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ΣΛδ to Snowbird:

Education, Assimilation, and Integration
of Cherokee in the Snowbird Community, 1932-1965

A Senior Thesis

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Abstract

SAB to Snowbird: Education, Assimilation, and Integration of Cherokee in the Snowbird Community, 1932-1965, explores the history of education of the Cherokees in the Snowbird Community. Beginning with a brief look at the Cherokee Boarding School and the creation of the Snowbird Day School. Exposing the effects that the Bureau of Indian Affairs assimilation policies and tactics had on this small Eastern Band of Cherokee Community. The assimilation process culminated in the integration of the Cherokee students into the Graham County school system, a process that took 11 years from 1954 to 1965. The Snowbird Community is apart of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Qualla Boundary, but it is located approximately one hour west of the main EBCI territory. This distance was key in creating the unique educational path that the community was placed on, with the adverse effects lasting for generations.

Contact! That was the first word I learned, I was a flight boy then. Contact! They used to show a movie down there [Snowbird Day School] every Tuesday or Wednesday night, for 5 cents. Well this particular night I was walking home. Contact! Contact! They showed this movie, it was a war picture, sort of. This plane sitting there, not these new planes but the old ones, they had the propellers in the front, you know. Well, the pilot was sitting over there, and this guy standing out there he said, “Contact!” Contact!¹

First contact was not just an event in the fifteenth century, it is also an experience that many indigenous people continue to face. Every native person has a moment they come into contact with the realization that their communities and their history is very different than other Americans.² For many Cherokee children in the Snowbird community in Western North Carolina, first contact with white America came from their education at Snowbird Day School. The above quote is from a former student of the Snowbird Day School and describes the first word he learned in English: Contact. The Snowbird Day School was opened from 1933 to 1965, and for the students that went there it was their first experience with the idea that they were the other, the lesser, that they, in a community full of Cherokees, were different.

Education has been the dominant tool for assimilating Native Americans into white society. For the Snowbird community, the Snowbird Day School focused on providing Cherokee students an American style education that emphasized English language and Western European culture that enforced assimilation and white supremacy.³ From 1954 to 1965, efforts to assimilate Cherokee students at Snowbird Day School into white American society culminated with the integration of the Snowbird students into the Graham County school system.⁴ Integration for Snowbird proved to have a significant impact on the community. The assimilation

¹ Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 14.

² Sandra Brown, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, November 12th, 2018, Interview 4, transcript, 2.

³ Asheville Citizens-Times, “Cherokee Educational System,” (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁴ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 4.

of Cherokee students into the white education system had many adverse effects on the community as a whole with the repercussions lasting for generations including loss of community and language, these were the costs of “contact” and becoming “American.”

Most of the scholarship on Native American education and assimilation focuses heavily on the boarding school model that was predominately used by the United States. The day school model goes mostly unmentioned, and Indian education is not ever associated by scholars, with the term segregation even though Indian schools across the nation were indeed segregated.

Donald A. Grinde Jr.’ “Taking the Indian out of the Indian: U.S. Policies of Ethnocide Through Education,”⁵ Michael C. Coleman’s “Motivations of Indian Children at Missionary and U.S. Government Schools,”⁶ and Linda LeGarde Grover’s “From Assimilation to Termination: The Vermilion Lake Indian School”⁷ all avoid the term segregation. They do however contend with the U.S. policy of assimilation of Native people into white American society through education. Tsianina Lomawaimas, “Domesticity in the Federal Indian Schools: The Power of Authority over Mind and Body”⁸ and her book she co-wrote with Teresa L. McCarty *To Remain An Indian*⁹ also addressed assimilation but fails to bring up segregation. By overlooking segregation in native education, historians have also overlooked histories on integration and perhaps more importantly, a broader critique of westernized native education from its origins to now.

⁵ Donald A. Grinde Jr., “Taking the Indian out the Indian: U.S. Policies of Ethnocide Through Education,” *Wicazo Sa Review* Vol. 9, No. 2 (Autumn, 2004): 25-32, accessed April 5th, 2018.

⁶ Michael C. Coleman, “Motivations of Indian Children at Missionary and U.S. Government Schools,” Vol. 40, No. 1 (Winter, 1990): 30-45, accessed April 13th 2018.

⁷ Linda LeGarde Grover, “From Assimilation to Termination: The Vermilion Lake Indian School,” *Minnesota History* (Winter 2002): 225-240, accessed April 5th, 2018.

⁸ Tsianina Lomawaima, “Domesticity in the Federal Indian Schools: The Power of Authority over Mind and Body,” Vol. 20, No. 2 (May, 1993): 227-240, accessed April 5th, 2018.

⁹ Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, *To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2006).

Some scholars have attempted to link civil rights to Native Americans. The earliest works that link Civil Rights themes to Native Americans is a journal article from 1987, written by Orland J. Svingen, entitled *Jim Crow, Indian Style*.¹⁰ Svingen does not mention southern Native Americans' relationship to Jim Crow. He does however draw comparisons between a Native American voting rights issues in Montana and African Americans in the Civil Rights era south. This article is one of the earliest sources found that link terms like Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and segregation to Native Americans. Just four years after the Svingen article was published an article emerged with almost the exact same title, written by Jeanette Wolfley: *Jim Crow, Indian Style: The Disenfranchisement of Native Americans*. This article does not make a comparison between Native Americans and African Americans, but rather asserts these terms as part of the narrative related to Native Americans.¹¹ Other early works that postulate a relationship between the Jim Crow South and Native Americans are *Native and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America*¹² and *Jim Crow Guide: The Way It Was*.¹³ Both works are attempting to bring Native Americans into the historical narrative of the broader subject of the Jim Crow South but fail to fully establish how Jim Crow directly affected Native people. While the authors of *Natives and Strangers*¹⁴ do directly mention Cherokees and the United States attempts to assimilate them into white American society, they focus heavily on the Indian Removal Act period. When they do mention Native Americans and civil rights, they broaden their lens to look

¹⁰ Orland J. Svingen, "Jim Crow, Indian Style," Vol. 11, No. 4 (Autumn, 1987): 275-286, accessed April 5th, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1184288>

¹¹ Jeanette Wolfley, "Jim Crow, Indian Style: The Disenfranchisement of the Native Americans," Vol. 16, No. 1 (1991): 167-202, accessed April 5th, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068694>

¹² Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols and David M. Reimers, *Natives and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹³ Stetson Kennedy, *Jim Crow Guide: The Way It Was* (Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1990).

¹⁴ Stetson Kennedy, *Jim Crow Guide: The Way It Was*.

at the Pan-Indian Movement of the late 1960's and 1970's. The *Jim Crow Guide*¹⁵ finds no real relationship between segregation laws and Native Americans' and instead gives a brief overview of Native American history and also highlights the Removal. However, the attempt to include Native Americans into a history on Jim Crow does display scholars growing interest in exploring a link between the two topics. Newer works like Daniel H. Usners "They Don't Like Indian Around Here," he explicates the nature of Jim Crow laws and the Chitimacha Nation of Louisiana, but does so with very little mention to education.¹⁶ Likewise, Henry Knight's article "Savages of Southern Sunshine" explores the Seminole Nation of Florida's experiences with Jim Crow but focuses on land dispossession.¹⁷ These historians have attempted to look at Jim Crow and Native Americans, but ignored the effects that *Brown v. Board of Education* had on southern Native Americans.

Scholarship on *Brown v. Board* largely neglects to mention the alterations this case made in the lives of Native Americans and their largely segregated education structures in the United States. *Brown v. Board of Education: Caste, Culture, and the Constitution* have given in depth legal histories and expresses how this monumental case changes the narrative for African Americans, but rarely mentions other minorities.¹⁸ However, a few sources recently emerge that affirm the Native American relationship to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In Martha Minow's 2010 book *In Brown's Wake: Legacies of the America's Educational Landmark*, she dedicates chapter 4 specifically to the Native American *Brown v. Board of Ed.* experience.

¹⁵ Stetson Kennedy, *Jim Crow Guide: The Way It Was* (Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1990).

¹⁶ Daniel H. Usner Jr., "They Don't Like Indian Around Here: Chitimacha Struggle and Strategies for Survival in the Jim Crow South," Vol. 9 (2016): 89-124, accessed April 13th, 2018.

¹⁷ Henry Knight, "Savages of Southern Sunshine: Racial Realignment of the Seminoles in the Selling of Jim Crow Florida," *Journal of American Indian Studies*, 48 (January 2014): 251-273, accessed April 13th, 2018.

¹⁸ Robert J. Cottrol, Raymond T. Diamond and Leland B. Ware, *Brown v. Board of Education* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003).

Denise E. Bates 2016 article “Reshaping Southern Identity and Politics: Indian Activism during the Civil Rights Era” also addresses *Brown v. Board of Education* effects on Native Americans. She highlights the case and shows the complex relationship that various Native Nations in the south had with the case, and fully explores Native American segregation but only dedicates one page to education.¹⁹

Scholarship on Cherokee history are typically centers around the Indian Removal Act of 1830, but this single point point of focus erases Cherokee history both before and after. Historians have failed to discuss the narrative of Native American education past very specific themes, and the works on Cherokee education and their segregation and integration experiences is underwhelming. John R. Finger, a historian known for his work on the Eastern Band of Cherokee, authored *The Eastern Band of Cherokees 1819-1900* and focuses mainly on the removal theme but brings the narrative up to the official recognition of the Eastern Band.²⁰ Few recent histories move to combat the eraser of modern native history from the American narrative. Finger’s later work, *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century*, mostly avoids the removal period but targets social and economic structures in the 20th century.²¹ A similar work emerged that focuses on Eastern Band tribal economics came out in 2018, written by Christopher Arris Oakley entitled *New South Indians: Tribal Economics and the Eastern Band of Cherokee in the Twentieth Century*.²² Also in 2018, Andrew Denson’s work, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* is the only

¹⁹ Denise E. Bates, “Reshaping Southern Identity and Politics: Indian Activism during the Civil Rights Era,” *Native South* Vol. 9 (2016): 125-151, accessed April 13th, 2018.

²⁰ John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees 1819-1900* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984)

²¹ John R. Finger, *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991)

²² Christopher Arris Oakley, *New South Indians: Tribal Economics and the Eastern Band of Cherokee in the Twentieth Century* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2018)

book that attempts to address the historical infatuation around the removal period.²³ Denson's book provides answers to why there has been such an obsession on the Removal period and gives a great critique of Cherokee history.

Due to the heavy focus on Removal there is so much Cherokee history that has yet to be written. This research will showcase one small piece of modern Cherokee history in one of the smallest Eastern Band of Cherokee community, Snowbird. Highlighting the effects of the harsh encounters that poor quality education had on the students of the Snowbird Day School. While, also exhibiting assimilation through education, even with good with teachers, still had detrimental consequences. Terms like segregation and integration are also brought into the narrative as it pertains to the Cherokee in the Snowbird community. Displaying the negative impact that integration, into the all white Graham County school system, had on the community and language.

The Eastern Band of Cherokees is a nation located on the Qualla Boundary in western North Carolina.²⁴ Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) was established as a nation and the Qualla Boundary as their nation's territory after the Civil War.²⁵ Cherokees entered the Civil War by way of an agreement made with the Confederates that the eastern Cherokees would fight in exchange for recognition as a nation. This proved successful and after the Civil War in 1886

²³ Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018)

²⁴ The Eastern Band is made up of a group that attempted to use a loophole in the Indian Removal Act to remain in their homelands. Many of them were forcibly removed but some hid in the mountains. Before, during and after the Removal they began to buy their homelands back, placing it in the name of a white ally, William Holland Thomas.

John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees 1819-1900* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

²⁵ Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018)

the North Carolina State Legislature passed a bill to allow the Cherokees in the east to stay in North Carolina.²⁶

Snowbird was an area that was a part of the original lands bought under a white ally, William Holland Thomas prior to the Removal and at the time was called Cheoh and Buffalotown.²⁷ Located in Graham County, in far western North Carolina, the Snowbird Community is 50 miles from the center of the Qualla boundary. Snowbird is the most isolated of the Eastern Band Cherokee communities. The closest town is Robbinsville about 15 miles away from the community center. The distance of the Snowbird community from the main part of the boundary is important because it set them on a different educational path than the rest of the Eastern Band. Due to its isolation, it has a unique reputation of being one of the more traditional communities of the Eastern Band. Snowbird did not have a recorded intermarriage until the 1960's and still holds the highest number of fluent Cherokee language speakers for the nation.²⁸ However, as the Eastern Band of Cherokee are recognized as a nation the United States government shifted its official Indian policy and assimilation entered the narrative.²⁹

Richard H. Pratt envisioned a new way to deal with the what was commonly known as the "Indian Problem." Pratt was a Colonel in the Civil War and after was sent west to fight in the

²⁶ John R. Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees 1819-1900* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

²⁷ After Removal, Cherokees began trying to obtain the title to their land as most of the land was still in Thomas's name. This ended in court and the result was the recognition of the One small piece of this newly established boundary was the Snowbird Community.

E. Stanly Godbold, Jr. and Mattie U. Russell, *Confederate Colonial and Cherokee Chief: The Life of William Holland Thomas*, (Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 46.

²⁸ Charlotte Neely, *Snowbird Cherokees: People of Persistence* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991), 3.

²⁹ The United States expansion westward culminated in several Indian wars and what was commonly termed the "Indian problem," left many Americans looking towards removal and extermination as the answer to the problem.

Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

various wars that were going on with Native nations.³⁰ He began to form ideas about “Americanizing” native people and how that would benefit not only the United States as a nation but the Native nations as well. His rhetoric and ideas quickly led to actual policy with the United States, and through the guidance of Pratt, started official policies that promoted the use of assimilation as the new tactic of eraser of native nationhood and identity.³¹ The main vehicle for assimilation became education, placing the burden of the United States civilizing mission on the minds of native children.

The Americanization of Indian [native] people, Pratt argued, would be most effective among Indian [native] youth. As he now infamously said, “Kill the Indian, Save the Man.”³² Pratt ran the largest and most tragic boarding school in the United States, the Carlisle Boarding School.³³ He said this quote in his speech on Native American assimilation meaning that through education he believed they could kill the Indian savage within, leaving a civilized human that would function as a white american. This process stripped children from their families, homelands, language, and identity using abuse as its main weapon to do so. The aftermath of this process has had a devastating effect on those that went through the assimilating school system and the generations following after.³⁴

Western education entered into indigenous communities with the intent to undermine and devalue those indigenous forms of education. Annie T. Oakes argues in her Chapter in *Indigenous Peoples: Equity in Education* that western education was never really about

³⁰ Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield: Liberty, Paternalism and the Redemptive Promise of Educational Choice,” *BYU Law Review*, Issue 2, (2008): 380.

³¹ Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield,” 380.

³² Francis Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friend of the Indian.”* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1978),

³³ Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield,” 380.

³⁴ Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield,” 387.

providing native youth an education at all but rather was yet another method that white society used to force the surrender of native communities.³⁵ This forced surrender was echoed in Pratt's own writing, suggesting that it was not enough for native people to forcibly surrender their land but their identity must also be surrendered to Americanization.³⁶

Assimilation through education for the Cherokee started early on in the form of Missionary schools. Moravian Missionaries established schools in 1805, prior to Pratt's ideology being turned into policy and sought to turn native people away from heathenism and into good Christians.³⁷ Conversion to Christianity, emphasised the want to civilize Native Americans to a Euro-western or American model. Ultimately, many well intended early Americans degraded Native Americans customs and civility with their conversions.³⁸ Missionary schools began to emerge in various Cherokee communities up until the removal period, when expulsion overshadowed education.³⁹ After the Civil War, missionary schools began to reemerge, again focusing on the christianization and westernization of the Eastern Band Cherokees through their children.

The United States policies of assimilation emerged in Cherokee North Carolina and became the main boarding school hub in the southeast. In 1879, Quaker missionaries established the Cherokee Boarding School on the Qualla Boundary.⁴⁰ In the same year the United States government, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), at the direction of Pratt, began to open

³⁵ Annie T. Oakes, "Not An Educational Institution: Native American Boarding Schools in the 19th and 20th Centuries." In *Indigenous Peoples: Equity in Education*, ed. Elinor L. Brown, Rhonda G. Craven, and George McLean, 71-92. (North Carolina: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2013). 78

³⁶ Richard H. Pratt, "Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian 1867-1904," ed. Robert M. Utley, (Norman, OK. University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.

³⁷ Anna Rosina Gambold, *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokee 1821* (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010). 21.

³⁸ Anna Rosina Gambold, *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokee 1821*, 47.

³⁹ Andrew Denson, *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 38.

⁴⁰ Asheville Citizens-Times, "Cherokee Educational System," (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

boarding schools all over the country.⁴¹ The Quaker boarding school in Cherokee was taken over in 1889 by the United States Department of War and soon after the BIA took control over the school.⁴² The school not only housed Cherokee students on the Qualla Boundary but served as the main boarding school for the rest of the tribal nations in the southeast.⁴³

Many children in Snowbird attended the boarding school in Cherokee.⁴⁴ The boarding school operated under the model that Pratt had established in 1879, which meant complete assimilation by means of the violation of the human rights of the youth that attended the school because of the mental and physical abuses that they suffered. The government did not acknowledge the parental rights of any native parent and their children were kidnapped to be placed in the school. In *Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield*, the author declares of Pratt, “Privately, he pointed out to military officials that Indian children in boarding schools would serve as useful hostages to ensure that tribal parents would always toe the line.”⁴⁵ Sarah Margaret Sneed recounts her mother’s experience with entering into the Cherokee Boarding School, “she and her sister were scooped up by a tribal lawman and truant officer, he placed her into the back of a wagon with other children and took them to the Cherokee Boarding School. Her mother had not given consent, nor was she notified, that her daughters had been taken to school.”⁴⁶ An article that ran in 1934 in the *Asheville Citizen Times* described the harsh treatment, “They tell of the times when they [students] would swim the river in wintery weather or hide out on the

⁴¹ Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield: Liberty, Paternalism and the Redemptive Promise of Educational Choice,” *BYU Law Review*, Issue 2, (2008): 387.

⁴² The Cherokee boarding school went from kindergarten through the 9th grade and if students wished to advance their education further they would have to attend school in Kansas at Haskell or Chilocco in Oklahoma.

Asheville Citizens-Times, “Cherokee Educational System,” (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁴³ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 4.

⁴⁴ Frieda Brown-Rattler, 4.

⁴⁵ Daniel E. Witte and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield: Liberty, Paternalism and the Redemptive Promise of Educational Choice,” *BYU Law Review*, Issue 2, (2008): 392.

⁴⁶ Sarah Margaret Sneed, “Uniform Indians: Personal Reflections on the Eastern Band Cherokee Boarding School Experience,” *Berea* Vol. 37, Iss 4 (Fall 2009) 1.

mountains and woods for days to evade the Indian policemen whose duty it was to round them up and keep them in school.”⁴⁷

In addition to the boarding schools, day schools were created in various communities to help with overcrowding at the boarding school. In Snowbird, a day school model began to be used for younger students sometime in the early 1900’s.⁴⁸ One important difference in the day school model in comparison with the boarding school model was the students remained with their families throughout the year.⁴⁹ This meant that parents in the Snowbird community maintained a small amount of agency in their children’s education. There were originally two schools in Snowbird, the Snowbird Gap School and the Little Snowbird School. It is unclear who began these schools or what year they opened, but in documents from the early nineteen-teens show that the Bureau of Indian Affairs ran these schools.⁵⁰ Neither school, however, is officially listed as Day Schools under the BIA.⁵¹ The remote location and inability of car access in the Snowbird community seems to have been the reason for this two-school model.⁵² Ironically, because there was not an appropriate road system in the Snowbird Community, the very small number of white families that did own land in alcoves of the Snowbird Community sent their students to these Cherokee Day Schools even though they were BIA run and typically segregated.

There were a number of contentious issues between the parents of the community and school administration, attendance at both day schools was an issue. In a response to a concerned parent the superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) response was, “You wrote a

⁴⁷ Asheville Citizens-Times, “Cherokee Educational System,” (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁴⁸ Asheville Citizens-Times, “Cherokee Educational System,” 1934.

⁴⁹ Allen Ledford, Letter to James E. Henderson: BIA superintendent, December 29th, 1917.

⁵⁰ James E. Henderson, Letter to Brest Conseen, December 19th, 1917.

⁵¹ James E. Henderson, Letter to Allen Ledford, January 30th, 1918.

⁵² Asheville Citizens-Times, “Cherokee Educational System,” (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

letter that there were only two or three Indian children attending Mr. Hyde's school. You seem to think that it was his fault. I think it is the fault of the Indians that they do not send [their children] to school."⁵³ This tension was also exacerbated by the BIA superintendent due to his threats to the parents that if they did not have the money to provide their children with clothing and could not improve their attendance that he would ship them off to the boarding school.⁵⁴ The two school model was becoming too difficult to maintain and the BIA looked to address issues with maintaining teachers and overhead cost.

In the early 1930's, the BIA began to favor a one school model for the Snowbird Community to streamline Snowbird education.⁵⁵ This meant building adequate roads for busing students to a new centralized location. For this the BIA hired an outside contractor and the project took about one year to complete.⁵⁶ The Eastern Band of Cherokee purchased a piece of land from an EBCI citizen to build the centralized Snowbird Day School.⁵⁷ Construction on the school began in 1932 and was completed by 1933.⁵⁸ In addition to the school, a kitchen and dining room, a teacher's home, and a duplex to house the bus driver and cook were also built.⁵⁹ The building of the road also meant that the few white families that lived in Snowbird had better access to town and they could send their children to the Graham County school system. Snowbird Day school was now officially segregated.⁶⁰

Once the Snowbird Day School was established in 1933, the BIA started to hire teachers from outside of the community, most from far away and with little experience with Native

⁵³ James E. Henderson, Letter to Allen Ledford, January 30th, 1918.

⁵⁴ James E. Henderson, Letter to Brest Conseen, December 19th, 1917.

⁵⁵ Asheville Citizens-Times, "Cherokee Educational System," (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁵⁶ Asheville Citizens-Times, "Cherokee Educational System," July 15th, 1934.

⁵⁷ Jonah Brown, "Special Council Resolution." (EBCI tribal council resolution, Cherokee, NC., 1938.

⁵⁸ Asheville Citizens-Times, "Cherokee Educational System," (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁵⁹ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 16.

⁶⁰ Asheville Citizens-Times, "Cherokee Educational System," (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

communities. Because of how isolated the community was the teachers had to stay in the home built for them next to the school. One of the later teachers remarked, “It was pretty isolated, it was a dirt road, there was no electricity there, and I think it was just too isolated, especially for a single teacher, just one teacher there at a time.”⁶¹ The isolation of Snowbird caused the teachers to flee. In just 15 years, from 1935 to 1950, the Day School went through 15 teachers.⁶² None of the teachers hired spoke Cherokee, and in a predominately Cherokee speaking community, this was problematic for both the teachers and the community members.⁶³

The constant flow of teachers coming and going created an atmosphere that was not conducive to learning for the Snowbird students. The quality of education suffered greatly in those 15 years. Former student Frieda Brown-Rattler recalled the lack of effort put forth by one of her teachers, Mr. Underwood. She proclaimed, “He just sat there and read his newspaper and smoked his pipe. He gave us a piece of paper and said ‘here, write your name,’ or ‘write your arithmetic,’ and he did not grade us or nothing. He just did whatever, so I did not get much education under him.”⁶⁴ With parents legally bound to send their children to the Snowbird Day School, the deficient education wasted both theirs and the students’ time.⁶⁵ However, English speaking students like Rattler were sadly not receiving the worst of what BIA education had to offer.

The language barrier between the white teachers and Cherokee students only heightened the issue of poor education quality at Snowbird Day School. Language dictated what the students were being taught, and a distinct difference in the way the teachers educated the few students

⁶¹ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 3.

⁶² Albert and Louise Lee, 3.

⁶³ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 3.

⁶⁴ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 3.

⁶⁵ 60. State School Laws, The Act of February 15th, 1929 (45 Stat.1185), *Amended August 9, 1946* (60 Stat. 962).

that could speak English and students that only spoke Cherokee was evident.⁶⁶ Diamond Brown Sr., a fluent Cherokee speaking student suggested that his English speaking classmates learned more than him. At the age of 10, Brown had not learned English, he also could not write his own name, and despite being in school for at least 5 years all he did in school was draw.⁶⁷ The Cherokee speaking students, which were the majority at the school, suffered from teachers incapability or un-interest in bridging the language gap, so what students learned had nothing to do with their intellectual ability.⁶⁸

This barrier created a language based hierarchy that developed in the minds of both English and Cherokee speaking students. Brown asserted, “We talked our own language there [Snowbird Day School], but we did not speak their language, none at all.”⁶⁹ The distinction of “them” and “us” was based on language and overshadowed the racial difference between the students and the various teachers. While English speaking students received at least some education, in a school where their peers mainly spoke Cherokee, they felt this difference even more. Rattler who spoke almost no Cherokee expressed, “Many times we felt like they [Cherokee speaking students] felt we were inferior to them.”⁷⁰ In a community full of Cherokees, language became the marker for difference amongst them. English speaking students felt they did not fit in with their peers and the Cherokee speaking students were entirely overlooked by the teachers.

The language barrier caused the BIA’s assimilation policies to fail at the Snowbird Day School because the teachers were not providing them the western education prescribed by the

⁶⁶ Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 14.

⁶⁷ Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 3.

⁶⁸ Louise Lee, “Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Service Notes.” (Snowbird, NC., 1950), 1.

⁶⁹ Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 14.

⁷⁰ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 18.

United States. By the late 1940's most children had yet to learn English and were still predominantly speaking Cherokee. In an interview with teacher Albert Lee he suggested, "I do not think they [Snowbird Cherokees] trusted people too much, because the teachers were changing all the time and white people in the county had not been too nice to them."⁷¹ The combination of poor quality of education, the coming and going of teachers, and discriminatory behavior created an atmosphere of distrust by the community. The importance of the issue of trust, or rather distrust, had to have played a huge role in the reason for the attendance problems at Snowbird Day School.

At the end of the 1940's, a transformation in education occurred with the arrival of two new teachers. In the middle of the school year in 1949, the Snowbird Day School once again found itself without a teacher. In December, Albert and Louise Lee, a young husband and wife who had both just graduated from the University of Tennessee, went to be interviewed at the BIA office in Cherokee.⁷² Initially only Albert applied, as the couple had two small children at the time and Louise was not planning on working. However, the reservation principal, Mr. Jennings, wanted to hire them both. Louise Lee remarked, "He suggested we go down to the school and look it over. So we drove down there, on this December day, and we looked around and said, 'Oh this is so beautiful! I think I could work here.'"⁷³ The Lees began working at the school in January of 1950.⁷⁴ The couple were eager to teach and entered their positions with youthful vigor.

Albert and Louise Lee looked for ways to gain the trust of the community. Louise Lee did the census for the BIA the first year that they were there and began to get to know the

⁷¹ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 10.

⁷² Albert and Louise Lee, 2.

⁷³ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 2.

⁷⁴ Albert and Louise Lee, 2.

families.⁷⁵ She started regular visits out to community members' homes and she continued over the summer months to maintain a relationship with the parents and students when school was out. Mrs. Lee wrote in her daily notes, "We have visited just about every home that have children coming to school, homes are poor, small and crowded. The people friendly and shy. We like them very much."⁷⁶ Their arrival at the school marked a change for the Snowbird community's relationship with western education and the Snowbird Day School. Both Mr. and Mrs. Lee began to go over and beyond their original duties as teachers. When the old, unreliable bus broke down, they used their own car to get the children to school. Mrs. Lee recalled, "We decided we had to make sure the kids knew there would be transportation for them every day, so they could kind of count on school."⁷⁷ The Lees also helped families when a child fell ill by taking them to and from the doctors in Cherokee, an hour and a half drive away.⁷⁸ When asked how long it took for the community to be comfortable with sending their children to the school with the Lees, Albert acknowledged that it took two years.⁷⁹ The Lees showed the community something that they had not seen before: respect.

Around this time the BIA realized that genuine care in the education of native children was far more effective than old abusive and militaristic tactics set forth by Pratt.⁸⁰ Diamond Brown Sr. reminisced, "they were all smiles, real nice, they were really nice. Wow, we had a teacher then."⁸¹ Attendance rose significantly under the Lees, probably because of Mrs. Lee's efforts to acquaint herself with the community with her home visits and as of January 1950 they

⁷⁵ Albert and Louise Lee, 9.

⁷⁶ Louise Lee, "Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Service Notes." (Snowbird, NC., 1950), 3.

⁷⁷ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 2.

⁷⁸ Albert and Louise Lee, 3.

⁷⁹ Albert and Louise Lee, 10.

⁸⁰ Bureau of Indian Affairs, "Caring Education for the Indian Children." (Washington D.C., 1951).

⁸¹ Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 14.

had enrolled 31 children.⁸² In order to make it more manageable the school was separated into two classrooms. Mrs. Lee wrote in her notes, “We’ve decided I’ll take the beginners, first and second grades. Al will have the third and fourth.”⁸³ The Lees successfully implemented this two-classroom model and later they added 5th and 6th grades. Because the Snowbird Day School only went to 6th grade the BIA still sent Snowbird students to the Cherokee Boarding School for 7th through 10th grade.⁸⁴ The resources and the students’ time were finally being valued.

Due to the new standard of education, the Snowbird Day School went from being a blight to a boon for the community. Having teachers that cared about the well being of the children, families, and education was a welcomed transition and completely changed the way the community functioned. The Snowbird Day School became the heart of the community. Mrs. Lee called it, “A community center, yes. Kind of a nice gathering place.”⁸⁵ However, it was more than just a gathering place and because there was no longer tension with the school, the parents started to become more involved at the school. To say the Lees did something grand would be an idealization; they came to teach the children of the community but they approached it differently than most other teachers had. They treated the parents in the community as their equals and realized that they themselves were outsiders.⁸⁶ They made efforts to integrate themselves and their growing family into an existing community. They saw themselves as just another family amongst the many families in Snowbird.

The Lees and the Snowbird families came together as a community to do various activities. They gathered on the school grounds every Sunday to eat and many of the community

⁸² Louise Lee, “Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Service Notes.” (Snowbird, NC., 1950), 1.

⁸³ Louise Lee, “Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Service Notes.” 1.

⁸⁴ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 4.

⁸⁵ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 2.

⁸⁶ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 4.

members talked about the adult games of volleyball and the children playing on the playground during those Sunday get togethers.⁸⁷ Mrs. Lee remembered, “they got jungle bars, good swings, and then of course on Sunday afternoons, the boys would come and play football. And the young men played volleyball.”⁸⁸ In addition, the Lees planned events at the school for the students including Christmas pageants for the parents to attend, box supper fundraisers, and short field trips.⁸⁹ Though the purpose of the school was to educate and assimilate, the Lees positive presence chipped away at some of the old stigma that Cherokee families had surrounding the school.

Ignorant to the negative effects that the United States assimilation tactics would have on indigenous languages, the Lees were very successful in teaching students English.⁹⁰ The Lees approach to teaching language was far removed from the old abusive tactics of the boarding school. They mostly just encouraged students to use Cherokee during their lessons and never chastised them for speaking Cherokee to each other. When asked if the Lees ever punished the children for speaking Cherokee Diamond Brown Sr. assured, “No, not at all, they would just say ‘what did you say’ then we would have to repeat their language [English].” The Lees taught the BIA’s prescribed curriculum and thus were the most successful teachers of assimilation that the Snowbird Day School had. However, in one letter written by Mrs. Lee after she had left the school, she begins her letter with “She-o” or *ḄḄ*, which means hello in the Cherokee language, showing that she had attempted to learn at least a few words in the Cherokee language shows some cross-cultural learning by Mrs. Lee.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Billy Brown, interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13th, 2018, Interview 1, transcript, 5.

⁸⁸ Albert and Louise Lee, interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 5.

⁸⁹ Diamond Brown Sr., interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 25.

⁹⁰ Sean P. Harvey, *Native Tongues: Colonialism and Race from Encounter to Reservation* (Harvard University Press, 2015).

⁹¹ Louise Lee, Letter on Time Spent in Snowbird.

Although the Lees finally provided Snowbird students with an education, the fact that they still taught a western form of education had a major impact on the community's ability to maintain the use of the Cherokee language. Diamond Brown remembers, "I did not speak English until the Lees were there, that's when it changed."⁹² By the 1950's students at the Cherokee boarding school had been learning English for at least two generations and because the students that attended the boarding school did not maintain their life with their families throughout the year they were predominately speaking English.⁹³ However, most of the Snowbird students only began learning English in the 1950's.⁹⁴ Even still, the Snowbird students maintained the use of the language at home with their families while they learned English because of the day school model.⁹⁵ According to Micah Swimmer, the Adult Language and Education Coordinator at the New Kituwah Academy, the Snowbird community, the smallest of the community on the Qualla Boundary, holds the highest number of fluent Cherokee language speakers for the nation to this day.⁹⁶ The high number of fluent Cherokee speakers can be attributed to the preservation of language through the lack of English education at the day school for so long.

The year 1954, was yet another turning point for the Snowbird Community and the students at the Snowbird Day School. Terms like 'consolidation' and 'integration' entered the narrative surrounding the Cherokee and Snowbird school system. After the *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision in 1954, the BIA began to consider integration as a solution for

⁹² Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 14.

⁹³ Asheville Citizens-Times, "Cherokee Educational System," (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁹⁴ Diamond Brown Sr., Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 2, transcript, 14.

⁹⁵ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 18.

⁹⁶ Micah Simmer, M.A., Adult Language and Education Coordinator, email message to author, November 5th, 2018.

Snowbird students so there was no longer a need to board at the Cherokee Central School.⁹⁷ The closest public schools to Snowbird were in the Graham County School System, made up of Robbinsville High School, Middle School, and Elementary. The plan for Snowbird students to integrate into the Robbinsville schools was to do so one student at a time and only in the high school.⁹⁸ Integrating one student at a time proved to be unsuccessful and most of those first students quit for one reason or another.⁹⁹ Frieda Brown-Rattler was one of those early students sent to Robbinsville in 1954. She recalls Mr. and Mrs. Lee telling her parents, “we’re looking at your children to be the leaders, in other words to blaze the trail for the rest of the enrolled (EBCI) children to go to school out there.”¹⁰⁰ She attended the school for her 9th grade year and the next year Frieda’s two older siblings were moved from Cherokee Central to Robbinsville High School. Frieda quit the following year in 1955, however her siblings remained.¹⁰¹ Rattler, like the few others that tested integration prior to her, proved that one Cherokee student entering into the all white school was not going to result in a successful implementation of integration. It was evident that the Cherokee students were going to need support from their peers.

⁹⁷ As early as 1934, consolidation is mentioned when the Cherokee school system made up of then Cherokee Boarding School, Big Cove Day School, Birdtown Day School, and Soco Day School, was going to do away with the boarding school and replace it with Cherokee Central School. In an article that ran in the Asheville Citizen Times it states, “Miss Edna Groves of Washington D.C., supervisor of home economics, Indian Service, and Professor Loram of Yale University, specialist in interracial contacts, were official visitors at the Cherokee Indian Reservation here recently. They conferred with R.L. Salsbury, superintendent of the reservation, and other school and agency officials here relative to a new and modernized course of study the Indian bureau is formulating for the reservation school system here.” Around 1935, the boarding school became the Cherokee Central School and they stopped bringing children there from other nations in the southeast, yet the various day schools continued to operate as normal. However, for Snowbird students this was inconsequential. Snowbird students continued to be boarded at the Cherokee Central School until at least 1955, even though the school technically did not function as a boarding school.

Asheville Citizens-Times, “Cherokee Educational System,” (Asheville, North Carolina), July 15th, 1934.

⁹⁸ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 3.

⁹⁹ Frieda Brown-Rattler, 21.

¹⁰⁰ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 21.

¹⁰¹ Freida Brown-Rattler, 21.

Also in 1954, talk from the BIA of consolidation via integration became the new narrative concerning the Day Schools. The BIA hoped to close the day schools and only operate the Cherokee Central School eventually moving all Cherokee students into state ran traditionally white schools. For Snowbird, this meant that efforts to integrate them would be more crucial than originally anticipated. In a letter from commissioner of the BIA S.W. Barton Greenwood to George A. Shuford of the U.S. House of Representatives, Greenwood asserted, “We believe the move [consolidation] is an important step towards the future integration of the Federal schools. We are cognizant of the disadvantages of the proposal in the minds of the Indian people and are making every effort to secure their cooperation prior to the move.” This sentiment echos the earlier rhetoric of Pratt, if the point of assimilating native peoples through education was to turn them into white Americans then integration into white school systems would mean that goal was realized.¹⁰²

The reason that the BIA was so pressed to achieve integration was they wanted the state of North Carolina to take over the responsibility of educating native youth. The BIA no longer wished to incur the cost of running all the schools in the Cherokee school system. A letter written to Eugene A. Wood, North Carolina State official, reads, “Legally, by virtue of the Indian citizenship and Indian rights under the 14th amendment of the United States Constitution, the answer to the question of responsibility for educating Indians today clearly points to State and local school districts.”¹⁰³ The BIA went from kidnapping Cherokee children in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, to the 1950’s when they wanted to be unburdened of the obligation of providing Cherokee children with an education. Neither approach focused on the well-being of

¹⁰² Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letter to Eugene A. Wood, September 20th, 1960.

¹⁰³ Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letter to Eugene A. Wood, September 20th, 1960.

the students. The BIA continued their efforts to convince EBCI to integrate the students in Snowbird.

It was one year later that EBCI officials got on board with consolidation, making integration of Snowbird Day School students inevitable.¹⁰⁴ The Lees began to work with Graham County to attempt to fast track the integration of the Snowbird students. By 1959, regular visits were being conducted between the Robbinsville and Snowbird students to hopefully ease the students into coexisting peacefully. Mr. Lee writes in a progress report, “Grades 4th, 5th, and 6th visited the Robbinsville school twice during the year. It was felt that these visits helped to prepare the children for going into public school.”¹⁰⁵ The couple that had come just nine years earlier and completely transformed the community’s views on education were actively participating in what would be the eventual end of the Snowbird Day School. However, the Lees were employees of the BIA and after all, integration was packaged as progress.¹⁰⁶

By 1961, Robbinsville High School and Middle School were completely integrated, all Snowbird students would attend Snowbird Day School until 6th grade and would then transition to Robbinsville schools. A statement released for publication by the superintendent of Graham County Public Schools stated,

Graham County in North Carolina has no negro residents but some four hundred Cherokee Indians. The Federal government is providing educational facilities for the Indians in grades 1 to 6 in a two teacher school located in the heart of the Indian Community. Those in grades 7-12 are now enrolled in Robbinsville Consolidated High School. This is the seventh year for indians in the Robbinsville High School.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ F.W. Swan, Letter to Richard Butts, April 6th, 1955.

¹⁰⁵ Albert Lee, Snowbird Day School Progress Report 1959-1960, May 1960.

¹⁰⁶ Frieda Brown-Rattler, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13, 2018, Interview 3, transcript, 21.

¹⁰⁷ Graham County Superintendent, Statement from Graham County Schools, 1962.

At this point Snowbird Day School was still in operation, but the demise of the school was in the near future.

The goal of the BIA to fully integrate the students of the Snowbird Day School was realized in 1963. Harold Duck, the reservation principle for the BIA, requested a meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Lee on February 1963, “Mr. Fleming and I would like to talk to the two of you concerning the future of Snowbird in all aspects.”¹⁰⁸ After this meeting, BIA officials and the Lees arranged a meeting with the parents of the Snowbird Day School students to inform them that the school would soon be coming to an end.¹⁰⁹ The school continued to function over the next two years, but students were actively being placed into Robbinsville. In 1965, only a small number of students remained and this was the last year that the Snowbird Day School would operate. The closing of the Day School was hailed as a success in the assimilation of the Cherokee by the surrounding white community, but for the students this meant dealing with the shock of integrating.¹¹⁰

The effects of integration varied amongst the children, but many of the students had a difficult time adjusting to their new school. Billy Brown, one of the last integrated students, remembers what integration was like for the younger students, “When they shut the doors [of the classrooms] you’d hear the kids cry,” “They’d be crying up and down the hallway, I’ll remember it for the rest of my life.”¹¹¹ Other students like Diamond Brown Jr., told his family of the constant fighting that he partook in to combat the racial slurs and discrimination that he and other students from Snowbird experienced while at Robbinsville by both the white teachers and

¹⁰⁸ Harold A. Duck, Letter to Albert Lee, February 11th, 1963.

¹⁰⁹ Albert Lee, Letter to Harold A. Duck, May 2nd 1963.

¹¹⁰ Asheville Citizen-Times, “Strange Snowbird Success Story: Teachers Efforts Emptied School,” (Asheville North Carolina), 1965.

¹¹¹ Billy Brown, interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13th, 2018, Interview 1, transcript. 5.

students.¹¹² Many of the young Snowbird Cherokee students that entered into school at Robbinsville began to feel a wide range of emotions, some celebrating their successes in sports, with others feeling like little warriors fighting racism. Many of those young children that integrated in 1965 did not graduate high school, dropping out for one reason or another throughout the years.¹¹³ The closing of the Snowbird Day School left students with the overwhelming feeling of loss.

The Day School had created a community center where children and their families could come together, and the closing meant the disintegration of many of the community activities that went on while the Lees were at the school. Billy Brown reminisced, “Going to school out there [Snowbird Day School] makes you close. Because it keeps you with your family-- I’m not saying family [biologically related], but it keeps you with your Indian family.” Many students expressed that the community has not quite been the same since the school closed and they have longed for a time like that to return.¹¹⁴ The loss of the community togetherness was not the only casualty of the closing of the Day School, integration meant the end of the Lees’ acceptance of the Cherokee language being spoken outside of classroom work.

Cherokee language speaking students found themselves being judged by their white peers and teachers for speaking Cherokee. For some students the cost of trading their language for education was too high and many chose a different route. Billy Brown remarked that many Cherokee language speaking students shared with him that, “They thought we were dumb but we were not dumb, we knew what they were talking about, so we’d set back there and talk Indian (Cherokee) and they would just put us in alternative school.”¹¹⁵ Because the students were

¹¹² Sandra Brown, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, November 12th, 2018, Interview 4, transcript, 2.

¹¹³ Billy Brown, interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13th, 2018, Interview 1, transcript. 7.

¹¹⁴ Billy Brown, interviewed by Dakota Brown, June 13th, 2018, Interview 1, transcript. 14.

¹¹⁵ Billy Brown, 14.

experiencing shame when speaking Cherokee a distinct loss of language can be attributed to integration. As a result only few exceptions in the community exist of the generation following those that were integrated that can actually speak Cherokee. These language speakers are now mostly elderly and many have passed away.¹¹⁶ Ironically, when the United States began its assimilation policies it also established its guidelines for federal recognition of tribal nations. One of the guidelines for a tribe to keep its federal recognition status is they must have speakers of their native language. Thus, the government had a vested interest in forcing native students to learn English. Like removal, it was an attempt to erase native nations.¹¹⁷

The Snowbird Community had a perspicuous relationship to the United States assimilation policies that pervaded the educational experiences of generations of students. These policies cultivated into what the BIA saw as the final step of Americanization of the Snowbird Cherokees, the integration into the Graham County school system.¹¹⁸ Despite the important role that the Lees played in creating a community around the Snowbird Day School they participated in the integration efforts that ultimately led to the demise of the school.¹¹⁹ This left the students longing for the family-like togetherness that they had grown to know over the 16 years that the Lees taught at the Snowbird Day School. However, the true magnitude of loss that years of assimilation and integration created for Snowbird can only be felt today in the panic to preserve the Cherokee language that is on the brink of extinction. The extinction of the Cherokee language not only threatens the Eastern Band of Cherokees status as a federally recognized tribe, but would also lead to the extinction of the knowledge contained within the words. Many feel

¹¹⁶ Micah Simmer, M.A., Adult Language and Education Coordinator, email message to author, November 5th, 2018.

¹¹⁷ "Frequently Asked Questions," U.S. Department of Interior Indian Affairs, accessed November 15th, 2018, <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

¹¹⁸ Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letter to Eugene A. Wood, September 20th, 1960.

¹¹⁹ Albert and Louise Lee, Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, 1993, transcript, 20.

teachers so they could be sent to an alternative school, etc. This will be used to provide context on the busing but also to show the experience of the integrated students.

Brown, Diamond. Interviewed by S. Dakota Brown, February 25, 2018, Interview 2 in English, Recording, Snowbird Day School Collection, transcript.

Mr. Brown provides information in his interview on the quality of education at the Day School throughout the time that he attended the school and also gives insight to being a parent of integrated students.

Brown, Jonah, "Special Council Resolution." (EBCI tribal council resolution, Cherokee, NC.), 1938.

The official resolution giving tribe authority over the land in which the Snowbird Day School was built.

Brown, Sandra, Interviewed by Dakota Brown, November 12th, 2018, Interview 4, transcript.

Sandra Brown tells the story of her husband's experiences with integration into the Robbinsville School System.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letter to Eugene A. Wood, September 20th, 1960.

Letter highlighting the long history of Indian education by the United States government and BIA. Also expressing the want for the BIA to have the state assume responsibility of Indian education.

Duck, Harold A., Letter to Albert Lee, February 11th, 1963.

The letter requesting a meeting to Mr. and Mrs. Lee on the future of the Day School.

"Frequently Asked Questions," U.S. Department of Interior Indian Affairs, accessed November 15th, 2018, <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>.

Used to establish guidelines for federal recognition of native nations.

Gambold, Anna Rosina. *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokee 1821*. Lincoln; London, University of Nebraska Press, 2010.

A translated collection providing context for the beginning of Assimilation Practices through education for the Cherokee.

Ghormley, Blanche. "Strange Snowbird Success Story: Teachers' Efforts Emptied School," *Citizen-Times*, 1965.

An article written the year that the Snowbird Day School officially closed in 1965.

Mostly highlighting Mr. and Mrs. Lee, the last teachers' of the day school, and their work to integrate students.

Graham County Superintendent, Statement from Graham County Schools, 1962.

This states when the integration process began in the Graham County school system and acknowledges that by 1962, both the middle and high school were integrated fully.

Greenwood, Barton. Barton Greenwood commissioner to George A. Shuford House of Representatives, Washington D.C., August 26th, 1954.

This letter concerns the integration of the Snowbird Day School students to the Robbinsville school.

Henderson, James E., Letter to Allen Ledford, January 30th, 1918.

This letter concerns the issues with attendance at the Day Schools in Snowbird and harshly places the sole blame on the parents.

Henderson, James E., Letter to Brest Conseen, December 19th, 1917.

This letter contains a threat to Snowbird parents of students at the day schools expressing that if they do not improve the attendance of their children that he will send them to boarding school.

Ledford, Allen, Letter to James E. Henderson: BIA superintendent, December 29th, 1917.

A letter from a parent of child that attended a day school in Snowbird and expresses his concern for the education.

Albert Lee, Letter to Harold A. Duck, May 2nd 1963.

Letter attempting to set up a meeting with the parents of the Snowbird Day School to inform them of the schools future

Lee, Louise and Albert. Interviewed by Kylie Crowe, Interview in English, Video, Snowbird Day

School Collection, transcript.

Source provides valuable information on the time that the Lee's spent at the Snowbird Day School and highlights a wide array of facts and stories. They tell of how they came to be hired at the school and their experiences there.

Lee, Louise, "Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Service Notes." (Snowbird, NC., 1950), 1.

These notes provide accounts of the first two months that the Lee's taught at the Snowbird Day School.

Lee, Louise, Letter on Time Spent in Snowbird.

Letter used to show that in Mrs. Lee's time at the Snowbird Day School that she did attempt to learn at least some Cherokee.

Pratt, Richard Henry. *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian 1867-1904*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964.

Autobiography of Pratt reveals his history with Indian tribes in the west and how that ultimately developed into his influential effects on the United States assimilation policies through education.

Rattler, Frieda. Interviewed by S. Dakota Brown, February 25, 2018, Interview 3 in English, Recording, Snowbird Day School Collection, transcript.

Frieda was one of the first students they tested integration on. At the time that she attended Robbinsville School she was the only Eastern Band Cherokee Student that went to the school. She also tells of her experiences at the Snowbird Day School and highlights poor education, the arrival of the Lee's, language, etc.

Sneed, Sarah Margaret, "Uniform Indians: Personal Reflections on the Eastern Band Cherokee Boarding School Experience," *Berea* Vol. 37, Iss 4 (Fall 2009) 1.

This article tells a second hand account of a child being kidnapped by law enforcement and taken to boarding school and exhibits the harsh treatment of the child.

Swan, F.W. Letter from F.W. Swan Official Advisor on Veteran Affairs to EBCI to Richard H. Butts superintendent BIA, Cherokee, NC, April 6th, 1955.

In this letter Swan is providing assurance to Butts that the Eastern Band of Cherokee will favor consolidation.

Simmer, Micah, M.A., Adult Language and Education Coordinator, email message to author, November 5th, 2018.

Swimmer provides the current issues surrounding language for the Eastern Band of Cherokee, as well as, establishes that Snowbird still holds the highest number of fluent speakers.

Annotated Secondary Source Bibliography

Books

Cottrol, Robert J., Raymond T. Diamond and Leland B. Ware. *Brown v. Board of Education: Caste Culture, and the Constitution*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003.

This legal history provides a good overview of the *Brown v. Board of Education* court ruling but fails to mention any minorities other than African Americans that were affected by this monumental decision.

Denson, Andrew. *Monuments to Absence: Cherokee Removal and the Contest Over Southern Memory*. Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Denson's book provides a new look at the infatuation with the Removal period in Cherokee history. His work is also used to establish some of the general Cherokee history.

Dinnerstein, Leonard, Roger L. Nichols and David M. Reimers. *Native and Strangers: Blacks, Indians, and Immigrants in America*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1990.

This social history briefly mentions the U.S. Government's early attempts to assimilate the Cherokee into white society, as well as, a broader mention of Native American involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. I will use this book to show how scholars in the early 1990's were venturing towards the subject of segregation and integration, but their heavy focus on Cherokees and the Removal period prevented a full exploration of the topic.

Finger, John R., *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

Finger's later work that moves the narrative of the Eastern Band past the Removal period and focuses on Eastern Band Tribal Economics.

Finger, John R., *The Eastern Band of Cherokees 1819-1900* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

Finger's work is one of the first and important works on the Eastern Band of Cherokee specifically. Used to show the scholarship on the removal period and provide general history of the Eastern Band.

Greymorning, Neyooxet. "Educating Indians: A Colonizing Agent of the United States of America." In *Indigenous Peoples: Equity in Education*, edited by Elinor

L. Brown, Rhonda G. Craven, and George McLean, 119-137. North Carolina: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2013.

In the chapter written by Greymorning he adds to this anthology scholarship on Indian Boarding Schools, but does not mention the Day School model.

Kennedy, Stetson. *Jim Crow Guide: The Way it Was*. Boca Raton, FL: Florida Atlantic University

Press, 1990.

This book attempts to place Natives in the broader topic of race relations in the south.

However, it never really mentions Native Americans' relationship to Jim Crow laws and instead gives an overview of Native history. Kennedy fails to mention Native American segregation and makes some unfounded assertions.

Lomawaima, Tsianina K., and Teresa L. McCarty. *To Remain an Indian: Lesson in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education*. James A. Banks ed. New York, NY: Teachers College Columbia University Press, 2006.

This book is one of the few that provides a full analysis of Native American education. It covers a wide range of topics such as, the value of indigenous education, the attempts by the U.S. Government to assimilate Native youth, the effects of western education on Native youth, and the importance of language related to education.

Minow, Martha. *In Brown's Wake: Legacies of America's Educational Landmark*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Minow states that in the academic narrative surrounding *Brown v. Board of Education*, segregation, and integration, that Natives are largely left out. In this book the terms segregation and integration are used in relation to Native Americans.

Neely, Charlotte. *Snowbird Cherokees: People of Persistence*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1991.

Neely is a professor of anthropology at Northern Kentucky University and this book is the only book that has ever been written on the Snowbird Community. While only briefly, this book directly mentions the Snowbird Day School but does not mention that it was a segregated school.

Oakley, Christopher Arris, *New South Indians: Tribal Economics and the Eastern Band of Cherokee in the Twentieth Century* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2018)
Contemporary work on the Eastern Band Tribal Economics.

Oakes, Annie T. "Not An Educational Institution: Native American Boarding Schools in the 19th and 20th Centuries." In *Indigenous Peoples: Equity in Education*, edited by Elinor L. Brown, Rhonda G. Craven, and George McLean, 71-92. North Carolina: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2013.

The author points out the assimilation techniques used by the BIA but shows how these schools sought to disrupt Native family and homelife, creating unhealthy family dynamics. While her scholarship is mainly on boarding schools, she provides a very blunt argument of the negative effects of BIA education on Native Youth.

Reed, Betty Jamerson. *School Segregation in Western North Carolina: A History, 1860s-1970s*. Contribution to Southern Appalachian Studies, 31. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011.

Reed brings up an important topic that has not come up in other text, which is the integration experiments that were done in the early stages of integration but only mentions them as they pertain to African Americans.

Journal Articles

Bates, Denise E. "Reshaping Southern Identity and Politics: Indian Activism During the Civil Rights Era." *Native South; Lincoln*, Vol. 9, (2016): 125-151. Accessed April 13, 2018.

<https://search-proquest-com.proxy177.nclive.org>

Her argument highlights many southern Native issues, including integration from Indian schools into the "white schools." This is one of the only sources found that discusses Native American segregation and integration in the south but she does not highlight one specific nation or school and instead gives an overview of integration experiences from various nations.

Coleman, Michael C. "Motivation of Indian Children at Missionary and US Government Schools." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Winter 1990): 30-45. Accessed April 13, 2018. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf>

Explores the reason for the United States government to assume the responsibility of educating Indian youth.

Grinde Jr., Donald A. "Taking the Indian out of the Indian: U.S. Policies of Ethnocide Through Education." *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Colonization/Decolonization (Autumn 2004): 25-32. Accessed April 5, 2018. <https://about.jstor.org/terms>

Highlights the effects of Native American assimilation through education by the United States government.

Grover, Linda LeGarde. "From Assimilation to Termination: The Vermilion Lake Indian

School.” *Minnesota History*, (Winter 2003): 224-240. Accessed April 13, 2018.

collections.mnhs.org/mnhistorymagazine/articles

Highlighting a specific indians school and the specifics of assimilation through education.

Knight, Henry. “Savages of Southern Sunshine: Racial Realignment of the Seminoles in the Selling of Jim Crow Florida.” *Journal of American Studies*, 48 (2014): 251-273.

Accessed April 13, 2018.

One of the few sources that focuses on native nations in the south and their experiences with Jim Crow segregation.

Lomawaima, K. Tsianina. “Domesticity in the Federal Indian Schools: The Power of Authority over Mind and Body.” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (May, 1993): 227-240.

Accessed April 5, 2018. <http://about.jstor.org/terms>

Expresses the great burden that was placed on native youth through their experiences with assimilation.

Pertusati, Linda. “Beyond Segregation or Integration: A Case Study from Effective Native American Education.” *Journal of American Indian Education*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (January 1988): 10-20. Accessed April 5, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24398090>

One of the only sources that bring the term segregation and integration into the context of Native American education.

Svingen, Orlan J. “Jim Crow, Indian Style.” *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Autumn 1987): 275-286. Accessed April 5, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1184288>

One of the only sources that mentions the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act and relates it to Indian Civil Rights. This act is something that was overlooked in my original research

but must now be included going forward, as the act that was granting Natives citizenship, was actually one more step towards assimilation.

Usner Jr., Daniel H. “They Don’t Like Indian Around Here: Chitimacha Struggles and Strategies for Survival in the Jim Crow South.” *Native South*, Vol. 9, (2016): 90-124. Accessed April 13th, 2018.

Used to display the commonalities in the southern Native experience in the Jim Crow era, and shows the complexities of the “grey area” that Native Americans were placed at the time. This also shows a large gap in the scholarship on Jim Crow and Native Americans.

Witte, Daniel E., and Paul T. Mero, “Removing Classrooms from the Battlefield: Liberty, Paternalism and the Redemptive Promise of Educational Choice,” *BYU Law Review*, Issue 2, (2008): 380.

Used to establish the way that Pratt’s policies on education negatively affected native people by pointing out that Pratt was more concerned with assimilation for cooperation than education.

Wolfley, Jeanette. “Jim Crow, Indian Style: The Disenfranchisement of Native Americans.” *American Indian Law Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1991): 167-202. Accessed April 5, 2018.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20068694>

Focuses heavily on Native American voting rights in the United States. She highlights the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act and recognizes the act as an attempt at assimilation. She directly mentions “Federal Indian Schools,” also known as BIA schools, as other aggressive modes of assimilation. Like the Svingen article, this shows the early scholarship that relates Native Americans to Civil Rights, even though education is only briefly mentioned.

