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Article Summary: The Santee Normal Training School offered religious and industrial training to Indian young people from 1870 to 1936. Despite cultural and financial obstacles to its success, it is said to have trained nearly half the educated leaders of the Sioux.

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Names: Stephen R Riggs, Alfred L Riggs, Frederick B Riggs

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Photographs / Images: Boys' Christian Endeavor, a Congregational Church organization of younger Santee students; campus of the Santee Normal Training School (*Word Carrier*, May-June 1910); Pilgrim Congregational Church, erected 1870-1871 on the Santee Agency; Santee tribal leaders at the Agency in 1918

THE SANTEE NORMAL TRAINING SCHOOL

By RICHARD L. GUENTHER

THE SETTLEMENT of the Santee Sioux on the Niobrara River in Nebraska in 1866, coupled with the release of their men who had been imprisoned after the uprising in Minnesota, stilled much of the anxiety members of the tribe had felt since the summer of 1862. Confinement and then removal from Minnesota had caused them much distress. Their home on Crow Creek in Dakota Territory had been the site of much suffering. Conflict with the Winnebagoes, sickness, hunger, death, and cold were numbered among their many afflictions. The Niobrara country was a land of milk and honey compared to the Crow Creek Reservation. The return of the men from their prison in Davenport, Iowa, reunited families and instilled feelings of security that had been absent for years.

The experience of punishment at the hands of the whites had been an awesome lesson, and now, reunified and well located, the Santee became more receptive to the white man's civilizing processes than ever before. As a consequence, a significant change would be wrought in them. At least partially responsible for this change was the Santee Normal Training School.

The devoted companion and missionary to the Santee, John P. Williamson, accompanied the people from Crow Creek to their new home on the Niobrara. There, with the assistance of a few helpers, the work of educating and Christianizing was continued much as it had been for years. But opportunities for expansion were soon recognized.¹

In 1869, two missionaries, Thomas S. Williamson and Stephen R. Riggs, visited the Santee Reservation on their way up the Missouri to preach the gospel to the Sioux. Accompanying them to Santee was Alfred

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L. Riggs, the eldest son of Stephen, who was contemplating following in his father's work. When John P. Williamson decided to leave Santee and begin a new station at the Yankton Indian Agency in Dakota Territory, the door was left open for Alfred to assume the former's responsibilities at Santee.² The elder Riggs, cognizant of the changes that had been wrought in the minds of the Santee since their defeat and punishment by the whites and ascertaining the possibilities for increased activity among the Santee as a result of these changes, wrote the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions that summer. He asked that operations be extended at Santee by the establishment of a training school. For this work he requested an appropriation of \$28,000 and he recommended that Alfred L. Riggs be placed in charge there.³

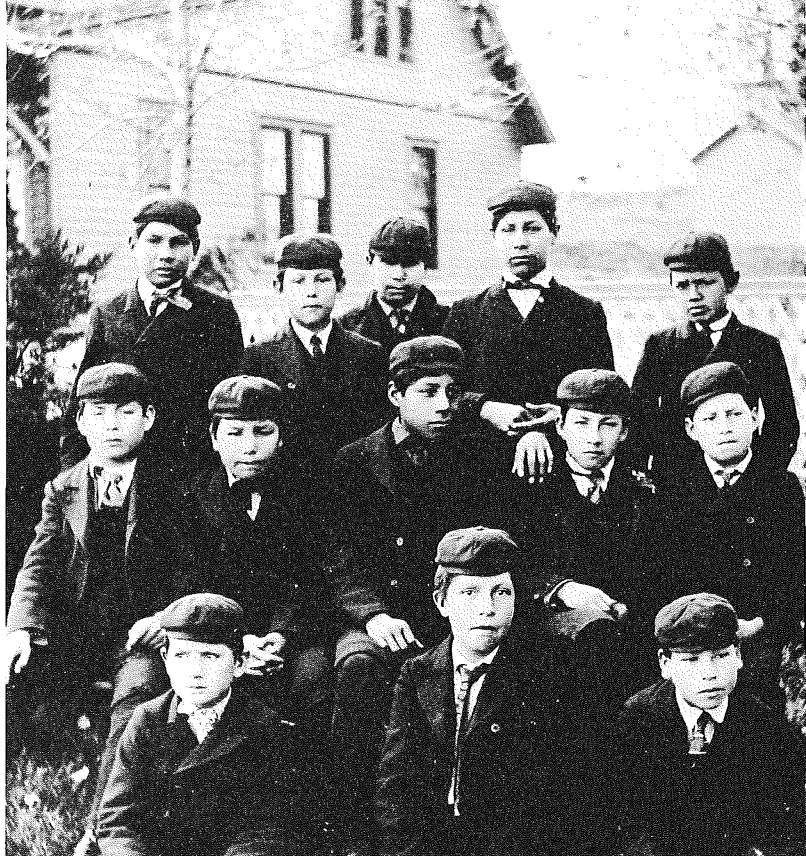
When the reservation was surveyed into eighty-acre plots for eventual family settlement, the commissioners felt assured that the Santee had found a permanent home and that they would be safe authorizing the expenditure of increased funds at Santee on the basis of this permanency.⁴ In May of 1870 A. L. Riggs moved to the Santee Mission.

The work of construction was begun that summer. Although it was necessary to have some finishing materials and pine boards shipped from Chicago, Sioux City, or Yankton by way of the Missouri River, other lumber could be cut and sawed on the site. By fall a frame home, school, and church were completed and ready for the reception of the student body.⁵ The *Iapi Oave*, the Sioux language newspaper published by the Dakota Mission and edited by John P. Williamson, carried a notice of the opening of the Santee High School. It listed A. L. Riggs as principal and Albert Frazier and Eli Abraham as his assistants and included an advertisement for students. It read:

If anyone should give you a deer, you would probably say, "You make me glad." But how much more would you be glad if one should teach you how to hunt and kill many deer. So, likewise, if one should teach you a little wisdom he would make you glad, but you would be more glad if one taught you how to acquire knowledge.⁶

Rapid growth characterized the early years of the school, but when government subsidies were withdrawn in 1901 from mission schools, operations were cut down and the school remained almost static in enrollment and physical growth.

In 1872 work was begun on a residence building for girls. This building, Dakota Home, was completed in 1874 at a cost of \$4,200 which was given



The Boys' Christian Endeavor was a Congregational Church organization of younger Santee students.

by the Woman's Board of Missions. It was two stories high and measured forty-two by forty-eight feet.⁷ Eventually three other homes for boarding students were built: Whitney Hall, for young men fifteen and over; Boys' Cottage, for boys from six to fourteen; and the Birds' Nest, for young girls.⁸ By 1885 there was a total of eighteen buildings on four hundred and eighty acres held by the school.⁹ Many of these structures were a part of the industrial training program; they included a print shop, shoe shop, blacksmith shop, agricultural buildings, and so forth. This represented the peak in construction at the school.

From the beginning, enrollment at the school was much higher than anything previously attained in the Board's educational endeavor. Early registration figures show that on the average there were approximately one hundred pupils.¹⁰ This rose in 1885 to two hundred and six.¹¹ Not all the enrollees were boarding students; many were from the Santee Reservation and attended day school, night school, or one of the other

forms of educational opportunities provided, such as the debating society.¹² After the withdrawal of government support, the enrollment again dropped to approximately one hundred.¹³

The school was founded by a Riggs and continued under the guidance of one for sixty-three years. Alfred, the founder, was succeeded after his death in 1916 by his son, Frederick B. Riggs. The latter held the office of principal until 1933 when he retired. His retirement ended ninety-six years of service to the Santee Sioux Indians by the Riggs family.¹⁴

There have probably been few missionary educators more thoroughly acquainted with the people among whom they worked than these men. Their knowledge of the language, traditions, habits, and thinking of the Santee had been gained as they grew to manhood among them. During these years the idea of service to the Indian must have become ingrained in them, for not only they, but many others of the Riggs families devoted all or part of their time to the school.

It is impossible to ascertain the degree of sacrifice these men felt they were making by performing their role. Perhaps some idea can be imagined by examining the statement of one of the teachers at the school. It is possible that the author was reflecting only her own disparagement when she noted that Dr. Riggs, even though "living in this little Indian village, cut off from sources of inspiration open to most men" still managed to maintain scholarly activities.¹⁵

In addition to their administrative duties there were teaching responsibilities. These words about Alfred attest to the heavy schedule they must have borne:

Until one has seen this grand educator at his daily work, with hand upon the helm, and eye upon the Distant Land, the manifold duties and cares to which he alone must give attention, the labor of mind and heart performed by him, can not be conceived of.¹⁶

Whatever their personal feelings, whatever their heavy burden, they remained to serve, and under their guidance the Santee Normal Training School became an eminent institution in the field of Indian education.

The staff varied in number with the size of the student enrollment. It consisted of teachers, matrons for the homes, industrial instructors, and general students, there were thirteen teachers in the normal school and thirteen instructors in the industrial department.¹⁷

Life as a teacher was very ordinary according to one who served under both Alfred and Frederick Riggs. She noted that pleasures and excitements consisted of visitors, attending meetings, chaperoning children on various trips and excursions, and the camp meeting of the Dakota churches held each fall. She noted that the year 1891 had been an exciting year, for some bands of Sioux became enthralled with ghost dances and of a coming Indian Messiah. Many Sioux were massacred by troops at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, that year as the result of the Messiah War but the Santee were not involved.

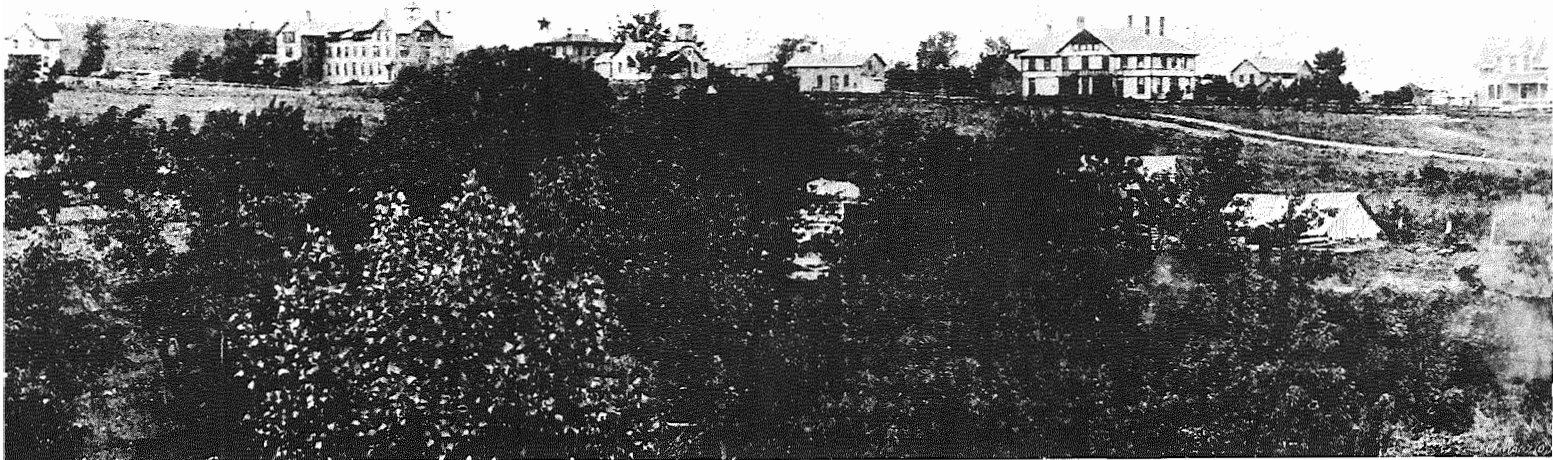
There were many duties for the faculty. In addition to teaching they had

to assist in entertaining the pupils by walks, plays, sociables, and picnics, to relieve the matrons at evening study hours, to teach in Sunday school, visit the neighboring Indian families, and to help anywhere as emergency arises from the absence or sickness of some one of the mission workers.¹⁸

The most noticeable thing about the Indian boys and girls who came to the school was their uncleanness. In some cases they apparently did not have even the most basic knowledge of personal hygiene.¹⁹ During their first few weeks in attendance, their progress was rapid in the assumption of the ways in which they were instructed, but after that it tapered off.²⁰

The little ones exhibited great joy at being in school and sharing their experiences with others. After they had lost their shyness, it was pleasant to teach them. The older students were not so interested for some of them were not in school of their own volition. These were often self-conscious, awkward, and uncouth; school was no longer a novelty to them and was uninteresting. Because their command of English was better than that of their parents, they felt they knew enough. Boys and girls became more interested in each other than in obtaining an education. In such situations they often became idle and rude. Some, however, showed promise; they were "a joy to their teachers, and an inspiration to other Indians."²¹

The Indian was a difficult student. Some thought he was difficult because he could not learn as readily as the whites and some had even insisted that the Indian could not learn at all. These charges were answered in the English edition of the Dakota Mission paper published at Santee. In it was found much about what educational abilities the Indian possessed. It read:



The Word Carrier, newspaper printed at the Santee Normal Training School, published this picture of the campus in its May-June 1910 issue (Vol. XXIX, No. 3). Building designations were added to the cut by its editor, A. L. Riggs.

It is no longer a debatable question whether an Indian can learn or not, . . . but it is still maintained that he does not learn as readily as his white brother. This is a popular fallacy, which the facts do not support. His mastery of one, and sometimes two, new languages (English and Dakota), in addition to the work of marshalling the forces of a strong and totally undisciplined nature, the gradual acceptance of things wholly new, which appeal to his intelligence as the *right things*, the weeding out of the old to make room for these newer and better things, all these require a mental acumen, and a moral strength, not to be lightly considered or undervalued, and entirely disprove the theory that he is intractable and unteachable.²²

The belief that Indian education was possible must have strengthened teachers' will to continue the task, for there were other difficulties native to the Indian with which the teacher had to cope.

In an address on Indian Education made at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, A. L. Riggs noted four possible pitfalls in teaching the Indian. He pointed out that the Indian was a wild, undisciplined person who had never been subjected to regular habits, but who also lacked an independent spirit because he was a member of a corporate body in which the individual meant nothing. In addition he was a religious man, the most religious of men. His religion bound him to live the life of his fathers. A final barrier was his language. It narrowly constricted his opportunities.²³

The ultimate goal of the Santee Normal Training School was to bring about the regeneration of the Indian people. The missionaries had decided while the Indian men were still in prison that the major portion of the work of regeneration was to be the task of the Indian himself. Thus, the school acknowledged its purpose to be the training of teachers, preachers, interpreters, and business men for the Sioux nation.²⁴ The school made no pretense at preparing its students for higher education; instead it sought to raise up men and women who were ready to meet the exigencies of Indian life in a white civilization. These men and women would in turn go back to their people to become responsible leaders in educating and Christianizing them so that they would become useful in their own community.²⁵ Each student was impressed with the idea that he was to use everything he gained from the school to help his people.²⁶ To achieve this goal the major efforts of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions were concentrated in the Santee school which was located on the Santee Reservation in the midst of the people. Although the Board operated other boarding schools and day schools on other reservations, none of them received the amount of support given the Santee school.

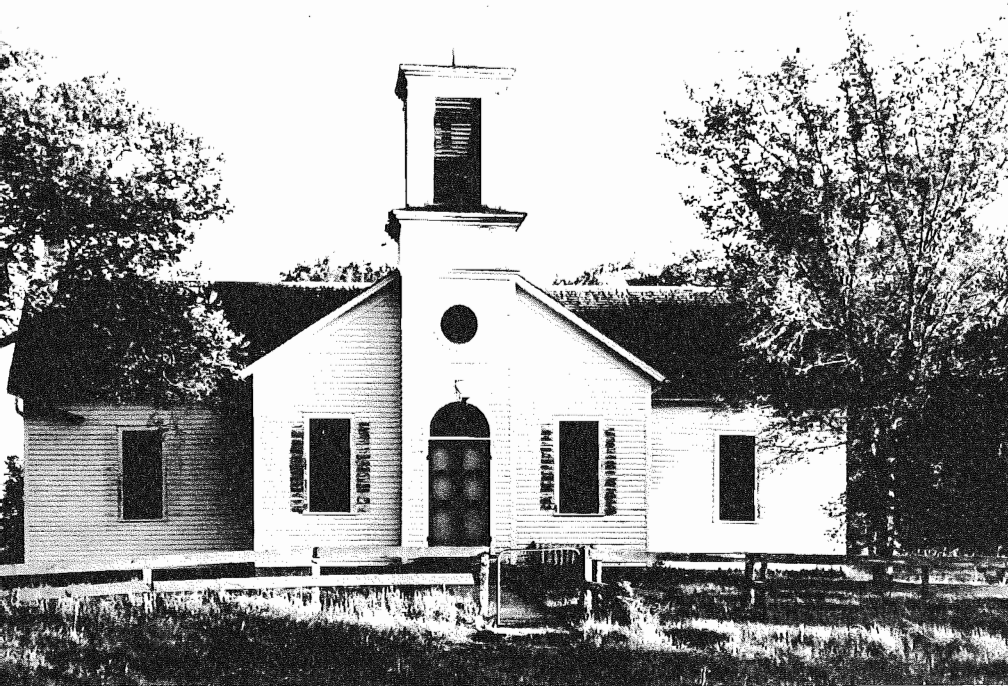
The foundation of education at the school was two-fold: religious training and industrial training.²⁷ Underlying everything was the religious influence. "The reason urged upon any pupil for the accomplishing of anything is that it is right."²⁸ Prayers were offered in the dining hall in the morning and in each home in the evening. Chapel services urged student contemplation of conduct, character, and responsibility. Church and Sunday School attendance were mandatory. Many of the older students belonged to the Young Men's or Young Women's Christian Association. "It is the exception when any pupil goes thru the school without becoming a Christian . . ."²⁹ A. L. Riggs organized a strictly theological class to supply a higher education for native pastors, and John P. Williamson and Stephen R. Riggs lent assistance in the teaching of it.³⁰ A correspondence course was set up to assist in the study of the *Bible* in the Dakota language, while another was instituted for the study of the book of *Luke* in English.³¹ The Christianizing of the Sioux was thought by Riggs to be a prerequisite to their regeneration because their own religion was fatalistic.³²

In a sense industrial training was fundamental also, for through it the mind came to know itself. It is more than "how to make a living, it is how to enter into life."³³ Alfred Riggs said the Indian must receive more than instruction, he must be trained.

The hand, the eye, the voice, the whole body, the mind, the will must be trained into habits of order, promptness, obedience, and right thinking. Here is the great necessity of industrial training.³⁴

So important was industrial training that all students above the primary grades received it for half the school day. Instruction in the best methods of farming, carpentry, printing, and the art of the blacksmith were given the boys, while the girls concentrated on sewing, cooking and house-keeping.³⁵

Instruction was also given in such conventional subjects as arithmetic, geography, history, drawing, music, reading, writing, composition and physiology. In some courses instruction was carried further than similar courses in English schools, but in others it was not carried so far. The Indian found mathematics difficult, but almost all had some native talent for drawing. Music was considered to be an important element in the curriculum. Vocal instruction was given daily to all and some also received lessons in piano and organ. The young men had a band which made a number of trips away from the school to perform. Music was important as a recreation and it had a wholesome effect on the students.³⁶



The Pilgrim Congregational Church, erected 1870-1871 on the Santee Agency, is maintained today in good condition.

The school received much outside criticism for the emphasis it placed on teaching the Indians to read and write in the vernacular. Despite these attacks the administration was adamant in its position that it teach the Dakota language. It even refused to comply with a directive from the Indian Office in 1887 making the teaching of Dakota illegal.³⁷

The foes of instruction in the vernacular pointed out that there was little opportunity for future educational advancement through knowledge of the Dakota language alone. Little had been translated into it and there was little hope that much would be done in the future.³⁸ This was the principal objection, but the author surmises that many people throughout the nation believed that until the Indian could speak English he was not civilized and was not making progress.

The members of the Dakota Mission made numerous replies to their critics. To fulfill the purpose of the school, it was considered necessary to teach the vernacular. The reader will recall that the school was intent on training Indians who would help bring about a moral regeneration in their people. Because this was the first problem with which they had to contend, the school's administration asked "how can we present Christ to any people except through a language they understand . . ."³⁹ It pointed

out that the native tongue was quite capable of conveying the simple truths of the Christian religion and these were the truths that were important, not myriads of elaborations of things too deep for the Indians' intellect. If the Indian must first learn English, few would ever gain religious knowledge.⁴⁰ It was admitted that many more doors would open to the Indian when he acquired the use of the English language, but to the school personnel this was not the question. There was no doubt about which was the richer language. The question to them was: Which was the best adapted to convey knowledge to the Indian?⁴¹

A retreat from this stand would violate the principles of mission education. Also standing in the way of English instruction was an intangible dislike of the language by the Sioux. It was felt that the Indian had no desire to speak the language and therefore placed a block between it and himself. "We might describe it as a bump of stubbornness in the throat, which effectually prevents the exit of any English words." Many tried to get the students to rid themselves of this "bump", but so many fell by the way that by the time the goal was reached, it was not worth it.⁴²

Support for this position came from the Reverend W. P. Robertson, missionary to the Cherokee and Choctaw. He wrote:

Neither the Indians nor their various languages are to become extinct in our day, and that the only way to teach, to enlighten, to elevate the Indian masses, must be through their own tongue.⁴³

This emphasis on the vernacular did not mean that there was no room for English in the curriculum. On the contrary it was studied and at specified times the use of the vernacular was forbidden in the homes and only English was to be spoken.⁴⁴ The reading and writing of Dakota was of primary importance, however; the use of the English language could come afterwards.

In order to stimulate the desire for education, to publicize the work of the Dakota Missions, and to present the Sioux with news, a paper, the *Iapi Oave* (the English edition was known as the *Word Carrier*) was published by the Dakota Mission. It began in 1871 with an edition printed entirely in Dakota. In 1873 the paper was doubled in size and one third of it was printed in English so that outside attention could be attracted and financial aid gained for the support of the paper. The paper served well its purpose and promoted its motto, "To help what is good, to oppose what is bad."⁴⁵

There were numerous obstacles confronting those who attempted to bring culture of the white civilization to the Indian of the north central prairies of the United States. Perhaps the most formidable was the Indian himself. His culture, which had been outlined by his ancestors, resisted progress; it was diametrically opposed to that which the whites fostered. The nature of this barrier has already been given some attention in preceding pages, and in view of this, its consideration here will be limited.

The Sioux, who were by nature spiritual men, drew upon their religion to explain natural phenomena. In the early years the Indians, uneasy because of the presence of missionary educators, would often attempt to use their religion to place the blame for certain unfortunate circumstances on the shoulders of the whites in their midst. Thus, they could conjure reasons to keep the children away from school by saying that the spirits were angry with the people for allowing the missionaries to come among them. In this way the drying lakes, the scarcity of game, or the failure of a war party could be explained. Those people that denied their native culture by cutting their hair and dressing themselves like the white men were often the object of derogatory and spiteful actions. The resolute tried to impress their hostility upon the missionary by demanding pay for the water, grass, and wood taken from their land, by threatening his life, or by killing his domestic animals.⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that despite the disrespect for and hatred of the missionaries and teachers who came to the Sioux, the author knows of no instance in which a person who came under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions ever lost his life at the hands of one of the Sioux.

The Sioux had little interest in what education had to offer them. They did not envision any of the benefits that it would bring, and it made little difference to them if they would gain from it because most of them were content with their way of life and opposed to change.⁴⁷ The men were particularly unwilling to be educated, but in the early years in Minnesota even they could be assembled if a feast was given.⁴⁸ "If the book brought them tobacco or potatoes, . . . it was good; but if not, it lied. And what did they want of anything that was not true."⁴⁹

It is to be noted that the Santee had been almost impenetrable in withstanding education and Christianity prior to the uprising in 1862. Until that time the missionary educators had had little response to their

efforts. Subsequently these Indians opened the door to Christianity and education. They made great strides forward compared with the members of other Sioux tribes who had not been so decisively crushed. Even so, the Santee possessed the same natural tendencies that the other Sioux possessed; these stood in the way of the adoption of the white man's ways. For example, they did not like to attend school in the hot weather. In deference the Santee school year did not begin until November and ended in May. Nor did they always persevere when they had attained a little knowledge, for they charitably did not want to move too far ahead of other students.

The settlement of the Indians on reservations had forcibly curtailed their way of life. Knowing that the old ways were gone, some sought an education at Santee or in other schools, but many still remained untouched. To uplift the Indian the school officials at Santee advocated mandatory attendance for all.⁵⁰ This was now possible. Whereas in the years prior to his conquest, he had resisted the establishment of any school, in the years after his subjugation his prime resistance to education took the form of the problem he made as a student. Though this was no threat to the physical existence of the school, it created problems for the teachers.

In the eyes of the missionaries the government contributed unwittingly to this obstacle, standing in the way of successfully educating the Sioux. They believed the government erred by giving the Indians large annuities in exchange for their land. The money thus appropriated was usually spent in such a way that the Indians' condition was maintained, not altered for the better.⁵¹ Continued annuities by the government fostered idleness, took away initiative and led the Indian toward pauperization.⁵² Confronted with the false pleasures of idleness and irresponsibilities, the Indian youth could hardly be expected to be good students. The effect of some government schools was deplored also, for they fostered these same wrong ideas. The Indian was given everything—clothes, board, room, and medical attention—when attending one of these schools. Even visiting friends and relatives were entertained free of charge by the government. The Indian was obligated to contribute nothing for his schooling and developed the idea that there was not much value in education, when in reality it was of the greatest value.⁵³ Government policy, they said, should have been designed to teach the Indian responsibility. The Indian should have been made to work for somebody first, then and only then, for himself.⁵⁴ In learning responsibility the Indian should have been required to pay for the

building and upkeep of his schools, and the children should have worked to pay for at least half their education.⁵⁵ Some Indians, F. B. Riggs said, "have never set much value on education because they have never done much of anything for it."⁵⁶ These liberal policies of the government's schools made it difficult for the mission to require the parents to pay for their children's traveling expenses, clothes, and at least part of their board.⁵⁷ The Santee school had no choice; the parents and the students had to help pay for the education offered in order to maintain the school, but to the missionaries this responsibility was also considered good educational discipline.

A constant threat to missionary activities was the possibility of the lack of adequate appropriations. The conquest of the Sioux and their confinement on reservations had allowed for increased missionary educational activity among them. To help support these operations the mission organizations were given governmental assistance. However, governmental subsidies were discontinued in 1901.⁵⁸ The loss of these funds literally strangled mission schooling. The American Missionary Association, which had assumed the Congregational Church's work among the Sioux in 1883, was forced gradually to withdraw support from its schools on the various reservations until in 1908 Santee was the only one receiving financial assistance from it.⁵⁹ Because the activities of the Association were concentrated in the Santee school, it was usually the recipient of a larger portion of the funds raised than other missions.⁶⁰ As the government increased its own educational functions among the Indians, the constituency of the missionary organization seemed to grow apathetic to the needs of the missions despite the numerous allegations by the missionaries that the education afforded in the government's schools was not as enduring as that of mission schools, since there was no Christian influence in the former.⁶¹

As was stated previously, Santee was incapable of maintaining an enrollment commensurate with its plant due to the lack of operational funds. Besides threatening the very existence of the school, the unavailability of money caused hardships within the school. Many of the children were without adequate clothing, and the school was not able to help them bring their apparel up to standard. Oftentimes the students came to school suffering from malnutrition, yet the school was in the unfortunate position of not always being able to make up for the nutritional deficiencies. The children were often forced to work long hours in the industrial shops of the school to produce more saleable goods so that



Santee tribal leaders posed at the Agency for this picture in 1918.

income would increase. The hiring of matrons for the homes was hampered, for the type of woman desired by the school was not available for the wages offered. The effort to maintain financial support was a never-ending struggle at Santee; for the most part the school managed to sustain itself, but difficulties in obtaining funds from the churches had some final influence in the closing of the school.

The passage of years made the financial situation critical because of the depreciation of the physical plant. By the 1930's it was sorely in need of improvements. The school made an appeal for \$20,000.⁶² The American Missionary Association responded by giving almost one-fourth of this amount immediately.⁶³ However, the remainder was not so easily obtainable and it was debilitating when the Presbyterian churches withdrew the support they had been giving to the school.⁶⁴

Pressed by the lack of money, the school's administration was forced into de-emphasizing its religious instruction in order to maintain standards in its academic departments. Religious education had to be placed in the hands of teachers who were already overburdened with their particular discipline when funds would not allow the employment of a person to take charge of Christian education. Originally built for the purpose of offering Christian education and training, the school in its attempt to survive had been forced to abandon its basic principle.⁶⁵

Governmental action complicated the school's attempt to be of service to the Indian too. Policy had been formulated which advocated that the younger children be kept closer to their homes for schooling. Numerous day schools were established to fulfill this policy. So emphatic had the government been that Santee had not offered courses of instruction for the lower grades after 1933. Maintaining only a high school was a difficult task also, for in this field the school had to compete with regular public high schools and the government's boarding schools. With old equipment and supported by only a small income, the Santee school could not offer the opportunities of tax-supported institutions.⁶⁶

The Santee Normal Training School took account of itself in 1936 and found that it could no longer offer an adequate education in comparison to the norms of the time and that it had abrogated its primary reason for being. Acknowledging the state into which it had fallen, the school determined to discontinue the educational program it had offered to Indian youth since 1870.⁶⁷

In the belief that there was yet a purpose for the school, it was decided to embark on a new course. Instead of training children, the school would educate adults. A program was devised whereby whole families would move onto the campus for a duration of one year. During this year the family would be handled as a unit; the adult members would be given practical as well as academic instruction in preparation for their assumption of the duties and responsibilities of missionary work among their own people. Phillip Frazier, the grandson of one of the first native pastors, took charge of this new enterprise which emphasized natural education by experience.⁶⁸ In addition to adult education, a program was formulated to make use of the school's physical plant during the summer months. Under this plan a Young People's Assembly, a Congregational Native Preachers Institute, and a Vacation Bible School Institute were scheduled for the summer of 1937.⁶⁹

The new enterprise did not long endure. Many families expressed a desire to take part in the new program, but the money necessary to operate it was not forthcoming. Contributions for the mission school which came primarily from agricultural people, were not large enough during the difficult years of the 1930's to maintain the school. Had the dynamic Frederick Riggs still been at the helm, perhaps the school could have survived somehow to give further service.⁷⁰

In June, 1938, officials of the American Missionary Association met at Santee to discuss the disposition of the buildings.⁷¹ Three of the principal buildings still stand on the grounds, but others were dismantled and the lumber sold. The Birds' Nest, which was the home for small girls, was removed to a location on Bazile Creek, a few miles south of the school, where it was reconstructed as a church, and the school chapel became the home of the Pilgrim Congregational Church. The grounds, however, became a pasture for a white man's hogs. Some improvements have taken place in recent years, though, as electricity was brought in and a pressurized water system constructed. Perhaps there is still a future for the site, for the Santee would like to see the school grounds restored as a summer camp to serve various church groups.⁷²

The effect which the Santee Normal Training School had on the Indian is, of course, incapable of being measured. To what degree the school brought about a regeneration of the Sioux Indian is not known. It is possible to make some inferences, however.

For those Indians who attended Santee, the school was without a doubt

highly influential. In writing for the American Missionary Association one author noted that "If they [students] have stayed at Santee for any length of time, they are found to be industrious, reliable, and eager to bring others of their race into better ways of living."⁷³ The same author quoted one of the renowned graduates of Santee on the motivation the school provided for future service among the Indian. Henry Roe Cloud, who graduated from Santee, Yale, and Auburn Theological Seminary and who became head of an Indian school, said, "In my life Santee has fanned a flickering ray into a radiant fire."⁷⁴ Frederick B. Riggs emphasized the necessary phase of an Indian's over-all education. He stated that

... there is but one answer to that persistent question: "Does an Indian on returning from school relapse to the heathen ways of his people?" The answer is. No, never if he has become a genuine Christian!⁷⁵

On the Indians of the Santee Reservation, the school was able to exert the the greatest good.⁷⁶ J. B. Harrison in his report on Indian reservations said:

The Indians on this reservation have made very encouraging progress in civilization, in personal habits and home life. This is in large measure the result of the energy and efficiency of the missionary and educational work for which this reservation has long been distinguished.⁷⁷

The question which must next be answered is: Did the graduates of Santee perform their function as stated in the purpose of the school by returning to their people to help raise them up? The School was said to have trained nearly half the preachers, teachers, government employees, and other educated leaders of the Sioux.⁷⁸ Many of the former students made no direct service to their people; they became housewives and farmers who influenced their neighbors indirectly through their habits and by practicing the occupational methods they had learned at Santee. A few of the graduates pursued a higher education; a few became famous. However, the school was not established with higher education and fame as objectives.⁷⁹

The school was influential as the center for Christian education for Indians in the Northwest. Its students came from widely scattered reservations in the Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming Territories, and Canada as well as the Santee Reservation. Many of these students became native missionaries not only for the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches but also the Episcopal and Dutch Reformed.⁸⁰

As the influence of the educated began to take effect, a teacher who served at Santee for twenty-seven years noticed the change in the Indians. She said the girls who came to school were neater and were supplied with more clothing. Some of the men were beginning to think of their wives as equals and no longer forced heavy work on them. The women were more interested in the work of the church in the community; they began to assume the responsibility of financially supporting their church and native missionaries. The men became better workers and farmers. They had previously been indifferent to the care of their tools and didn't want to be tied down to care for their animals.⁸¹

H. H. Belfield, who visited Santee in 1885 and who was the director of the Chicago Normal Training School, made some comments about Santee for a publication called "The Hand and Brain." These comments were quoted in the *Word Carrier* in May, 1885. Belfield called the school one of the most remarkable institutions in the country. The result of its program, he noted, would be commendable for any school, but in Santee's situation they are marvelous. In words extremely appropriate, considering the ending of and the results of the school, he said, "The good it can do is only limited by its means."⁸²

FOOTNOTES

1. For the history of Santee Sioux removal to Nebraska, see Roy W. Meyer, "The Establishment of the Santee Reservation", *Nebraska History*, 45 (March 1964), 59-98.

The Santee Normal Training School was located on the Santee Reservation of Knox County in northeastern Nebraska. The site is near Lewis and Clark Lake, formed by Gavins Point Dam on the Missouri River, about 11 miles northeast of Niobrara.

2. Stephen R. Riggs, *Mary and I. Forty Years With the Sioux* (Boston: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, Congregational House, 1887), 251-53.

3. Stephen R. Riggs Papers (MSS in Minnesota Historical Society), July 19, 1896.

4. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1896.

5. Mrs. Lawrence R. Howard, "A Century of Indian Progress: A Group of Four Programs" (New York: American Missionary Association, n.d.), 39. (Booklet); and Riggs, *op. cit.*, 270-71.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Iapi Oave*, Santee, Nebraska, February, 1876.

8. Edith Leonard, "The Adventure of a Massachusetts State Normal School Graduate Among the 'Wild Indians' of Santee" (New York: American Missionary Association, n.d.), 1 (Pamphlet).

9. J. B. Harrison, *The Latest Studies on Indian Reservations* (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1886), 86-87.

10. Frances C. Holley, *Once Their Home or Our Legacy From the Dakotaha* (Chicago: Donohue and Henneberry, 1891), 330; and *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, May, 1874 and July, 1878.

11. Harrison, *loc. cit.*

12. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, May, 1874.

13. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1902* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902); and Charles F. Ryder, *Light and Shadows in the Indian Work* (New York: American Missionary Association, n.d.).

14. "100 Years for the Sioux," *The Literary Digest*, CXV (May 20, 1933), 19.

15. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 2.

16. Holley, *op. cit.*, 331.

17. Harrison, *op. cit.*, 36; and Leonard, *loc. cit.*

18. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 1-7.

19. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, March, 1876.

20. *Ibid.*, May, 1877.

21. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 2-3.

22. *Word Carrier*, Santee, Nebraska, June, 1884.

23. *Ibid.*, July-August, 1884.

24. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, September 1883.

25. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, July-August, 1914; and Howard, *op. cit.*, 39-40.

26. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 1-7.

27. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, September, 1883.

28. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, June-July, 1886.

29. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 4.

30. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, March, 1876.

31. Howard, *op. cit.*, 40.

32. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, September, 1883.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, July-August, 1884.

35. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 4.

36. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, July-August, 1914; Harrison, *op. cit.*, 37; and Leonard, *op. cit.*, 4.

37. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, September-October, 1887.

38. Harrison, *op. cit.*, 136.

39. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, June, 1874.

40. *Ibid.*, January, 1874.

41. *Ibid.*, December 1873.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*, June, 1878.

44. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, June-July, 1886.

45. Riggs, *op. cit.*, 263-64.

46. *Iapi Oave*, February, 1873; and Riggs, *Mary and I*, 102-109.

47. *Word Carrier*, November-December, 1903.

48. Charles M. Gates, "The Lac Qui Parle Indian Mission," *Minnesota History*, 16 (June, 1935), 145.

49. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, February, 1873.
50. Frederick B. Riggs, "Industrial Schools for Indians," *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Lake Mohonk Conference on the Indian* (Lake Mohonk, N. Y.: Lake Mohonk Conference on the Indian, 1930), 41; and *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, January, 1876 and October, 1876.
51. *Iapi Oave*, *op. cit.*, April, 1873.
52. Frederick B. Riggs, *op. cit.*, 44.
53. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, May-June, 1915.
54. Frederick B. Riggs, *op. cit.*, 43.
55. *Ibid.*, 41.
56. *Ibid.*, 44.
57. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, May-June, 1915.
58. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1902* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902)
59. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, September-October, 1908.
60. Stephen R. Riggs Papers (MSS in Minnesota Historical Society), November 12, 1875.
61. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, January-February, 1903.
62. *Ibid.*, May-June, 1935.
63. *Ibid.*, July-August, 1935.
64. *Ibid.*, May-June, 1935.
65. *Ibid.*, November, 1936.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*, March, 1937.
70. David Frazier, Personal Interview, May 31, 1962.
71. *Niobrara* (Nebraska) *Tribune*, June 30, 1938
72. Frazier, *op. cit.*
73. Mrs. Lawrence R. Howard, "A Century of Indian Progress: A Group of Four Programs" (New York: American Missionary Association, n.d.), 41. (Booklet).
74. *Ibid.*, 42.
75. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, January-February, 1903.
76. Loring B. Priest, *Uncle Sam's Stepchildren* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1942), 139; and Herbert Welsh, *Civilization Among the Sioux Indians* (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1893), 17.
77. J. B. Harrison, *The Latest Studies on Indian Reservations* (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1886), 17.
78. "100 Years for the Sioux," *The Literary Digest*, DXV (May 20, 1933), 19; Howard, *op. cit.*, 39; and *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, September-October, 1908.
79. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 8.
80. S. C. Gilman, *Christian Work Among the Dakota Indians* (Indianapolis: Carlton and Hollenbeck, 1894), 9. (Pamphlet); Howard, *op. cit.*, 39; Welsh, *op. cit.*, 18; and *Word Carrier* *op. cit.*, December, 1887.
81. Leonard, *op. cit.*, 5.
82. *Word Carrier*, *op. cit.*, May, 1885.