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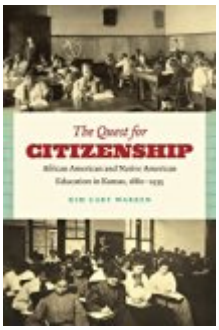


**Kim Cary Warren.** *The Quest for Citizenship: African American and Native American Education in Kansas, 1880-1935.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. 399 pp. $24.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8078-7137-9.

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**Commissioned by** Patrick G. Bottiger (Florida Gulf Coast University)

In the late nineteenth century, white American reformers saw blacks and Indians as "problems," outsiders improperly adjusted to American civilization. To correct these problems, reformers sought to bring the marginalized nearer to the American standard by giving them the benefits of education. Although both groups were problems and education was a desired solution, the type of education differed. Reformers thought they could make "uncivilized" Indians into acceptable Americans by cutting their hair, putting them into suits and dresses, and removing them from the negative influences of their societies. Indians were taken from a segregated environment and placed into another: a white one in which their only option was to Americanize. For blacks, in contrast, the desired approach was to suit them for a role on the margins of American society. Thus, they were removed from white civilization, placed in segregated schools in segregated neighborhoods where they would receive an underfunded vocational education appropriate for fitting them into the lower ranks of the American workforce. In neither case did the reformers consider the preferences of those they were Americanizing.

In *The Quest for Citizenship,* Kim Cary Warren attempts to show how African Americans and Native Americans worked within these less than friendly environments to minimize white efforts to change them, in order to attain entry into American society on their own terms. The setting for her exploration of black and Indian education is Kansas from the Gilded Age into the New Deal.

Warren examines schools--primary through post-secondary--established by whites to segregate blacks and Indians from their culture. She contends that the dominant white society, and in particular the "friends of the Indian" and "friends of the Negro," attempted to impose its values and terms on the students and, that in both cases, the students and their parents resisted to some degree. The result was that over the nearly half a century under study both blacks and Native Americans managed to achieve some degree of education while retaining their own values and

norms. The work describes how Native Americans and blacks managed to achieve their goals, how their methods differed, and how the dominant society's expectations for one group differed from those for the other.

Whites in the late nineteenth century wanted blacks and Native Americans to assimilate and become as white as they could so that they could take their places in the racial hierarchy that naturally included whites at the top. Warren argues that blacks and Native Americans saw benefits to joining American society, but neither group accepted that they would have to sacrifice who they were to become Americans. Neither wanted to become "white" completely and abandon their values for those of the majority society.

Blacks and Indians wanted the same loosely defined citizenship, but for different reasons. The former, feeling that they were as "American" as whites, wanted to enter American society as accepted members and political equals. Integration and inclusion were the black goals. For Native Americans, the objectives were different. They were not Americans in the sense that blacks wanted to be and whites thought themselves to be. They were original inhabitants, after all, and had established their way of life and their worldview well before there were any whites and blacks on the continent and any United States within which to argue citizenship matters. According to Warren, Indians, like whites and blacks, recognized the benefits of American citizenship. But they wanted that citizenship as Indians whereby they could hold onto traditional culture and be accepted as autonomous and bicultural Americans.

White Americans were reluctant, to say the least, to accept either group's ambition. The purpose of schooling in the late nineteenth century, for blacks and Indians alike, was to slough off all the undesirable traits and remake the outsiders as acceptably white Americans. If that meant denying language or dress or other traditions, then so be it. The white educators wanted to make their charges into model citizens capable of being Americans, albeit at the lower end of the social and economic structure.

Because Warren seeks to demonstrate change over time, she logically approaches the subject chronologically. There are three sections, each dealing with a discrete period, but rather than comparative chapters within each period Warren has elected to write separate chapters on black and Indian schools. The first section deals with the years of clear white dominance, discussing the philosophical underpinnings of white colonialists who established the schools, the curriculum designed to Americanize the students, and the goals of those who created the schools. Next comes the period when the students, their relatives, and the greater minority community began to subvert the white system by appearing to adapt but actually preserving what was essential to their self-identity. Native American students, far removed from their communities, had to develop self-reliance in resisting the destruction of their identities. Black students, segregated but still at home, had parents fighting for better schools and against segregation. In the final phase, the black and Indian assertion of a distinct identity became strong enough to alter the institutions that were designed to defeat that identity. Teachers became more assertive and inspired the students who would return to the schools and create the generation that would fuel the revolution of the 1950s and 1960s.

Along the way, the work introduces important educators, examines the vocational curricula of the boarding and segregated schools, and portrays innovative black and Indian teachers and principals who subverted the white vocational goal by incorporating academic subjects and inculcating racial pride as well as competence in the full curriculum. And we observe as patronizing whites slowly change their attitudes as black and Indian leaders become more overt in their assertion of autonomy and equality. When *The Quest for Citi-*

*zenship* is all done, the stage is set for the next generation, or those who were to have been totally whitened and tucked into their place but instead became the precursors of the revolution after World War II.

The work is well done, particularly given its brevity. The selection of Kansas is critical to the argument, and the selection could not be better. Kansas might not be southern but it held the racist values widespread in the United States at the time. It might not be western but it had the same assessment of Native American capabilities. Kansas is the ultimate center, neither truly western nor truly southern but reflecting influences and elements of both. Its geographical centrality made it appealing as a location for the Indian schools, and it was also an attractive destination for Exodusters after the Civil War as well as the setting for one of the critical episodes of the late antebellum era, Bleeding Kansas.

After the war, white reformers provided several schools for each group, and the author explains how the schools worked, what they sought to achieve, how the schools and their constituencies differed. Warren's documentation is thorough, and includes archival materials, published reports, secondary materials, but lacks oral histories, while her use of photos is an asset rather than a distraction and helps the text by substituting for the thousand words unavailable in a small volume. The section dealing with the evolution of homecoming at Haskell in the 1920s is especially compelling as an illustration of how Indians avoided the deracination desired by whites and slowly created a display of cultural pride, a point that many whites did not even notice was happening.

Warren works within the mainstream in contending that treatment of blacks and Indians differs. Historians have taken as given since at least the 1970s that historically, American treatment of Native Americans and black Americans has diverged. When not trying to exterminate Indians, whites have sought to make them into model white Americans; in contrast there has been a consistent effort to keep blacks as America's mudsill and marginalize them. Historians have also noted that blacks have struggled for inclusion while Native Americans have been ambivalent at best, seeing little in American society worth changing who they are. The author takes an old assumption, that black and Native American expectations differed, and develops a test case.

More important, she breaks away from the traditional examination of minorities against the majority to develop a comparison of two minorities, both with the same general aim, both in the same geographic region and political context, and both over the same period of time. This comparison of the two in a context of educational institutions in a relatively neutral state supports and amplifies the long-held interpretations and brings them together in one case study. This volume should serve as a stimulus for additional comparative studies at the state level, perhaps dealing with other minorities confronted with the similar imperative to adapt to a dominant culture. For now, it is a valuable addition to studies of minority adjustment to majority expectations.

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