural education, administrators established popular business, trade, and nursing programs, and correspondence from students suggest that many were attracted to these courses of study. Students were kept busy with a variety of extracurricular and recreational activities, as well. In chapter 5, the author argues that one purpose of extracurricular activities was to convince the students that "the benefits they received from contact with Anglo society, meaning cultural domination, were greater than any injustices their ancestors had endured" (p. 151). One of the most interesting sections details the inauguration of the new alumni-funded football stadium in 1926. Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work saw the facility as "an expression of the gratitude of representatives of 50 Indian tribes for what has been done for them … in providing educational facilities for Native Americans" (p. 155). However, one *Kansas City Times* writer who witnessed the performance

of Native music during the dedication ceremony was reminded of "Custer's last stand, the Halloween of beasts and birds … it was diabolism" (p. 155). For Vučković, the dancing and music at the ceremony was an important milestone in the emergence of new forms of Native American cultural expression. Football, in particular, was a game where Native Americans could "symbolically challenge and beat white society," as they did with stunning regularity, including a defeat of the University of Nebraska at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri (p. 157).

Vučković's discussion of health and the body in chapter 6 examines students' health and their parents' reactions to unsanitary conditions at Haskell. According to a 1914 investigation, dank showers and a lack of toothbrushes were common problems that students experienced. The report noted that "overactivity" from the rigorous study and work schedule caused many students to lose weight (p. 185). In addition, poor ventilation, dust, and overcrowding all contributed to extremely high rates of trachoma and tuberculosis. Here again, Vučković reminds us of the "catch-22" of funding the school based on student enrollment: school administrators tried to keep sick students at Haskell in order to maintain funding, though in the end many had to be sent home, resulting in fewer dollars for the school that could have been used to improve the facilities. Ironically, students also contributed to the spread of illness by hiding their conditions as long as possible because they feared lying alone in sterile rooms. Once children became seriously ill, they were often sent home to either recuperate or die, in part to reduce the numbers of deaths the school had to report.

Drawing on the work of James C. Scott (*Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* [1990]), Vučković interrogates the public and hidden transcripts of life at Haskell in chapter 7. Here, she argues that boys more than girls were able to find some space to resist the public transcript of Anglo superiority and Victorian morality. Surreptitiously, boys inducted themselves into adult life by smoking, drinking, cursing, and gambling, though at least one young man quit Haskell citing the "detrimental … habits of my associates" (p. 214). Female students were more closely monitored by school staff, though couples occasionally found a degree of solitude and liberty along a nearby riverbank, in the school's orchards, or at restaurants and pool halls in Lawrence. While a significant number of students clearly enjoyed Haskell and "may have internalized the ideological underpinnings" of its assimilationist curriculum, many students fled the school, citing homesickness, boredom, dislike for school, their need to help out at home, or, occasionally, love (p. 241). The urge to flee may have been particularly strong for children raised traditionally and, therefore, less prepared for the rigidity of school. The desire to flee for home was particularly strong among the 250 students kept at Haskell each summer to maintain the school's buildings and farms.

In the concluding chapter, Vučković surveys the lives of Haskell graduates and their evaluation of their school years. Acknowledging that students who disliked their time at Haskell probably did not send those thoughts back to the school, much of the alumni correspondence Vučković cites is positive. For its part, Haskell feted those students who found work in the Indian Service, the military, industry, nursing, or the domestic arts, and those who "married good," to a White or "civilized Indian," while problematizing those who returned to reservations, "Indian nature," or had "bad marriages" to "camp Indians" or African Americans (pp. 256-257). The book concludes with a short analysis of some of the lasting effects of the Haskell experience, including language loss, cultural conflict, and the creation of a "Haskell family" among its multiple generations of graduates.

As a work of institutional history, *Voices from Haskell* adds to the understanding of the complexity and contradictions within an important Native American boarding school at the turn of the twentieth century. Vučković rightly illustrates the myriad experiences of Native American students, from those who quickly perished from disease and those who resisted or simply went through the motions to those whose Haskell experience defined and enriched their lives. This approach can leave the reader without a clear sense of direction at times, particularly because the narrative is topical and only broadly chronological. In the end, Vučković makes no overarching arguments beyond the complexity and contradictions that a school like Haskell inevitably sows. Vučković's informed discussion of health and sanitary conditions at the school were particularly interesting to this reviewer. While it may not be as useful as an introductory reading about Native American education, this richly detailed work will certainly be useful for comparative research or in a course on Native Americans or Native American education.

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