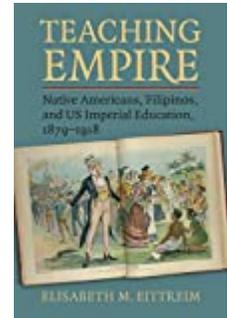


Elisabeth M. Eittreim. *Teaching Empire: Native Americans, Filipinos, and US Imperial Education, 1879-1918.* Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019. pages cm \$34.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-7006-2858-2.



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Teachers as Agents of Imperialism

In *Teaching Empire: Native Americans, Filipinos, and US Imperial Education, 1879-1918*, historian Elisabeth M. Eittreim focuses on the teachers employed in the US education systems for Native Americans in the United States and Filipinos in the Philippines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rather than constructing a comparative study, Eittreim demonstrates complex linkages and divergences in policy, personnel, and ideology between Native American boarding schools and public education in the Philippines. This work contributes to the ongoing effort to bridge the historiographical gap between studies of US imperialism on the continent and overseas. In so doing, Eittreim reveals the significance of place and long-term goals of assimilation in the functioning of US imperial education policy.

From the outset, Eittreim focuses her study on the teachers, drawing extensively from personal and institutional records. Teachers, she argues, are particularly fruitful ground for exploring the inti-

mate ground-level operation of US imperial policy. As imperial actors, they were on the front lines of the civilizing mission. Most of the teachers were white, with women predominating at the Carlisle Indian School and men predominating in the Philippines. The teachers' personal beliefs and interpretations of their mission had a great effect on their students, and ultimately the enactment of imperial education policy, which was always more ambitious than realistic.

The first few chapters focus on Carlisle Indian School. Chapter 1 charts the foundation of the Carlisle Indian School and its principles of civilizing Native Americans through various programs. Eittreim puts this in a larger context of increased federal control of Indian policy as well as the feminization of the profession of teaching. Of particular interest was its relation to earlier programs at assimilating African Americans. One of Carlisle's founders even led a regiment of Buffalo Soldiers, African American soldiers serving to "pacify" In-

digenous people in the continental West. In these moments, Eittreim links a series of civilizing missions that targeted various people of color in the nineteenth-century United States. Eittreim suggests how these webs of race, civilization, and imperialism migrated from the frontier to the boarding school classroom and later to the Philippines.

Chapter 2 focuses on how teachers at Carlisle saw themselves and their mission in filial and moral terms. In particular she addresses the English-only policy and its cultural violence. Teachers saw their mission as helping students better integrate into American society through modeling ideal bourgeois Victorian gender norms. Chapter 3 examines how discipline was enforced at Carlisle, for teachers and students alike. Students were encouraged to police themselves and others and faced public punishment and humiliation if they disobeyed. These disciplinary regimes enacted both cultural and physical violence on the students, something that was part of the experience of education.

Chapter 4 turns to the Philippines and the records of thirty-three American teachers who went there. The American teachers found themselves faced with a number of challenges outside of the classroom—many were sent to islands and provinces where they faced devastating epidemics and were exposed to the violence of the Philippine-American War. Chapter 5 reflects upon the ways that the experience of teaching was a profound cultural experience for teachers. Interacting with Native American and Filipino students (a handful of teachers worked in both locations) provided teachers with new cultural understandings. In some cases, these experiences modified or even challenged teachers' preexisting cultural attitudes toward their students. Yet Eittreim is quick to note that regardless of the intentions or beliefs of teachers, they ultimately "reproduced the systems that sought to indoctrinate Indian and Filipino subjects to follow 'civilized' American mores" (p. 211).

Eittreim is careful to confine the parameters of her study to teachers, and she acknowledges that she "does not interrogate the records of American Indian or Filipino peoples to a significant degree" (p. 18). She does include evidence from American Indian and Filipino actors, and there are moments when she could have done more with them. For example, she explains a 1907 incident in which the superintendent of Carlisle was found to have had a sexual relationship with a student at the school. Eittreim focuses on how the controversy had a profound impact on the ultimate end of the school. Moments like this demand greater examination of sexual assault and coercion and their possible effects on Carlisle students.

Overall, Eittreim's work impressively connects US civilizing missions for Native American and Filipinos through the realm of education. She writes in clear and accessible language, and this book (or even select chapters) would be excellent reading for courses examining the history of education, empire, or Filipino or Native American policy.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at <https://networks.h-net.org/h-amindian>

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