

## “Educate or We Perish”: The Armstrong Academy’s History as Part of the Choctaw Educational System



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Efforts to educate the Choctaws began while they were still in Mississippi. American churches sent missionaries to the tribe to help civilize them through education and conversion to Christianity. As a result of this missionary activity several schools were started while the Choctaws were still in Mississippi. The Choctaws were very desirous to have their children educated. In fact, they placed a high priority on education before and after removal. They saw education as the way to survive in the white man’s world that was encroaching upon them.<sup>1</sup> Chief Isaac Garvin, one of the principal chiefs of the Choctaws after removal said in speaking of the education of Choctaws, “I say educate! Educate! Or we perish!”<sup>2</sup>

The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek of 1830 stipulated that the Choctaws were to move to territory west of the Mississippi that became

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their permanent homeland. This move occurred in the early 1830s. The Choctaws were aided in their move west by the Armstrong brothers, Francis and William. In fact, Captain William Armstrong was appointed superintendent of the removal of the Choctaws east of the Mississippi.<sup>3</sup>

The boarding schools were not established in the Choctaw Nation until the 1842 Public School Act was passed by the Choctaw Council. Historian Angie Debo wrote, "The Greatest step forward in Choctaw education was taken in 1842 . . . when the Council provided for the establishment of a comprehensive system of schools."<sup>4</sup> In November of that year the council created six boarding schools: Spencer Academy, Fort Coffee Academy, Koonsha Female Seminary, Janubbi Female Seminary, Chuwahla Female Seminary, and Wheelock Female Seminary.<sup>5</sup> A seventh school named Norwalk School was placed under control of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in October 1845. Spencer Academy, Fort Coffee Academy, and Norwalk were to be schools for boys.<sup>6</sup>

In 1842 the council blocked the establishment of an additional male academy near the council house at Nanih Waya on the Kiamichi River because of its location. This academy was to be named Nannawaiya.<sup>7</sup> By October 1843 the council provided money for this additional academy and decided to change the name to the Armstrong Academy, named after Captain William Armstrong, the popular U.S. agent to the Choctaws.<sup>8</sup> Born around 1800, William Armstrong should have participated in the Battle of New Orleans; however, in 1832 he was appointed to help remove the Choctaws from the state of Mississippi to their new home. He was appointed as agent to the Choctaws in 1835 after the death of his brother Francis, the former agent. He was friendly, helpful, and interested in the education of the Choctaws. After many years of service to the Choctaws he died in Doaksville, Choctaw Nation, in June 1847.<sup>9</sup>

The Reverend William H. Goode, the superintendent of Fort Coffee Academy in the northern part of the Choctaw nation, said of Agent Armstrong, "He was emphatically the friend of the Indian, and especially of the Choctaw; and, as a result, he possessed their confidence and even affection in a very high degree. . . . Major Armstrong highly approved the educational movements among this people, encouraged missionary labor, and vigorously seconded every effort for their improvement."<sup>10</sup>

However, William Armstrong was not perfect. There were rumors that circulated that he was able to pay off a \$20,000 debt and acquire property worth \$40,000 on his salary of \$1,500 a year.<sup>11</sup> Whatever his

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financial circumstances, William Armstrong was loved by the Choctaws.<sup>12</sup>

The new academy needed a location, and a law was passed by the Choctaw Council in October 1844 named a committee to locate the site for the academy. This committee consisted of Rev. Ramsey D. Potts, Capt. Silas D. Fisher, Iacha-hopaiyi, Nicholas Cocheneur, Isaac Fe-Flore, and R. M. Jones.<sup>13</sup> The committee got to work and a site was selected. Potts spoke for the committee when he said of the selected site: "The institution is located two miles south of the road leading from Fort Towson to Fort Washita, fifty-five miles west of the former and thirty east of the latter. It is near the dividing ridge of the waters of Boggy and Blue Rivers, and twenty miles northwest of the nearest point of Red River."<sup>14</sup> In modern terms the academy was located about one mile east and two miles north from the town of Bokchito in Bryan County, Oklahoma.<sup>15</sup>

The new academy needed money to operate, and like the other schools in the Choctaw Nation Armstrong Academy was funded out of the Choctaw national treasury. The first appropriation for the academy was \$2,900 in October 1843. The American Indian Mission Association, a Baptist organization, agreed to sponsor the academy and to contribute \$1,000 a year.<sup>16</sup> Work began on clearing the land and constructing the buildings in 1845. The American Indian Mission Association sent clothing, bedding, and other necessities to the academy.

The opening date was scheduled for November 1 but was delayed until December because the contractor had not completed the buildings on time.<sup>17</sup> The academy actually began classes on December 2, 1845, with thirty-three boys in attendance. The first superintendent was Ramsey D. Potts, who had been part of the selection committee for the site. He had been in the Choctaw Nation since 1835 as a Baptist missionary in charge of a mission station at Providence.<sup>18</sup>

When Potts began teaching students, he was alone. The other teachers from the American Indian Mission Association assigned to teach at the academy had not arrived yet, so Potts performed all of the duties by himself. On February 10, 1846, Potts was undoubtedly happy to see Rev. P. P. Brown arrive to fill a position as teacher. H. W. Jones also was hired as farmer, and a Mrs. Brown and Miss Chenoweth went to work on the domestic affairs of the academy.<sup>19</sup>

One of the biggest concerns of early teachers at Armstrong Academy and other boarding schools was teaching the children English. Brown said, "Believing that the use of English, as the means of intercourse, not only in school hours but at all times, stood first in importance at the commencement of their education, our efforts on the part of those

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unacquainted with the language have been almost entirely directed to the attainment of that object."<sup>20</sup> By 1848 Potts was indicating that they were having some success in teaching the boys English by saying, "but few of our students, when they entered the institution, knew anything of the English; but now all their intercourse with one another and the family is carried on in English. Thus has one great difficulty been overcome and many of them pursue their studies with an increasing desire to know more."<sup>21</sup>

Potts was pleased with the progress of the students in learning English. In his 1853 report he said, "When we take into consideration the difficulties they have to encounter in acquiring a foreign language, they certainly are entitled to much credit for the improvement made by them."<sup>22</sup> However, there were others who were not so optimistic about teaching the students to learn English. The Reverend P. P. Brown in his 1846 report said:

He has not only the spelling and the pronunciation to learn, but the meaning of every word, the method of putting words together to form a correct and intelligible sentence, and the manner of expressing sentences, in order to convey the correct meaning. The books, also, in use for white children, or those understanding English, are not adapted to the wants of the Indian children.<sup>23</sup>

An additional concern of the early missionary teachers was to convert the boys to Christianity. Potts believed that in order to educate the boys, the institution needed to be "conducted upon religious principles."<sup>24</sup> He went beyond simple instruction in 1848 when he said, "we therefore labor to make our students Christians, which has been attended with some success."<sup>25</sup> In addition to his duties as the superintendent of Armstrong Academy Potts was instrumental in starting a congregation of Christian Choctaws that was eventually to be called the Philadelphia Baptist Church, and one of the meetings of that church was held at the Armstrong Academy in February 1847.<sup>26</sup> Subsequent superintendents also labored to convert the boys under their charge to Christianity and preached in local churches. Reverend Andrew G. Moffat, a later teacher at the academy, reported in 1854 that "we have tried to impart religious instruction to the people within our reach; since our last report forty-four have been baptized into the church."<sup>27</sup>

One of the first glimpses into what was being taught at the academy came from a report written September 1, 1846, to Agent Armstrong by the Reverend P. P. Brown. He said that all students, "have been engaged principally in reading and spelling" and "22 have learned to

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write. 19, since the first of June, have studied Emerson's First Part North American Arithmetic." Reverend Brown also indicated that some of the students were using McGuffey's First and Second Readers. By August 1848 the school had been divided into eight classes, with the eighth class beginning with the alphabet and the seventh and sixth classes concentrating on mental arithmetic and spelling. The first class studied "Emerson's arithmetic, 3d part; geography; grammar, algebra, reading, writing and spelling."<sup>28</sup> In 1852, in addition to lessons on reading and spelling, there was attention paid to arithmetic in most of the classes and geometry, algebra, English grammar, composition, and declamation in the first class.<sup>29</sup>

The students had a regular routine to follow each day. The Reverend P. P. Brown wrote a letter in which he described how a day went for the fifty-five boys in attendance:

During the fall and winter, the first bell rang at 4 o'clock, A.M. for the boys to rise, whose duty was to build fires and sweep out the sitting room. At 5 o'clock all rose, and fifteen minutes after the roll was called. Breakfast took place at 6, after which the boys went to work. At 8 o'clock the bell called the boys together to wash themselves and prepare for school, which convened at half past 8. At 11, fifteen minutes recess was given for rest and recreation. From 12 to 1 an intermission took place for dinner. At 3 o'clock, P.M. another recess of fifteen minutes occurred, the same as in the morning. At 4 school closed, and the boys went to work until supper, which generally took place a little before sunset. After supper the boys assembled in the school room to prepare the morning lessons."<sup>30</sup>

The Armstrong Academy began with thirty-three students in 1846, and by 1849 it had fifty-seven students. This number was small compared to Spencer Academy, which had 100 students, but was larger than Fort Coffee Academy, which had 50, and Norwalk, which had 24 boys.<sup>31</sup> In 1855 there was an average of 43 who boarded at the academy, with 4 more being day scholars. Spencer was still ahead of Armstrong, with 105 boys who were there at the time of the final examinations.<sup>32</sup>

Superintendent Potts felt that the schools in the Choctaw Nation should teach the students until they were ready for the "common business transactions of life," and that was "as far as the schools of the [Choctaw] nation should go." He thought that if the boys in the nation could be taught in a school devoted to agriculture, where they could be taught "farming [based] upon scientific principles, as well as to make

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and repair the necessary tools," it would be of great benefit to the nation.<sup>33</sup>

The early teachers and superintendents of the academy seemed to be optimistic about the education of the students. Potts had much praise for the work of the students when he wrote, "The capacity of the students for receiving instruction is equal to that of the whites, and they have exhibited a commendable improvement in every branch studied."<sup>34</sup> Rev. Andrew Moffat, second superintendent of the academy, wrote in 1855, "Indeed it remains no longer an unsolved question but that the aborigines of our country, with proper management, can be elevated high in the scale of civilization and moral intelligence."<sup>35</sup>

That the boys at Armstrong were to be engaged in manual labor is clear from the Public School Act of 1842, which stated, "Instruction in Agriculture and the Mechanical Arts shall, in the Male Schools, be combined with the instruction in Letters."<sup>36</sup> The superintendent agreed with this need.<sup>37</sup> He wrote in 1848 that "idleness has ever been considered the parent of vice, and its effects are perceptible among the whites as well as the Indians; consequently, the blending of labor with education is a great corrector of the evil. It is, therefore, important that habits of industry should be inculcated among the Indians."<sup>38</sup> Potts wasted no time in getting the boys to work. During the first term he had the boys clearing land and cultivating the farm. He had a field of "50 acres . . . cultivated in corn by them, in addition to a garden and three acres of sweet potatoes. The crop has been well attended to . . . I think we shall make a sufficiency of corn, peas, beans, pumpkins, and turnips, for our consumption. . . . The time devoted each day to labor has been about 2 or 2 1/2 hours."<sup>39</sup>

The health of the students at the Choctaw boarding schools usually remained good, but at times there could be sickness and even death. At the Fort Coffee Academy in fall 1853, thirty-two boys were sick with the measles. They had not quite recovered when whooping cough, pneumonia, and the flux hit the students. The academy became a hospital, with every room taken by the sick. By the time this sickness left four weeks later, fifteen of the students were dead.<sup>40</sup> Nothing that bad was reported at the Armstrong Academy, but the health of the students could be a concern at times. Reverend Potts reported a death from whooping cough in 1849.<sup>41</sup> Superintendent Baker reported that in November 1858 a measles outbreak occurred in the area near the academy, and he was told by the school trustee to suspend school until February 1859.<sup>42</sup>

By 1854 the school was facing hard times. The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek signed by the Choctaws in 1830 provided that \$2,500 would be given for three teachers for a period of twenty years. Rev-

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erend Potts was one of the teachers who had been getting this money since 1834, and it was transferred to Armstrong Academy when he became superintendent there. The academy stopped receiving this money in 1852, two years early. Also by 1852 the sponsoring American Indian Mission Association was two years behind in its \$1,000 annual support of the academy. The academy was suffering financially, and Potts was in ill health, which may have been the reasons why Superintendent Potts left early in 1854.<sup>43</sup>

Not much is known about the second, third, and fourth superintendents of the academy. A. S. Dennison only stayed there for a few months in 1854 and then left because of illness. Andrew G. Moffat had arrived at the academy a few years before as the principal teacher. He was still a teacher in August 1854, when he submitted the annual report of the academy. But by August 20, 1855, the date of his last report, he was the superintendent.<sup>44</sup> The record is uncertain about the identity of the next superintendent of the academy. Dr. W. B. Morrison wrote that Allen Wright was made the head of the institution after graduating from theological seminary in 1855. Still another source said that Allen Wright served as the principal instructor from 1855 to 1856.<sup>45</sup> Wright could have briefly been in charge of the academy in fall 1855 before William R. Baker was placed in charge on Christmas Day 1855, although he was not appointed as superintendent until early 1856.<sup>46</sup>

By the mid-1850s after about ten years of operation the academy was in need of repairs to the buildings and farm. Moffat reported that "scarcely any new rails have been made on the place for four years, so that the fences are far from adequate to keep out stock. The buildings used for our evening school, and bed-rooms for the pupils, teachers' room, and also Miss Chenowith's house, are very much dilapidated, and will not turn water."<sup>47</sup> The school was closed in the winter of 1854-55 for the purpose of making repairs. Superintendent Moffat said that "one large building was re-covered" and that new chimneys were being built for two buildings. He also indicated that a new building would be built for the teachers and staff.<sup>48</sup> However, these repairs must not have been enough, because the Choctaw Council responded in 1857 to the need for repairs by appropriating \$8,121 for the construction of a new brick building. Robert W. Nail and William R. Baker were put on the building committee at the Armstrong Academy.<sup>49</sup> Superintendent Baker wrote that the building would be ready to use in fall 1859. He also indicated that the new structure had cost about \$10,000 more than was appropriated.<sup>50</sup>

Also about this time the American Indian Mission Association, the Baptist organization that had helped to sponsor the academy, ceased to exist. The academy was transferred to the Domestic Board of the

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Southern Baptist Convention, which was supposed to pay off all past debts and send more workers for the academy.<sup>51</sup> What happened with this arrangement is unknown because there is no report for 1856, and the Cumberland Presbyterian Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions, another missionary organization of another church, took control. Superintendent Baker noted in his 1857 report that the Cumberland Presbyterian Board took control on February 2, 1857; however, in his 1859 report he indicated that the organization took control on February 22, 1856.<sup>52</sup> In 1859 Baker reported that the Choctaw Nation was giving the school \$2,900, and the Board was giving \$1,000. There was no mention of any other organizations supporting Armstrong Academy at this time, so these entities probably provided financial support to the academy until the Civil War.<sup>53</sup>

The Civil War disrupted normal life in the Choctaw Nation. It is assumed that Armstrong Academy finished out the 1860-61 year, but after that it was likely closed and perhaps was vacant during the 1862 year. In October 1863 an amendment to the constitution of the Choctaw Nation was passed, declaring that "the seat of government shall be permanently fixed at Armstrong Academy, and shall be called and known as Chahta Tamaha."<sup>54</sup> During the Civil War Confederate soldiers were stationed at Armstrong Academy. The academy was also one of the "principal hospital camps of the Confederate forces in Indian Territory, and the wounded and sick were carried there from locations as far distant as Fort Smith. Two hundred and fifty of the dead were buried nearby in shallow graves in a neglected cemetery."<sup>55</sup> During the Civil War it was unlikely that crops were planted at the academy, and while the academy was the Choctaw Capital, the state of its farm is unknown.

The academy also was used during the war to hold meetings that decided the fate of the American Indians tribes fighting for the Confederacy. There were many meetings or councils of the various American Indian tribes and governments held at the Armstrong Academy. One of those councils was held on February 5, 1864, when a council of the United Nations of the Indian Tribes met to make peace with the "wild Indians" further west and also to discuss Indian status in the Civil War. General Samuel B. Maxey, the commanding general for the Confederacy in the Indian Territory, gave a speech to the tribes that resulted in Indians' continued support of the Confederacy.<sup>56</sup> A council of the leaders of the Indian nations and tribes met at Armstrong Academy on June 10, 1865, to declare a cessation of hostilities until a permanent council could convene on September 1, 1865, with commissioners of the U.S. government to spell out the terms for a permanent



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peace between the Indian nations and tribes. The meeting on September 1 did not occur at the academy because the representatives of the U.S. government were in Fort Smith, so the council was moved to that location.<sup>57</sup>

In the years after the Civil War Armstrong Academy continued as the capital of the Choctaw Nation, with the buildings serving as the home of the Choctaw Council.<sup>58</sup> The Choctaw Supreme Court was also located at the academy, and some criminals were executed there.<sup>59</sup> The Choctaw Council passed a constitutional amendment to move the capital of the Choctaw Nation from the Armstrong Academy to Atoka in early 1876, but Governor Coleman Cole vetoed it and did not send it to the people for a vote.<sup>60</sup>

In fall 1883 the General Council passed an act that reestablished Armstrong Academy as an educational institution. The new capital building was completed at Tuskahoma, so the Armstrong Academy was no longer needed as the capital. The law stipulated that fifty orphan boys would attend this school, with one-third coming from each district, and classes would begin on the first Monday in September 1884.<sup>61</sup> The academy was given an annual allocation of \$5,000, with \$2,500 coming from the council and \$2,500 coming from the Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>62</sup> The council decided to contract with the Foreign Missions Committee of the Southern Presbyterian Church to manage the academy for ten years. The Presbyterian board sent William James Beard Lloyd, a Presbyterian missionary, to be the superintendent. Superintendent Lloyd was to teach the boys how to farm “as civilized people farm.” He was to have two assistants who were to teach the boys a “good practical education,” meaning a common school education.<sup>63</sup> Further insight as to what this education entailed can be found in Superintendent Lloyd’s 1889 report about the students and what they studied. The students in the primary department were divided four divisions. The first division studied what was called a first reader and also studied spelling and writing on slates. The second division studied the second reader, spelling, and writing. The third division studied the third reader, spelling, arithmetic, and writing. The fourth division studied the fourth reader, spelling, geography, arithmetic, and writing. The advanced department was divided into three divisions. The first division studied scripture reading, moral philosophy, arithmetic, geography, spelling, and writing. Another division studied scripture reading, moral philosophy, arithmetic to decimals, English grammar, written exercises, geography, spelling, and writing.<sup>64</sup>

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When Lloyd became superintendent of the Armstrong Academy, he found the buildings in need of repair. In 1884 the council appropriated \$2,500 to Superintendent Lloyd to make repairs to the academy. Lloyd inventoried the property of the Armstrong Academy in December 1889. In the inventory Lloyd indicated that the main building, which was about thirty years old at the time, was in great need of repair and that the other buildings needed attention as well.<sup>65</sup>

In late 1889 the Choctaw Council called for Lloyd's resignation for reasons unknown. Davis Eagleton mentioned in his book on Lloyd that there was a part of the Choctaw Council that wanted to fill the superintendent position at the academies with native Choctaws. When Lloyd failed to show up in late 1889 to a meeting with the Choctaw Council to deliver his annual report because he was taking care of sick students, this part of the council seized control and called for his resignation. But Eagleton also mentions that this call for Lloyd's resignation was not due to a personal dislike of Lloyd.<sup>66</sup> Another reason that the council may have solicited Lloyd's resignation was the apparent mismanagement of funds. In 1886 the Committee on Schools said that Reverend Lloyd had failed to turn in some vouchers and that his report "is of such a complicated nature" that an accountant was hired to settle the accounts of Armstrong Academy.<sup>67</sup> Lloyd had also overspent by more than \$538 in the school year 1888-89, and the Board of Missions of the Presbyterian church was notified that "they must remove the said W. J. B. Lloyd as superintendent of Armstrong Academy and put a more competent man in his place."<sup>68</sup> Whatever the reason, the Foreign Missions Committee of the Presbyterian Church did not approve of the successor to Lloyd who had been chosen, and Lloyd was asked to return. He refused.<sup>69</sup> Lloyd continued to be interested in the education of Choctaw youth until he died in 1916.<sup>70</sup>

On January 1, 1890, Rev. Calvin J. Ralston was appointed by the Presbyterian Home Mission Board, South to replace Lloyd.<sup>71</sup> Ralston was born in Rockingham County, Virginia, where he spent his boyhood and early manhood. He served as an assistant in the hospitals in the Confederacy during the Civil War. After the war he was the principal of Suffolk Female Institute. He graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1875 and married Sallie Cline in 1876. He held pastorates first in Kentucky, then in Tennessee, and finally in Denton, Texas.<sup>72</sup>

By 1890 the academy farm had about 130 acres under cultivation. However, the crop was almost an entire failure that year because the fencing around the crops was in bad shape and the cattle got into the crops. Another reason for the failure, Rev. C. J. Ralston reported, was the dry weather. The farm at this time had about thirty-three head

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of cattle, 130 head of hogs, and many mules and horses. Ralston said that he planned to “reduce the acreage and have better fences.” By 1892 things had improved to the point that Ralston reported that they “raised a fine crop of corn.”<sup>73</sup>

The students who learned and tended the fields at Armstrong Academy did not always attend voluntarily. Students were escorted to the academy by the law enforcement officials. Students who were unhappy at the academy at times tried to escape. Ralston said that when he took charge of the school in January of 1890, that there were thirty-three boys there, but the inventory of Armstrong Academy taken by Superintendent Lloyd in December 1889 had thirty-seven boys, indicating that four had run away. Two came back on January 6, 1890. Ralston also reported that another student ran away on July 8 and had not returned.<sup>74</sup> Regulations had been made for runaways from the boarding schools. The law stated that when a student left the boarding school without permission, the student then was to be returned by his parents, by guardians, or by the law.<sup>75</sup>

Superintendent Ralston treated the boys as a parent would, describing the administration of the institution as “parental.” He said that “the boys are directed and controlled as my own children are; my wife and I doing all in our power to make them happy and contented.” He also indicated that obedience to all tasks, whether in the school room or “in the family” was required.<sup>76</sup> This parental or family system of running the academy appeared to have been the way Superintendent Lloyd had run the academy also.<sup>77</sup>

There were some members of the Choctaw Council who wanted the academies to be run by their own people. Reverend Ralston was aware of this desire. He wrote in his report of 1892, “If the time has come for this change we stand ready to surrender the work to your care.”<sup>78</sup> And so when the ten-year contract with the Presbyterians ended in 1894, the Choctaws decided to discontinue management of their boarding schools by religious organizations. The Choctaw Board of Education appointed Thomas W. Hunter, one of their own, as superintendent. He was born in 1869 near the town of Boswell. His father was full-blooded Choctaw, and his mother was from Tennessee. After he was educated in the tribal schools in the nation, he then attended Roanoke College in Virginia.<sup>79</sup>

By the 1890s the Choctaw boarding schools were experiencing a change. In 1890 the Choctaw Council passed a major law that altered the educational system in the Choctaw Nation, including the boarding schools. This law created a board of education, which consisted of the principal chief of the Choctaw Nation, the superintendent of schools,

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and three district trustees. It was the responsibility of the board to appoint all teachers, to select textbooks, to cancel any academy or seminary if an outbreak of sickness occurred, and to promote agricultural and manual training in the academies. The choice of who went to the academies was placed in the hands of the county judge. Each student was to undergo a physical and mental examination before being admitted to an academy. The county judges, in deciding who to place in the Armstrong Academy, were to pay attention to who was the most needy. There was a limit of fifty boys placed on the Armstrong Orphan Academy.<sup>80</sup> However, the academy did not stay at this limit. Reverend Ralston reported thirty-three boys when he took over in January 1890, but by 1893 there were sixty boys at the academy; by 1897 there were seventy-five boys there.<sup>81</sup> The Choctaw Board of Education reported that there were far more students that applied to get into the academies than they could accommodate. That may have been part of the reason why Armstrong Academy was operating over its capacity as stated by the 1890 Education Act.<sup>82</sup> The Choctaw Council passed a law in November 1890 for the purpose of repairing and enlarging the building so that it could accommodate one hundred boys, so it was not long after the 1890 law was passed that it could house more boys.<sup>83</sup>

The schools of the Five Civilized Tribes were heading for change as the decade of the 1890s neared its end. This change had started many years before. The Five Civilized Tribes believed and practiced communal ownership of the land, which meant no private ownership of any of the land. The dominant white laws and culture were based on private ownership of the land. The U.S. government could not tolerate this. As more and more non-native individuals moved into the territory of the Five Civilized Tribes, the newcomers began to clamor for a change. At first the land allotment among the members of Five Civilized Tribes was enforced by persuasion only, but by 1886 the secretary of the interior began to advocate forcible land allotment.<sup>84</sup> As the 1880s ended and the 1890s began, Congress started to pass laws that gave government agencies the power to force the Five Civilized Tribes to accept allotment of their land. In 1898 Congress passed the Curtis Act. This act was of great significance to the Choctaw educational system. In order to assimilate the Indians into broader white society, tribal people needed to come under the laws and system of justice that U.S. citizens were under. This could only be accomplished by dissolving the tribal governments. The Curtis Act abolished tribal courts and made all laws of the nations invalid. The secretary of the interior also gained control over some of the income of four of the Five Civilized Tribes, which also gave him control of the schools.<sup>85</sup>

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With federal control came a bureaucracy of people to manage the programs of the Five Civilized Tribes. A position of U.S. Indian inspector was created, which was to manage all of the affairs of the Five Civilized Tribes. A position of superintendent of schools of Indian Territory was created to manage all Indian schools of the Five Civilized Tribes. Under this position were supervisors of schools in each nation.<sup>86</sup>

In 1899 the person who filled the position of superintendent of schools of Indian Territory was John D. Benedict. Born in 1854 near Indianapolis, Indiana, his family moved to eastern Illinois in 1869. He spent many years as a teacher, county superintendent, and assistant state superintendent for Illinois schools.<sup>87</sup> He reported that while the Indian schools were under the management of the various churches, the educational quality was good. However, he did not like that in the last few years the schools were under the supervision of the tribes themselves. He found the education system in the Five Tribes in great need of improvement. Many of the teachers were incompetent, and positions in education were handed out to family and friends. He also reported that the sanitary conditions at the schools were poor. He felt that since they would soon be given an allotment of land, the schools should concentrate more on manual training of the students, which had been neglected in the boarding schools.<sup>88</sup> Benedict said that learning English was still a problem in the boarding schools and that superintendents still talked to students in their native tongue. He also indicated that students did not attend school on a regular basis.<sup>89</sup>

Some of the criticisms of Superintendent Benedict were rather harsh, at least as far as the Choctaw Nation was concerned. The Choctaw Board of Education indicated in their 1895-96 report that they had instituted required examinations for all teacher applicants, resulting in better teachers who the board of education deemed qualified to work as teachers in the academies.<sup>90</sup> In addition the laws of the Choctaw Nation required that the students be taught agricultural and mechanical skills.<sup>91</sup>

Benedict began to change how the schools were run. He appointed the teachers and administrative positions in all the Choctaw Schools for the year 1899-1900 school year, giving preference to Choctaws who were competent. The boarding schools were opened in September 1899.<sup>92</sup> He decided to hold summer normals for all five tribes where the teachers could improve their skills. The first normal was conducted for the Choctaws at Tuskahoma Academy in June 1900. It was to last for four weeks, and Choctaw Supervisor of Schools E. T. McArthur was in charge, aided by John D. Benedict. The normals produced more qualified teachers in the Choctaw Nation. In the summer normal for the

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Choctaw Nation in 1902 held at the Jones Academy, some boys from the Armstrong Academy were brought “and used to illustrate the techniques of primary work.”<sup>93</sup>

While all these changes were occurring, work at Armstrong Academy continued. At first there was no change in the leadership of the academy. Thomas Hunter stayed on as superintendent until August 1900, when Samuel L. Morley was placed in charge of Armstrong Academy. Morley had been the principal teacher at the academy since 1895. He was born in Honey Grove, Texas, in 1872 and attended school at the University of Arkansas.<sup>94</sup> Superintendent Hunter went to the University of Arkansas and selected Morley to come to Armstrong Academy.<sup>95</sup>

Morley was taught military tactics at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and he brought his training with him to Armstrong Academy. He taught the boys military drills and offered a prize to the student who did the best. The students faced stern corporal punishment for the infraction of any rule.<sup>96</sup> This was quite different from the parental governance that was practiced by Reverend Ralston. Morley said about the use of military discipline that “there are certain lessons that every young man needs to learn. The chief of these are obedience, order, promptness, and courtesy. The effect of military training is to develop and foster these virtues.”<sup>97</sup> Morley’s military training of boys had spread to all of the Choctaw male academies by 1906.<sup>98</sup>

Morley was transferred to Jones Academy in September 1903 and was replaced by Wallace B. Butz for a year.<sup>99</sup> Gabe E. Parker was promoted to superintendent in July 1904. Parker was born at Fort Towson in 1878. His father was J. C. Parker of Kentucky, and his mother was a one-quarter Choctaw. Gabe Parker was educated at Spencer Academy, graduating there in 1894. He then continued his schooling at Henry Kendall College in Muskogee. He became principal of Armstrong Academy in 1900 at the young age of twenty-two and was superintendent in 1904 when he was only twenty-five, remaining in that position until 1913.<sup>100</sup>

Discipline at the academy was rather harsh. C. E. Fair, one of the principals under Superintendent Gabe Parker from 1906 to 1909, wrote a letter in 1935 to W. B. Morrison in which he described the discipline and rules at the academy:

No boy was allowed to run down or up the stairways; every boy must take off his hat as he entered the building, and should never wear his hat in his room or in the halls. There must be no talking after retiring bell at night; lights went out at 9:00 P.M., and absolute quiet must prevail everywhere until rising bell next morning

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at 7:00. Whispering or other methods of communication during school hours were absolutely tabooed.

C. E. Fair explained why whipping was the only way to discipline the boys at the academy:

I confess I protested against this indiscriminate method of punishment when I first took hold of the job. Mr. Parker and the teachers who had been there several years told me it was the only punishment these Indian boys respected. I doubted it, but finally concluded they were right. I tried other methods, often to my chagrin and sorrow, and finally fell to it with all the grace I could command. The only way I could explain it was that the Choctaws from time immemorial had used that method of punishment for violations of their tribal laws, and these boys felt they were not punished if they didn't get a whipping—they had been reared in that sort of atmosphere.<sup>101</sup>

One of the students who arrived at the academy during the time that Parker was superintendent was Peter W. Cole. He was born on February 4, 1892, and when his parents died he was placed at Armstrong.<sup>102</sup> When he arrived, he described the students' own rules that they enforced on each other:

The Judge or the chairman and members already in session asked me my name, age, my home, and several other questions. I answered all questions in my own native tongue, and was instantly told that I was not allowed to talk in my own tongue but must talk in English, and that I had committed a break in a rule of school as well as laws of the kangaroo court. I was also charged with "breaking in, in school without permission" "Talking Choctaw," etc., and the chairman asked, "What is the desire of the members?" Some shouted "Send him back home." While others cried, "Make him wrestle, fight, or give him a permanent job as water carrier or to empty slop for the teachers and matron." Here I stood wondering what it was all about, or what the final result would be, until one boy about my size walked up and challenged me for a wrestle. We wrestled and when I got the best of him up jumped another boy larger than I. And so it continued until you were handled by someone or if you were somewhat high-tempered and showed fight, of course, you had your hands full.<sup>103</sup>

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One of the things that the U.S. government misjudged was the length of time it would take to allot all the land and disband governmental affairs of the tribes. The original Curtis Act of 1898 had set the date of the end of the tribal governments as March 4, 1906, after which there would be no Indian governments. There would also be no tribal funds to administer the schools, and they would be forced to close. On March 2, 1906, Congress passed a law that continued the tribal governments "until all property of such tribes, or the proceeds thereof, shall be distributed among the members of said tribes."<sup>104</sup> But after 1906 insufficient money was given the boarding schools for upkeep and repairs because it was thought that the schools would not be continued after statehood. By 1909 the boarding schools were in terrible shape.<sup>105</sup>

In fall 1909 Indian Inspector E. B. Linnen toured the Indian Territory boarding schools. They were not kept up to the standard of Indian schools on Indian reservations. Students in some schools did not have enough food, medical care, fuel, lights, stationery, necessary tableware, clothes, and shoes. Furthermore, the buildings were out of date. Because these schools were in a dilapidated condition, there was much criticism as to how the U.S. government was conducting the education system in Indian Territory. Someone had to be blamed. The ax fell on John D. Benedict and three of the tribal school superintendents who all lost their jobs in January 1910.<sup>106</sup>

A new system of education was put in place with new leadership. Oscar H. Lipps was put in charge as supervisor for the Five Civilized Tribes. Part of this new system was cutting back on the boarding schools. Twelve of the twenty-four boarding schools in the Five Civilized Tribes were shut down. The remaining twelve, which included Armstrong Academy, received extensive repairs and continued to educate Indian youth.<sup>107</sup> Also a part of the government plan was to change the curriculum so the academy was more industrial in nature.<sup>108</sup> Superintendent Gabe Parker, speaking at the Lake Mohonk Conference in October 1910, said that things were progressing well with the industrial plan and discussed plans for growth: "We hope to be able to do everything that is possible for a school of that size to do along the lines of industrial training. The boys are enjoying their manual training work."<sup>109</sup>

During fall 1915 a committee of eight men was called to Washington, D.C., to develop a new program of study for all Indian schools across the United States. They looked at all different kinds of courses of study and came out with a new program. The program was divided into day schools and boarding schools. In the boarding schools, in addition to reading, language, and spelling, there was time for geography,



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arithmetic, history, physiology and hygiene, music, civics, manners, military and gymnastic drills, and four hours of industrial training in the first six grades. After grade six there were four years in the vocational division in which more subjects were taught, such as farm and household physics, chemistry, rural economics, field crops and plant diseases, vocational arithmetic, farm and household accounts, soils and soil fertility, and drafting.<sup>110</sup>

Farming continued to be a part of the curriculum of the Armstrong Academy well into the twentieth century. By 1912 it was being reported that there were dairy herds and new orchards at Armstrong.<sup>111</sup> In addition to the school farm at the academy the boys grew their own individual gardens, at least during the latter years of the academy. Superintendent of Schools John D. Benedict wrote that each student was given a plot of land and seed with which to plant a garden, and prizes were given the students for their work on the last day of the school year.<sup>112</sup>

The last superintendent of Armstrong Academy was Peru Farver. He was born in 1888 in Bonton, Indian Territory, the son of a full-blooded Choctaw father and a white mother from Kansas. He was educated at Armstrong Academy from 1902 to 1909 where he was a very good student and an excellent athlete.<sup>113</sup> After graduation Peru went to the University of Chicago but returned shortly thereafter to teach at the academy for three years and coach football. He then went to Oklahoma A & M, where he played football. He became superintendent of the academy in 1913 at the age of twenty-five.<sup>114</sup>

At the academy the health of the boys was a continuing concern. Superintendent Ralston reported when he began his time as superintendent there were many boys in ill health. In March 1890 there were thirty cases of measles and nineteen of pneumonia. Superintendent Ralston reported a death in 1890 from measles and pneumonia and more sickness in 1892, but no deaths.<sup>115</sup> During the academic year of 1895-96 sickness and death was prevalent in the schools of the Choctaw Nation. As the twentieth century dawned, there was still more sickness at the academy. In 1902 the closing exercises were not held because of a small pox epidemic at Armstrong Academy.<sup>116</sup> The Choctaw Board of Education was aware that health was a concern at the schools. They recommended that the students not be allowed to go home at Christmas because they became exposed to illness and got behind in their studies. The board also took steps to make sure that medical help was available for the students at the schools.<sup>117</sup>

By the early twentieth century as the U.S. government began to take control of the schools, federal officials began to try to help with

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the health concerns in the Choctaw Nation. Measles, scarlet fever, malarial fever, and tuberculosis were a problem. To help solve the problem, there was a "tuberculosis contest" in the schools of the Five Civilized Tribes in which all the students wrote an essay about what they had learned about how to prevent this disease. Other methods used to prevent disease were oiling the floors with a dust-collecting oil, better ventilation, and installation of screens on kitchen doors and sleeping porches in an effort to keep out flies. At Armstrong Academy Superintendent Parker made a flytrap of sirup kegs, thus "eliminating most of the expense for labor and material."<sup>118</sup>

In later years of the academy the closing examinations became more elaborate. The boys would show the knowledge they had gained, military drills perfected, and other accomplishments. A description of the June 1901 closing exercises follows:

Early in the morning a large crowd assembled at old Armstrong to witness the class examinations which were conducted all during the forenoon. The examinations disclosed the fact that all the pupils had made great progress during the year. . . . In the afternoon the competitive drill was the main feature, consisting of quick, hand foot and hat. We never saw a better exhibition of drilling than was there.<sup>119</sup>

The event could last all day, and plenty of food was available. In the evening a commencement program was held, at least in the latter years of the academy.<sup>120</sup> Toward the end of the school's history the closing exercises became known as commencement exercises during which many of the students sang songs, played musical instruments, or delivered orations. Speeches were also given by distinguished guests. Gabe E. Parker, former superintendent, delivered an address in 1915. The commencement program was often printed in the local newspapers.<sup>121</sup>

In April 1917 the United States declared war on the Central Powers. There were calls for men to serve in the armed forces. The war hit home at the academy when all of the Armstrong Academy boys of age applied for enlistment in the military in spring 1917. Only fourteen boys were accepted. The boys were all between eighteen and twenty years of age. Another former Armstrong student by the name of Joseph Oklahombi enlisted in the armed forces and saw action in France. He was honored for heroism in the war. In fact, the newspaper said that Oklahombi was "a war hero second only to Sergeant Alvin York of Tennessee."<sup>122</sup> The call for men to serve in the armed forces reached Superintendent Peru Farver. He resigned his post as superintendent in August 1918

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to enter the army, and E. A. Porter, another superintendent, was assigned to Armstrong in his absence. In March 1919 Superintendent Farver was reinstated at Armstrong Academy.<sup>123</sup>

The question of when Armstrong Academy burned has several answers depending on the source. Dr. James D. Morrison, former professor of history at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, put the end of the academy in February 1921.<sup>124</sup> His source for that date could have been Peter Cole, who reported the school burning in February 1921.<sup>125</sup> There are those people who think that the academy burned in 1919. Kent Ruth wrote an article for the *Daily Oklahoman* in 1971 stating that the academy burned in 1919.<sup>126</sup> Also noted historian and editor of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma* Muriel H. Wright said that the academy burned in 1919.<sup>127</sup>

However, wherever the previous scholars obtained their information, the newspapers of the time clearly stated that the academy burned in January 1920. Among those was the *Bryan County Democrat*, which reported in the January 22, 1920, edition on the front page "Armstrong Academy, An Old Land Mark in Choctaw Nation Went Up in Smoke Last Night."<sup>128</sup> Also the *Daily Oklahoman*, the *Caddo Herald*, and the *Durant Daily Democrat* reported the same story in January 1920.<sup>129</sup> The newspaper accounts claimed that it burned at about 7:30 p.m. on the night of January 21, 1920. The newspaper also noted that the fire "was first discovered in the boiler room and the flames spread so rapidly that the inadequate fire fighters at the school were unable to cope with them."<sup>130</sup> Cam Sullivan, a resident of Bokchito at the time, recalled the night the academy burned down in an interview for the *Daily Oklahoman* in 1959, "That fire could be seen for miles. . . . It took out the main dorm, the school building and the laundry. It left the teachers house and the large barn." Bertha Raines from Bennington was also interviewed by the *Daily Oklahoman* about the day that the academy burned. "I was up at the Old Church community and saw the light. It was an awful thing." She also recalled how the homeless students were brought into towns all around the academy and were given places to stay until the government took them to other Indian schools.<sup>131</sup> Pete W. Cole, a former student at the academy, recalled that he was "on the train and when it arrived at Bokchito, a few of the Armstrong Academy students boarded the train and said the Armstrong Academy went up in flames about 6:30 in the evening."<sup>132</sup>

Gabe E. Parker stated that Armstrong Academy would probably not be rebuilt because of the announced policy of the federal government to integrate the Indians with the white children in public schools.<sup>133</sup> The other property of the academy was "disposed of through Indian Agents

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and commissioners appointed for that purpose." What was left of the academy was valued at \$5,466. Today the entire land upon which the academy stood is in private hands.<sup>134</sup>

Armstrong Academy was an educational institution for the Choctaw Nation for approximately seventy-five years. What of those who attended this school? Was it a benefit to them? John D. Benedict wrote in his report in 1909 that Superintendent Morley "has been keeping in touch with the Choctaw boys who have gone out from this school and he is pleased to note that many of them are satisfactorily filling various positions of trust. He recalls six who hold good positions as bank cashiers and bookkeepers, one of whom is a full blood. One is just completing a course in civil engineering in a college, two are successful lawyers, several are clerks in stores, while several others are engaged in improving their allotments."<sup>135</sup>

The Armstrong Academy and the other academies began as a result of Choctaw leadership that valued education. These schools helped Choctaw children to improve their opportunities in life through education. The school system, though not perfect, was certainly comparable if not better than that of many other American Indian tribes. The Armstrong Academy, as a part of this Choctaw system of education, educated many boys and orphan boys in the nation and served its purpose quite well.

### Endnotes

\* Dennis Miles is the technical access and public services librarian for the Henry G. Bennett Memorial Library at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant.

<sup>1</sup> James D. Morrison, *Schools for the Choctaws* (Durant: Choctaw Bilingual Education Program, 1978), 1-14; 18-32.

<sup>2</sup> James D. Morrison, *The Social History of the Choctaw Nation: 1865-1907* (Durant: Oklahoma Creative Informatics, 1987), 31.

<sup>3</sup> "Treaty with the Choctaw, 1830 September 27, 1830. 7 Stat., 333. Proclamation, February 24, 1831," *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, vol. 2, ed. Charles Kappler (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 311; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Armstrongs of Indian Territory Part II: William Armstrong," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 30, no. 4 (1952): 420.

<sup>4</sup> Angie Debo, *Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 60.

<sup>5</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation* (1847; repr., Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1975), 37.

<sup>6</sup> Morrison, *Schools for the Choctaws*, 160; Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 56-57.

<sup>7</sup> Morrison, *Schools for the Choctaws*, 216-18.

<sup>8</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Foreman, "The Armstrongs of Indian Territory," 420, 422, 451.

<sup>10</sup> Reverend William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion with Linnings of Mission Life* (Cincinnati: Poe & Hitchcock, 1863), 43.

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<sup>11</sup> James Milligan, *The Choctaw of Oklahoma* (Abilene, TX: H. V. Chapman & Sons, 2003), 87.

<sup>12</sup> Foreman, "The Armstrongs of Indian Territory," 451-53.

<sup>13</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 78-79.

<sup>14</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1846-47*, 1846, 29th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC: Ritchie and Heiss Printers, 1846), 342-43 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1846).

<sup>15</sup> John D. Morris, *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 10. The exact section of land is Section 12, T 6, S, R 11 E.

<sup>16</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 51.

<sup>17</sup> Morrison, *Schools for the Choctaws*, 222-23.

<sup>18</sup> W. B. Morrison, "Old Philadelphia Baptist Church," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 13, no. 4 (1935): 266.

<sup>19</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1846, 345.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>21</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1848* (Washington, DC: 1848), 506 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1848).

<sup>22</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1853*, 1853, 33rd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong Printer, 1853), 414 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1853).

<sup>23</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1846, 345.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 343-44.

<sup>25</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1848, 507.

<sup>26</sup> W. B. Morrison, "Old Philadelphia Baptist Church," 268.

<sup>27</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1854*, 1854, 33rd Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC: A. O. P. Nicholson Printer, 1854), 142 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1854).

<sup>28</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1846, 344-45; Office of Indian Affairs, 1848, 506.

<sup>29</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1852*, 1852, 32nd Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong Printer, 1853), 424-25 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1852).

<sup>30</sup> James W. Moffitt, "Early History of Armstrong Academy," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 21, no. 1 (1943): 90.

<sup>31</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1849*, 1849 (Washington, DC: Robert Armstrong Printer, 1849), 103-04, (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1849).

<sup>32</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1855*, 1856, 34th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: A. O. P. Nicholson Printer, 1856), 163-65 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1855).

<sup>33</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1852, 424-25.

<sup>34</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1853, 414.

<sup>35</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1855, 164-65.

<sup>36</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 39.

<sup>37</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1846, 344-45.

<sup>38</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1848, 505-06.

<sup>39</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1846, 342-43.

<sup>40</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1853, 423.

<sup>41</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1849, 1111.

<sup>42</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1859*, 1860 (Washington, DC: George W. Bowman Printer, 1860), 201 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1859).

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<sup>43</sup> Morrison, *Schools for the Choctaws*, 233-35; W. B. Morrison, "Old Philadelphia Baptist Church," 270.

<sup>44</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1852, 424; Office of Indian Affairs, 1854, 141; US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1856*, 1856, 34th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: A. O. P. Nicholson Printer, 1856), 164 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1856).

<sup>45</sup> G. T. Ralls and W. B. Morrison, eds., "Allen Wright," *Oklahoma Trails* (Atoka, IT: Atoka Press, 1827), 166; Allen Rucker, "Eight Great Indians: Allen Wright, Choctaw," *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), January 12, 1930, 45; W. S. Peterson interview, January 24, 1936, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 107, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 348.

<sup>46</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1859, 201. William Baker stated in the above report that he "was employed by the school trustees of the nation, and took charge [of the Armstrong Academy] on the 25th day of December 1855, and was appointed superintendent by the Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions, shortly after its connections with the school."

<sup>47</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1854, 142; Office of Indian Affairs, 1846, 342-43.

<sup>48</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1856, 165.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph P. Folsom, *Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation Together with Treaties of 1855, 1865, and 1866* (New York: William P. Lyon & Son, 1869), 151-52, 157-58; US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1860*, 1860 (Washington, DC: George W. Bowman Printer, 1860), 202 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1856). The Choctaw Council actually had appropriated \$4,000 in November 1856 but repealed that amount in 1857 and appropriated \$8,121 in its place. By then the academy was already under construction.

<sup>50</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1860*, 1860 (Washington, DC: George W. Bowman Printer, 1860), 202 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1860).

<sup>51</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1855, 165.

<sup>52</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1857*, 1858 (Washington, DC: William A. Harris Printer, 1858), 164 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1857); Office of Indian Affairs, 1859, 201.

<sup>53</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1859, 201; Office of Indian Affairs, 1860, 140.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 141; Folsom, *Constitution and Laws*, 26. The reason for this assumption is the fact that Superintendent Baker's report for 1860 was written on September 6, 1860, probably after the school year had started.

<sup>55</sup> Muriel H. Wright and LeRoy H. Fischer, "Civil War Sites in Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 44, no. 2 (1966): 162; Matthew Walton James interview, July 16, 1937, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 107, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 149.

<sup>56</sup> Fred Hood, "Twilight of the Confederacy in Indian Territory," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 41, no. 4 (1963-64): 433; Samuel Bell Maxey, ed., Address delivered by Brig. Gen. S. B. Maxey, commanding district of the Indian territory and ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs: before the grand council of the Confederate tribes at Armstrong Academy C.N., by special invitation, February 5th, 1864 (Paris Job-Office, 1964); Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War* (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919), 320.

<sup>57</sup> Kenny A. Franks, *Stand Watie and the Agency of the Cherokee Nation* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 182-83; Annie Heloise Abel, *The Indian Under Reconstruction* (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1925), 141; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume XLVI: Part II Correspondence (Washington, DC: Government Printing

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Office, 1896), 1105.

<sup>58</sup> Debo, *Rise and Fall*, 158.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas W. Hunter to W. B. Morrison, letter, August 20, 1935, W. B. and James D. Morrison Collection.

<sup>60</sup> "The Constitutional Amendment: The Chief's Veto," *Vindicator* (Atoka, IT), March 15, 1876; "Letter to Governor Cole by Simpson McGilbery," *Vindicator*, April 19, 1876, 4; Debo, *Rise and Fall*, 158.

<sup>61</sup> "Bill No. 27 Approved October 22, 1883," microfilm CTN 27, no. 19793, Choctaw National Records Collection, Research Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (hereafter cited Choctaw Nation Collection); Debo, *Rise and Fall*, 158-59.

<sup>62</sup> "Bill No. 27 Approved October 22, 1883," Choctaw Nation Collection; Davis Foute Eagleton, *A Tribute to the Memory of Rev. W. J. B. Lloyd: Missionary to the Choctaw Indians, 1870-1916, Evangelist, Statesman, Friend* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1916), 38.

<sup>63</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Board of Indian Commissioners for the Year 1890* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 60 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1890).

<sup>64</sup> Invoice of property belonging to Armstrong Orphan Home School transferred by W. J. B. Lloyd, Supt., December 1889, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19801, Choctaw Nation Collection. One of the duties of the superintendents of all Choctaw boarding schools was to submit a report annually to the National Council and after 1890 to the Board of Education. The report was examined and then if all aspects appeared correct, the council passed a resolution accepting the report. The actual reports written in the 1880s and 1890s are lost except for the two by Superintendent Ralston in 1890 and 1892. However, the resolutions still exist.

<sup>65</sup> Invoice of property belonging to Armstrong Orphan Home School transferred by W. J. B. Lloyd, Supt., December 1889, microfilm, CTN 27, no. 19801, Choctaw Nation Collection; "Bill No. 20 of the Choctaw General Council, Approved October 25, 1884," W. B. and James Morrison Collection.

<sup>66</sup> Eagleton, *A Tribute*, 39.

<sup>67</sup> "Bill No. 33 of the Choctaw General Council, Approved October 27, 1886," W. B. and James Morrison Collection.

<sup>68</sup> Choctaw Nation, *Laws of the Choctaw Nation Passed at the Regular Session of the General Council Convened at Tushka Humma, October 7, 1889 and Adjourned November 15, 1889* (1890; repr. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1975), 34-35.

<sup>69</sup> Eagleton, *A Tribute*, 39.

<sup>70</sup> W. B. Morrison, *The Red Man's Trail* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1932), 77; Eagleton, 40.

<sup>71</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1890, 60.

<sup>72</sup> "Necrology-Rev. Calvin James Ralston," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 9, no. 2 (1931), 213-14; W. B. Morrison, "The Missionary Bell," *Onward*, August 21, 1927, 5; "Dr. Morrison Writes Interesting Article About Rev. Ralston," *Durant (OK) Daily Democrat*, August 31, 1927.

<sup>73</sup> Report of C. J. Ralston, Supt. of Armstrong Orphan Home for the Fiscal Year Ending July 1, 1890, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19802, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>74</sup> *Laws of the Choctaw Nation Made and Enacted by the General Council from 1886 to 1890* (Atoka: Indian Citizen Print, 1890), 52; Invoice of property belonging to Armstrong Orphan Home transferred by W. J. B. Lloyd, Supt., December 1889, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19801, Choctaw Nation Collection; Report of C. J. Ralston, Supt. of Armstrong Orphan Home for the Fiscal Year Ending July 1, 1890, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19802, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>75</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 40.

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<sup>76</sup> Report of C. J. Ralston, Supt. of Armstrong Orphan Home for the Fiscal Year Ending July 1, 1890, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19802, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>77</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1890, 60.

<sup>78</sup> Report of C. J. Ralston, Supt. of Armstrong Orphan Home for the Fiscal Year Ending July 1, 1892, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19802, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>79</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1890, 60; Joseph B. Thoburn, *A Standard History of Oklahoma* (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1916), 1564.

<sup>80</sup> Choctaw Nation, *The Constitution and Laws of the Choctaw Nation*, 41-43, 49-50, 52.

<sup>81</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1893*, 1893, Secretary of the Interior (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1893), 146 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1893); US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1897*, 1897, 55th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1897), 144 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1897).

<sup>82</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Choctaw Nation for the Years 1895 and 1896*, microfilm CTN 27, Choctaw Nation Records.

<sup>83</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1891*, 1891, Secretary of the Interior. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 60 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1891).

<sup>84</sup> Debo, *And Still the Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1940), 20; Clara Sue Kidwell, *The Choctaws in Oklahoma: From Tribe to Nation, 1855-1970* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 137-40; W. David Baird, "Spencer Academy, Choctaw Nation, 1842-1900," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 45, no. 1 (1967): 25-43.

<sup>85</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the United States Indian Inspector for the Indian Territory to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1899), 3-5 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1899); US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900*, 1900, Secretary of the Interior (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), 104-05, 107 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1900); Kidwell, *The Choctaws*, 137-40.

<sup>86</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1899, 3-5.

<sup>87</sup> Muriel H. Wright, "John D. Benedict: First United States Superintendent of Schools in the Indian Territory," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v033/v033p472.pdf> (accessed December 2, 2011).

<sup>88</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1900, 108.

<sup>89</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Superintendent of Schools for Indian Territory in Annual Report of the United States Indian Inspector for Indian Territory Together with the Reports of the Superintendent of Schools in that Territory, and of the Indian Agent in Charge of the Union Agency to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1899*, Secretary of the Interior (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1899), 20-21.

<sup>90</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Choctaw Nation for the Years 1895-96*, microfilm CTN 27, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>91</sup> Choctaw Nation, *Laws of the Choctaw Nation Made and Enacted by the General Council, from 1886 to 1890, Inclusive* (Atoka, IT: Indian Citizen Print, 1890), 42.

<sup>92</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1900, 108-09.

<sup>93</sup> Joe C. Jackson, "Summer Normals in Indian Territory after 1898," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 37, no. 3 (1959): 317.

<sup>94</sup> Robert L. Williams, "Samuel Long Morley," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 22, no. 3 (1944): 233-34.

<sup>95</sup> T. W. Gunter to W. B. Morrison, letter, August 20, 1935, W. B. and James Morrison



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<sup>96</sup> W. B. Morrison, "Ghost Towns of the Choctaw Nation," *Daily Oklahoman*, March 22, 1936, 55; US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, 1906*, 1906-07, 59th Cong., 2d sess., House Executive Document 5 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907), 41 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1906); Interview with Peter W. Cole, May 17, 1937, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 107, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 167; W. B. Morrison, letter, August 6, 1935, W. B. and James Morrison Collection.

<sup>97</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs. *Report of the Superintendent of Schools for Indian Territory in Annual Reports of the Department of the Interior, 1906* (Washington, DC: 1907), 752 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, Supt., 1906).

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 751.

<sup>99</sup> Williams, "Samuel Long Morley," 234; US Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the United States Indian Inspector for the Indian Territory Together with the Reports of the Indian Agent in Charge of the Union Agency, the Superintendent and Supervisors of Schools, and Revenue Inspectors in that Territory to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1903*, 1903, Secretary of the Interior (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 98; US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes, Indian Inspector for Indian Territory: Indian Contracts, 1904* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1904), 289; Thoburn, *A Standard History*, 1197.

<sup>100</sup> Thoburn, *A Standard History*, 1197.

<sup>101</sup> C. E. Fair to W. B. Morrison, letter, August 5, 1935, W. B. and James Morrison Collection.

<sup>102</sup> Peter W. Cole interview, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 65, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 249.

<sup>103</sup> Peter W. Cole, "Brief Sketch of Old Armstrong Academy, A Government School for Indian Boys, Destroyed by Fire in 1921," *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 2, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 163-65.

<sup>104</sup> *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, vol. 2, ed. Charles Kappler (1904; repr., Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1972), 654; Office of Indian Affairs, Supt., 1906, 749.

<sup>105</sup> "Report of the Supervisor of Schools," *Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1910: Administrative Reports in Two Volumes*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911): 225.

<sup>106</sup> "Indian Officers Surrender Posts," *Daily Oklahoman*, January 11, 1910, 9; "Great Scandal in Indian Schools," *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City, UT), January 10, 1910, front page.

<sup>107</sup> "Boarding Schools to be Abandoned," *Daily Oklahoman*, April 20, 1910, 9.

<sup>108</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1911* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1911), 79.

<sup>109</sup> "Address of Gabe E. Parker," *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian and Other Dependent Peoples, October 19-21, 1910*, ed. Lillian D. Powers (unknown publisher), 53.

<sup>110</sup> US Department of the Interior, *Reports of the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1916: Volume II Indian Affairs Territories* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), 9-21.

<sup>111</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1912*, Secretary of the

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Interior (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), 94 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1912).

<sup>112</sup> US Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1909, 1909*, Secretary of the Interior (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), 73 (hereafter cited as Office of Indian Affairs, 1909).

<sup>113</sup> Document regarding Peru W. Farver, author's personal collection, document received from Janice Whaling, great-niece of Peru Farver; Thoburn, *A Standard History*, 1655. This source states that Peru went to Oklahoma A & M first and then to the University of Chicago.

<sup>114</sup> Thoburn, *A Standard History*, 1654.

<sup>115</sup> Report of C. J. Ralston, Supt. of Armstrong Orphan Home for the Fiscal Year Ending July 1, 1890, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19802, Choctaw Nation Collection; Report of C. J. Ralston, Supt. of Armstrong Orphan Home for the Fiscal Year Ending July 1, 1892, microfilm CTN 27, no. 19802, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>116</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Choctaw Nation for the Years 1895 and 1896*, microfilm CTN 27, Choctaw Nation Collection; *Caddo (OK) Herald*, June 6, 1902.

<sup>117</sup> *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Choctaw Nation for the Years 1895 and 1896*, microfilm CTN 27, Choctaw Nation Collection.

<sup>118</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1912, 90-91.

<sup>119</sup> "Closing Exercises," *Caddo Herald*, June 21, 1901, 3.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.; "Academy Closes Successful Term," *Bokchito (OK) News*, June 5, 1913, 1; "At Armstrong Academy Next Mon. and Tues.," *Bokchito News*, May 28, 1914, 1.

<sup>121</sup> "Academy Closes Successful Term," *Bokchito News*, June 5, 1913, 1; "At Armstrong Academy Next Mon. and Tues.," *Bokchito News*, May 28, 1914, 1; "Strong Address to Students," *Bokchito News*, June 3, 1915, 3.

<sup>122</sup> "Choctaw Indian Boys Join National Guard," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 20, 1917, 38; "Joseph Oklahombi: Choctaw War Hero," *Rock Valley (IA) Bee*, October 28, 1921, Digital Archives of Sioux County, <http://siouxcounty.newspaperarchive.com/PdfViewer.aspx?img=75808092&firstvisit=true&src=search&currentResult=2&currentPage=0> (accessed April 20, 2010).

<sup>123</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1919, 389.

<sup>124</sup> Morrison, *Schools for the Choctaws*, 237.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Peter Cole, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 65, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 249.

<sup>126</sup> Kent Ruth, "Ruins Recall 1845 Academy," *Daily Oklahoman*, May 23, 1971, 9.

<sup>127</sup> Wright and Fischer, "Civil War Sites," 163.

<sup>128</sup> "Armstrong Academy, An Old Land Mark in Choctaw Nation Went Up in Smoke Last Night; Big Lost," *Bryan County (OK) Democrat*, January 22, 1920, 1.

<sup>129</sup> "Armstrong Academy Burns Tuesday Eve," *Caddo Herald*, January 22, 1920, 1.

<sup>130</sup> "Armstrong Academy, An Old Land Mark in Choctaw Nation Went Up in Smoke Last Night; Big Lost," *Bryan County Democrat*, January 22, 1920, 1.

<sup>131</sup> "Trip to Choctaw Capital Worth It," *Daily Oklahoman*, December 13, 1959, 24A.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas W. Hunter interview, October 21, 1937, *Indian Pioneer History Collection*, vol. 2, ed. Grant Foreman (Oklahoma City: Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, Microfilm Publications, 1978), 69.

<sup>133</sup> "Gabe Parker Says Armstrong Academy Not to Be Rebuilt," *Durant Daily Democrat*, January 1920.

<sup>134</sup> "Armstrong Academy," *Durant (OK) Weekly News*, May 4, 1934, 6; Interview with Reba Titsworth, Durant Public Library, Durant, Oklahoma.

<sup>135</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, 1909, 73.