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Sophie Aberle among the Pueblos



STEPHEN J. KUNITZ

When Sophie Aberle (1896–1996) stepped off the train in Lamy, New Mexico, in June 1927 to begin her first summer of research at San Juan Pueblo, she had already received a PhD in anatomy from Stanford University, one of the first—if not the first—women in the United States to do so, and in September was to begin her first year at Yale Medical School.¹ These few details suggest that she was an unusual woman for her time. Although she was unusual, her intellectual and political trajectory in her work with Pueblo Indians reflected major trends in the larger American context, from the scientifically respectable racism of her early years, through the liberal communitarianism of the New Deal Era, to the conservatism of the 1970s and 1980s.

To the extent that Aberle is known at all at present, it is for her early research on vital statistics of the Pueblos, which remains a valuable source of historical and contemporaneous demographic and epidemiologic data. However, her role as superintendent of the United Pueblo Agency (UPA) during the New Deal, and her later criticism of the Indian policy that she supported during those

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years are also worth understanding for they reveal many of the contradictory and conflicting interests that have influenced policy since the Great Depression.

Aberle's unpublished memoir does not reveal her early history, but it is clear that she was an independent-minded person who had been influenced by a very independent grandmother. She was raised by a well-to-do aunt and uncle in California, who provided a private tutor and took her along when they visited various mines they owned throughout the West. They also supported Aberle at Berkeley and later at Stanford, when she transferred there to finish her undergraduate education and attend graduate school.²

Upon finishing her PhD, she became a research assistant in anthropology at Yale and received support for a summer's work at San Juan Pueblo. The funds came from a grant awarded by the National Research Council's Committee for Research in Problems of Sex (CRPS) to Clark Wissler, an anthropologist who was a member of the CRPS and curator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, as well as a faculty member at Yale.³ His research was primarily among Indians of the Northern Plains and included demographic studies as well as studies of folklore and material culture.⁴ He was highly regarded by many in the profession and was active on numerous committees. Also a believer in innate racial differences and Nordic superiority, he was a member of the inner circle of the eugenicist Galton Society founded in 1918 by Madison Grant. The Galton Society's agenda was to protect white Protestant Americans from genetic pollution by inferior races, especially Polish Jews, and to counter the growing influence of the Boasian school of cultural anthropology in universities and in the American Anthropological Association.⁵

Aberle wrote in her memoir: "The work of Sigmund Freud had just begun to appear. The committee sponsoring my grant had been organized in response to emerging public concern for social and sexual behavior. Discussions of divorce, illegitimacy and prostitution were in the air."⁶ She did not mention the eugenicist thinking of either Wissler, under whose direction she worked, or of Robert Yerkes, chairman of the CRPS. Nor did she mention the control of sexuality in the interests of social stability, which was the goal of the CRPS and of the Rockefeller Foundation's Bureau of Social Hygiene, which had initially provided the funds to support the committee's work.⁷

According to Aberle, the grant was based on the assumption "that civilized life was artificially complex as opposed to the simple, natural behavior of primitive peoples. Following out that idea, an investigator observing sex behavior among the uncivilized would aim at recognizing one by one in the primitive society the elemental constituent items of sex which are obscured by civilization."⁸ The Pueblos, like the Samoans about whom Margaret Mead was writing at the same time,⁹ were assumed to "cl[i]ng to their archaic customs . . . and

consequently . . . their sexual habits would be simple and would shed light on sexual relationships within our 'complicated' culture."¹⁰

The Southwest, especially New Mexico, had become particularly attractive to people searching for an alternative to the increasingly urban industrialized world of early-twentieth-century America. In the Pueblos they believed they had found true primitives, people who were close to nature, spiritual, and spontaneous.¹¹ Thus, in the years before World War II, New Mexico became a popular destination for artists, writers, political activists, and anthropologists, among whom were many women who found greater freedom there than they had experienced in the relatively more-rigid society of the East Coast.¹² Moreover, although the area was remote from the more-settled parts of the country, it had become increasingly accessible as a result of the transcontinental railroad. The magnificence of the scenery, the presence of agricultural indigenous people, and the proximity of several small cities made it at once attractive and relatively easy for field research. Thirty years before Aberle went to New Mexico, a young woman from New York City visiting the Native pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona wrote home from Flagstaff, Arizona, "[T]his is a great place for professors' families and other intelligent travelers."¹³

Aberle's assumptions about the primitive nature of the Pueblos seemed to be borne out by her observations concerning sexual behavior. In a section of her memoir about her first summer at San Juan titled "What's natural is right," she observed "that sex had no connotation of sin, that chastity was looked on with disfavor, and sex for them was more casual than it was during the twenties in the majority culture."¹⁴ Nonetheless, she had not collected sufficient material to write about sexual behavior, and in subsequent visits over the next several summers, she changed her focus to vital statistics.

Demographic Change among American Indians

Aberle's work with Pueblo data occurred against the backdrop of a general decline in indigenous populations in the Americas, a trend that, at the time she began her research, had only recently reversed. Scholars generally agree that prior to 1920 mortality from warfare, starvation, and epidemics, rather than reduced fertility resulting from venereal diseases, had accounted for population decline. However, the magnitude of the decline was, and is still, a matter of dispute,¹⁵ and the contribution of diminished fecundity is also uncertain.¹⁶

In his surveys of Indian tribes in the American Southwest and northern Mexico in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Aleš Hrdlička noted that syphilis was known in all the tribes he visited but the extent of the disease was unknown.¹⁷ As part of the same survey, he made a particularly close study

of births and deaths among the San Carlos Apaches and the Pimas in central and southern Arizona respectively. In the 1890s, among 37 postmenopausal San Carlos women, the average number of births was 6.7; among 35 Pima women, the average was slightly more than 7. He also reported that there were three childless Pima women included in the group. If they were excluded, the average rose to 7.7. However, 60 percent of children had died among the Apaches and 66 percent among the Pima. He concluded: "As the two tribes may be safely taken as representatives of a large number of others living under similar conditions, it is evident that the fertility of the Indian woman is in many localities, if not generally, equal to the preservation of the race. It is not a deficient birth rate but great mortality which keeps the majority of the tribes from increasing rapidly."¹⁸

Similarly, the U.S. Census of 1900 indicated that childlessness was no more common among Indians than among whites and African Americans, and that the percentage of women who never married was less, and the total fertility rate of married women was higher.¹⁹ Together, these observations indicate that if syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections had a major demographic impact on Indians in the eighteenth century and earlier,²⁰ and among certain island populations,²¹ by the second half of the nineteenth century they were no longer significant, and certainly not in the American Southwest where Aberle did her work. There, mortality was the major determinant of population change.

Pueblo Demography and Vital Statistics

In an unpublished and undated lecture on racial characteristics, Aberle remarked that her studies were done to investigate whether there were physiological and psychological characteristics that correlated with such obvious features as skin color, shape of skull, facial features, and hair texture which differed among races, including susceptibility to tuberculosis and syphilis.²² The inherited biological basis of racial differences in susceptibility to the major causes of death was a widespread,²³ but not universally accepted, notion at the time. It is not surprising that Aberle regarded it as a real possibility.²⁴ During the interwar years, it was widely agreed by many scientists that there were important biologically-based differences among races, even though such a view was in retreat.²⁵ Moreover, Aberle had begun her career as a student of genetics; her major sponsor, Clark Wissler, was a well-known eugenicist; so were Robert Yerkes, and John Campbell Merriam, president of the Carnegie Institution.²⁶ Each of the latter two headed organizations that funded Aberle's research; all three were members of the Galton Society,²⁷ and it is reasonable to think she may have been predisposed to share their assumptions about the genetic bases of racial differences.²⁸

Whatever Aberle's beliefs about the sources of racial differences, when she described the origins of her research on vital statistics in her first publication on the topic, she used somewhat different terms. She was, she wrote, testing the assumption that had "crept into the literature . . . that primitive people do not produce many children." "The view regarding the low fecundity among primitive people," she continued, "led [Alexander] Carr-Saunders to conclude in his study of 'The Population Problem' that fecundity has increased with civilization."²⁹ Aberle's work examined in two neighboring pueblos, San Juan (Aberle's main base of operations) and Santa Clara. Although they were assumed to be exemplary "primitive" people, they had been in intimate contact with the Spanish since the sixteenth century. Indeed, a major source of data was the parish records of Christenings, marriages, and deaths from the early eighteenth century, which Franciscan missionaries had kept.

The Pueblos are comprised of several different language groups: Keresan, Zuni, Hopi, and Tanoan. The latter are divided into the Tiwa, Towa, and Tewa. The two Pueblos with which Aberle first worked are Tewa-speaking. The Tewa are concentrated along the Rio Grande and its tributaries north of Santa Fe, an area particularly well-suited for irrigation and thus very attractive to the first Spanish settlers. Consequently, the Tewa were in especially close contact with Europeans in general and the Catholic Church more specifically from an early date. In comparison to other Pueblos in less-attractive areas, the Tewa had lost the most land, and their kinship system had been modified. Unlike other Pueblos, which were matrilineal, Tewas had a bilateral kinship system, the result of close contact with the Catholic Church and Europeans.³⁰ The reason to mention this long history of colonization is because, although they were poor, the Pueblos could hardly have been described as a "primitive" population free of contact with Europeans. Aberle was aware of this fact, for not only did she present contemporary income data, but she wrote, "In the parish books of the eighteenth century, the Franciscan Fathers have noted the assistance and advice they gave the Indians in their agricultural pursuits, so it is apparent that the Indians have been in direct contact with white people for over three centuries."³¹

Aberle found that in San Juan and Santa Clara Pueblos, birth intervals in the years 1779–1837 and 1892–1928 were essentially the same, about 24 months in each. Based on surveys she conducted in each of the two Pueblos, on average women up to and including age 30 had experienced 3.8 pregnancies; women ages 30–40, 7.6; and women above 40, 9.4. No evidence of sterility was found.³² She also observed that lues (syphilis) did not have an impact on childbirth. A survey of several Pueblos from 1923–1924 showed that 10.9 percent of 426 individuals had positive Wassermann tests. In San Juan in particular, the percentage was 7.9.³³ Comparing Pueblo women in the two periods with childbearing in

other historic and contemporary populations, Aberle concluded that fecundity did not increase with civilization and “fertility was dependent upon something intrinsic in the human organism itself, rather than upon culture or environment.”³⁴ Notably, there was no mention of racial differences.

Although infant deaths had only been mentioned in Aberle’s first study in connection with the calculation of birth intervals, they were the topic of a second paper a year later. Her object was “to determine the death rate among children reared in a community under fairly primitive conditions.” She estimated that infant mortality in the two Pueblos was 228.5 per 1,000 live births, more than twice the rate for whites and slightly less than twice the rate for African Americans estimated in a study of several American cities.³⁵ She wrote, “The very high mortality among Indian infants and children must be due to many causes; but probably the most important cause is ignorance concerning the treatment of women during parturition and the care and feeding of children.”³⁶ Decades later, Aberle was roundly criticized as being insufficiently aware of the impact of colonization, poverty, and the deprivation of land rights on Pueblo communities, especially on the health of their people.³⁷

Aberle framed a study of maternal mortality in five Native pueblos similarly: “The impression generally prevails that among the more primitive peoples childbirth is a relatively simple and safe event for the mother.”³⁸ On the contrary, she found that maternal mortality in the years 1927–1932 was at least seven times higher than the rate in the rest of the United States. She observed that childbirth practices, particularly “precautions . . . to insure sterilization,” were unsafe. Indeed, a study of almost two thousand Indian deliveries in hospitals at about the same time showed that maternal mortality was the same as in the general population, suggesting that it was lack of access to hospitals that accounted for the very high Pueblo rate.³⁹ Nonetheless, she concluded, “The high maternal mortality among the Pueblo Indians must be due, therefore, to their lack of knowledge regarding the conduct of deliveries.” More generally, she concluded that, in contrast to conventional wisdom, “child-birth [*sic*] among the more primitive peoples is not a relatively simple and safe event for the mother.”⁴⁰

The research described above was done in the early 1930s after Aberle finished medical school, and while she was a member of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Yale, where she also carried out physiological research, still sponsored by the Committee for Research in Problems of Sex.⁴¹ After a few years, however, she realized that as a woman her chances of academic advancement were slender, and not long after the paper on maternal mortality was published, she left for a position at the Carnegie Institution. She remained there for a year and was then—on the basis of her research among Pueblos—offered a job by John Collier, commissioner of Indian affairs in the

New Deal administration of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt. She was encouraged by President Merriam of the Carnegie Corporation to take the position with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), "thinking it ideal to have a scientist engaged in federal administration, conducting research in an area over which she had some control. Such an arrangement, he thought, could solve many federal problems," a view with which she subsequently came to disagree.⁴² She accepted the position and in 1935 was made superintendent of the United Pueblo Agency, responsible for administration of all nineteen New Mexico Pueblos as well as three small Navajo communities.⁴³

The Reform of Federal Indian Policy

From the late 1800s through the 1920s, Federal Indian policy had attempted to force the assimilation of Indians into larger American society by breaking up reservations into individually-owned allotments, and by coercing Indian children to attend boarding schools where they were to learn English as well as trades that would suit them for life as American citizens. By the 1920s, this policy was being challenged and modified by a new generation of reformers.⁴⁴ John Collier, who had offered Aberle the job at the United Pueblo Agency, was the commissioner of Indian affairs when the transformation in policy took place in earnest, and was a major author of those changes, beginning in the early 1930s.⁴⁵ A great deal has been written about him and the BIA during his administration.⁴⁶ Two aspects of the policy he pursued deserve emphasis: the liberal communitarianism that underpinned it; and the important role of experts in implementing it.

Collier's involvement in Indian affairs began in 1920, when he was attracted to New Mexico by Mabel Dodge Luhan, an old friend from his days in reform work in New York City, where she had hosted a well-known modernist salon in Greenwich Village.⁴⁷ Collier became convinced that the only place in the United States where it seemed at all possible to build the kind of community life he valued was among Indian tribes, particularly in the Southwest, and particularly among the Pueblos.⁴⁸ Like many others, Collier believed that in order for Indians to maintain their tribal way of life, their land base had to be protected. Thus, shortly after arriving in New Mexico, and with the support of wealthy clubwomen⁴⁹ and other philanthropists⁵⁰ in California, he became the chief critic of the Bureau of Indians Affairs until, in 1932, he himself was appointed Commissioner of Indian Affairs under President Roosevelt.

Protection of land rights was to be one of Collier's major preoccupations both during the time he was the BIA's chief critic and later as its commissioner. He was especially incensed by the Bursum Bill, which was introduced in 1922

by Sen. Holm Bursum of New Mexico for the purpose of giving to non-Indians who had illegally settled clear title to Pueblo land. The bill had its origins in the fact that the Pueblos had been deemed superior to other Indians and, according to the *United States v. Joseph* decision of 1876, were not wards of the federal government. Therefore, they were allowed to sell or lease their lands.⁵¹ This Supreme Court decision was reversed in 1913 by the *United States v. Sandoval* decision, which concluded that in fact the Pueblo Indians were entitled to the protection of the government and had been all along.⁵² As scholar Lawrence C. Kelly wrote: “The practical effect of this reversal was to jeopardize the landholdings of some 3,000 non-Indians, representing 12,000 persons who, in various ways, had obtained parts of the original Pueblo land grants. For years after 1913, these claimants used every means available to evade the Supreme Court decision. Following the disclosure of this problem by a Congressional investigation in 1921–1922, Senator Bursum of New Mexico introduced a bill to disentangle the land situation.”⁵³

Friends of the Indians, among them Collier, believed the bill unjustly favored the present, non-Indian land holders and placed the burden on the Indians to prove that the present occupants did not possess clear title. Normally, the burden of proof would have rested on the present occupants. Collier founded the American Indian Defense Association to cooperate with Indians from various pueblos, and the bill was defeated.⁵⁴

When Collier became commissioner of Indian affairs under Roosevelt, he was able to institute many of the reforms for which he had been agitating since 1920.⁵⁵ Many social reformers felt comfortable in the New Deal administration because it represented both the importance of social planning by experts in order to meet human needs rather than allowing the free market and economic considerations to dominate policy, and it was an attempt to re-establish the bonds of community and ameliorate the hard lot of the poor while at the same time avoiding the rhetoric and reducing the reality of class conflict.⁵⁶

During his term as commissioner, Collier initiated many programs, perhaps the most important of which was the Wheeler-Howard Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 (IRA).⁵⁷ The provisions of the IRA were intended to aid Indians in maintaining their tribal life. It reversed the previous allotment policy, purchased land for landless Indians, and encouraged tribes to develop constitutions in order to become self-governing and create institutions with which to negotiate with the federal government—while at the same time, it had the flexibility to deal with urban, industrial America, just as Collier had hoped could be achieved with foreign-born immigrants to American cities.

On a somewhat smaller scale was the attempt to turn reservation day schools into community centers. Indian boarding schools had represented an effort to

“Americanize” Indians by taking them away from home and requiring them to wear Anglo-European clothing, speak only English, and learn Western trades. Not only were day schools less expensive than boarding schools, but it was hoped that parents would learn from their children, that the school itself would become the center of various community activities and enterprises, and that children would gain an appropriate technical education while not becoming alienated from their parents and tribal traditions and language.⁵⁸

Yet another reform Collier initiated was the decentralization of the Bureau of Indian Affairs bureaucracy into various area offices that would both be responsive to local Indian tribes in their area, and actively cooperate with them in initiating and carrying out programs of various sorts.⁵⁹

An important innovation Collier introduced was the use of anthropology for administrative purposes. Indeed, William H. Kelly argued this practice was the beginning of applied anthropology in the United States.⁶⁰ Lawrence Kelly observed that Collier’s contact with anthropologists began only after he had become commissioner of Indian affairs.⁶¹ As commissioner, Collier initiated several attempts to use anthropology to inform policy making:⁶²

1. The short-lived Applied Anthropology Unit, the primary goal of which was to help Indian tribes write constitutions under the authority of the Indian Reorganization Act. This attempt failed largely because time was short and the Unit had been established to support an already existing policy, not to inform policy making.
2. The Soil Conservation Service experiment in land use planning on the Navajo Reservation.
3. The Technical Cooperation-Bureau of Indian Affairs soil conservation for work on several Indian reservations.
4. The Indian Education, Personality, and Administration Research Project.

Anthropology served a similar purpose in each of the four projects: it was meant to be a tool of administration. According to Scudder Mekeel, who first directed the Applied Anthropology Unit, the IRA:

[C]losely resembles the British policy of “indirect rule” in that the native political and social organization is strengthened by utilizing it for administrative purposes. The policy behind the Indian Reorganization Act differs, however, in objective. The objective of the Indian Reorganization Act is humane—rehabilitation of broken, pauperized, and demoralized, Indian groups. The aim of British colonial administration varies from colony to colony. In some places it is the gathering of taxes from the natives, in others it is the making available of a cheap labor supply,

and so on. The similarity of British and present Indian Office policy in regard to natives is in the technique for carrying out administration objectives—the technique of working through native organization rather than ignoring it or blasting it.⁶³

In this context, the goal of anthropology was to guide the administration of Indian affairs in what were believed to be the Indians' own best interests. Indeed, Collier and Laura Thompson were clear that the primary goal was not academic but managerial.⁶⁴

This was the reformed Bureau of Indian Affairs that Aberle joined after having spent several summers doing research among the Pueblos, and the organization within which she was able to pursue further research.⁶⁵

Aberle and the United Pueblo Agency

Aberle's transition from scientific investigator to federal bureaucrat was not easy. Prior to her arrival, Collier had consolidated six Pueblo agencies into the United Pueblo Agency (UPA), based in Albuquerque.⁶⁶ There was considerable resistance to the change because some of the Pueblos believed their influence over policy would be diminished, and to Aberle both because she was a woman and because she was inexperienced as an administrator. The opposition was led most vociferously by Mabel Dodge Luhan speaking on behalf of Taos Pueblo. Both Luhan and Anna Ickes, wife of the secretary of the interior, had opposed Aberle's appointment because, according to Aberle, "both women had worked for the Indian's [*sic*] cause long before I came upon the scene, in unofficial positions. Now I threatened to take away some of the special esteem they felt they deserved, particularly as a woman working in an official capacity."⁶⁷ With Collier's support, Aberle survived those initial difficulties, and even became friendly with Luhan, though there was always some hostility toward her from some Pueblos.

Aberle's new position at the UPA seems to have influenced a shift in her thinking. First, scientific racism was receding as a respectable position. Its decline was largely hastened by advances in genetic knowledge, by the increasingly successful assimilation of European immigrants to American society, and particularly by the growing abhorrence of the vicious racism of the Nazis, and exemplified by the quiet death of the Galton Society in 1935.⁶⁸ Second, Indian policy had been radically transformed by the New Deal Administration of President Roosevelt. Moreover, Boasian cultural anthropology, which held that culture was more important than innate racial characteristics in shaping behavior, was clearly ascendant within the anthropology profession in general and within the Bureau of Indian Affairs in particular. All these developments may have had

an impact on Aberle, but her exposure to the realities of poverty in the pueblos seems to have deeply impressed her as well, for her subsequent research no longer mentioned racial biology and primitivism. For example in a survey of the health of children in several different pueblos, physical examinations revealed a high proportion suffering poor nutritional status, but Aberle and her coauthors made no claim that this result reflected the lack of knowledge of modern nutrition, though poverty was not mentioned either.⁶⁹

Poor economic conditions were mentioned, however, in each of two papers on vital statistics published in 1939 and 1940, after Aberle had been UPA superintendent for several years. In the first paper, she and her co-authors wrote: "We cannot consider here the many factors which, once controlled or improved, will yield beneficial results. Diet, further sanitary improvements, the betterment of the economic conditions of the Indian, and an increase in medical facilities may be cited. Attention is already being turned to factors such as these and if such efforts as are being made are continued without financial or political restriction we may expect to see results in a downward trend of mortality among the Pueblo Indians."⁷⁰

A year later they wrote: "With the passage of the Reorganization Act of 1934 . . . a new policy in the administration of Indian Affairs was brought into existence. Its most significant features are its recognition of the Indian tribal councils as governing bodies of the pueblos, promotion of an enlightened educational policy, an extension of improved medical services, and most important, a concerted effort to better the Indians' economic condition."⁷¹

It is not unreasonable to suppose that Aberle's immersion in the administration of Pueblo affairs quickly familiarized her with the economic and medical hardships the villagers confronted and influenced the way she understood her data. Indeed, much of her tenure as superintendent was devoted to improving the nutrition and public health of Pueblo communities, as well as to acquiring land and improving agriculture.⁷² These efforts included health education, improved nutrition and hygiene, classes to teach food preservation, the building of protected water supplies and sewage systems, the drainage of stagnant pools, land acquisition, stock reduction and improvement, and scientific range management. In addition, and among the most contentious issues, was the reorganization of tribal governance.

The IRA had empowered tribes to develop constitutions that would make it possible for them to become representative democracies. Aberle wrote that among the Native pueblos, civil affairs had been controlled by the religious hierarchy in each community but that over time, the two—church and state—were becoming increasingly separate, though "[D]evelopment has not progressed at the same rate in all of the villages."⁷³ By the time she left office in 1944, only Santa

Clara Pueblo had a written constitution that had been approved and accepted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, while several others had written constitutions that had not yet been approved by the secretary of the interior.⁷⁴ Broadly, the difficulties involved a conflict between new forms of representative government and the theocratic structure of the pueblo villages, illustrated by the controversy in Taos Pueblo over the use of peyote.

A small segment of the Taos population had joined the Native American (peyote) Church and was disciplined by the officials of the pueblo. Aberle and Collier intervened on behalf of the peyotists on the grounds that their civil rights had been violated, and that U.S. law, which superseded Pueblo law, enforced a separation of church and state. Mabel Dodge Luhan wrote to Sec. of the Int. Harold Ickes: "Do you really mean that you are defending *self-government* when you take the side of a few drug addicts against the efforts of the pueblo officers to eradicate the usage of the Peyote drug? These officers are trying to deliver the Indians from their bondage to a narcotic & you try to encourage them in the use of it."⁷⁵ Although intemperate, Luhan was pointing out a real inconsistency in the application of the policy of self-determination.

After she finished her tenure as superintendent, Aberle wrote a monograph on Pueblo land, economy, and civil organization. In it she observed that both involvement in the cash economy and exposure to scientific management of range land had worked a change for the better in Pueblo civil society; such that they were increasingly able to retain their vitality while still adjusting to the larger U.S. society. She concluded with a statement somewhat at odds with the policy she and Collier had pursued in the Taos peyote controversy: "Insofar as the Federal Government limits its authority to handling Indian problems which lie outside of the local tribal authority, and refrains itself from entering into decisions which should be under the jurisdiction of Pueblo officials, just so long will the Pueblo organizations continue to function effectively."⁷⁶ No longer were Pueblos seen as primitives isolated from the currents of American life but as peoples embedded in history and deserving protection and support.

After the Bureau of Indian Affairs

Aberle left the job as superintendent of the UPA in 1944. She had married William Brophy, an attorney who had previously worked on behalf of the Pueblos. When he succeeded John Collier as commissioner of Indian affairs in 1945, they moved to Washington, D.C. where she worked for the Division of Medical Sciences of the National Research Council (1944–1948) and studied malaria control, and where she co-authored⁷⁷ a history of the NRC Committee for Research on Problems of Sex with the distinguished anatomist George Corner.⁷⁸ She

also served on the first board of the National Science Foundation (NSF) from 1950–1958. Beginning in 1957, having returned to New Mexico, she and Brophy worked for the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian sponsored by the Fund for the Republic, which issued its final report in 1966. After Brophy's death in 1962, Aberle assumed major responsibility for its completion.⁷⁹

The final report of the commission concluded that the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 had given Native tribes the tools to address their problems themselves. "However, before the efficacy of the act could be adequately demonstrated," the report stated, "World War II broke out; and after the war the old attitude of trying to assimilate Indians by legislation reasserted itself, culminating in the termination resolution."⁸⁰ In the decade of the 1950s, the report continued, the controversy over termination dominated discussions of Indian policy. Indeed, several tribes had their federal recognition terminated, with what the commission regarded as almost entirely negative consequences. As a result, though the commission favored integration of Indians into the larger society, it recommended that termination never be done without both the informed consent of tribes themselves and sufficient safeguards to ensure they were not cheated by private and state organizations. The commission noted, "[T]he fact that Indians have grown weary of too much supervision and resentful of what they feel to be the 'father-knows-best' attitude of the B.I.A. Yet, despite their discontent, most existing tribes oppose termination because they are accustomed to a dependent relationship with the federal government and because they know they are unprepared for a clean break."⁸¹ By the time the report was issued in 1966, Indian policy was once again changing as federal funds began to flow from various Great Society programs into tribal governments and other tribal entities, allowing them to manage their own affairs free of interference from the BIA. In the 1970s, Pres. Richard Nixon formally reversed the policy of termination.⁸²

During the early 1970s, Aberle began working again with Pueblos. She had raised money from the NSF, which supported a research project on Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) in schools serving Pueblo children. Aberle was the principal investigator but worked as an employee under the supervision and control of the All Indian Pueblo Council (AIPC). The money was channeled through a university and could not be spent for nonresearch purposes. In the mid-1970s this arrangement brought her in conflict with a Pueblo Indian school administrator who wanted to use some of the money to pay unrelated expenses incurred three years earlier. In her telling of the story, Aberle objected to what she thought was a misuse of funds and, as a result, was fired by the AIPC. She later wrote: "To the Indians it was of first importance to keep a brown-skinned

sister out of trouble. My explanation about regulations was not believed. They looked at me out of the corner of half-shut eyes, as if to say, 'You are making up a good white's 'excuses.'" However, in one way, they were right. They could easily have got away with ignoring this regulation. I could not. Their accounts were rarely if ever audited by the federal authorities. Mine were critically reviewed."⁸³

The letter of dismissal from the chairman of the AIPC claimed Aberle had failed to coordinate her project proposals and travel to Washington, D.C. with the office of the chairman and that she had submitted an independent proposal to the NSF: "Your efforts to submit another proposal on behalf of the All Indian Pueblo Council appears to be nothing more than an effort to promote your proposal with the University of Albuquerque." The chairman claimed this sort of action would cause chaos within the AIPC, and so she was terminated. Aberle objected, claiming none of this was true and that due process had not been followed.⁸⁴

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, the result was a transformation in Aberle's thinking about Indians in general and Pueblos in particular.

I was stunned. I could feel my heart beat, my mind was a blur. I thought the Indians were my friends. They were not. I believed Indian parents were enthusiastic enough to stand up for CAI. They were not. Then I realized with a start that I had been seeing through rose-colored glasses from a privileged position. My thinking had been derived from my liberal ideology which was popular in the forties. These products of my imagination had clung to me for years, because of my strong desire which was half conviction, half hope to have them true. Suddenly, with dismal realization I saw my mistake and then considered what my fantasies had cost me in sheer toil and endless time.⁸⁵

Aberle, who had been a friend and colleague of Collier's when they both worked for the BIA, attributed to his policies many of the problems she now saw clearly for the first time. "The majority culture harbors two schools of thought about the pueblos," she wrote. The first, exemplified by Collier himself, emphasized "Indian purity," the lack of emphasis placed upon the accumulation of wealth, freedom from hatred, closeness to the earth, and the blending of recreation and worship. The second, "rarely mentioned except in whispers behind closed doors, is based on the Indians being in many ways like the rest of us except for their belief that all objects are animate. . . ." Aberle elaborated on both: "I often heard snickers by the 'old-timers' of [the] BIA behind my back, when I expanded on John Collier's theme in which I thoroughly believed at the time. The other school sees the Indians as humans like ourselves."⁸⁶

She compared the Pueblos unfavorably with the Cherokees of Oklahoma: "I found that the pueblos were the most archaic among the American Indians,

and the Cherokees I met the most sophisticated. In fact, most of the Cherokee were indistinguishable from the Anglos in dress, logical reasoning, and future orientation.”⁸⁷ The difference was accounted for by the fact that the Cherokees had their reservations abolished in 1912 when Oklahoma became a state: “Without reservations in which to segregate, they resemble their neighbors. . . . The Cherokee demonstrate that Indians can be a contributing part of the white society.”⁸⁸ Aberle argued this was not true of the Pueblos, especially those who had remained on their reservations. Self-government, which she thought she had been encouraging as superintendent of the UPA, was simply a way for tribal leaders to retain power, not to deal effectively with the problems faced by their communities.⁸⁹

Elaborating on her critique, she believed that the Pueblos were unwilling to do their own farming and instead leased land to non-Indians, nor did they use the water to which they had rights but would—and probably should—lose it to the city of Albuquerque that had need for it.⁹⁰ Almost every job that required technical administrative skill was occupied by three people: “The head is usually an Indian without specific knowledge and training for the particular position he fills; the second-in-command almost always, an Anglo expert with the necessary training and background; and the third, an Indian trainee. One wonders whether the trainee is being groomed to fill the first or second position.”⁹¹

To Aberle breaking up reservations and assimilating Indians were the only ways to force Indians to become part of the larger society:

As I see the problem facing the pueblos during this first year of the eighties, it appears to me impossible for the Indians to become members of the majority culture, submit to competition and work for their own basic needs, while holding on to their subsidies and clinging to their ancient ways. Such Indians are ‘kept’ people. But they reason, “If I can get by with the way things are set up for me, and there is stability, why change?” The only way to get Indians to consider other ways will be to permit *stability* to be more miserable than *change*. Any unwanted change in pueblo life will be blamed on ‘*whitie*,’ until such time when they come to understand that *need* is not synonymous with what they want.”⁹²

She continued a few pages later, arguing that subsidizing Indians “puts a distinct burden on the tax payer. Now is the time to question what these ‘reform policies’ have done to the people who are paying for the ‘reform.’ . . . Is a culture worth preserving that must be subsidized at the expense of another culture?”⁹³

At this point, she had completely repudiated her beliefs as embodied in the recommendations of the final report of the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indians, which had been critical of ter-

mination of federal recognition and had provided case studies of its deleterious consequences for the tribes that had been terminated.⁹⁴ She now believed that the maintenance of reservations would continue to create dependent people who were unable to engage effectively with the larger society. "Whom you would destroy," she wrote, "Subsidize."⁹⁵

Conclusion

Aberle's professional career working with Pueblo Indians covered about fifty years (1927–1977) and included a central role in what was perhaps the most innovative administration in Indians affairs of the entire twentieth century. Service by women in positions of authority during the New Deal was not uncommon, and many remarkable women made their lives and careers, both within and outside government, in New Mexico during the interwar years. Aberle exemplified both.

John Collier offered her the job as superintendent of the newly organized UPA undoubtedly due to her earlier research among the Pueblos and his belief that scientific experts were particularly well-suited to manage the complex affairs of contemporary society. This faith, shared by many Progressives and New Dealers, was embraced at one time by Aberle herself. Beginning in the 1960s, anthropologists and other social scientists harshly criticized administration by scientists or technocrats as simply a cloak for colonialism, a means of manipulating Indians while creating the illusion of autonomy and self-determination.⁹⁶ There is evidence to support this interpretation of both the Progressive Era and the New Deal,⁹⁷ but it is only part of the truth. For, as Washburn has observed, Collier had to deal not only with Indians but with the U.S. Congress, which was often hostile to Indian interests.⁹⁸ Without creation of tribal governments as part of the Indian Reorganization Act, there would have been no entities with which the federal and state governments and private industries could deal, and Indian interests would have continued to be decimated as they had been before the New Deal.

Moreover, administrators like Aberle believed deeply that they were working in the best interests of Indians, not that they were manipulating them in their own interests or those of the federal government. That is why she was so disillusioned when, in the 1970s, she was fired by the All Indian Pueblo Council, an organization with which Collier had collaborated in the 1920s to fight the Bursum Bill.⁹⁹ She had given herself to a cause in which she believed deeply, only to be rejected when times changed.

Indeed, times had changed. Anthropologists became critical of what they saw as the colonialism of the BIA during the New Deal Era, but more importantly, Indian tribes and pan-Indian groups became far more assertive than in the past,

demanding more control over their own affairs and resources, and reclaiming lands that had been lost to non-Indians.

The demands of Indians for greater self-determination had important consequences, for not only the policy of termination of federal recognition was rejected as a moral and practical failure by a Republican president, but the special relationship between tribal governments and the federal government was affirmed first by President Nixon and then by Pres. Ronald Reagan, and Congress passed legislation in the mid-1970s empowering tribes and tribal entities to contract with the federal government to manage schools, hospitals, and other services. The All Indian Pueblo Council was at the forefront of such changes, including the building of the Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque in the 1970s with funds from the Economic Development Administration. It was also among the first Indian organizations to take over management of schools serving Pueblo students, which were previously managed by the BIA.¹⁰⁰

There was, however, a severe backlash, as comments by President Reagan and his Sec. of the Int. James Watt indicated. Watt claimed that reservations exemplified the “failures of socialism,” and the President, in off-the-cuff remarks in Moscow, invited Indians to “be citizens along with the rest of us.”¹⁰¹ But more than inflammatory language was involved, for the Reagan administration’s statement on Indian policy noted, “It is important to the concept of self-government that tribes reduce their dependence on federal funds by providing a greater percentage of the cost of their self-government.”¹⁰² In practice this meant reduced funding for Indian tribes. The statement continued, “It is the free market which will supply the bulk of the capital investments required to develop tribal energy and other resources.”¹⁰³ As George Pierre Castile has observed, “The key similarities between the nineteenth-century assimilationist view and the Reagan doctrines are in the emphasis on self-sufficiency, individualism at the expense of the collective, and a stress on private economic enterprise rather than communal.”¹⁰⁴

Aberle’s disillusionment in the late 1970s with the policies she had supported throughout her career, while precipitated by the painful rejection she had experienced, was also consistent with the widespread reaction to Indian assertiveness and with the reemergence of an assimilationist and individualistic ideology occurring at the same time. Sounding like Secretary Watt, she wrote in 1984 to a friend of “the central reality of our time—namely—socialism fails.”¹⁰⁵

Despite her early interest in scientific racism, there is no evidence of racism in her publications from the 1920s or in her memoirs written five decades later. Her criticisms of Indians, especially the Pueblos, were based upon her hostility to the reservation system and to the dependency that she believed it fostered. Indeed, the ideology of assimilation is arguably antithetical to the

assumption that races are unequal, for it assumes that integration in schools, housing, jobs, and marriage is at once desirable and possible, as revealed by her praise of the Oklahoma Cherokees. Her intellectual and ideological trajectory over more than fifty years thus mirrored changes in the culture more generally. She began in the 1920s with the then intellectually respectable scientific racism prevalent at the time, progressed to the communitarian liberalism of the New Deal, and ended with an individualistic reaction to the New Deal in the 1970s and 1980s.



Sophie D. Aberle. Photograph courtesy Sophie D. Aberle Photograph Collection, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.

Notes

1. Sophie D. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” unpublished memoir, 1980, folder 34, box 13, Sophie D. Aberle Papers, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico [hereafter SDAP, CSWR, UNM]. Aberle tried unsuccessfully to have the manuscript published.

2. For a useful summary, see Kathleen F. Ferris, “Sophie D. Aberle and the United Pueblos Agency, 1935–1944” (master’s thesis, University of New Mexico, 1997).

3. S. A. Freed and R. S. Freed, *Clark Wissler, 1870–1947: A Biographical Memoir* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1992); and Sophie D. Aberle and George W. Corner, *Twenty-five Years of Sex Research: History of the National Research Council Committee for Research in Problems of Sex, 1922–1947* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1953), 95–96, 224.

4. For examples, see Clark Wissler, “The Influence of the Horse in the Development of Plains Culture,” *American Anthropologist* 16, no. 1 (1914): 1–25; “Material Cultures of the North American Indians,” *American Anthropologist* 16, no. 3 (1914): 447–505; “The Effect of Civilization upon the Length of Life of the American Indian,” *Scientific Monthly* 43, no. 1 (1936): 5–13; “Population Changes among the Northern Plains Indians,” *Yale University*

Publications in Anthropology no. 1 (1936): 1–20; and *Changes in Population Profiles among the Northern Plains Indians*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. 36, pt. 1 (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1936).

5. Eric B. Ross, “The ‘Deceptively Simple’ Racism of Clark Wissler,” *American Anthropologist* 87 (June 1985): 390–93; Warren Shapiro, “Some Implications of the Race Theory of Clark Wissler,” *Mankind* 15 (April 1985): 1–17; Elazar Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States between the Two World Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 108–12; and Jonathan Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Genetics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2009), 298–320.

6. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 2.

7. Wade Pickren, “Robert Yerkes, Calvin Stone, and the Beginning of Programmatic Sex Research by Psychologists, 1921–1930,” *The American Journal of Psychology* 110 (Winter 1997): 603–19. Rockefeller philanthropies entirely sponsored the NRC committee, an outgrowth of the Rockefeller-sponsored Bureau of Social Hygiene, in its early years. See also Aberle and Corner, *Twenty-five Years of Sex Research*; R. C. Cochrane, *The National Academy of Sciences: The First Hundred Years, 1863–1963* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1978), 263; Glenn E. Bugos, “Managing Cooperative Research and Borderland Science in the National Research Council, 1922–1942,” *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 20, pt. 1 (1989): 1–32, esp. 4–11; and Adele E. Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction: Modernity, American Life Sciences, and “The Problems of Sex”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), chap. 4.

8. Aberle and Corner, *Twenty-five Years of Sex Research*, 95.

9. Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1928). Mead’s work, like Aberle’s, was funded by the NRC, though by a different committee, the Division of Anthropology and Psychology. Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 323–24, and Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 2.

10. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 2.

11. Flannery Burke, *From Greenwich Village to Taos: Primitivism and Place at Mabel Dodge Luhan’s* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2008), 8–10; and Robert L. Dorman, *The Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), esp. chap. 2.

12. Molly H. Mullin, *Culture in the Marketplace: Gender, Art, and Value in the American Southwest* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); Margaret D. Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters: Feminism and Pueblo Cultures, 1879–1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Nancy J. Parezo, ed., *Hidden Scholars: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); Barbara A. Babcock and Nancy J. Parezo, *Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880–1980* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); and Lesley Poling-Kempes, *Ladies of the Canyons: A League of Extraordinary Women and Their Adventures in the American Southwest* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015).

13. Letter of Amelia Holenback, 13 June 1897, in Mary J. Straw Cook, *Immortal Summer: A Victorian Woman’s Travels in the Southwest* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2002), 27–28.

14. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 17–18.

15. Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); David Henige, *Numbers from Nowhere: The American Indian Contact Population Debate* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); and Douglas Ubelaker, "Patterns of Demographic Change in the Americas," *Human Biology* 64 (June 1992): 361–79.

16. An army surgeon stationed at Fort Sumner in New Mexico Territory in the late 1860s, where the Navajos were being held in captivity, wrote: "On this reservation I cannot say I have seen a single case of constitutional syphilis. But what does and will decrease the number of the tribe and finally wipe them out of existence is the extensive system of abortion carried on by the young women. You may remark how seldom it is a young woman has a child; in fact, none of the women, except they are thirty or forty, ever think of having one, if they can help it, so that two or three children are considered a large family." Quoted in Denis F. Johnston, *An Analysis of Sources of Information on the Population of the Navaho*, bulletin 197, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966). This was a particularly bleak time in Navajo history. Shortly after, they were released and began the long trek home to western New Mexico and northern Arizona. Once re-established in their homeland, population began to increase rapidly. Reduced fertility was thus transitory, a response to a period of great deprivation and stress, and not a permanent state and not the result of venereal disease.

17. Aleš Hrdlička, *Physiological and Medical Observations among the Indians of Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico*, bulletin 34, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1908).

18. Hrdlička, *Physiological and Medical Observations*, 42. Around the same time, Joseph Murphy, medical supervisor of the U.S. Indian Service, wrote: "While venereal diseases are present among certain tribes, they are probably not present in as large a proportion among a majority of the Indian tribes as they are among whites." Joseph A. Murphy, "Health Problems of the Indians," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 37 (March 1911): 105.

19. Nancy Shoemaker, *American Indian Population Recovery in the Twentieth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 46, 47, 52.

20. Archer B. Hulbert, "The Era of Indian Demoralization," *Journal of Race Development* 6 (January 1916): 285–99.

21. Examples are Hawaii, the Marquesas, and Yap, all in the Pacific Ocean. Edward E. Hunt Jr., Nathaniel R. Kidder, and David M. Schneider, "The Depopulation of Yap," *Human Biology* 26 (February 1954): 21–51; David E. Stannard, "Disease and Infertility: A New Look at the Demographic Collapse of Native Populations in the Wake of Western Contact," *Journal of American Studies* 24 (December 1990): 325–50; and Stephen J. Kunitz, *Disease and Social Diversity: The Impact of Europeans on the Health of Non-Europeans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

22. This item is an undated lecture on racial biology research, likely from the early 1930s before she joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Sophie D. Aberle, "Physiological Characteristics of Pueblo Indians," n.d., folder 5, box 2, SDAP, CSWR, UNM. The work was sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, by Yale and Cornell Universities, and by the Department of the Interior. Madison Bentley, professor of psychology at Cornell University, did the psychological research, which never seems to have been published.

23. Paul A. Lombardo and Gregory M. Dorr, "Eugenics, Medical Education, and the Public Health Service: Another Perspective on the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 80 (summer 2006): 291–316.
24. Forrest Clements, "Racial Differences in Mortality and Morbidity," *Human Biology* 3 (September 1931): 397–419.
25. Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism*.
26. Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 319.
27. *Ibid.*, 305–06.
28. The Boasians gained representation in the NRC Division of Anthropology and Psychology, and it is notable that Aberle's funding came from a different committee, where the eugenicists were still in control. Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 323.
29. Sophie D. Aberle, "Frequency of Pregnancies and Birth Interval among Pueblo Indians," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 16 (1931): 63.
30. Stephen J. Kunitz and Bill G. Douglas, "European Contact and the Contemporary Household Demography of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 66 (fall 2010): 329–50.
31. Aberle, "Frequency of Pregnancies and Birth Interval among Pueblo Indians," 64.
32. *Ibid.*, 75.
33. Edgar L. Hewett cited the same survey of syphilis among the Pueblos to emphasize that the "scourge of syphilis" had been much exaggerated. He also commented that the physician at the Santa Fe Indian School "informs me that there is virtually complete absence of hereditary syphilis record of the pupils; the aggregate of those passing under his notice being several thousand, representing all the northern Pueblo villages, with a considerable number from other villages and tribes." Edgar L. Hewett, "Present Condition of the Pueblo Indians," *Papers of the School of American Research*, New Series, Paper no. 10 (1925), 2–3.
34. Aberle, "Frequency of Pregnancies and Birth Interval among Pueblo Indians," 79.
35. Sophie D. Aberle, "Child Mortality among Pueblo Indians," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 16, no. 3 (1932): 339–44.
36. *Ibid.*, 347.
37. Lena McQuade writes: "Aberle's findings simply dislocated reproductive difference from human biology to cultural practices, leaving intact a hierarchical model of civilized progress that always privileged the culture of Euro-Americans while rendering Native Americans permanently outside the purview of civilization." Lena McQuade, "Reframing Reproductive Oppression: Medical Research into Mortality at San Juan Pueblo," *Thinking Gender Papers*, UCLA Center for the Study of Women, 2008, accessed through <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/14s71191>. See also Lena McQuade, "Troubling Reproduction: Sexuality, Race, and Colonialism in New Mexico, 1919–1945," (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2008).
38. Sophie D. Aberle, "Maternal Mortality among the Pueblos," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 18 (1934): 431.
39. E. Blanche Sterling, "Maternal, Fetal and Neonatal Mortality among 1,815 Hospitalized American Indians," *Public Health Reports* 48, no. 20 (1933): 522–35; and John C. Slocumb and Stephen J. Kunitz, "Factors Affecting Maternal Mortality and Morbidity among American Indians and Indians of the Southwest," *Public Health Reports* 92, no. 4 (1977): 349–56.

40. Aberle, "Maternal Mortality among the Pueblos," 435.
41. For a list of some of Aberle's publications in this area, see Aberle and Corner, *Twenty-five Years of Sex Research*, 132. By the early 1930s, support for the committee had been transferred from the Bureau of Social Hygiene to the Natural Sciences Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, reflecting a shift in the direction of research on reproduction. Clarke, *Disciplining Reproduction*, 106.
42. Aberle, "Our Illusion of Roots," 40.
43. *Ibid.*, 39–40. The Hopis in Arizona were administered by a different agency.
44. Tom Holm, *The Great Confusion in Indian Affairs: Native Americans and Whites in the Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).
45. John Collier, *From Every Zenith: A Memoir; and Some Essays on Life and Thought* (Denver, Colo.: Sage Books, 1963), 18.
46. See, for example, Stephen J. Kunitz, "The Social Philosophy of John Collier," *Ethnohistory* 18, no. 3 (1972): 213–29; Lawrence C. Kelly, *The Assault on Assimilation: John Collier and the Origins of Indian Policy Reform* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983); Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920–1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977); Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934–45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980); Elmer R. Rusco, "John Collier: Architect of Sovereignty or Assimilation?," *American Indian Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1991): 49–54; and E. A. Schwartz, "Red Atlantis Revisited: Community and Culture in the Writings of John Collier," *American Indian Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1994): 507–31.
47. Van Wyck Brooks, *The Confident Years: 1885–1915* (New York: Dutton, 1955), 361–63. Much has been written by and about Mabel Dodge Luhan and her impact on the Indian reform movement. See, for example, Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Edge of the Taos Desert: An Escape to Reality* (1937; repr., Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984); Mabel Dodge Luhan, *The Suppressed Memoirs of Mabel Dodge Luhan: Sex, Syphilis, and Psychoanalysis in the Making of Modern American Culture*, ed. Lois Palken Rudnick (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012); Emily Hahn, *Mabel: A Biography of Mabel Dodge Luhan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977); Lois Palken Rudnick, *Utopian Vistas: The Mabel Dodge Luhan House and the American Counterculture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); Burke, *From Greenwich Village to Taos*; and Jacobs, *Engendered Encounters*.
48. Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 126.
49. Karin L. Huebner, "An Unexpected Alliance: Stella Atwood, the California Clubwomen, John Collier, and the Indians of the Southwest, 1917–1934," *Pacific Historical Review* 78 (August 2009): 337–66.
50. John Collier Jr., foreword to Kelly, *Assault on Assimilation*, xvii.
51. James A. Vlasich, *Pueblo Indian Agriculture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 114–18.
52. *Ibid.*, 150–51.
53. The quotation is from Lawrence C. Kelly, *The Navajo Indians and Federal Indian Policy, 1900–1935* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1968), 58–59. On the same subject, see Suzanne Forrest, *The Preservation of the Village: New Mexico's Hispanics and the New Deal* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 56–58.
54. Collier, *From Every Zenith*, 135. On the Omnibus Bill, see Kelly, *Assault on Assimilation*, 246–47.

55. Much of what Collier did was a direct outgrowth of his earlier experience; service in the New Deal Administration was not unusual for someone who had been active in urban reform. For instance, Sec. of the Int. Harold Ickes, Collier's immediate superior, had been active in reform in Chicago prior to World War I. Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 241-44.

56. John Collier, selected editorials from *Indians at Work*, collected and reprinted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., n.d., 2-3.

57. Kelly, *The Navajo Indians and Federal Indian Policy*, 166.

58. Using schools as community centers had been attempted prior to World War I when the school center movement became a national movement, with the work of Edward Ward in Rochester, New York. These schools became recreation centers for all ages: they were used as libraries, municipal baths, people's theaters, and assembly halls. Their overriding purpose, however, was to revive "the neighborly spirit, the democracy that we knew before we came to the city." Davis, *Spearheads*, 80. Collier reviewed Ward's book in J. Collier, "Social Centers," *National Municipal Review* 11 (July 1913): 455-60.

59. Collier, "selected editorials," from *Indians at Work*, 43.

60. William H. Kelly, "Applied Anthropology in the Southwest," *American Anthropologist* 56 (August 1954): 709-14.

61. Lawrence Kelly has published several articles that usefully discuss anthropology in the Indian New Deal: Lawrence C. Kelly, "Anthropology and Anthropologists in the Indian New Deal," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 16, no. 1 (1980): 6-24; "Why Applied Anthropology Developed When It Did: A Commentary on People, Money, and Changing Times, 1930-1945," in *Social Contexts of American Ethnology, 1840-1984*, ed. J. Helm (Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society, 1984), 122-38; and "Anthropology in the Soil Conservation Service," *Agricultural History* 59 (April 1985): 136-47.

62. Clyde Kluckhohn and E. Adamson Hoebel, "Covert Culture and Administrative Problems," *American Anthropologist* 45, no. 2 (1943): 213-29.

63. Scudder Mekeel, "An Appraisal of the Indian Reorganization Act," *American Anthropologist* 46, no. 2, pt. 1 (1944): 209-17; and John Collier, "Collier Replies to Mekeel," *American Anthropologist* 46 (1944): 422-26. See also Lawrence C. Kelly, "The Indian Reorganization Act: The Dream and the Reality," *Pacific Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (August 1975): 291-312.

64. John Collier and Laura Thompson, "The Indian Education and Administration Research," *Sociometry* 9, no. 2/3 (1946): 141-42; and Laura Thompson, *Personality and Government: Findings and Recommendations of the Indian Administration Project* (Mexico, D.F.: Ediciones del Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, 1951).

65. Sophie D. Aberle, "Frequency of Pregnancies and Birth Interval among Pueblo Indians," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 16, no. 1 (1931): 63-80; Sophie D. Aberle, "Child Mortality among Pueblo Indians," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 16, no. 3 (1932): 339-49; Sophie D. Aberle, "Maternal Mortality among the Pueblos," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 18, no. 3 (1934): 431-35; Ethel C. Dunham, Sophie D. Aberle, Lucile Farquhar, and Michael D'Amico, "Physical Status of Two Hundred and Nineteen Pueblo Indian Children," *American Journal of Diseases of Children* 53 (March 1937): 739-49; J. H. Watkins, E. H. Pitney, and Sophie D. Aberle, "Vital Statistics

of the Pueblo Indians,” *American Journal of Public Health* 29 (1939): 753–60; and Sophie D. Aberle, J. H. Watkins, and E. H. Pitney, “The Vital History of San Juan Pueblo,” *Human Biology* 12 (May 1940): 141–87. In addition, after she left the Indian Service, Aberle wrote *The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico: Their Land, Economy, and Civil Organization*, ed. J. Alden Mason, Frederica De Laguna, and J. Lawrence Angel, Memoir No. 70 of the American Anthropological Association, in *American Anthropologist* 50, no. 4, pt. 2 (Menasha, Wis.: American Anthropological Association, 1948).

66. Aberle, “The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico,” 56.

67. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 48–53.

68. Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, chap. 13, esp. p. 349.

69. E. C. Dunham et al., “Physical Status of Two Hundred and Nineteen Pueblo Indian Children.” This same study found two percent of children had a positive Wassermann test, though only two children showed clinical signs of syphilis, compared to 7.2 percent of 427 Navajo children who had also been screened with Wassermann tests, an examination of the blood to test for exposure to syphilis.

70. J. H. Watkins et al., “Vital Statistics of the Pueblo Indians,” 760.

71. Aberle et al., “The Vital History of San Juan Pueblo,” 147.

72. K. F. Ferris, *Sophie D. Aberle and the United Pueblos Agency*, chaps. 2, 3.

73. Aberle, *The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico*, 61.

74. In 1970 Edward Dozier summarized the secular government of the pueblos as follows: “Of the nineteen communities [. . .] only six have adopted elective forms of secular government. Thirteen pueblo villages are still governed in the traditional manner where officers are appointed by a religious hierarchy and remain under the domination of the priestly authority system.” Edward P. Dozier, *The Pueblo Indians of North America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), 199.

75. Mabel Dodge Luhan to Harold Ickes, 18 November 1936, transcription, SDAP, CSWR, UNM.

76. Aberle, “The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico,” 65.

77. Elizabeth M. Ramsey, *George Washington Corner, 1889–1981* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1994).

78. Aberle and Corner, *Twenty-five Years of Sex Research*.

79. William A. Brophy and Sophie D. Aberle, comps., *The Indian: America’s Unfinished Business*, Report of the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966). For a critical review, see Murray L. Wax, “Kindly Genocide,” *The Kenyon Review* 31, no. 3 (1969): 384–89.

80. Brophy and Aberle, *The Indian*, 180.

81. *Ibid.*, 191.

82. George Pierre Castile, *Taking Charge: Native American Self-Determination and Federal Indian Policy, 1975–1993* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006); and Stephen J. Kunitz, “The History and Politics of Health Care Policy for American Indians,” *American Journal of Public Health* 86 (October 1996): 1464–73.

83. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 283.

84. See Delfin J. Lovato, Chairman of the AIPC to Sophie D. Aberle, 15 January 1976, folder 31, box 12, SDAP, CSWR, UNM.

85. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 284.

86. *Ibid.*, 394–95.
87. *Ibid.*, 242.
88. *Ibid.*, 247.
89. Sophie D. Aberle to Soia Mentschikoff, 30 January 1984, folder 51, box 15, SDAP, CSWR, UNM.
90. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 398. Several years later, she wrote to friends, “When and if water becomes scarce and non-Indians watch the Indians irrigating their crops as theirs are withering from the drought, they may well demand a reinterpretation [*sic*] of ancient Indian treaties and federal laws based on vague aboriginal land boundaries.” Aberle to Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Heard, 4 July 1984, folder 51, box 15, SDAP, CSWR, UNM.
91. Aberle, “Our Illusion of Roots,” 396.
92. *Ibid.*, 413, emphasis in original.
93. *Ibid.*, 417–18.
94. *Ibid.*, iii.
95. *Ibid.*, 405.
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