Agricultural Extension and the Campaign to Assimilate the Native Americans of Wisconsin, 1914–1932

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Congress founded the Agricultural Extension Service (AES) in the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 to disseminate agricultural research to individual farmers. In some states the AES also worked to encourage Native Americans to adopt sedentary intensive agriculture and all aspects of assimilation connected with that occupation. J. F. Wojta, AES administrator in Wisconsin from 1914 to 1940, took a deep interest in Indian farmers and used the power and resources of his office to instruct Native Americans. Ho-Chunks, Menominees, Ojibwes, and Oneidas in Wisconsin adopted or rejected these social, economic, and political assimilation efforts during the Progressive Era according to their own circumstances and goals. The experience of Wisconsin tribes with the state's agricultural extension programs illustrates different ways that Native peoples tried to benefit from modern government services while maintaining their own culture and kinship ties.

When U.S. senator Robert M. La Follette Sr. visited the Oneida reservation west of Green Bay, Wisconsin, in October 1909, he was pleasantly surprised by the nice homes and well-developed farms he found there. At the time, nearly every Oneida household owned a milk cow (one family had thirty), the local Episcopal church operated a creamery, and a private business took in Oneidas' excess cream and milk for its cheese factory. Oneidas were citizens, and the landowners among them, having obtained fee-simple title to their allotments, were paying local real estate taxes. The Wisconsin legislature had divided most of the reservation into two townships: Oneida in Outagamie County and Hobart in Brown County. It is understandable that, due to these social, economic, and political developments, La Follette believed Oneidas were assimilated into mainstream society. He was wrong, however.[1]

In 1909, Oneidas chose some incorporation into the local market economy but also strengthened their separate institutions. Oneidas maintained their own churches, choirs, schools, baseball teams, traditional leaders, and social groups. They kept close ties with other Oneida communities in New York and Canada. At times, they also asserted political autonomy. For example,

[1]The author would like to thank Donald Parman, Purdue University, and Bernard Schermetzler, Division of Archives, University of Wisconsin–Madison, for their help with this article. U.S. Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Condition of Indian Affairs in Wisconsin,* 61st Cong., 1st sess. (Oct. 2, 1909), serial 12-0, 1122; 1910 Oneida Superintendent's Narrative Report (SNR), Superintendents' Annual Narrative and Statistical Reports from Field Jurisdictions of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1907–38, frame (fr.) 237, reel 95, microcopy 1011, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group (RG) 75, National Archives (NA); Cara E. Richards, *The Oneida People* (Phoenix, 1974), 76.

a group of Oneidas known as the Indian Party refused to accept the legitimacy of Hobart and Oneida townships. Other Native American groups in Wisconsin also rejected mainstream culture to varying degrees. Although faced with the same pressures of assimilation during the Progressive Era, including the efforts of both the Agricultural Extension Service (AES) and the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), Indian communities in Wisconsin adopted or rejected varying levels of mainstream social, economic, and political acculturation according to their own needs. In fact, they often maintained visions of a cohesive society that competed with the social vision of the progressive officials who dealt with them. These visions included an emphasis on maintaining cultural and kinship ties sometimes at the expense of the accumulation of wealth.[2]

AES, Progressivism, and Native Americans

The federal government has a long history of interest in Native American farming. Congress first funded agricultural education for Native Americans with the Civilization Fund of 1819. In addition, individual treaty agreements often contained a provision for hiring reservation farmers. After the OIA adopted a policy of individual land ownership with the Dawes Act of 1887, the federal government increased its appropriations for farm instruction to help Native Americans profit from their land holdings. Progressive Era commissioners of Indian affairs emphasized scientific farming, and by 1905, 80 percent of all reservations employed an agency farmer—sometimes an Indian, but more often a Euro-American. Many Native American children also received agricultural education in boarding or day schools. In 1910, 79 percent of Indian men and 30 percent of Indian women reported agriculture, forestry, or animal husbandry as their main occupation. The stated purpose of the OIA was to assimilate reservation Native Americans, rendering them indistinguishable in every way from other Americans by turning them into sedentary farmers who participated in the local market economy.[3]

[2]Laurence Hauptman, ed., *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860–1920* (Norman, OK, 2006); Herbert S. Lewis, *Oneida Lives: Long-Lost Voices of the Wisconsin Oneidas* (Lincoln, 2005); Kristina Ackley, "Renewing Haudenosaunee Ties: Laura Cornelius Kellogg and the Idea of Unity in the Oneida Land Claim," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 32:1 (2008): 57–81. For a general discussion of persistence of culture, see Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans and Whites in the Progressive Era* (Austin, 2005), 23–49.

[3]R. Douglas Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America: Prehistory to the Present* (Lawrence, KS, 1987); Donald L. Parman, *Indians and the American West in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington, IN, 1994), 1–29; David Rich Lewis, *Neither Wolf nor Dog: American Indians, Environment, and Agrarian Change* (New York, 1994), 14–18; Arthur C. Parker, "The Status and Progress of Indians as Shown by the Thirteenth Census," *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians* 3 (July–Sept. 1915): 202; Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians,*

In founding the AES, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 increased educational and extension services to all farmers. With the law, Congress in part sought to further country-life reform policies that were designed to alleviate some of the hardships of rural living and thereby to slow the abandonment of farms. Congress also hoped to increase efficiency on individual farms and in the farm economy. Legislators such as Georgia senator Hoke Smith believed that farmers were not learning about the research being done in agriculture. Many states had been funding agricultural instruction projects for years, but the Smith-Lever Act provided central coordination and additional funds for disseminating promising agricultural techniques. The law stipulated that county board members needed to appropriate at least $1,000 for a farm agent (the principal vehicle for information dissemination) and to inform the dean of the state's college of agriculture—who acted as extension director—that their county wanted to join the program. Some states added requirements to the federal guidelines. California, for example, insisted that a county provide $1,500 and possess an active Farm Bureau chapter before the state would authorize a county agent for it. Some states, such as Texas and Oklahoma, organized segregated extension divisions. After requirements were met, the AES hired an agent for the county and allocated money for part of the agent's salary and expenses. The federal government initially provided each state with $10,000, from which each participating county would receive $700. With few federal guidelines, the state administrators and the county agents were largely responsible for meeting the needs of their constituents.[4]

Wisconsin had immediate use for the Smith-Lever funds since it was one of the states that had a history of agricultural instruction before 1914. In 1910, three-fourths of Wisconsin citizens still lived in rural areas. Farmers

1880–1920 (Lincoln, NE, 1984), 1–39. Of course the end result was a tremendous loss of Indian land. Janet A. McDonnell, *The Dispossession of the American Indian, 1887–1934* (Bloomington, IN, 1991).

[4]E. R. McIntyre, *Fifty Years of Cooperative Extension in Wisconsin, 1912–1962* (Madison, 1962), 49–66; Smith-Lever Act, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 38 (1914): 372; William Bowers, "Country Life Reform, 1900–1920: A Neglected Aspect of Progressive Era History," *Agricultural History* 45 (July, 1971): 211–21; Philip A. Grant, "Senator Hoke Smith, Southern Congressmen, and Agricultural Education, 1914–1917," *Agricultural History* 60 (Spring 1986): 111–22; Wayne D. Rasmussen, *Taking the University to the People: 75 Years of Cooperative Extension* (Ames, IA, 1989), 26–39; Emmet Preston Fiske, "The College and Its Constituency: Rural and Community Development at the University of California, 1875–1978" (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 1979), 117; Debra Reid, "African-Americans and Land Loss in Texas: Government Duplicity and Discrimination Based on Race and Class," *Agricultural History* 77 (Spring 2003): 258–93; Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, *Red Earth: Race and Agriculture in Oklahoma Territory* (Lawrence, 2004), 60; E. L. Luther, "Agricultural Representatives," *Wisconsin Farmers' Institute Bulletin*, 31 (1917): 31–32, 37; E. L. Luther to J. F. Wojta, Aug. 18, 1915, box 1, Ernest L. Luther Papers, 1912–1952, State Historical Society of Wisconsin. The federal government has historically provided about 30 percent of the total annual budget for extension programs.

constituted a large voting block in the state, and they had been demanding agricultural-extension activities for decades. The state government responded with Farmers' Institutes as well as an extension program. The University of Wisconsin organized an agricultural college extension service in 1909. The state legislature appropriated $30,000 for each of the service's first two years. The College of Agriculture used these funds to help pay the salaries and expenses of instructors who traveled to local schools throughout the state. The college also used the funds to continue longstanding demonstration projects that were coordinated by academic departments, such as the purebred-seed program of the Agronomy Department. The College of Agriculture also used its resources to help transform Wisconsin from a marginal wheat-growing state to a profitable dairy-producing region.[5]

Congress did not mandate that Smith-Lever funds be used for Native Americans because the OIA was officially charged with agricultural instruction to Indians. But some government officials argued that states should use their resources for Indian communities. AES personnel in about a dozen states agreed and assisted with farm instruction for Native Americans. In Nebraska during 1915, for example, AES personnel held Farmers' Institutes at both the Winnebago and Omaha agencies. In 1916, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells recognized extension efforts for Native Americans of Arizona, Kansas, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. County agents in these states and others organized boys and girls clubs, vaccinated hogs against cholera, assisted with fairs attended by Indians, such as the Mountain Farm Bureau Fair at Ahwahnee in Madera County, California. Agents made themselves available to farmers, both Indian and white, to answer questions and distribute bulletins. Overall, however, most county farm agents provided little if any assistance to Indian farmers. Indeed, Kiowas in Caddo County, Oklahoma, benefited from extension services even less than the African American farmers in the area. Likewise, California county farm advisors rarely volunteered to provide services to Indian farmers.[6]

[5]John W. Jenkins, *A Centennial History: A History of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin–Madison* (Madison, 1991), 67–68; Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin: A History 1848–1925* (Madison, 1949), 2:582–83; McIntyre, *Fifty Years,* 39–43; Charles McCarthy, *The Wisconsin Idea* (New York, 1912), 125–31; David Thelen, *The New Citizenship: Origins of Progressivism in Wisconsin, 1883–1900* (Columbia, MO, 1972), 59–60, 67–71; Rasmussen, *Taking the University to the People*; Alfred Charles True, *A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, 1785–1923* (New York, 1969); Grace Witter White, *Cooperative Extension in Wisconsin: 1962–1982* (Dubuque, IA, 1985); Norman K. Risjord, "From the Plow to the Cow," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Spring 2005): 40–49.

[6]E. A. Allen, "The Indian—Federal and State Responsibility," *The Red Man* 8 (Oct. 1915): 45; *Commissioner of Indian Affairs (CIA) Annual Report for 1916,* 32; A. E. Anderson, "State Co-operation with Indians," *The Red Man* 8 (Apr. 1916): 282–84; Lewis, *Neither Wolf nor Dog,* 148; Report of the State County Agent Leader for November, 1916, Annual Narratives and

The extent of Wisconsin's AES programs for Indian farmers, though modest, was much greater than similar programs in other states. This is in part due to the overall progressive atmosphere in the state, especially among the state's farmers. Wisconsin was famous for its innovative public policies, celebrated in the Progressive Era as the Wisconsin Idea. Wisconsin progressives fought to regulate railroads and other businesses. They sought greater efficiency by embracing scientific farming and lumbering. They also attempted to enhance societal cohesion by turning schools into community centers that promoted democracy and American values.[7]

Wisconsin legislators, while not deeply involved in Indian matters, debated bills and passed some laws involving Native Americans during these early decades of the twentieth century. These dealt with four basic categories: the Wisconsin claim to swamplands on reservations under the Swamp Lands Act of 1850, liquor consumption by Indians, township restructuring to accommodate the transition of Indian holdings from trust land to fee simple, and the protection of Indian remains. With these laws, legislators tried to incorporate Indians and their lands into white society. In addition, Wisconsin legislators did not exclude Native Americans from the benefits of progressive reforms concerning efficiency and the regulation of big business. Indians of Wisconsin could and did take advantage of regulated railroad rates, workmen's compensation, Farmers' Institutes, and agricultural experiment stations.

In addition to the general progressive atmosphere of the state, the extent of Wisconsin's agricultural programs for Native Americans was also due to the personal interest of Joseph Frank (J. F.) Wojta, an AES administrator in Wisconsin from 1914 to 1940. No other state had such a dedicated and consistent advocate for extending AES programs to Indian farmers. During these early years, Wojta was the key figure in Wisconsin's efforts to help Indian farmers, though his background offers few clues as to why he decided to step beyond his official duties and offer instruction to Native American communities. He was born in 1869 to Catholic Polish American parents in Two Creeks, a small town on Lake Michigan about ninety miles north of Milwaukee. His grandfather Joseph Wojta was one of the earliest settlers in the area in the 1840s. Wojta remembered listening to his grandfather's stories

Statistical Reports From State Offices and County Agents, reel 1, T 849, Records of the Federal Extension Service, RG 33, National Archives; "Helping Indians to Understand Farming Better," *The Red Man* 8 (Dec. 1915): 126; Lynn-Sherow, *Red Earth*, 136.

[7]Thelen, *New Citizenship*; John Milton Cooper, Jr., "Why Wisconsin? The Badger State in the Progressive Era," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 87 (Fall 2004): 14–25; David L. Brye, "Wisconsin Scandinavians and Progressivism, 1900 to 1950," *Norwegian-American Studies* 27 (1977): 163–94; Stanley P. Caine, *The Myth of a Progressive Reform: Railroad Regulation in Wisconsin, 1903–1910* (Madison, 1970); Victor Jew, "Social Centers in Wisconsin, 1911–1915," *UCLA Historical Journal* 8 (1987): 97–113.

about Potawatomi and Menominee Indians who passed through or lived in Manitowoc County.[8]

Wojta's early career mirrors the work experiences of his progressive contemporaries; they were all trying to mold careers out of serving their communities. He taught in rural schools, like his grandfather before him, finished a bachelor's degree at the University of Wisconsin, and then served as a school principal. In 1902, he decided that agriculture was his calling and completed the long course (resulting in a master's degree) at the University of Wisconsin. He taught agronomy at the University of Minnesota, directed the Agricultural Department at Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota, and superintended a county agricultural school in Michigan before returning to Wisconsin and finding new opportunities with the infant AES in 1914.[9]

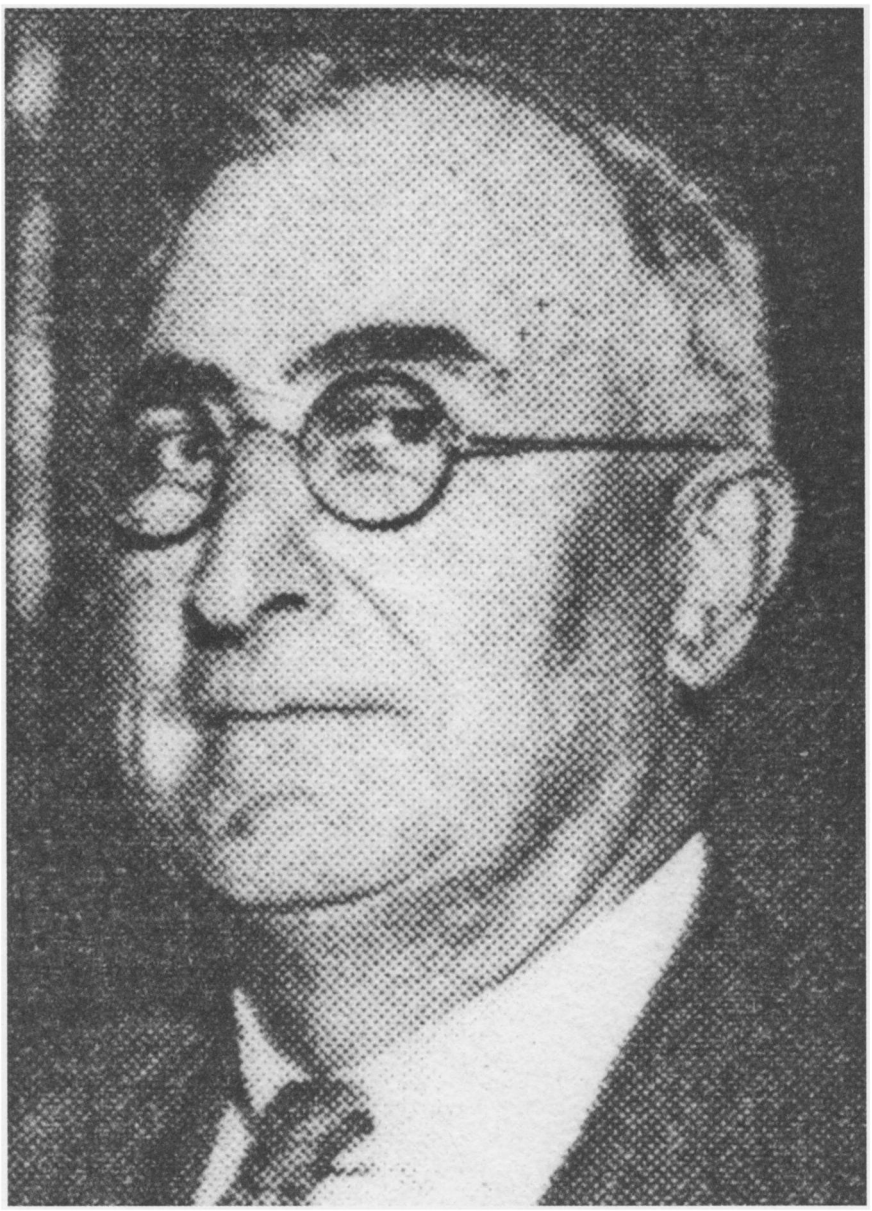
Wojta did not join AES to help Native Americans, but he actually spent a considerable amount of his time doing just that. When Menominees and their reservation agent requested assistance with farming in 1915, H. L. Russell, dean of the university's College of Agriculture, sent Wojta to the Keshena Agricultural Fair to give lectures on crops and livestock. The assistant director of the Wisconsin AES, K. L. Hatch, recognized Wojta's work with Indians as groundbreaking. Wojta generated enough enthusiasm with his descriptions of the Farmers' Institutes that four reservation superintendents requested assistance for 1916. Wojta was delegated the job of providing the services, and he demonstrated throughout his career that he genuinely relished his role, which he perceived as humanitarian activity.[10]

Wojta supported farm-institute work in Indian communities because he believed it would help Native Americans to assimilate economically, socially, and politically into mainstream society. Like most Americans, Wojta believed that Indians had to change their culture in order to survive. He expressed the typical Progressive Era view that in the twentieth century, no group—Native American or otherwise—could expect to exist on its own, isolated from the market economy, social pressures, and the democratic system. When visiting reservations, Wojta falsely assumed that the communities only existed

[8]J. F. Wojta, "The Town of Two Creeks Manitowoc County," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 25 (Dec. 1941): 146–47; Joseph Frank Wojta, *A History of the Town of Two Creeks, Manitowoc County, Wisconsin* (Madison, 1945).

[9]Alfred Charles True, *A History of Agricultural Education in the United States, 1785–1925* (Washington, 1929), 347; "Resolutions . . . on . . . Wojta," J. F. Wojta File, Civilian Personnel Records, National Personnel Records Center, National Archives, St. Louis, MO; K. L. Hatch to H. B. Russell, July 2, 1914, box 4, Archives Series [AS] 9/1/1-9, College of Agriculture Papers (COA), Division of Archives, University of Wisconsin-Madison. Wojta started as a supervisor of courses, was appointed assistant state leader of county agents in 1915 and became state leader in 1920.

[10]J. F. Wojta, "Indian Farm Institutes in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 29 (Winter 1946): 423; Wisconsin AES Annual Report for 1916, reel 1, T896, RG 33.



J. F. Wojta, Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service administrator. Reprinted from *Wisconsin Farm Progress: 1938 Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service Annual Report* (June 1939), 5.

through government largesse. He thought that the schools and hospitals were provided gratis by the U.S. government instead of in fulfillment of treaty obligations. Wojta thought that these "handouts" would not continue and that Wisconsin Indian communities needed to become self-sufficient. Because their reservation lands were limited and game was becoming scarce, Wojta also pointed out that Native Americans could not continue to support

themselves largely by hunting and gathering. He failed to realize that most Native American groups relied on both hunting and agriculture. A diversified economy insulated them from catastrophic failures while nurturing social ties and ceremonialism.[11]

Naturally, Wojta believed that intensive farming offered a solution for the problems of the Indian population of the state. Obviously growing food was a means of becoming self-sufficient, and it was the number-one occupation in Wisconsin. Wojta also believed strongly that farming would change Indians' worldview and mode of living so as to enable Native Americans to assimilate socially and succeed in white society. He saw Native Americans as still imbued with supposedly backward behavior patterns; they were too eager for quick results and excitement. In his view, the popularity of races, dancing, lacrosse, and hunting was evidence that Indians were "restless." Wojta believed that the rigors of manual labor and the gradual rewards of farming would teach Indians to be more patient, reliable, and sedentary. He wanted to show them the "dignity" of farming and help them to move up the ladder of civilization. He was optimistic and equalitarian enough to see all this as possible. Of course, what Wojta expected was that Indian farmers, like good homesteaders in northern Wisconsin or on the Great Plains, would not farm simply to make a living but would seek to make money.[12]

Wojta's opinions represent one of four commonly articulated Progressive Era views about Native Americans. In his assimilationism, Wojta was joined by many progressives, including numerous members of the dozen or so Indian reform groups. Theodore Roosevelt, who usually held assmiliationist views, though he often expressed contradictory ones, eloquently expressed the perspective in the *Outlook* in 1913:

> Of course, all Indians should not be forced into the same mold. Some can be made farmers, others mechanics; yet others have the soul of the artist. Let us try to give each his chance to develop what is best in him.[13]

The second view was an updated version of the vanishing-race perspective of the nineteenth century. Joseph K. Dixon, member of the education bureau of the Wanamaker department stores and organizer of the Wanamaker

[11]J. F. Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians in Farming," *Wisconsin Archeologist* n.s. 6 (Sept. 1927): 117; J. F. Wojta "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," *Wisconsin Archeologist* 18:1 (1919): 19.

[12]Field Report of J. F. Wojta for the week ending Sept. 11, 1915, box 6, AS 9/4/13, COA; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 19, 30; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians in Farming," 117–18; Thomas A. Krainz, "Culture and Poverty: Progressive Era Relief in the Rural West," *Pacific Historical Review* 74 (Feb. 2005): 108.

[13]Theodore Roosevelt, "Impressions about Indians," *Outlook,* Oct. 1913, 364–65.

Expedition to western reservations in 1913, asserted that Indians were a vanishing race because they were biologically unfit to compete with whites. During the Progressive Era, few American officials expressed such extreme racial determinist or formalist attitudes toward Native Americans, but Frederick Hoxie has argued that by 1920, optimism about Native American progress had been replaced by a belief that Indians were "frozen in time and space." Faced with the lack of Indian progress, some Americans such as Frances Leupp, commissioner of Indian Affairs (1905–09), began to believe that Indians could not fully assimilate, but that they could survive as a race by becoming a manual-labor class; this was the third major Progressive Era perspective on Indians. Leupp established an Indian employment bureau which specialized in placing Indians in migrant labor jobs, while he reemphasized the vocational nature of the boarding schools. Subsequent commissioners at least partially shared Leupp's philosophy. Native American intellectuals such as Arthur C. Parker disagreed and represented a fourth view that would only later become more broadly accepted. Parker and others argued that Native Americans could achieve whatever they wanted by adopting many of the outward trappings of mainstream society but still remaining culturally Indian.[14]

Native American communities in Wisconsin experienced and responded to AES efforts in varying degrees, but certainly they reflected Parker's perspective more than the other three views. They accepted and sometimes even sought out AES advice but refused complete cultural assimilation. The groups least affected by AES programs were the so-called landless or non-reservation groups (Ho-Chunks and some Ojibwes) who relied on a seasonal economic pattern. These groups were the least politically and socially acculturated, interacted only occasionally with AES staff, and largely ignored the pressure to adopt sedentary agriculture. They chose their own form of social cohesion—one that reinforced their culture and families rather than put them under stress. Although opportunities dwindled as the century progressed, in 1910 many economic options remained for these communities. Wisconsin was still "wild" to some degree, and many families could sustain themselves by hunting, gardening, and gathering if they wished. While the activities resembled the strategies of the precontact subsistence cycle, most groups were confined to smaller areas than their ancestors had been accustomed to using.

[14]Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca, NY, 2005), 14, 55, 69–88; Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 115–45, 201–02, 206; Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs*, 131–52; Frederick Hoxie, ed., *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (Boston, 2001), 14–20, 119–22; Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880–1940* (Oxford, 2000), 6–15.

An AES demonstration on an unnamed reservation. Reprinted from *Forces Building Farm Life: 1930 Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service Annual Report* (Feb. 1931), 11.

Ho-Chunks and the AES

Ho-Chunks, in particular, depended heavily on these traditional pursuits. Wisconsin Ho-Chunk families had refused removal to Nebraska during the nineteenth century and had obtained individual land holdings through the Indian Homestead Act of 1874. In 1910, 735 Ho-Chunks lived on these lands scattered through many counties of central Wisconsin. They continued to make many of their necessities, such as mat-covered wigwams, beadwork items, and appliqué blankets. Ho-Chunks also maintained such social customs as prohibiting marriage within the same clan, while ignoring state laws concerning marriage and divorce.[15]

In 1916, Ho-Chunks relied on itinerant economic practices that were seasonally based. In the early summer, most families picked blueberries, which grew among the pine trees of west-central Wisconsin. They ate and dried the berries but also sold them, making enough money to buy necessities for the season. Belle Steele, Indian Office field matron, reported in 1909 that Ho-Chunk women could make between seventy-five cents and two dollars per day picking blueberries. Mountain Wolf Woman, however, remembered that whites would pay between twenty-five and fifty cents for each quart of blueberries, a price that would yield most pickers more than two dollars a day. During the summer, Ho-Chunk families also planted gardens with corn,

[15]Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, *Indian Population, 1910* (Washington, 1915), 17–21; Nancy Lurie, *Wisconsin Indians* (Madison, 1987), 12; Nancy Lurie, "The Winnebago Indians: A Study in Cultural Change" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1952), 271–72; *Condition of Indian Affairs in Wisconsin*, 1170; 1916 Grand Rapids SNR, fr. 10, reel 58, RG 75; "Board of Indian Commissioners Report" in *CIA Report for 1920,* 87.

squash, and other vegetables, and some Ho-Chunks worked on local white farms. Others performed for sightseers in the Stand Rock Ceremonial at the Wisconsin Dells tourist area and sold black-ash baskets and woodcarvings to eager tourists. Ho-Chunks had been taking advantage of the economic opportunities of the Wisconsin Dells area since about 1890. In the fall, after the garden produce had been harvested, dried, and stored, many families worked in the cranberry bogs. In 1916, some of these marshes were still public domain land, though many of them had become private property. A few Ho-Chunks filed for homestead deeds to bog areas, but most Ho-Chunks worked for wages from white marsh owners. Men raked the berries, and women sorted and boxed them. After they had finished with the cranberry harvest, some families traveled to Nebraska to visit relatives while others camped along the Mississippi in the La Crosse area. On the river, they hunted deer or bear, and trapped muskrat. Those families with children attending school often stayed close to either Tomah or Wittenberg, where the Indian boarding schools were located. Sometimes only the fathers traveled to the Mississippi to hunt.[16]

Clearly, Ho-Chunks were agricultural peoples, but social considerations shaping their seasonal cycle precluded them from adopting commercial farming. Although Ho-Chunk families were scattered over many counties in Wisconsin, they maintained close tribal ties through language and networks of kinship. Ho-Chunks recognized that the cranberry marshes and blueberry areas provided good opportunities for visiting and holding dances. Thus, for Ho-Chunks, the seasonal cycle not only provided subsistence but also allowed for tribal strengthening.[17]

In 1916, the OIA established an agency headquarters for Ho-Chunks at Grand Rapids (now known as Wisconsin Rapids) in growing Wood County. Superintendent E. J. Steinstra supervised two clerks and two farmers at the agency. He and the farmers visited Ho-Chunk families, advising about crops and arranging for their produce to be displayed at the Wood County Fair. The OIA also used the boarding schools at Tomah and Wittenberg (the latter closed in 1917) to teach agriculture. The Tomah School housed joint OIA-AES experimental work on local soil and climate.[18]

[16]1914 Tomah SNR, fr. 65, reel 149, RG 75; *Condition of Indian Affairs in Wisconsin*, 1171; Nancy Lurie, ed., *Mountain Wolf Woman: Sister of Crashing Thunder: The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian* (Ann Arbor, 1961), 10–16, 22, 117; Lurie, "Winnebago Indians," 275; Nancy Lurie, "Winnebago" in *Northeast,* vol. 15 of *Handbook of North American Indians,* ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington, 1978), 704; Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison, 2001), 48–49.

[17]Lurie, "Winnebago," 704; Lurie, *Mountain Wolf Woman,* 34; 1916 Grand Rapids SNR, fr. 21, reel 58, RG 75.

[18]1912 Tomah SNR, frs. 32–33, reel 149, RG 75; *CIA Report for 1914,* 30; 1916 Grand Rapids SNR, frs. 5, 24, reel 58, RG 75.

Ho-Chunk farmers leaving the March 26–27, 1917, farmers' institute in Black River Falls. Reprinted from *Wisconsin Wins: 1917–1918 Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service Annual Report* (Apr. 1919), 21.

J. F. Wojta became involved with Ho-Chunk agricultural education in 1917. On March 12, he and Superintendent Steinstra met to plan two Farmers' Institutes—one at Mauston in Juneau County and the other at Black River Falls, Jackson County. Even though Ho-Chunks owned individual plots of land, Wojta received little support for his work with these farmers from county agents. Only L. H. Robbins, Jackson County agricultural agent (1917–19), assisted Wojta at all, and that was at only one event.[19]

Wojta tried but failed to make the institutes relevant to Ho-Chunk needs. At both events, he judged the local horses and explained how to care for the animals, which he knew played a large role in Ho-Chunk culture. He probably was not impressed with Ho-Chunk horses; rather than owning work horses for plowing and other farm labor, Ho-Chunks valued riding ponies that were fast, looked sleek, and could transport them on their seasonal travels. Wojta also addressed growing garden vegetables such as corn. He spent time discussing the different varieties of corn, including sweet corn and popcorn, though of course Ho-Chunk ancestors were cultivating corn long before Wojta's European ancestors had ever seen it. Wojta also demonstrated simple methods of testing seed and cutting seed potatoes.[20]

[19]State County Agent Leader's Report, Mar. 1917, reel 1, T896, RG 33; Indian Farmers' Institutes for 1917 in Wisconsin, box 9, AS 9/4/8-3, COA, ; McIntyre, *Fifty Years*, 239, 260; *Mauston Star,* Apr. 26, 1917.

[20]State County Agent Leader's Report, Apr. 1917, reel 1, T896, RG 33; 1917 Grand Rapids SNR, frs. 47, 58, reel 58, RG 75; *Badger State Banner* (Black River Falls, WI), May 3, 1917.

A few intensive farmers appeared among the hundreds of Ho-Chunks who were drawn to the institutes for socializing, food, and amusement. Wojta met one man who had sold seventy-five bushels of potatoes in 1915. He also talked with another Ho-Chunk who had sold $125 worth of cucumbers. Some families were raising poultry and pigs. Superintendent W. F. Dickens reported in 1929 that one Ho-Chunk was supporting his family on a fifty-five acre farm and another operated a fifteen-head dairy operation. A number of Ho-Chunks living in the vicinity of Mauston had won prizes at the 1916 state fair in competition with other Indians of Wisconsin. Charley Decorah, for example, won first prize for the tallest stalk of corn, and Asher Pettibone also got a blue ribbon for the best half-peck of white beans. Ho-Chunk farmers won first prize for their collective exhibit at the 1919 Juneau County Fair. Most Ho-Chunks, however, could not be convinced to adopt sedentary farming techniques. Wisconsin College of Agriculture livestock specialist D. S. Bullock discussed dairying at the Mauston Institute, but only six of the roughly three hundred Ho-Chunk families in 1916 owned a dairy cow, and few more were likely to try to obtain one because they traveled so much. Even though Wojta criticized Ho-Chunk ponies, no family would willingly do without one. Few farmers would be in their fields during the summer to carry out the intensive spraying and cultivating that Wojta recommended.[21]

Instead over time, Ho-Chunks relied more heavily on itinerant labor. Three economic trends resulted in migrant labor becoming even more possible and profitable for Ho-Chunks in Wisconsin after World War I. First, white farmers began to expand their acreage of crops due to mechanization. Those who grew produce that required handpicking needed a labor force that was willing and able to live by the fields during harvest. This included cranberry farmers, and increasingly strawberry and cherry growers as well. In 1926, Door County, northeast of Green Bay, alone produced 628,000 crates of cherries. Second, Ho-Chunks began to buy cars, which made travel around the state on newly paved roads inexpensive and quick. Third, tourism brought more customers who were willing to buy Ho-Chunk produce. Although these trends and other factors, such as bans on using fire to stimulate blueberry growth, brought some changes, Ho-Chunks maintained their basic itinerant pattern of berry harvesting, gardening, and hunting.[22]

[21]Indian Farmers' Institutes for 1917 in Wisconsin, box 9, AS 9/4/8-3, COA; *CIA Report for 1916,* 133, 183; *Mauston Star,* Oct. 5, 1916; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 32; 1919 Grand Rapids SNR, fr. 79, reel 58, RG 75; 1929, 1931 Tomah SNR, frs. 803, 993, reel 149, RG 75.

[22]Lurie, "Winnebago Indians," 270, 277; Robert Ritzenthaler, "The Potawatomi Indians of Wisconsin," *Milwaukee Public Museum Bulletin* 19 (Jan. 1953): 115; Frank G. Swoboda, "Agricultural Cooperation in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 10 (Spring 1926): 166; 1927 Tomah SNR, fr. 588, reel 149, RG 75; Lurie, "Winnebago," 704; U.S. Senate Committee on

Indian farmer display of produce. Tribe unknown. Reprinted from *Serving Wisconsin Farmers in War Time* (July 1918), 19.

Ho-Chunks adjusted quickly to the changing economy, embracing wage work as well as piecework in their labors. In 1920, wage work—including cranberry-bog jobs—comprised only a small amount of Ho-Chunk income. In that year, Ho-Chunk workers depended most on native industries, which included the sale of handicrafts and berries. By 1928, Ho-Chunks obtained most of their income from wage labor from working in paper mills and canneries as well as in the cranberry marshes.[23]

The Wisconsin AES continued to encourage Ho-Chunks to farm during the twenties and failed to offer any alternatives to the efforts of the Indian Office to persuade them to become sedentary. Wojta held an institute early in the decade at Valley Junction. He addressed the usual topics of horses and vegetable gardens. By 1930, however, those who understood the Ho-Chunks' situation realized that they would not take the steps to become intensive agriculturists. Ho-Chunks strengthened tribal ties and identity through their gatherings. Farming was a stationary, labor-intensive way of life that in their eyes offered few if any rewards or satisfactions. For these Indian workers, wage and piecework brought diversity and security; if one or all crops failed, subsistence could be obtained in other ways so that the precariousness of their lifestyle could be mitigated. Ho-Chunks also chose seasonal wage and piecework because it left them free to decide how much time and effort to expend in order to obtain what they needed and wanted. They restricted these wants not only to what they could afford but to what was worth the

Indian Affairs, *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States,* 71st Cong., 1st sess. (July 8, 1929), S 545-2-A 1886-87.

[23]*CIA Report for 1920,* 117; 1928 Tomah Superintendent's Statistical Report (SSR), frs. 681, 683, reel 149, RG 75.

extra labor to obtain it. Long after the Progressive Era was over, Ho-Chunks maintained their own priorities, including preservation of their culture.[24]

Menominees

While Ho-Chunks and other non-reservation communities largely ignored the sporadic AES advice, many reservation communities welcomed Wojta. AES personnel entered a very complex arena when they visited Indian farmers on reservations. Native American communities were no longer "reserves" isolated from white society. As a result of allotment, nearly all Indian country in Wisconsin except the Menominee reservation had been organized into townships. Many Indians of Wisconsin owned land and were citizens. (Scholars estimate that two-thirds of Indians nationwide were citizens by 1920.) Local whites interacted with Indians socially as well as professionally, with some local communities more welcoming to their Indian neighbors than others.[25]

Cultural differences and a heavy federal presence, however, set reservation communities apart from the surrounding areas. Native American cultures in large part determined many of the social and religious mores of the communities. The vast bureaucracy of the OIA, with its mostly non-Indian employees of superintendents, farmers, teachers, and field matrons, continued to control much of the official business of the reservation. Most of the progressive reforms that reached reservations were programs conceived of and administered by OIA personnel. Wojta knew that Native Americans resented the OIA employees in part because many were not qualified for their jobs. Indians across the country especially disliked agency farmers, whose own agricultural training was often poor or absent. As many as 40 percent of agency farmers had no more than an eighth-grade education. In some cases, these men were not only unqualified to teach farming, but they were also cruel, uncaring, and greedy. In addition, agency farmers often served as temperance agents, arresting Indians for possessing alcohol. Wojta hoped that reservation communities would see the AES differently, and in fact they looked to Wojta as an alternative to the sometimes heavy-handed OIA personnel.[26]

[24]1929 Tomah SNR, frs. 787–788, 804, reel 149, RG 75; Nancy Lurie, "Trends of Change in Patterns of Child Care and Training Among the Wisconsin Winnebago" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1947), 63–65; Lurie, *Mountain Wolf Woman*, 43–44.

[25]Felix Cohen, "Indian Citizenship" in *American Indians*, comp. Walter Daniels (New York, 1957), 107; For court rulings on citizenship and wardship, see David E. Wilkins, *American Indian Sovereignty and the US Supreme Court: The Masking of Justice* (Austin, 1997), 118–36.

[26]Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending Sept. 11, 1915, COA; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 31; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians in Farming," 119; Hurt, *Indian Agriculture in America*, 168; Lewis Meriam et al., *Problem of Indian Administration* (1928; New York, 1971),135, 493; U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, *Interior Department Appropriation for 1932,* 71st

Many Menominees eagerly sought out Wojta's aid and accepted some degree of assimilation into Euro-American society, but they tried to remain politically distinct. Menominees held an unallotted reservation of 200,000 acres in northeast Wisconsin that enjoyed rich timber resources, and in 1910 the national government built a saw mill to process the raw materials. Robert M. La Follette Sr. and others tried to protect Menominee timber resources by legislating select-cut techniques on the reservation. Logging and the mill combined offered more jobs than the 1,300 Menominees could fill. While Menominees embraced lumbering, they resisted mill work and looked for alternatives. They were accustomed to lumbering in the winter and farming in the summer, and they welcomed Wojta's advice.[27]

Wojta conducted his first Indian Farmers' Institute on the Menominee reservation in 1916. Menominees told him that they were sure that this instruction was the "very best they ever had on the reservation." At the institutes, Wojta gave instruction on potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, carrots, and beets, root crops that grew well in the sandy soil of the reservation. Wojta also gave an impromptu talk on poultry raising in response to Menominee farmer Mose Tucker's question on the subject. Wojta gave him detailed instructions on building a hen house and protecting his birds from disease, predators, and parasites. Tucker built a hen house the following spring and stocked it with twenty-five White Leghorns, enlarging his flock the next year. Tucker proved to be a relatively successful crop farmer through most of the 1920s, though records do not show how his poultry experiment fared in the long term. Tucker was not the only Menominee to become interested in poultry. In 1918, the tribe increased the number of birds that members owned to seven thousand after maintaining about five thousand birds during the previous three years.[28]

Agency farmer Ernest Oshkosh, a Menominee Indian in a post often held

Cong., 3rd sess. (Nov. 17, 1930), H 556-0, 806-08; *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States*, 1971–73, 2030.

[27]Brian C. Hosmer, "Creating Indian Entrepreneurs: Menominees, Neopit Mills, and Timber Exploitation, 1890–1915," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 15 (Jan. 1991): 1–28; Report of Mr. Edward E. Ayer on the Menominee Indian Reservation, Jan. 1914, 79–80, Edward E. Ayer Collection of Americana and American Indians, Newberry Library, Chicago; Angus Nicholson, "The Menominee Indians Working Their Way," *The Red Man* 5 (Sept. 1912): 17–23; 1914, 1915 Keshena SNR, reel 69, RG 75; Robert E. Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin, 1600–1960* (Madison, 1995), 161–63.

[28]Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending Feb. 26, 1916, and Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending Mar. 25, 1916, box 6, AS 9/4/13, COA; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 28–29; Wojta, "Indian Farm Institutes in Wisconsin," 424–25; 1916, 1919, 1924 Keshena SNR, 1923, 1925 Keshena SSR, reel 69, RG 75; *Shawano County Advocate,* Mar. 21, 1916, Mar. 28, 1916; *CIA Report for 1915,* 193; *CIA Report for 1916,* 183; *CIA Report for 1917,* 189; *CIA Report for 1918,* 203. Wojta wrote in his articles that the first institute for the Menominees was in spring 1915, but all other sources record it as Mar. 21–24, 1916.

by Euro-Americans, addressed the crowd on the last day of the meeting. He thanked the AES representatives for "showing us loyalty by extending their helping hand." Oshkosh added that their "presence in our midst for the last few days will mean much to our progress." Then he addressed his fellow tribe members, instructing them to remember the teachings that they had received, and advising them to show their "loyalty," as he put it, by demonstrating "ability as self-supporting good promising and useful citizens." Clearly Oshkosh understood the progressive goals of the extension service.[29] Oshkosh, grandson of Chief Oshkosh and son of Chief Neopit, was a lifetime Indian Service employee. He attended St. Joseph's Indian Training School in Indiana and graduated from Haskell Institute in Kansas in 1894. He served the OIA initially on the Menominee reservation as a carpenter and as assistant logging superintendent. From 1900 to 1910, Oshkosh worked at schools on various western reservations. In 1910, he returned to Keshena, worked his own thirty-acre farm, became an agency farmer in 1912, and remained in that position until his death in 1929.[30]

Menominees, including Oshkosh, helped to craft the program for the 1917 institute at Keshena, and participation was enthusiastic. Oshkosh persuaded Wojta to attend a planning meeting and to return to Keshena in March for the institute. Even though the roads on the reservation were covered with deep soft snow, 800 Menominees attended the sessions. Some Menominees wanted to plant apple trees, so Wojta and his colleagues gave a planting, spraying, and pruning demonstration. Dairy specialist B. S. Bullock was, however, central to the program. Livestock raising was well established on the reservation, but both the OIA and Wisconsin AES hoped it would grow even more. In 1916, Menominee farmers owned more than six hundred horses and almost three hundred cows. Eighty-five Menominee families kept cows for milk. Wojta and Agent Nicholson both believed that the reservation was well suited to dairying because it had plenty of fresh water and pasturage. In fact, white dairy farms surrounded the reservation, largely due to an earlier campaign to turn Wisconsin wheat farmers to dairying. Both men saw the Farmers' Institute as an opportunity to further this campaign by explaining the positive points of the dairy industry to the Menominee. The labor-intensive and confining nature of dairying, however, did not appeal to most Menominee. A 1928 AES survey of dairy farming in Shawano County revealed that no milk was being produced commercially on the Menominee reservation.[31]

[29]Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 28–30; Wojta, "Indian Farm Institutes," 426; *Shawano County Advocate*, Mar. 28, 1916.

[30]Ernest Oshkosh to Wojta, n.d. [1921 or 1922], box 9, AS 9/4/8-3, COA; Ernest Oshkosh File, Civilian Personnel Records, National Personnel Records Center.

[31]State County Agent Leader's Report for Feb. and Mar. 1917, reel 1, T896, RG 33; Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending Mar. 24, 1917, box 6, AS 9/4/13, COA; "Indian Farm-

Menominee farmers were interested in advice, but they largely resisted pressure to adopt not only dairying but all types of intensive agriculture. Although the available statistics do not provide reliable data on yields, farming success apparently peaked before 1920 on the Menominee reservation. The superintendent reported that the value of the crops harvested in 1918 equaled $86,773. Twelve of the almost one hundred farmers on the reservation had each grown crops that valued over $1,000. Superintendent Allen noted that in 1919 the reservation had produced crops worth $92,056, probably due to high wartime prices, but that prospects for further growth were not good. During the twenties, the number of farmers remained the same, but the number of successful operators and the value of their yearly crops decreased. Superintendent Allen counted only three instances during the twenties when a farmer enjoyed a seasonal yield of more than $1,000. The annual estimates of crop value for the reservation for the late 1920s and early 1930s were between $10,000 and $40,000. Superintendent W. R. Beyer reported in 1930 that there were fewer than twenty self-sustaining farmers on the reservation.[32]

When Wojta returned to Keshena in 1919, he brought with him Nellie Kedzie Jones, state home demonstration leader. Jones had just begun her fourteen-year career with the Wisconsin extension service. Like Wojta, she was a progressive crafting a career out of service and was recruited into helping Native Americans. But unlike her colleague, she seems never to have become enthusiastic about this aspect of her work. She was born Nellie Sawyer in Maine in 1858 but spent much of her life in Kansas, earning a BA and then teaching at Kansas State Agricultural College. After living throughout the Midwest, she settled, with her husband and daughter, on Smoky Hill Farm in central Wisconsin in 1911. She remained a busy lecturer and writer while living on the farm. Each winter, she traveled to "farm-and-home" weeks on midwestern college campuses. She also wrote columns for the *Country Gentleman* from 1912 through 1916. Her basic message throughout was that farm life was hard for a woman, but with organization and planning, the amount of work could be minimized. Underlying that basic message, though, was an expectation that was part of the larger country-life reform movement: On a farm, men were producers and women were consumers, a modern idea of gender roles at odds with most Native American traditions, let alone many

ers' Institute at Assembly Hall Menominee Indian Reservation Keshina [*sic*], Wis.," box 1, AS 9/4/13, COA; Indian Farmers' Institutes for 1917 in Wisconsin, box 9, AS 9/4/8-3, COA; *Shawano County Advocate*, Mar. 20, 1917; McIntyre, *Fifty Years*, 239, 241; *CIA Report for 1917,* 137, 189; 1918, 1919, 1929 Keshena SNR, reel 69, RG 75; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 29; "Dairy Marketing in Shawano County" in "Annual Report of Department of Farmers' Institutes for the Year 1931–1932," box 2, AS 9/27/2-1, COA; Risjord, "From the Plow to the Cow," 40–49.

[32]1918, 1919, 1920, 1923, 1925, 1928, 1930, 1931 Keshena SSR, reel 69, RG 75; 1921, 1924, 1930 Keshena SNR, reel 69, RG 75; *Shawano County Advocate*, Feb. 16, 1915, 1.

Euro-American ones. In 1918, she moved to Madison to become head of the Wisconsin Home Economics Extension Service. She supervised a corps of fifteen "county emergency agents" who tried to encourage compliance with wheatless, sugarless, and fuelless days during World War I. After the war, she continued to visit farmwomen and to promote a better life for rural people until her death in 1956 at the age of 97.[33]

At Keshena in 1919, Jones lectured eighty-two Menominee women on the importance of improving their lives through the purchase of consumer goods. She demonstrated techniques designed to make housekeeping easier, advocating such things as fitting out kitchens with counters of the correct working height and explaining new labor-saving devices, such as electric washing machines. While most Menominees wore store-bought clothes and lived in timber-frame houses, they, like more than four-fifths of all rural Wisconsin people, did not have access to electricity in 1919. In order to attend these sessions, the women missed instruction on growing root crops and caring for dairy cows, labors considered by Jones and AES as production-oriented men's work.[34]

While they accepted some aspects of white material culture, Menominees were not assimilated politically into their immediate region. Because it had not been allotted, the Menominee reservation was the only Indian territory in the state that had not been organized into townships by 1910. Menominee lands bordered three Wisconsin counties: Shawano, Langlade, and Oconto. Farm agents from any of these three could have taken an interest in Menominee farmers; however, it made the most sense for the agent of Shawano County to become involved because the town of Shawano is only seven miles from the reservation town of Keshena. Yet the farm agents from the nearby counties, like the agents in the counties where Ho-Chunks lived, appear to have been largely absent from these extension efforts, leaving the task by default to Wojta. For example, the only interaction on record between Shawano County

[33]Jeanne Hunnicutt Delgado, ed., "Nellie Kedzie Jones's Advice to Farm Women: Letters from Wisconsin, 1912–1916," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 57 (Spring 1973): 4–5; Jeanne Hunnicutt Delgado, ed., "Nellie Kedzie Jones's Advice to Farm Women: Letters from Wisconsin, 1912–1916" in *Women's Wisconsin: From Native Matriarchies to the New Millennium,* ed. Genevieve G. McBride (Madison, 2005), 318–19; McIntyre, *Fifty Years*, 167, 172; Nellie Kedzie Jones, "The Woman on the Farm–Her Needs and the Forces Available for the Betterment of Her Condition" in *Agricultural Extension as Related to Business Interests: Something of Its Meaning, the Forces Engaged in the Work, and the Results Obtained* (Chicago, 1916); Mary S. Hoffschwelle, "Better Homes on Better Farms: Domestic Reform in Rural Tennessee," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 22:1 (2001): 53; Bowers, "Country Life Reform," 211–21.

[34]McIntyre, *Fifty Years*, 172; "Menominee Indian Farmers' Institute at Assembly Hall, Keshena Indian School, Keshena, Wis. Apr. 8th and 9th, 1919," box 9, AS 9/4/8-3, COA; Monthly Report of State Home Demonstration Leader, Apr. 1919, reel 1, T896, RG 33; McBride, *Women's Wisconsin,* 303; Hoffschwelle, "Better Homes on Better Farms," 53.

agricultural agent Merton Moore (1917–19) and Menominee farmers was at the 1919 Menominee Farmers' Institute. Given Wojta's statewide duties, these local agents' apathy may have hampered Menominee attempts to use AES as an alternative to the OIA.

The Lac Court Oreilles, Red Cliff, and Bad River Reservations

While Lac Court Oreilles (LCO) Ojibwes did have limited interaction with the Sawyer County agricultural agent during the Progressive Era, like Menominees they were less politically and economically tied to the local community than other tribes in the state. In their case, they chose to fight with the local community over two important issues: the building of a dam and the responsibilities of local government. These conflicts strained relations and demonstrated LCO resistance to wholesale entry into the market economy and the loss of collective political power. Although there is some evidence of cooperation in educational and economic matters, William A. Light, the reservation's OIA superintendent, noted in 1912 that there was "very little commingling of the white and Indian races in this community." Again in 1915, he commented that both Indians and whites disapproved of intermarriages. The *Sawyer County Record and Hayward Republican,* unlike other papers published near Indian reservations, did not announce or report on LCO activities such as the Farmers' Institutes.[35]

LCO farmers were less successful than farmers in most other Native American communities. Most families on this remote northwestern Wisconsin reservation grew vegetables for their own consumption, and in 1913 they only sold $100 worth of surplus. In 1916, only three farmers cultivated more than five acres, and few owned much livestock. In 1919, fifty LCO families kept milk cows, but, besides the Hayward Indian School herd, no sizable dairy operations existed among LCO members. LCO Ojibwes had to contend with a five-month growing season, during which a frost could occur at nearly any time. They were also handicapped by extremely harsh winters and frequent droughts, in addition to the common obstacles of potato blight, cutover lands, lack of roads, and few implements. Most supplemented farming with a seasonal cycle of fishing, beadwork, wild-rice harvesting, and wage labor.[36]

Sawyer County agricultural agent C. P. West, however, responded to Wojta's requests and showed some interest in LCO farmers. He judged livestock at the annual fair and talked about the dairy industry at the 1918 and 1919 LCO Farmers' Institutes, which Wojta also attended. In May of 1917, when four Hayward Indian School cows died suddenly, OIA Superintendent Henry J.

[35]1912, 1915 Hayward School SNR, frs. 53, 132, reel 63, RG 75.

[36]1910, 1917, 1918, 1919 Hayward School SNR, frs. 2, 4, 183, 209, 235, reel 63, RG 75; Edmund Jefferson Danziger Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK, 1979), 118; *CIA Report for 1913,* 121.

McQuigg called on County Agent West for help. The agricultural agent and the assistant state veterinarian determined that the cows died of *Hemmorhagic sceptocemia*, which is commonly known as shipping fever, stockyard fever, or blood poisoning. To ward off an epidemic, West vaccinated the remaining cows of the herd as well as a thousand non-LCO cows in the county. He arrested the disease before too many animals were lost and a full scale epidemic erupted. West, of course, was not acting on behalf of LCO here but for the county as a whole.[37]

In addition to economic problems, LCO leaders spent nearly a decade fighting the building of a dam on the Chippewa River. Beginning in 1912, the Wisconsin-Minnesota Light and Power Company began preparing to build the facility to provide hydroelectric power and flood control to local communities. The proposed dam would flood 5,600 acres of LCO land, including many traditional gathering grounds and the town of Pahquahwong. LCO leaders lost the fight, and the Winter Dam was completed in 1923. To the horror of LCO residents, the floodwaters unearthed bodies from a cemetery that the power company had promised but failed to relocate. Seven hundred graves had been left to the floodwaters. In addition, the water levels of the resulting Chippewa Flowage were so erratic that wild rice beds could not even be created along the new lake.[38]

LCO residents also waged a war with Sawyer County over local politics that soured their relations. In 1913, the LCO reservation was a part of Reserve Township, and reservation inhabitants largely operated the town government. Yet in March of that year, the county board supervisors—except the one from Reserve—voted to separate all non-reservation land from the township. White landowners wanted this action because they felt that they were assessed high property-tax rates by the LCO town board members, whom they accused of "squandering" their monies. An audit of the disbursements of 1911–13 disproved their claim. In 1916, however, the county board again separated property from Reserve—in this case, former reservation allotments that had been sold and were now taxable. Finally in 1917, the state legislature, acting on the request of Sawyer County, abolished Reserve Township and distributed the property and assets among neighboring townships. The county in effect dissolved the only viable political voice of

[37]A Summary Report of County Representative Work for the Month of Sept. 1916, reel 1, T896, RG 33; Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending May 4, 1918, box 6, AS 9/4/13, COA; Wojta to West, Apr. 25, 1919, box 4, AS 9/4/1, COA; West to Wojta, May 2, 1919, box 4, AS 9/4/13, COA; County Agent Summary Report for May, 1917, Sawyer County and Narrative Report on the War Work of Sawyer County Agent West, reel 1, T896, RG 33.

[38]Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 67–69.

Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe farmers' institute. Reprinted from *Pages of Progress: 1920 Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service Annual Report* (Jan. 1921), 39.

LCO Ojibwes by gerrymandering the reservation.[39]

The Sawyer County Board members were also very reluctant to provide any money for roads on the LCO reservation. In 1917, they finally allocated $500 to repair an unsafe bridge. The superintendent reported in 1919 that after "a great deal of pressure," the board paid for the construction of about a mile of graded road on the reservation. He doubted any other improvements would be funded by the county.[40]

These actions were prompted by a combination of developmental pressures, a strained political atmosphere, racism, and fiscal stinginess. Other counties in Wisconsin, however, extended infrastructure aid to Native American communities. LCO tribe members, as part of the organized township, were supposedly entitled to all local government benefits. Sawyer County, in other words, could not legally refrain from fixing LCO roads. The county board did allow an agricultural agent to help LCO farmers; but it was often in the county's best interest to provide the aid, as in the case of the shipping-fever epidemic. The county balked at expending road money on the LCO reservation because tribe members were not paying taxes. Wisconsin whites considered LCO Ojibwes as wards of the national government, and many saw reservation members as shiftless and undeserving of county aid. Besides preventing road construction and the easy access to markets that good roads provided, these opinions undoubtedly produced other obstacles to LCO farmers such as lack of recognition, closed markets, and unfair prices. No amount of AES help could overcome these obstacles, which compounded those created by northwestern Wisconsin's difficult environment.[41]

[39] *Sawyer County Board of Supervisors Proceedings* (SCBSP), 1913 to 1914, 10–11, 14–15; SCBSP, 1917, and SCBSP, 1915; 1918 Hayward School SNR, frs. 137, 209, reel 63, RG 75; Chapter 313 in *Laws of Wisconsin* (1917).

[40] SCBSP, 1917; 1919 Hayward School SNR, fr. 239, reel 63, RG 75.

[41] 1915 Hayward School SNR, fr. 137, reel 63, RG 75; *U.S. v. Nice*, 241 U.S. 591, 36 Sup. Ct. Rep. 696 (1916); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln, NE, 1984), 785.

In contrast, Bad River and Red Cliff Ojibwes were fairly politically, socially, and economically incorporated into Ashland and Bayfield counties. Half of all the residents of Odanah, on the Bad River reservation, were white. Superintendent P. S. Everest noted in 1916 that there was a "strong mingling of the two races." The *Ashland Daily Press* often commented favorably on Bad River Indians' efforts. Red Cliff Ojibwes also had good working relations with local white communities. They readily found jobs off of the reservation. They could borrow money from local banks. Red Cliff fruit growers sold their produce through the local fruit association that whites used. Bayfield County maintained the roads on the reservation even though most Red Cliff residents did not yet pay taxes on their allotments.[42]

Bad River Ojibwes, also in contrast to LCO Ojibwes, enjoyed relatively favorable conditions for farming. Their soil, although sandy in spots, was generally rather fertile and rich, the best soil of any of the Ojibwe reservations. The area also received adequate rainfall. The Bad River farmers were compensated for late springs by lengthy, warm falls because of Lake Superior. To get a jump on the season many farmers germinated seeds in their homes or bought plants in the greenhouses of the nearby city of Ashland. The local lumbering towns were lucrative and fair markets for Bad River produce.[43]

C. B. Post, agricultural agent for Ashland County from 1915 to 1917, maintained a strong interest in the agricultural progress of the Ojibwe farmers on the Bad River reservation, located east of Ashland in northern Wisconsin. Post received many visits from some of the 125 Ojibwe farmers on the reservation, and he advised them on how to farm their allotments. In 1916, he met with Wojta and Superintendent P. S. Everest at Odanah, the principal town on the reservation, to survey the condition of agriculture there and to make a plan of action. The three of them planned an Indian farmers' institute at Odanah for 1917 that would address livestock raising.[44]

Bad River farmers welcomed the help, but they already had considerable knowledge of some types of livestock raising. In 1917, reservation Indians collectively owned 150 cows and heifers. Almost every rural family owned one milk cow, and several others kept small dairy herds. In 1915, Bad River resident Mike Couture bought a Holstein herd that, although not registered,

[42]1916 La Pointe SNR, frs. 643–44, reel 77, RG 75; for example, *Ashland Daily Press*, Mar. 27, 1917; 1916, 1918 Red Cliff School SNR, fr. 76–79, 112, reel 114, RG 75.

[43]Danziger, *Chippewas*, 115; 1921, 1922 La Pointe SNR, frs. 912, 913, 916, 1007, 1008, reel 77, RG 75; 1928 Lac du Flambeau SNR, fr. 1175, reel 75, RG 75.

[44]Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending May 20, 1916, box 6, AS 9/4/13, COA; General Characteristics of Work Performed by County Representatives for May 1916, reel 1, T896, RG 33; 1917 La Pointe SNR, fr. 687, reel 77, RG 75; McIntyre, *Fifty Years*, 246; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 22; *Ashland Daily Press,* Mar. 24, 1917, Apr. 3, 1917; Indian Farmers' Institute at Village Hall, Bad River, Mar. 27–30, 1917, box 1, AS 9/4/13, COA.

was of nearly purebred stock. During the next two years, he gradually sold half of these twenty cows to other residents on the reservation. By 1920, several families were selling milk to the local cheese factory and producing enough additional milk to sell to some of the two thousand Odanah residents.[45]

In 1917, Bad River farmers also owned more than 250 horses. Superintendent Everest had used money allocated to individuals from the sale of reservation timber to buy many of these teams for farmers. Everest, Wojta, an OIA inspector, and the local newspaper all acknowledged that Bad River Ojibwes took very good care of their animals. Everest reported that it was a "generally conceded fact that the local Indians take better care of their livestock, especially their horses, than even their white neighbors." The Indian farmers proudly displayed their teams at the county fair as well as at the annual Bad River fair.[46]

Besides working with the county agent and Farmers' Institutes, Bad River Ojibwes had access to an experiment station, which was another Wisconsin-funded agricultural resource. Everest consulted the station about what crops were suitable for the northern climate. Because the station personnel had shown that winter wheat and alfalfa thrived in Ashland County, Everest encouraged Ojibwe farmers to plant both crops. He noted in 1916 that the two farm crops had become established on the reservation. M. H. Wright, Post's successor as Ashland County agent, picked up where Post left off. He served as instructor at the April 1918 institute. As Post had, Wright handled the livestock sessions but did not deal with sheep. He addressed raising hogs and poultry. Bad River farmers owned an estimated nine thousand of these animals in 1918.[47]

Bad River Ojibwes took advantage of their favorable situation into the 1920s. Nearly all farmed. In 1922, Superintendent P. S. Everest reported that 135 farmers were cultivating 2,500 acres of reservation land. Because much of the 200,000-acre reservation was cutover land, another 40 farmers had used their proceeds from timber sales to buy 1,200 acres and lease 500 acres of land outside Bad River to farm. These farmers also owned considerable amounts of livestock, valued at almost $60,000 in 1922.[48]

[45]*CIA Report for 1918,* 152, 203; 1916, 1917, 1920 La Pointe SNR, frs. 650–52, 685, 816, reel 77, RG 75.

[46]*CIA Report for 1918,* 203; Danziger, *Chippewas,* 115; 1915, 1916 La Pointe SNR, frs. 616, 649, reel 77, RG 75; Wojta, "Wisconsin Indians Learn Farming," 22; *Ashland Daily Press*, Mar. 27, 1917; J. F. Wojta, "Chippewa Indians Adopt Modern Farming Methods," Indians of North America Miscellaneous Material 1909, 1917, and n.d., State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

[47]1916, 1917 La Pointe SNR, frs. 652, 687, reel 77, RG 75; "Helping Indians to Understand Farming Better," 126; McIntyre, *Fifty Years*, 246; *Ashland Daily Press,* Mar. 28, 1918; *CIA Report for 1919,* 193.

[48]1922 La Pointe SSR, frs. 30, 31, 35, 60, reel 78, RG 75.

Red Cliff Ojibwes during this time faced some of the same obstacles and economic challenges as Bad River Ojibwes. By 1913, the OIA began to fund a road through this northern reservation, so transportation to allotments was not a major problem. Before they could farm, Red Cliff Indians, however, needed to clear their land, which cost from $40 to $65 per acre. Few could afford this. Even fewer had the desire, since they could earn good wages ($1.85–$3.25 per day) by working in the lumber and fishing industries, which they did when they had exhausted their funds from the sale of timber. By 1920, seventy-seven Red Cliff Ojibwes—out of 1,021 total allottees—had been given "certificates of competency" and held their allotments without restrictions. Superintendent M. A. Sutton reported that half of the land owned by these Ojibwes had been sold. Of the 154 able-bodied men in the tribe living on the reservation in 1918, only 35 were farmers. Superintendent J. W. Dady, Wojta, and Bayfield County agricultural agent V. E. Brubaker still promoted farming to this community.[49]

Dady encouraged and at times coerced Red Cliff Ojibwes into the county farm community, but many, like Ho-Chunks and Menominees, found wage labor more consistent with their efforts to maintain their tribal culture. Dady displayed Red Cliff produce at the Bayfield County Fair and at the 1914 state fair. He arranged an annual agricultural fair and in 1917 invited nearby white farmers to compete for premiums against the Red Cliff farmers. He also helped to arrange credit at a local bank for those needing funds to improve their farms. Bankers usually refused to accept Indian land as collateral because title remained in federal trust. Since trust status was quickly being eliminated at Red Cliff by fee patenting, Dady assured local bankers that their investment in the reservation community was sound. He believed that if the farmers felt they were personally liable for their debts—rather than indebted to the tribe through OIA loans—they would work harder; however, most simply turned to wage labor when they had depleted their resources. Dady also encouraged and at times, in his words, "induced" Red Cliff Ojibwes to take advantage of services offered by the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture. In 1915, "a number" of Ojibwes attended the farmers' course at the Junction State Experiment Farm in central Wisconsin. Dady later pressured a Carlisle graduate to attend the fourteen-week farmers' course at the main campus of the University of Wisconsin—possibly by withholding his timber funds from him.[50]

Wojta also did what he could to promote farming on the reservation. In late August 1917, he visited Red Cliff and arranged for a Farmers' Institute and

[49]Danziger, *Chippewas*, 111, 117; 1916, 1920 Red Cliff School SNR, frs. 76–77, 149, reel 114, RG 75; *CIA Report for 1919,* 126.

[50]1915–16, 1918–20 Red Cliff School SNR, frs. 59, 61–62, 76–78, 112, 120, 136, reel 114, RG 75.

returned to the area in April 1918 to conduct it. At the institute, County Agent Brubaker lectured on dairying, a pursuit the Red Cliff community dismissed, and on fruit growing, a topic that was of great interest because berrying was an important part of Ojibwe seasonal cycles. Brubaker demonstrated the pruning and spraying of orchards. Red Cliff farmers were well aware that strawberries, apples, cherries, and other fruit thrived on the lake-front reservation, which was in a "frost proof" area. That same year, six Red Cliff Ojibwes joined the Bayfield Fruit Growers Association and started attending the group's Saturday meetings. In 1913, one Red Cliff Ojibwe, whom Dady claimed had never attempted any farming before, raised and sold through the fruit association two hundred crates of strawberries for prices ranging from $1.50 to $2.75 per crate. The growers continued to plant trees. By 1920, the reservation had 850 apple trees, 90 plum trees, 35 cherry trees, and numerous fruit bushes.[51]

Oneidas

Most Wisconsinites, like Senator La Follette in 1910, also believed that Oneidas had been successfully assimilated into white society in social, economic, and political ways. Prominent Oneidas demonstrated what a boarding-school education could do for an ambitious individual who chose to compete in mainstream society. For example, Dennison Wheelock, a graduate of Carlisle Indian School, became a premier musician, served on the executive committee of the Society of American Indians in 1912, worked for the OIA, joined the bar association of Wisconsin, and during the 1920s argued legal cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Like Seneca anthropologist Arthur C. Parker, Wheelock had no doubt that Native Americans of the Progressive Era could accomplish whatever they set out to do. During the 1920s, many Oneida moved to Green Bay or to Milwaukee, where they made up the largest Native American group in the cities.[52]

Not all Oneidas were professionals or had moved to urban areas, but most of those who remained in the reservation area appeared to have chosen Euro-American ways, according to J.C. Hart, the Oneida school

[51]Field Report of J. F. Wojta, week ending Sept. 1, 1917, box 6, AS 9/4/13, COA; State County Agent Leader's Report for Aug. 1917, reel 1, T896, RG 33; *Bayfield County Press,* Mar. 29, 1918; Wojta, "Indian Farm Institutes," 431; *CIA Report for 1912,* 32; *CIA Report for 1919,* 193; 1912, 1913, 1915, 1916, 1918 Red Cliff School SNR, frs. 7–8, 24, 59–60, 76, 110, reel 114, RG 75; Chantal Norrgard, "From Berries to Orchards: Tracing the History of Berrying and Economic Transformation among Lake Superior Ojibwe," *American Indian Quarterly* 33 (Winter 2009): 47–51.

[52]Hazel Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements*, (Syracuse, 1971), 91, 97, 202; Richards, *Oneida People*, 78; Nancy O. Lurie, "Recollections of an Urban Community: The Oneidas of Milwaukee" in *The Oneida Experience: Two Perspectives*, ed. Jack Campisi and Laurence M. Hauptman (Syracuse, 1988), 101–02.

Fair near Oneida. Included in farm agent J. N. Kavanaugh's 1924 annual report. Box 10, archives series 9/4/3, College of Agriculture Papers. Courtesy of the Division of Archives, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

superintendent, who reported in the late teens that the local Indians were living in comfortable houses and that local whites accepted Oneidas, both politically and socially. Oneidas voted in all elections and often participated in the township governments of Hobart and Oneida. "Intermarriage," Hart wrote in 1917, "while not very common, is not rare, and excites no comment." Oneida families owned good farmland and were producing adequate crops. Most of these Oneidas were farming on a small scale, and a few had dairy cows. In 1920, Oneida farmers still retained 10,000 acres of the original reservation. Some 400 farmers cultivated about 4,000 acres of this land. They grew 3,000 acres of hay, 500 acres of cabbages, and 500 total acres of beets, corn, oats, potatoes, and rye. Oneida farmers used most of the rest of the 10,000 acres as grazing land. Combined they owned 1,000 cows and heifers, 350 hogs and pigs, 5,000 geese, and 800 horses.[53]

Whether or not Hart was exaggerating his claims to speed the issuance of competency certificates to the Oneidas, William H. Metoxen remembered that when he returned to Oneida in 1915 after graduating from Haskell Indian Institute he was surprised that his parents were "really farming." He had only been away for three years, but he had worked on some big farms in Kansas, and he felt that the change at Oneida was drastic. The Metoxen family had expanded its dairying business and now was selling the milk from its ten cows to the Oneida Creamery. Previously, William's mother had been using the excess milk to make butter, and some families had been selling their milk to Fairmont's Creamery in Green Bay. The Metoxens also had thirty-

[53]1917 Oneida School SNR, frs. 344, 350–51, reel 95, RG 75; 1920 Keshena SSR, reel 69, RG 75. When the Oneida school was closed, the Menominee superintendent became responsible for reporting on Oneida progress.

five acres in cultivation. They were growing corn, grains, and hay. William could not believe that the woods were gone, but he quickly put to use on the new land some of the tillage techniques that he had learned at Haskell. When he had dragged his cornfield (with a spiked-tooth harrow) to reduce weeds, local farmers thought he was going to destroy his crop. Metoxen's yield, however, was better than anyone else's and the next year, neighbor farmers also dragged their cornfields.[54]

The Oneida community did not, however, have adequate resources to face the onslaught of total market and political incorporation. Many Oneidas could not pay their taxes or afford the expenses of farming, and they began to sell or lose their land due to back taxes. Some sold well below market value. Mason Wheelock remembered that his neighbor sold forty acres for $25. Some mortgaged their property to buy equipment, and the banks foreclosed when Oneidas failed to make payments. Solomon Wheelock, Mason's brother, was lured by the easy credit that farm-machinery dealers offered. Intending to buy a wagon, Wheelock left the dealership with not only the wagon but also a grain binder, mower, horse rake, plow, harrow, and small tools. He was forced to sell some of his land to pay off the resulting mortgage. Some did not believe they had to pay taxes on land they had been told was theirs, and they were evicted for not paying. Some tried to pay, but the assessments were too high on account of new schools, roads, and other infrastructures in the new townships. Others were cheated out of their land by whites and possibly other Oneidas. Those who could not read were sometimes told that they were signing a mortgage or deed for only part of their land when the paper actually gave the designee the entire property. Mason Wheelock and others accused some of the prominent Oneidas, including Dennison Wheelock, Mason's cousin, of cheating the elderly out of their land.[55]

Since Oneidas were no longer wards, the federal government provided no services to them and no longer offered them local OIA jobs. The Oneida Indian Boarding School closed in 1918, and the agency transferred to the Menominee reservation in 1919. While Oneidas had controlled the governments of both Hobart and Oneida townships early on, by the end of the 1920s, no Oneida served Hobart Township, and few were elected in Oneida Township either. These developments not only reduced the number of good paying jobs open to Oneidas, but it diminished Oneidas' ability to govern themselves and provide a sympathetic local apparatus. Stadler King remembered that Oneida Township's relief program was hardly tapped by Oneidas between 1910 and 1920, but that as whites moved into the township, the town officials had to give out more in relief groceries. As whites took over township government, it became easier, he remembered, for whites to

[54]Lewis, *Oneida Lives*, 7, 158–59.

[55]Lews, *Oneida Lives,* 9–10, 36–37, 42, 60; Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 108.

obtain relief than for Indians. Oneidas who asked for help were given jobs such as cutting brush or working on the roads, while whites in the same conditions were given groceries without having to labor for them.[56]

Like the OIA, the AES was of limited help to Oneidas. Oneida oral narratives collected in the early 1940s do not mention the AES. In 1917, Hart reported that Oneida farmers were attending institutes for white farmers, and some possibly continued to do this during the twenties. County farm agents for both Brown and Outagamie counties—which absorbed all but 90 acres of the reservation—often assisted farmers located on the old reservation during the 1920s. It is difficult, however, to determine to whom these farms belonged. Wojta offered an institute at Oneida early in the decade, but his involvement with the tribe seems to have ended there. J. N. Kavanaugh, farm agent for Brown County, included a photograph of Oneidas in his 1924 annual report that demonstrates that he was not really familiar with the farmers. He photographed women and children holding prize-winning produce at a local fair. Rather than recounting any contact he may have had with these women, in the caption he simply states that they "seem to be able to grow farm products." The state assistant 4-H club leader may have tried to form a club at Oneida in 1927, but no evidence of the activities of this club seems to exist in the records.[57]

Absence from the AES records does not mean, however, that Oneidas vanished as a collective people. Oneidas to some extent assimilated economically and politically. Many families, however, maintained Oneida customs. Oneida Ida Blackhawk remembered that not until the 1940s did most Oneida families adopt white wedding practices such as having a bride's family pay for the reception. Oscar Archiquette attended a traditional Oneida three-night wake when his mother died in 1917. Oneidas also maintained their own collective institutions as they adopted mainstream practices. Tom Elm played in the Oneida Indian National Band, and Jane Cornelius sang in the Oneida Society, a Christian choir still important today.[58]

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Indians of Wisconsin used AES advice selectively and services only sporadically, in ways that generally reflected their underlying goal of

[56]1918 Oneida School SNR, fr. 360, reel 95, RG 75; 1925 Keshena SNR, reel 69, RG 75; *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States*, 1998; Lewis, *Oneida Lives,* xxvii, 9, 133–34.

[57]1917 Oneida School SNR, fr. 351, reel 95, RG 75; Annual Report, Outagamie County, 1923, box 86, AS 9/4/3, box 86, COA; Annual Report, Brown County, 1928, and Annual Report, Brown County, 1924, box 10, AS 9/4/3, COA; E. Salter, Assistant Club Leader, Monthly Reports, Apr. 1927, reel 10, T896, RG 33; Wojta, "Indian Farm Institutes in Wisconsin," 432.

[58]Lewis, *Oneida Lives,* 8, 28, 55, 144.

maintaining their group cohesion and customs. Though not culturally sensitive by later standards, Wojta and the AES were optimistic about the potential of Indian farmers. They did not stereotype Native Americans as manual laborers (even when the communities themselves chose that option) or as frozen in time, as did many Indian Office personnel. Wojta and the agents he worked with imagined the American dream, Wisconsin-style, for every farmer, including the state's remaining rural Indians. While not every agent accepted Indian farmers as his constituents, enough did to symbolize the state's overall willingness to extend the body politic across the reservation. During the 1920s, even more so than in the Progressive Era, Wisconsin state government would support administering programs for Native Americans. Wojta himself supported the Swing-Johnson bill debated by Congress that would have allowed states to contract with the national government to provide services to Native Americans. Though Congress never passed Swing-Johnson, in 1927 the Wisconsin legislature passed a bill allowing for the state to receive funds under the proposed law, only to have its efforts vetoed by Governor Fred R. Zimmerman. When Wojta died in 1947, the faculty of the University of Wisconsin passed a resolution in memoriam. This resolution acknowledged his efforts on behalf of Indian and white farmers and noted that Lac Court Oreilles Ojibwes had held a ceremony to honor Wojta that was attended by three hundred members. Though largely forgotten today and hardly mentioned in the histories of the Wisconsin AES, Wojta was a pioneer of tribal–state government cooperation.[59]

[59]J. F. Wojta to W. W. Clark, Nov. 21, 1939, box 4, AS 9/1/1-9, COA; Annual Report of Department of Farmers' Institutes for the Year 1931–1932, box 2, AS 9/27/2-1, COA; Resolutions of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin on the Death of Emeritus Professor J. F. Wojta, Joseph Wojta File, document 830, Personnel Records, Division of Archives, University of Wisconsin-Madison.