UNCOVERING ARIZONA’S CHILDHOOD:
A HISTORY OF CHILDREN IN TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY ARIZONA

By

REBECCA TESS PEIFFER

A Thesis Submitted to The Honors College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelors degree
With Honors in
History
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MAY 2016

Approved by:

____________________________
Dr. Tyina Steptoe
Department of History
Abstract

This project seeks to understand the cultural complexities of life in Arizona from 1900-1920 from the perspective of the children that grew up during this time. Children reflect the societal norms of their time, yet also change and add to existing cultural practices as they develop. Their interactions with the unique culture of Arizona reveals a great deal about the specific ways culture changed and developed over this period. Various history classes and supplemental research provide context for this period in Arizonan history. Borderlands theory helps tie together seemingly disparate cultural threads from the archives. Memoirs of children and students from different cultural groups give children a voice in the story, while other sources that discuss children provide background on the views of children during this period. This study reveals that though Anglo culture dominated during this period, this required white community leaders to actively push against the natural blending of culture throughout the region, occurring in large part due to the mixed cultural upbringing of children.
Introduction

The turn-of-the-century was a dynamic time in Arizona’s history. Different ethnic and political groups transformed it from a territory to a state, from a crossroads of Native American societies to the white man’s Wild West, and ultimately from an undefined borderland society to a uniquely American melting pot. Several different ethnic groups contributed to Arizona’s transition, including Anglo settlers, ethnic Mexicans, Native American tribes, and a variety of immigrants from around the world. A study of Arizona as a borderland helps reveal the significance of this multiethnic space, where so many groups shaped the direction of Arizona’s future. Each group brought their own unique cultural norms, yet had to struggle between staying true to their original culture and accepting outside influences from the other groups neighboring them. Children embodied these challenges, and the cultural practices that children internalized would go on to define the society’s future.

Children are an important part of any society. They allow the culture and life of a given society to continue into the future. Yet, the lives of children in various societies has not been well studied. Few histories study children, and even some of the ones that do, such as Linda Gordon’s history of the 1904 Clifton orphan abduction, rarely focus on the children themselves. Children may be the focus, but adults are the primary actors, and their decisions drive the narrative, while children are only passive participants in the encounter.1 In some ways, this makes sense. Adults tend to be more active participants in the political and economic spheres of society, whereas children exist in narrower spheres. Adults also tend to control the main cultural trends of a society, whereas the contributions of children are far subtler. Still, most of their perspectives and cultural upbringing occurred during their childhood, not their adulthood. Their

---

experiences as children determined what cultural practices they will continue when they become adults, and which ones they will reinvent. In this way, studying the history of children could provide an untapped resource for understanding the dynamic nature of culture and the processes by which it changes over time in a given society.

In order to uncover the hidden lives of children in Arizona during this time, one must dig deep into the archive. Children themselves do not appear as main actors in historical records. Their lives and experiences are rarely directly recorded in newspapers or government documents. The best records available are diaries, which are rare, and personal memoirs, written after they have already grown up. Still, their stories can be partially recreated from the bits and pieces left behind in other parts of the archive. School records give an idea of their daily life and upbringing, though only for those children who attended school. An understanding of home life can come from grocer’s books, floorplans of common houses, and family photographs.

Occasionally, too, children will appear in newspaper articles, or be involved in some large event, such as the Orphan Abduction scandal of 1906. Piecing together all these threads allows for a tentative narrative about the lives of children in an ever-changing society.²

The extensive literature of borderlands history serves as an excellent foundation for this kind of research. Children behave and grow up extremely differently depending on the cultural values they learn from their parents and the society around them. Therefore, understanding Arizona as a borderland between several different cultures will help illuminate life for the

---

²Nurpur Chaudhuri et al. ed., *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2010). This collaborative work has been a useful guide in this kind of research. It focuses on piecing together stories about the lives of forgotten women who show up only briefly in the archives. The co-authors latch onto clues about women left in the archives, such as a woman’s name in the list of those arrested in a riot, or magazines marketed specifically to women, and then use that as a springboard to start investigating the context around the women’s lives. Using a combination of the sparse evidence in the archive and a great knowledge of the historical context of the time, they are able to recreate narratives about women in a history dominated by the stories of men. These same principles should help uncover the lives and experiences of children in turn-of-the-century Arizona.
individual children who reside within its borders. Authors such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Jose David Saldivar have particularly helped set up some context for understanding how Arizona functioned as a borderland between several different regions of the world. Arizona perfectly fits Gloria Anzaldúa’s definition of a borderland: “a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary...in constant transition.”3 This aspect of Arizona is essential to understanding day-to-day life, for Arizonans are not a single group. As Jose David Saldivar points out, an understanding of borderlands culture requires an emphasis on the hybridity of race and culture, rather than the “purity” of one particular ethnicity.4

Though this paper breaks down people into different ways of life based on their ethnic group for the sake of simplicity, the reality is far more complicated. Ethnic groups are loosely defined by the society around them, and they are subject to interpretation. In a borderlands society, each group is influenced by the others, learning and adapting to the unique needs of the social and physical environment. Therefore, the particular traits that noticeably differentiate groups from each other are only part of the story. These traits are changing over time and often changing in response to living in a mixed environment. The conception of a “pure Mexican” or a “pure Anglo” must not be taken to heart in a borderlands context, for each group is a product not only of their own cultural norms, but also the society that exists around them. In this way, by studying the culture of Arizona during this time, this paper is inherently looking into the changes that occurred in cultural identity between several groups that all come together as “Arizonans.”

The history of children in Arizona offers a new perspective on borderlands history in this region by highlighting the fluidity of culture and the dynamic relationships that were always

---

4José David Saldivar, Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1997), 19.
under threat of being redefined with the next generation. Children’s experiences determine the way they will behave as adults, when they have some degree of control over their communities and cultures. The context around Arizona during this time sheds a great deal of light on these harder to find stories. Through understanding the borderlands culture that these children navigated as they grew up, one can understand a great deal about the less documented parts of their lives. Studying these children provides insight far beyond their individual lives as well. The changes that children experienced as they grew up during this transitional period are reflections of the cultural changes Arizona underwent as its people strove to establish a new sense of identity as Arizonans.
Arizona’s History Leading Up to the Turn-of-the-Century

The area now called Arizona has a long, dynamic history. Several groups of people have called this land home, from several tribes of Native Americans, to Mexicans, and most recently, Americans, including the dominant Anglo population and migrants from various ethnic minorities, including European, Asian, and African-Americans. These groups have all left their mark on Arizona’s culture. In recent years, these ethnic groups have shared the same space and worked together to mold Arizonian society. Though Anglo-Americans were the dominant cultural group at the turn of the century, even they were constantly redefining themselves in reaction to the unique space they inhabited and the other groups they found themselves surrounded by. They combined their traditional U.S. values with the practical necessities of living in Arizona. Mexican-Americans adapted to the new economic systems imposed on the land while still retaining their own traditional ways of life. American Indians faced some of the largest challenges, being marginalized by Spain and Mexican culture before U.S. culture, and constantly struggling between assimilation and adaptation to the new cultural norms. All of these facets of life in Arizona help to explain several unique aspects of Arizonan cultural life.

The area now known as Arizona has long been home to various Native American peoples. Archeologists have dated sites of human remains in nearby New Mexico to as early as 9000 BC, and there is evidence that could trace this back as far as 10,000 BC. Though little is known about these ancient peoples, they had to make good use of the land in order for the area to remain populated for 10,000 years. Arizona’s climate dramatically changed over these ten thousand years. Much like today, it swung wildly between wet seasons with heavy rains and

---

flash floods, and hot, arid periods that provided little water to the native communities. In order to adapt to these changes, communities of people in Arizona are thought to have been small and migratory, moving to the most favorable locations for each season. They also established sophisticated agricultural and water conservation techniques in order to survive in this tough region. Different groups formed different kinds of communities, including the famous Pueblo peoples, who built adobe houses and took on a sedentary lifestyle, and the Hohokam who built their communities around canals and irrigation systems of the Salt Lake River. These findings make it clear that Arizona has been home to a wide variety of human communities for thousands of years. Their lifestyles helped shape the landscape of Arizona and established traditions that would continue up until the arrival of Europeans.

In 1540, Francisco de Coronado arrived in Southern Arizona, near modern day Bisbee. This was the beginning of a new era in Arizona’s history, one of life on the border of a large Spanish colony. This colony, called New Spain, spanned present-day Central America, all of Mexico, and the US Southwest. Arizona was at the frontier of an already unwieldy colony, and the Spanish army had a difficult time maintaining it to its full potential. They originally came hoping to find gold and silver, but never uncovered any deposits. Instead, the Spanish who moved there focused on building missions and “colonizing” the local Native American populations. These included Papagos, Pimas, and several different tribes of Pueblo Indians. Some of these groups, such as the Pimas, revolted and fought against these changes. Others, like the Apaches, never gave in to Spanish rule, and instead constantly attacked cities in migratory

---

10Cruz and McBride, *Arizona, Heartland of the Southwest*, 41.
12Cruz and McBride, *Arizona, Heartland of the Southwest*, 42.
bands. Ultimately, however, the Spanish developed a system for controlling these Native American populations and utilizing their labor to their advantage. Spaniards who chose to live in Arizona were prepared for the risks that went along with this frontier area. Often these were men, resulting in a great many mixed race children. The cultural exchange between Spaniards and American Indians would come to define several new races and cultures of people.

By the time New Spain declared its independence in 1821 and renamed itself Mexico, there was already a distinct culture and society developing out of the old colony. Spain had always had difficulties ruling over its colonies from afar. It would take months for royal orders to arrive from Spain, and continuing correspondence could take up to a year. In this time, local governments had to manage the day-to-day needs of the colony. Colonists understood this reality, and many came to resent the royally appointed officers, who would delay important decisions waiting to hear back from the crown. The main group with this complaint were the “creoles” who were ethnically Spanish, but had grown up in the Americas. They and the “mestizos,” people of mixed Spanish and Indian origin, banded together to create an independent Mexico. The new leadership fell mostly to creoles, as the racial hierarchy prevailed through the revolution. Mestizos made up the largest population, other than American Indians, however. For this reason, many of the Mexicans living in Arizona around the time it was bought by the United States were mestizo. This is the dominant reason Anglo-Americans came to view the typical Mexican as mestizo, and developed several of their racial biases based on this group.

---

In 1853, Arizona transitioned into the jurisdiction of the United States of America. At the time it was not known as Arizona, but was simply part of the greater New Mexico territory. This was a mere fifty years before the period under study, so it is not surprising that a large portion of its inhabitants were still of Mexican descent. By the turn-of-the-century, several U.S. pioneers had established their households in this territory, but these existed alongside a strong Mexican-American community. The relationship between these two communities was constantly changing over time, but in general the two groups had their own ways of life and did not make much effort to integrate their communities. Still, there was some level of cultural exchange between the groups. Mexicans had already developed some methods for living and farming in this arid, unforgiving terrain, and a few of these techniques were adopted by the Anglo settlers. Many of these adaptations were slow, however, and happened against the will of the Anglo-American population, which was more focused on emulating European culture.

During this time, Arizona was a frontier land on the border of several different societies. During this time, Arizona attracted small numbers of people from everywhere, resulting in a great mixing pot of ethnicities. Since Arizona’s white residents came from all over America and Europe, it became the racial norm for all people of European origin to be considered “white.” Evidence of this can be seen in the 1904 orphan abduction, where white women lamented seeing young Irish orphans going to Mexican homes, rather than white ones. This occurred in the West much earlier than in the rest of America, possibly because the Anglo population was much smaller and isolated in this frontier land. The biggest cultural divisor was -- and in many ways still is -- Mexican heritage. White pioneers, whether they were Anglo-American or a white immigrant came together in the communities for the most part.

---

There was a strong “emotional residue” from the effects of the physical border with Mexico, and the not-too-distant changes of this border. The transition that occurred with this border left a strong mark on Arizonan and U.S. society. In addition, Arizona constantly changed and adapted to the flow of immigrants entering and exiting the state. Since it was largely a frontier mining territory, its population was in a near constant state of transition. Finally, the great divide between U.S. culture and the cultural practices of the American Indian tribes still living in Arizona created an extremely “unnatural boundary” between the two groups, that would have to be constantly addressed and updated. The presence of so many different ethnic groups in these frontier communities helped define Arizona’s strange, transitional culture. Though many elements of life in borderlands Arizona are vague and difficult to pin down, this paper intends to narrow in on some crucial features of race relations in Arizonian communities.

The physical border with Mexico played a huge role in determining the culture of Arizona during this time, but it was not the only border worth considering. U.S. pioneers brought with them another border, one between America and Europe, particularly Britain and Scotland. Their ideas and lifestyles were largely taken from what they had heard from those parts of the world and their desire to emulate those traditions. Much of the archival research reflects a desire to tame the frontier and live a “civilized” lifestyle. The pioneers’ ideas about civilization have clear roots in the Victorian era of Europe, and though it was fading in Europe itself, pioneers and colonists attempted to recreate it in the Wild West of the United States. This can especially be seen in the way that children were raised and the kinds of schools they were sent to. When these schools emphasized French or Scottish education, they were considered even better than U.S. education in many children’s eyes.19 Anglo-American pioneers encouraged and praised

19 Alleen Pace Nilsen, et al., comps, Dust in Our Desks: Territory Days to the Present in Arizona Schools (Tempe, AZ: Arizona State University, College of Education, 1985), Dorothy Robinson, 28, and Harold Shortridge,
interactions between this invisible border, while interactions between the already-present cultures and borders were hardly tolerated.

American Indians fall into yet a third category, distinct from both Mexican and white communities. The various tribes that still inhabited Arizona had an interesting position in U.S. society. They were in some ways autonomous and separate from the country, having their own leaders and norms they would adhere to on land that they claimed for themselves. At the same time, they could not completely separate ties with the United States, and it was a constant struggle between the two groups. On the one hand, the United States government became increasingly frustrated at the Indian’s stubbornness about integration. Every interaction with them, including trade deals, building infrastructure, and establishing schools, was made more complicated by their insistence for some level of autonomy. On the other hand, to the American Indian community, the fact that they were living now under the United States of America did not change their traditions and customs. For them, they were fighting not to make the government struggle, but simply to keep their cultural practices and lifestyle from being absorbed into the greater U.S. culture. They had struggled the same way under Mexico’s rule, and to them, the two were not too different. In this way, American Indians’ place in the greater cultural scheme of Arizona is in many ways more nuanced than that of the other groups.

Just as several groups of U.S. citizens and immigrants were grouped together as “white,” Mexicans and American Indians were often grouped together by white settlers. The word “Indian” is used interchangeably for either group, and often both groups are described in the


same terms. This conflation is strange, considering how just by looking at the policy of the time, American Indian groups were clearly their own category, and laws were designed specifically to address this group. Still, white pioneers saw several similarities between the two groups. They seemed to live in similar structures, eat similar foods, and even look mostly alike. In addition, many Mexicans were the descendants of both Europeans and Indians. Many of these white pioneers prized “racial purity,” and to them introducing non-white genes into the family means that its descendants will never truly be white. In addition, these settlers saw race as far more binary than their Latin American counterparts, and the concept of mixed race was strange to them. Therefore, it made sense to categorize Mexicans as Indians, because they could not see Mexicans as white, therefore it was easiest to simply consider them Indians.22 While not every source from the time groups them together in this way, it is not an uncommon grouping to see.

These different groups lived separately from each other, but often in the same town and community. White and Mexican children went to school together, and both ethnic groups worked the mines side by side.23 Still, they made an effort to keep their lifestyles separate and preserve an element of their original culture. This can be seen in the type of houses both groups built for each other, the food they consumed, and their conceptions of children. All of these elements led to a unique borderlands society, where the various ethnic groups could not avoid picking up some elements of the other cultures, but also fought to keep themselves distinctly separate. In particular, these differences came to a heated conflict in 1904, when a train of orphans from New York pulled into Clifton-Morenci, located on the Eastern part of the territory.

22Kate McCullough, Regions of Identity: The Construction of American in Women’s Fiction, 1885-1914 (Stanford: Stanford University, 1999), 134.
23Shortridge, Childhood Memories, 38.
The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction began in Clifton in 1904 when a train of Irish Catholic orphans pulled into the station. They had already been adopted by several Mexican Catholic families in the area. Several white, Protestant women saw them getting off the train and were shocked to hear that they were going to Mexican homes. The very next day, they rallied with their husbands and town leaders to form a mob and take the children away from these families, re-adopting them into their own. This decision was held up in court in 1905, largely on the grounds of Mexican families supposedly being unfit to care for white children. This event was a landmark in Arizona history, and quite revealing about the attitudes toward children and race during this time. Even though the two communities shared the same land and similar lifestyles, interactions between the two communities were heavily looked down upon, especially interactions between white children and ethnic adults. It was one of the few times during this period that Arizona received a national spotlight for its actions. Likely, this had to do with the nation’s fascination with Arizona as a wild frontier. Only on the frontier of society could citizens get away with this bold vigilantism and be labelled as heroes.

At the turn-of-the-century, Arizona citizens fought hard for US statehood separate from New Mexico. On Valentine’s Day of 1912, their hard work paid off, and Arizona officially became its own state. Arizona’s transition from territory to state was the landmark event of this period. It demonstrated that the people of Arizona considered themselves unique and self-sufficient enough to justify having a government separate from the neighboring territory. With this event, Arizona began its transition away from a frontier land on the edge of society to a full-fledged member of the United States of America. The cultural push for this change had already

25 Ibid, 149.
26 Ibid, 276.
begun by the time that Arizona officially became a state, however. The education of children largely emphasized manners and Victorian norms of etiquette, which were considered essential at the time for civilized living. The family portraits of this time also demonstrated Victorian fashion, rather than the fashion typically imagined in the “Wild West.” The culture of Arizona had a great duality during this time. On the one hand, events like the Great Orphan Abduction demonstrate the wild, mob mentality that could only occur on the fringes of society. At the same time, much of the culture was obsessed with putting on civilized airs and mimicking the rest of the country.

The turn-of-the-century also meant the start of the Progressive Era in most of the US, and these movements had varying effects on Arizona. Progressives around the country pushed the importance of improving society, through a huge push for education and better health and working conditions. The Progressive Era replaced the previous emphasis on the Victorian era in most of the country. In particular, the white population was moving away from now-outdated Victorian norms of respectability. Advances in technology and the urbanization of labor made these people confident they could actively change their societies to better suit them. For minorities, such as the African-American community, however, this was a time to redefine the norms of the Victorian era into a new respectability culture. These community leaders believed that adhering to this set of values which was so recently in style would prove their worth to the white community and improve their standard of living. These values included modesty in dress and attitude, as well as hard work and attention to cleanliness. Arizona seems to have taken a

29Images from Gordon, Arizona Orphan Abduction.
31Ibid, 16.
32Ibid, Remaking Respectability, 15.
similar approach to these community leaders, emphasizing the values of the Victorian era over those of the Progressive era, perhaps in an attempt to catch up with the rest of the country and escape their label as a frontier society.
The Image of Children

Parents in all communities have specific expectations for their children as they grow up. They hope to raise their children to be valuable and successful members of society. The specific expectations of parents in each group can reveal a great deal about the values of their respective communities. In Arizona, each ethnic community had its own ideal “image” of how children should behave and grow. In general, this image reflected the societal expectations for adults at that time. Most of the records left behind of children at this time are from an adult perspective. Family photographs, for instance, are the largest visual record available of children. These photographs display children in a specific context, determined by their parents. The information we have about children’s lives primarily comes from adults as well. Understanding how parents expected their children to behave can illuminate the societal and cultural expectations of the time.

Official photographs of children from this time illustrate the image that society wanted to preserve of them. Many Anglo and Mexican families from Arizona paid to sit for photographs as a way of showing off their status and ability to sustain a high-class family on the frontier. In doing so, the children in the photographs became a symbol of status and pride in the family. Being able to support a large family and afford nice clothes for all of them was a big deal in this mining town. The mentality was that the hard-working Anglo man would be a truly individual spirit and fulfill the American Dream on the frontier, building himself up by his bootstraps. For many parents, their children were a testament to the perseverance of their culture and values even in a difficult environment. This tenacity and hard-working spirit was an important trait in both Mexican and Anglo cultures, as well as the ability to care for children. In these ways, family

---

33Gordon, Arizona Orphan Abduction, 61.
34Shortridge, Arizona, 75.
photographs allowed parents to use their children as proof that they embodied important cultural values of the time.

For instance, after the events of the Great Orphan Abduction, their new Anglo families photographed them dressed up in fancy attire holding goat cart whips. The girls wore clean, European-style dresses with leggings. The one boy pictured wears a collared shirt and formal pants. All children have immaculate shoes.\(^{35}\) This image captures the parents’ desire to show their children as high-class, both in the way they are dressed, and the fact that they would have them hold whips. The goat-cart whips give a sense of power and dominance, which is something that during this time the white settlers tried to maintain over the other ethnic communities in Arizona. The outfits look like something adults would wear to a formal gathering, rather than children during this time. White parents during this time tried to make their children look as high-class as possible, and this meant dressing them in perfectly clean clothing reminiscent of the Victorian fashions in Europe for these photographs. This explains the high collars on the girl’s dresses and the accessories they wore on top of this, including neckties and hair ribbons. This greatly contrasts with the daily attire of their parents during this time, who had to dress for either the farms or the mines.

This image of the orphans as high-class and powerful also stemmed from the desire to contrast them with children and families in the Mexican community, who the children would have joined had the white settlers not “rescued” them. Another image floated around during this time that was meant to show the typical Mexican family as slovenly and unfit for white children. In this photograph, the men are wearing sombreros and dirty farm clothing, and the whole family stands outside of a run-down looking home.\(^{36}\) Still, while this was the image that the white

\(^{35}\)Image from Gordon, *Arizona Orphan Abduction*.
\(^{36}\)Image from Gordon, *Arizona Orphan Abduction*. 
community held of the Mexican community, there are several other images that demonstrate the Mexican community had similarly high standards for presenting their children in photographs taken at weddings, funerals, and simply around the house for the sake of having a family photo. In this photographs, the girls all wear similar dresses, usually white and immaculately clean. The men tend to wear similarly sharp black tuxedos, and the young boys would wear small versions of these.\textsuperscript{37} This demonstrates that the Mexican community also wanted their children to have a high-class appearance and to carry on their legacy and culture.

All communities greatly valued education and believed it essential for their children. They valued children for their future potential, the adults they would one day become, far more than who they were then. The memories of childhood that were most valuable to these children, like running around outside or inventing games with friends, were secondary in the eyes of their parents. The children themselves, however, did not necessarily care for their lessons, instead preferring to spend their time freely. Even though many of them would come to appreciate later in life the importance of their parents teachings, those teachings would define their adult life, not their childhood. Still, both communities seemed to have shared similar values about children and tried to raise them so that they would grow up to fulfill the social contracts of adults in their respective societies.

White communities in Arizona promoted and followed the educational model mandated throughout the country throughout this time. Since the 1830s, several public schools had been established throughout the country, driven by the political ideology of Horace Mann, considered the founder of public education in the US. This model considered education as a means to creating a better citizen, one who could intelligently participate in a democratic society upon

\textsuperscript{37}Images from Gordon, \textit{Arizona Orphan Abduction}. 
reaching adulthood. The general idea of these schools was to send children away to be educated by someone who knew better than the parents, who was well versed in history and literature. It also made sense to send them away since their parents largely worked in the mines, and that was no place for children to learn. The US public school system was founded on the principle of ensuring the future generation had the knowledge necessary to inherit society. In Arizona in particular, that meant that the schools taught literacy and arithmetic, but also home economics and hands-on cooking classes, so as to prepare the students for life on the frontier. This curriculum demonstrates that the community felt it necessary for children to learn not only to expand their knowledge-base, but also to address the practical needs of society at the time. In a land where restaurants were still not prevalent and a dirty house could lead to severe illness, these skills were extremely important for adults to know. Teaching them to children ensured the community would continue to flourish in a similar way in the future.

The Mexican community also valued education for similar reasons, and tried to get as many of their children as possible into the public school system. Unfortunately, even though the schools accepted both white and Mexican students, the prejudices against Mexicans and lack of school facilities in general in the states prevented several from attending. In response to this, members of the community would often open up their homes as places for tutoring children. These lessons were often similar to those taught at the public schools, but also had a strong religious component. Catholicism was an important part of their communal values, and when

---

39Nilsen, Dust in Our Desks, 32.
40Gordon, Arizona Orphan Abduction, 39.
41Ibid.
they had the opportunity to teach children from within the community itself, they would pass down many of these values through this education.

Education in American Indian communities also meant learning directly from community members and it allowed the culture and traditions of the tribe continue on even through the challenges the turn-of-the-century brought to their way of life. Education was informal, and often involved having children observe their parents and other kin working and repeat some of the important steps. The point was for children to learn from members of the community, who would know better than anyone else about the traditions and cultural values they want to pass down. In a way, these traditions shared a lot in common with US public schools. They intended to teach children the skills necessary to live in the community as adults. Also, tribal children were disciplined and pushed to perfection no less than they would have been in a government school. As one Hopi mother pointed out, she was raising not only a child, but a future warrior and defender of the tribe. “Manhood was thus planned in babyhood,” she said, emphasizing the focus of childhood was to prepare for the future, when the child would be a grown adult.\footnote{Michael C. Coleman, \textit{American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930} (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), 16.} This mindset demonstrates that the American Indian communities were also concerned with continuing their future and passing down these traditions to their children. In fact, for them, having their children learn about the values of the community was a matter of survival even more so than it was for the Anglo and Mexican communities.

While the white and Mexican communities had some level of choice in how they educated their children, many American Indian communities had to fight against initiatives to have their children re-educated in ways of life outside of the tribe. The white community believed that tribal education would only continue what they saw as a backwards and unsanitary
way of life. Just as in the Great Orphan Abduction, children became the battleground between the two different communities and their views of the other culture. On the reservation, these children were raised to have the values of the tribe, both in their appearance and in their behavior. In attempting to erase this “backwards” culture, the white community tried to re-educate these children in a European fashion.\textsuperscript{43} Both communities saw the children as the key to the future, and tried to mold the children to their image of what the future should be. Of course, the white communities had the advantage of being able to raise their children in their own image, while the American Indian communities had to fight for that very same basic right.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{43}David Adams Wallace, \textit{Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928} (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 21.}
Schooling American Indian Children

A great deal of historical literature details the controversial boarding schools created specifically for American Indians in the Southwest. These schools served as a prime example of the cultural norms the US government hoped to pass on to American Indian communities. The leaders of Anglo communities in Arizona hoped to make dramatic changes in the culture of American Indians at large by re-educating American Indian children in their image. The values they taught to these children were openly the values they hoped to pass onto the American Indian communities at large. At the same time, these children still were primarily raised in their own homes by their own families. Students had to find a way to balance the contradicting lessons they were learning and form a unique identity. The struggle of the children highlights the struggle of the community at large during this time: on the one hand, adapting and advancing to meet the needs of the modern world, but at the same time retaining their traditional culture and values. American Indian children demonstrate the dynamic nature of culture during this time. Studying how they adapted to various culture pressures can reveal a great deal about the important conversations regarding cultural identity and how American Indians navigated the complexities of life in Arizona during this time.

By the 1890s, boarding schools became cemented as the primary means of government education for American Indian children. The fact that they were boarding schools was significant. The goal of these schools was to separate the children as much as possible from their native culture, which was seen as primitive and un-American. Boarding schools were not the first option considered. Day schools would have been a cheaper and less difficult alternative.

---

44Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 21-23. These complaints had an additional political level. The turn-of-the-century saw the rise of communism as a popular model around the world, and many in the US sought to distinguish themselves from this model. For many US leaders, the communal society of these various American Indian tribes reminded them far too much of communism, and they sought to stamp this out.
Still, day schools would not have been as effective at immersing the children in US life and ensuring they continue to live by the lessons they were taught. The founders of the schools worried about the corrupting effect that visiting their parents too often could have. In this way, the clear motivation of the school was assimilation to the dominant, white, US culture. Children were the central agent in this movement to promote assimilation. The hope was that even if it was too late to change older members of the tribe, the tribe’s future could be salvaged by re-educating the children and ensuring their salvation. Another of the founders’ goals, though a lesser one, was that the children would have a positive effect on their parents and the tribe as a whole, spreading the teachings of these government schools. As might be expected, this outlook was extremely optimistic. American Indian children during this time grew up in a strange crossroads of cultures. The effects of this borderlands interaction were myriad, and not nearly as black or white as either group hoped.

This new style of education greatly contrasted with traditional methods of teaching children in most American Indian societies. Education was not separated from the rest of a child’s upbringing, as in the Western tradition. In place of formal schooling separate from everyday life, a child’s everyday life was their education. They would learn from parents and kin the important skills and values of the community. For example, boys in the Hopi tradition would meet with their elders in the winter and learn the history and important tribal hierarchies of their community, while girls would work alongside the women of the household to tend the livestock and crops. Children learned by observation and repetition. By taking the children away from

---

45 Adams, Education for Extinction, 28.
46 Ibid, 19.
their family and community, the Arizona government was taking them away from a valuable educational opportunity. Though this was partially the goal, as they hoped to separate them from the cultural values of their parents, few in charge of these schools understood exactly how much of a traumatic shift this could be for the children. Rather than shifting from no education to a great deal of education, these schools forced children to learn in a completely foreign style from the way they had been raised.

The vastly different implementations of education between the two cultures would lead to a great deal of confusion among American Indian children put through both systems. On a basic level, the children were required to learn English through an immersion program, where they could not speak in their native languages and rarely were addressed in a language they understood. This fundamental challenge made it difficult not only to learn, but also to even go about daily life. Some students reported not having anyone to speak to until they learned English, which could take years.49 This experience stripped the children of one of the basic aspects of community--language--and made it exceedingly difficult to express themselves and connect to their surroundings. The white educators did this intentionally, in the hopes that children would quickly pick up the new language in this environment.

Even students who did learn English struggled with more complicated language barriers that the founders did not intend. Both communities had extremely different social norms surrounding language. For instance, even to this day most English speakers in the US expect prompt responses to their statements, and having a conversation paused in silence for more than a few seconds becomes awkward. In contrast, it is polite in several native languages for someone to wait at least forty seconds to respond to a comment. This led to several white teachers

49Coleman, American Indian Children, 106.
believing that American Indian children were unintelligent, because they would try to wait for a polite amount of time before responding to their teacher’s questions. The children, too, were often confused why the teachers bothered to ask questions, if they were just going to tell them the answer a few seconds later anyway.\(^{50}\) This communication barrier demonstrates the lack of cultural understanding between the two groups, even as they shared the same soil.

The children’s culture shock extended far beyond the classroom to the daily life events of the school. In recounting their memories, even American Indian students who grew to like the school recalled that the first day was terrifying. Irene Stewart, who choose to keep her Anglicized name after leaving the school and went on to become a Christian missionary, said of her first days: “I was homeless. No one cared for me as my old home folks had. I feared everything, especially the people and the strange facilities.”\(^{51}\) New arrivals to the school were forced to change their attire to look more “American” as part of the process of assimilation. This included a change in clothing as well as cut hair for boys.\(^{52}\) This was an intentional change on the part of the educators, in hopes of molding these children into an accepted, “civilized” image.\(^{53}\) Alongside these cultural concerns there were some serious health and medical concerns in the American Indian communities. For instance, disease and poor hygiene seem to have been a problem on the reservations during this time. The rampancy of lice was part of the reason for forced haircuts, even for some girls.\(^{54}\) Still, though these health concerns may have been stronger on the reservation, there is evidence for these same problems throughout Arizona at large.

\(^{50}\)Amy Fountain, “Politeness in Language,” (Class Lecture, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, 2012).
\(^{52}\)Coleman, *American Indian Children*, 81-83.
\(^{54}\)Coleman, *American Indian Children*, 83.
In addition, for many the boarding schools only exacerbated some of these problems. The schools often under-supplied food, and the food they did provide was extremely poor quality. \(^{55}\) Children got sick and even died in these schools almost annually.\(^ {56}\) One explanation for this is the exposure to a completely foreign diet and environment that these children’s bodies may not have been prepared for. If this is the reason, it captures some of the tragedy of the situation. In trying to fix the supposedly backwards ways of these children’s parents, white policymakers only lowered their standard of living. This makes it clear that the creators of these schools brought their preconceptions of American Indians to the table and relied far too much on these uninformed preconceptions. They assumed that promoting their culture would inherently fix the problems they were facing, such as poor diet and cleanliness. Even if their technological advances helped increase the standard of living, the problem was far greater than just instilling new cultural values. In fact, by focusing on only that aspect of the problem, these schools endangered the children’s health and wellbeing more than if they had been raised naturally by their families and communities.

The schools had several unintended culture shocks in store for the students, the consequence of educators not prepared for how many basic facets of life were different in American Indian society. Even just the bell schedule required a complete shift of their understanding of time. Coming from their traditional communities, they found it strange and confusing to split up the day into different segments of time, each with a particular goal.\(^ {57}\) This heavily contrasted with the white understanding of time, which considers a schedule an important part of getting through the day, and attention to this schedule a virtue. Many mistook

---

\(^{56}\)Ibid, 162.
\(^{57}\)Ibid, 87-88.
the American Indian conception of time for laziness.\textsuperscript{58} Children were forced to confront these basic differences in thinking about time and come to some balance of the two. Few adults have to confront their understanding of the world at this level, let alone children. These children had a unique outlook on life after this experience, and each came to their own personal understanding of how to balance two differing cultural outlooks.

Children who attended these boarding schools learned to navigate through two different cultures, and in the end found their own unique cultural perspective. Many children came to greatly appreciate their education at the schools, and had a difficult time returning to life on the reservation. For instance, Irene Stewart came to believe her teachings that stated life on the reservation was primitive. She could not bring herself to return to the reservation. After getting used to the “strange facilities,” living without them felt too unsanitary and backwards.\textsuperscript{59} These responses demonstrate that the schools did partially achieve their goal of introducing these children to white culture. Children returning home certainly brought their new ideas from the school, often causing friction between them and their families. The student Qoyawayma, for instance, was berated by her mother by practicing white methods of cooking, “wasting three whole eggs on a cake.”\textsuperscript{60} This initial resistance often waned, however, as the children grew up and began to see the value of their parents’ teachings. Qoyawayma later commented on the poverty gap between the white community and her community of Hopis. Having food was not a guarantee in the Hopi community, which necessitated a different attitude towards it.\textsuperscript{61}

Many students had a similar experience upon returning to the reservation. After living for so long at the school, it was difficult to remember life before that. None of these children were

\textsuperscript{58}Coleman, \textit{American Indian Children}, 87.
\textsuperscript{59}Ibid, 179. Quote from page 80.
\textsuperscript{60}Ibid, 181.
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid.
unaffected by the cultural exchange. They all had to re-examine their self-identity and come to some conclusion about how to live their life. Many ultimately choose to combine the values of both cultures. One student even chose to live on the border of the reservation in order to physically be a part of both societies.62 This is one of the strongest examples of Arizona as a borderlands society during this time. Since these students experienced both life on the reservation and several years of intensely immersive white schooling, they grew up embodying important parts of both cultures. Their young age was fundamental in this borderlands shift. Though they had grown up in their native culture, they still had not fully developed their worldview, making them more open to the ideas they learned in school. This does not mean that they completely adopted these ideas. Instead, they learned to mix them with their cultural and familial knowledge, ultimately developing their own very personal understanding of the world.

American Indian boarding schools greatly shaped the culture of Arizona at the turn of the century. It developed interactions between the white community and the various American Indian communities whose children attended. Though the adults of these groups seemed mostly separate from each other, through these children the two cultures came closer together. These cultural interactions were not always positive, and in fact produced much tension between the various American Indian communities and white community leaders. Still, they fundamentally changed the relationship between these two communities and the direction of future interactions. These schools produced extremely influential groups of American Indians who internalized some aspects of white culture and would often re-interpret their native culture in a way that fit with their new values. These children demonstrate the great overlaps in culture during this time.

Childhood Memories

As the experiences of American Indian children forced into government schools demonstrates, children never fully conform to their parents’ image. Especially during this time of drastic generational gaps, children’s perspective and worldviews can offer a different picture of the world during this time. Looking at the experiences and memories of children themselves illuminates some of the cultural change that is occurring in the region. When children grow up with ideas separate from their parents, they begin to act on those ideas and change the culture of their society. In that way, understanding children’s unique experiences during this time helps to parse through the conflicting cultural narratives of the time. Unfortunately, many of the sources available which describe memories of childhood only have interviewed Anglo men and women, or American Indian alumni of the infamous boarding schools. This makes it difficult to see outside of these particular perspectives. Still, they provide useful information about the cultural interactions between the many ethnic groups in Arizona, due to the many interactions that occurred between children of various groups.

One of the big cultural markers in Arizona is speaking Spanish, which typically identifies a person as Mexican. Interestingly, many Anglo children have memories of learning this language alongside their peers. Though Spanish was not formally taught in schools, since Mexican and Anglo children were integrated for the most part, the children would typically learn enough at least to interact with the other students. One woman who went to school in Phoenix during this time recalls that even though foreign language wasn’t a part of the curriculum “we spoke all Mexican with those kids from that segment of the community, so we didn’t think there was any need to study another language.”\footnote{Nilsen, Dust in our Desks, Chrystle Willis Ross, 31.} This memory reveals a great deal about the

\footnote{Nilsen, Dust in our Desks, Chrystle Willis Ross, 31.}
interactions between the Mexican and Anglo community during this time. Even though the children went to school together, they knew that they were from different parts of the community and could identify the important cultural differences between them. There was a clear interaction between the communities, as the children from both learned to communicate in both of the native languages of the communities. Still, there was something that set them apart and made them into two distinct communities, so that the Mexican children were “those kids” and separate in some way from the Anglo speakers.

Adults who attended school at this time also remember the important gender divides between children. For instance, whether schools allowed boys and girls to play together on the playground was a big deal, and many adults still remember those rules from their school and how they impacted playtime. There were some games that seemed to be more popular with girls and others with boys, yet when they were not segregated, the girls would participate in all of the different games proposed by the boys, at least to prove themselves.\(^{64}\) Other school activities were often separated, such as lining up for the bell and in the classroom, except in cases of punishment.\(^{65}\) This divide shows that many activities with rules set down by adults gender separation was encouraged, perhaps to fit with the norms of the time. When the activities sprung about organically from the children, however, they can often remember interacting with children and not caring too much about their gender. In fact, one woman remembers fighting another boy in the school, an interaction that one would not typically expect at this time.\(^{66}\) This suggests that the gender divisions of this time may not have been as strongly enforced here as in other parts of the country. In either case, children seemed to have gravitated towards certain games based on

\(^{64}\)Nilsen, *Dust in our Desks*, Chrystle Willis Ross, 30.
\(^{65}\)Ibid, Chrystle Willis Ross, 30, Lorenzo Rhoton, 33.
\(^{66}\)Ibid, Dorothy Robinson, 28.
their gender, but were certainly not deterred from crossing the gender barrier and playing with other children.

Several activities seem to have been popular with Anglo children during this time, including bike riding. For many children, learning to ride a bike was their fondest childhood memory.\(^6\) It opened up new forms of play with the other children, while also providing a sense of achievement and pride. Learning to ride a bicycle was one of the few milestones that children could achieve outside of school. It showed their peers that they had matured and reached the stage where they could play in this new, more challenging format. Peer recognition is often an important part of childhood, and that seems to have been true in this age as well. Demonstrating the ability to learn a new skill could help assert their capabilities to the other children in their peer groups, whose acceptance is often more important than parental praise. In addition, many children took pride in their achievement for primarily personal reasons.

Another important milestone that Anglo children took pride in was learning to read. This also opened up a whole new world of possibilities for them, though often not with their peers. Reading was a good source of entertainment in a frontier society where toys were sparse.\(^6\) It also provided them with pride and recognition from their peers, and even more from their parents and teachers. Several people remember their pride at learning to read before the other students in class and later going on to perform well in spelling bees.\(^6\) Achievement was an important part of life in Arizona during this time, and parents took great pride in their students doing well at these activities. If they performed subpar, as well, the children tended to remember the lesson even better, for it came alongside a great deal of shame.\(^7\) It is clear from the memories of those who

\(^6\)Nilsen, *Dust in our Desks*, Dorothy Robinson, 27, Chrystle Willis Ross, 30.
\(^6\)Ibid, Dorothy Robinson, 28.
\(^6\)Ibid, Lawrence H. Kleinman, 34.
\(^7\)Ibid, Chrystle Willis Ross, 30.
went to school during this time that education mattered a great deal to children, even if they did not fully realize it at the time.

One child who grew up to greatly appreciate his education was Harold Shortridge. He wrote a detailed account of his childhood in Clifton, largely between 1915 and 1926. His memories in particular are extremely helpful in creating a picture of childhood during that time, for he provides ample description on several subjects. For instance, he specifically mentions noticing the influence of Scottish immigrants to Arizona on the school system as a child. He believed that their ideas about education helped develop incredible elementary schools in Clifton, and even though he did not excel at school, he became truly grateful for the strict, high-quality education he received.71 On top of this he recounts his adventures with childhood friends, who were dominantly other Anglo boys, and often fought with Mexican children.72 This further illustrates the friction between the two communities that could be felt even between the children.

Shortridge also recalls the importance of music during his youth in Arizona. Most of the songs he recalls singing were the popular tunes across the country at that time: “Over There,” “Polly-Wolly-Doodle,” and “Goodbye Broadway, Hello France” to name just a few.73 He mentions cowboy songs in particular, and how he liked to sing them because they were simple.74 It seems like not much music was written for children in particular, or at the very least that music was not available to Shortridge in Clifton. Instead, children listened to the same music as their parents, which could be raunchy, politically charged, or just flat out silly. He was not the only one to point out the importance of music. Several students mentioned that they would sing

---

72Ibid, 38.
73Ibid, 46.
74Ibid.
patriotic songs in schools, often as they lined up for class. In this way, songs were a memorable way that children learned to connect with the wider community of the U.S.A.

The games that Shortridge recalls playing in Clifton seem quite similar to the ones recounted by children in Phoenix at the time. Young girls tended to play jacks, jump rope, and hopscotch, while boys would play with marbles and tops. Both genders also played sports, especially basketball. While this was a stereotypically male game, there were female basketball teams at many of the schools in Phoenix, and when recess was not segregated, girls would often join in. Still, for Shortridge and other children in Clifton, there were fewer resources available for games like basketball. Children would instead have to resort to their imagination to come up with their own fantasy games. Shortridge recounts some of them quite bluntly. He and his friends created a game entirely intended to humiliate a newcomer to their play group, which involved calling the newcomer their king, and then as soon as they began to get comfortable in that strange position of power, pelting them with various gross objects. More often, however, the children would use the natural environment to their advantage, and go bug catching or slingshotting rocks on the mountains.

---

75 Nilsen, *Dust in our Desks*, Francis R. Vihel, 32.
77 Ibid, 24, 30.
79 Ibid, 36, 42.
Children’s Interactions with Arizona’s Natural and Built Environment

As a frontier civilization, Arizona offered a unique environment for children to explore. Almost every person who reminisces about their Arizona childhood in a memoir emphasizes the impact the unique space had on them. For some, the natural playground of mountains and streams was always present in their memories of childhood games and activities.\(^\text{80}\) Others reveled in the constant innovation being brought into the landscape, remembering their awe of the trains that would rush through the towns, or the houses that were so uniquely designed to handle the tough Arizona climate.\(^\text{81}\) These memoirs reveal that both natural and built environments played an important role in their experience of childhood in Arizona. Both these environments reflect the great diversity of Arizona. There were mountains and stretches of flat desert, stretches of arid land which seemed to never receive water and streams that flowed into waterfalls.\(^\text{82}\) In addition, the borderlands culture of the area led to a diversity of built environments and vastly different understandings of how to make use of the land.

Children spent much of their time outside, so the physical environment of Arizona was an important part of their lives. Harold Shortridge remembers the beautiful, and sometimes thrilling, landscape of his hometown, Clifton. Surrounded by mountains on all sides, with a nearby river for swimming and drinking, it was an exciting place for children to explore and grow up. For most of the year the climate was mild, but after an intense monsoon storm, the rivers might overflow in a devastating flash-flood. For Shortridge, these storms were nothing short of awe-inspiring. The thunder would echo in the surrounding mountains and the rain would pour down incessantly. Shortridge describes his memory of “sudden large waterfalls cascading over the

\(^{81}\) Ibid, 30.
\(^{82}\) Ibid, 2.
cliffs, carrying huge rocks which sometimes brutally sliced into homes."⁸³ Thankfully, these homes were designed in such a way that they could be repaired after these seasonal storms. This is an indication of the kind of home life that came along with living in frontier Arizona.⁸⁴ Homes and families had to adapt to a tough environment, though rather than seeing this as a problem, children like Shortridge saw it as an adventure.

Another problem that settlers had to adapt to was the frequency of forest fires. Due to the arid climate, the natural brush often set on fire, either naturally or through human carelessness. Rather than this scaring him, however, Shortridge saw it as another way that the natural environment of Arizona was exciting. In fact, the fires added to the beauty of the mountains and “lit up all of the red cliffs...you could see the fire reflected [on them] in the distance.”⁸⁵ The fires excited Shortridge’s young imagination and deepened his awe of the world around him. In addition, they led to some excellent family memories. “Oftentimes our whole family would get in the car in our pajamas and robes...and we’d hurry down to watch the fire with tremendous enthusiasm and fascination,” Shortridge recalls.⁸⁶ The unique features of the land in Arizona imprinted themselves on Shortridge’s childhood in two ways. They were a great cause for excitement, as it was much more fun to play and live in an exciting land than a boring one as a child. They also helped the family come together in ways that were quite memorable for Shortridge. Many children during this time likely shared Shortridge’s perspective on the environment. Still, it was a dangerous terrain. Living there required that each family make certain adaptations to the land.

⁸⁴Ibid.
⁸⁵Ibid, 70.
⁸⁶Ibid.
Different kinds of housing evolved to adapt to the natural environment. Shortridge remembers living in a “tall, gabled brick, home” which he describes this as typical for the time.87 It had two floors and a family room separate from the guest room.88 These brick houses varied vastly from the adaptable adobe structures of nearby Indians and Mexican-American. Pollen analysis of these adobe structures shows that they changed over time to accommodate the family’s unique circumstances. “Rooms are added as families grow or buildings are sold,” Mary Kay O’Rourke asserts as the root cause of the observed changes in the buildings.89 These houses were tough enough to survive the elements, causing some Anglo-American researchers to inaccurately assert that adobe could never wear.90 These houses were likely much easier to fix after the storms, and seem more fitting in the frontier environment Shortridge and other Arizona residents described than his brick house.

Home cooking was an important part of life for children in this time. In the small mining towns of Arizona, restaurants were few and far between. There were some, such as El Charro Cafe in Tucson, which opened in 1922 and is still thriving today.91 However, most restaurant options were taverns, which of course children could not visit. Therefore, children mostly ate at home, food that was cooked on the household wood stoves that Shortridge described so fondly.92 Coal stoves also seem to have been in use, as researchers described Mexican-American families using them in their homes to make “olla of frijoles (bean stew)” and meat, likely gathered from

87Shortridge, Arizona, 51.
88Ibid, 51-52.
90Phelp, Carrie Padon, The Primitive Mexican Home in New Mexico, Thesis (BS) State College, New Mexico, 1913.
92Shortridge, Arizona, 51.
household livestock. Livestock seem relatively common in this era, and probably made good companions and pets for children—for a time. Household meals also included various wheat products, such as breads and cakes in Anglo houses, and tortillas in Mexican-American and Indian households. Children from both households enjoyed hand-picking fruit from trees. Shortridge fondly recalls getting to visit a large farm north of Clifton to pick “delicious apples, pears, and other fruit” for supper. Even more exciting was travelling to bigger cities which had ice cream stores, a luxury and a treat for children at the time. Children in this time seem to have enjoyed a robust diet, and one that was extremely tied to the land on which they lived. Interestingly, however, children's’ diets were a point of contention and a large cultural divider between parents of different ethnicities in Arizona.

Diet is deeply tied to culture in this period, and changes in diet can reveal a great deal about the changes in Arizona’s culture over time. Unfortunately few records remain from a non-white perspective on major dietary changes, so the information available about all other ethnic groups and their dietary habits comes from an outsider perspective. Still, it appears that Mexican and Indian households had already developed a food culture which fit well with the Arizona landscape. This makes sense, considering they had lived on the land for many generations. The relatively new white settlers brought along their own food culture, however, which was greatly different, and not extremely successful in the Arizona environment. Many popular trees from out East required too much water to be sustainable in a desert environment. Interestingly, rather than

---

95 Ibid.
96 Shortridge, *Arizona*, 44.
consulting with other ethnic groups to see how they made efficient use of the land, they took a more scientific approach to solving the problems that arose from their original dietary choices.

Several universities, including the University of Arizona, worked to research better agricultural practices in Arizona. One of these was a report issued in 1906 on the potential effectiveness of using cactus as a food source. The report mentions that cactus has been used in Mexico extensively for human consumption, but that they are more interested in potentially using it as feed for livestock, perhaps still being wary of these strange traditions.97 In addition, a large section of the research throughout Arizona during this time was dedicated to agriculture and food research.98 Several different food options were explored, including olive trees imported from the Mediterranean, citrus from East Asia and the Caribbean, and local hackberries.99 This demonstrates an attempt to diversify food in the Arizona area. Overall, only some of these dietary options proved feasible, but it is still interesting that primarily white researchers choose to look around the world for the answer to how to manage food in Arizona. Considering that other ethnic groups had food traditions that had worked in Arizona for thousands of years, yet there seems to have been little outreach or connection to understand this. A large part of this may stem from the new needs of an industrialized, mining town Arizona, as opposed to the Arizona of old. Prejudice and ethnic preconceptions were a large motivation as well. Children’s unique dietary needs help demonstrate the case for both of these possibilities.

Arizona underwent some dramatic changes when it was introduced to the United States, and this helps partially explain the need for new agricultural techniques. Public schools were

97David Griffiths and Raleigh Frederick Hare, “Prickly Pear and Other Cacti as Food for Stock II” (Mesilla Park, NM: New Mexico College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, 1906), 30.
99Tanya Quist, interview by Rebecca Peiffer, University of Arizona, Oct 22, 2015.
formally introduced to Arizona in 1864.\textsuperscript{100} Until then, schools seemed to not be prevalent in the Mexican or Indian communities. Missionaries planned to make religious schools in Northern Mexico, but only few of these actually were built.\textsuperscript{101} Indian children were typically taught within their communities, close to home, by watching their elders. They had a vastly different idea of education that often clashed with U.S. norms and law.\textsuperscript{102} These schools, in contrast, were far from the homes of the students, since they had to be out of the way of the farms and the mines. This meant that children made a long walk through the dust and the heat to get to school, carrying their own lunch. For this reason, researchers looked into food options that would either last longer in the heat, or that they could make at school and not have to carry in the first place.\textsuperscript{103} Part of the push for new dietary practices was therefore practical and to the great benefit of many schoolchildren, but a large part of it also stemmed from cultural preconceptions.

White settlers’ hesitance about eating “Mexican” food also came down to their preconceptions about Mexicans and Indians and anything associated with their culture. Here, just as in the previous case, children become the rallying cry, but over a less well-defined concern. During the court case for the orphan abduction of 1904, the white parents argued that they saved the children from the Mexican families, and as proof they related that some of the kids were sick early on and would vomit up “frijoles,” the word for Mexican-style beans. The Anglo community leaders, and particularly the women who fronted the movement to take away the children in the first place, blamed their sickness on the poor quality of Mexican food, even

\textsuperscript{100}Stephen Beauregard Weeks, \textit{History of Public School Education in Arizona} (Washington: GPO, 1918), 10.

\textsuperscript{101}Weeks, \textit{History of Public Schools in Arizona}, 5.

\textsuperscript{102}Fierman, “Impact of the Frontier,” Appendix VIII. Nathan Bibo’s records show evidence of a great cultural divide on how to handle the integration of American Indians into society. Many writers and artists seem to have pushed to allow them to continue their cultural traditions rather than looking down on them as backwards. Nathan Bibo, who married into their community disagreed however, stating that to overlook the health concerns of that way of life for the sake of cultural sensitivity would be unfair to that population and their children.

\textsuperscript{103}Mary Printer Lockwood et al., “The Hot Lunch for Rural Schools,” 5.
likening it to child abuse. The white community made arguments like this rather frequently, even worrying about the effects of this food on Mexican-American children’s health.

Of course, these children by and large grew up to be healthy, and to this day tortillas and frijoles are a staple of Mexican-American cuisine. Still, this group effectively relied on the fact that children are a symbol of innocence and fragility to make their case. Suggesting that Mexican culture is damaging to children immediately vilifies the culture. Rather than searching for a solution to the health problems Mexican-American children supposedly had, white community leaders used their plights to make an emotional argument about the problems of Mexican culture. These arguments conjure images of innocent children suffering due to the evils of their parents’ culture imposed on them against their will. Still, these children have no say in these arguments. Whether or not they are actually suffering is immaterial, and without looking deeper into the archive, it is difficult to tell what life was like for Mexican-American children. White community leaders used a similar emotional appeal to convince the government to approve measures to take American Indian children away from their families and forcibly school them in an Anglo environment. In both cases these arguments by the Anglo community reduce children to nothing but symbols and images that can further their cultural agenda.

104 Gordon, *Arizona Orphan Abduction*, 75.
Conclusion

Each ethnic group in Arizona at the turn-of-the-century adjusted to the environment around them, and children’s experiences reflect this. Some of these changes were a response to the dramatic cultural shifts occurring across the U.S. during this time, but many more seem to have come about due to cultural interactions between the various groups. Anglo settlers became interested in European modes of life as a way of contrasting themselves with the Mexicans who worked alongside them in the mines and sent their children to the same schools. White children picked up cultural elements of Mexican communities, including a basic knowledge of Spanish, but at the same time knew to keep themselves largely separate from “those kids.”\textsuperscript{106} Mexican families sought to preserve their cultural heritage and demonstrate that the Mexican Catholic tradition can be as high-class as the Victorian Protestant one. This came through in the family photographs common to this time, where Mexican parents almost always portray the children in fancy attire.\textsuperscript{107} Still, for many children, the only educational options were Anglo-dominated schools, meaning that the children would need to learn English and white cultural norms. For American Indians the changes were even more forced, as concerned members of the white community insisted on removing their children from their native communities and re-educating them in the ways of white culture at government boarding schools.

Children growing up in Arizona had to learn to navigate these strange, quasi-defined relationships between the various ethnic groups. On the one hand, their parents instructed them on the ways of their respective cultures. At the same time, their school experiences generally involved white teachers, meaning that their formal education came from a completely different perspective. On top of this, though many of their peers were within their same ethnic group, in

\textsuperscript{106}Nilsen, \textit{Dust in our Desks}, Chrystle Willis Ross, 31.
\textsuperscript{107}Images from Gordon, \textit{Arizona Orphan Abduction}. 
the small towns of Arizona it was impossible not to interact with children from the other communities. In all these ways children interacted with the cultural climate of Arizona on a day-to-day basis. Though they may not have fully understood the culture at their age, their responses to it demonstrate their ability to adapt to various new situations. Having been immersed in Arizona’s cultural life during this time, these children grew up to embody the important cultural dynamics of this state at the turn-of-the-century.

In studying the different experiences of Arizonan children during this time it becomes clear that there was not really any one unifying culture within Arizona as a whole, but rather a great multitude of influences that constantly were evolving to meet the realities of the current day. Anglo culture remained dominant during this period, but the white settlers had to actively work against the inter-cultural exchanges occurring at all levels of society. Children embody both the traditions of various ethnic groups that are passed down and these dramatic cultural changes happening at all levels of society in Arizona. The myriad ways in which they defined their identity reflect the nuanced conversations occurring around cultural identity in the broader community. American Indian children found ways to combine the lessons they learned at boarding schools with their traditional upbringing on the reservation, confusing and upsetting both their tribal communities and the Anglo communities, who wished they would reject the other community entirely. The children’s reactions demonstrate that no community could fully reject the others. All these communities interwove themselves into Arizona’s culture during this time, and none alone could truly define “Arizona.” White community leaders during this time pushed back against this truth, trying to instill their cultural values as the dominant values of Arizona. Children demonstrate the impossibility of this act. Their memories are a testament to the greatly interwoven cultures that made up Arizona at the turn of the century.
Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


Acknowledgements

I would like to thank…

- Pr. Amy Fountain for teaching me that language is more than a tool, but actually an important element of culture.
- Pr. Linda Darling, who helped me through my first history research paper and prepared me for similar projects in the future.
- Pr. Oscar Martinez for providing me with an excellent foundation knowledge of Mexican history, which was essential in researching this project.
- Pr. Susan Crane for creating the “History of Memories” course, which taught me valuable methods for analyzing memories and photographs as a source of memory.
- Pr. Julia Clancy-Smith for all her guidance on writing research papers and utilizing the resources in an archive effectively.
- Pr. Katherine Morrissey for providing me with some background in Arizona history and helping me find interesting sources.
- The History Department and faculty for an amazing educational experience that has culminated in this project.
- The Honors College for providing me with the opportunity and resources to complete this endeavor.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for my advisor on this project, Pr. Tyina Steptoe. Her course on the Jazz Age helped me appreciate the value of cultural history and piqued my interest in writing about that time period. Without her support and encouragement at every step of the way, this project would not have been possible. Thank you!