

by submissive headmen,⁵⁴ the Indians' religious practices were discouraged, and medicine men curtailed in the performance of their rituals.⁵⁵ These brusque efforts to force cultural change often only resulted in a further withdrawal into protective social mechanisms.

When the Messiah craze reached the Cheyennes and Arapahoes late in 1889, many of the conservatives hoped for a general adoption of this religious manifestation. Some adherents were gained, although the Indian officials discredited the movement through the use of progressives.⁵⁶ More serious were the religious practices built upon the use of the peyote button obtained from the Kiowas or from Mexican traders. The Peyote Cult quickly arose in considerable force after 1899 and despite all efforts of the agents it gained converts among the progressives and non-progressives alike. Leaders of the cult were prosecuted in courts, but the Indians, finding refuge in the dreams produced by the use of peyote, showed their antagonism to the religion of Christianity.⁵⁷

Nor did the whites desire to assimilate the Indians through educational means. When schools were opened in the counties, whites were outspoken in their demand that Indian children continue to attend their established schools despite the fact that the federal government offered to pay tuitions well above the costs of the Indian pupils.⁵⁸ The exceptions to the rule were those children of mixed blood whose parents resided in the towns.

How well did the Dawes Act and subsequent Indian policy succeed to 1907? When the Burke Act of 1906 was enacted enabling the Secretary of the Interior to declare certain Indians competent, thus granting them the right to manage their own affairs and receive the patent to their allotment in fee simple,⁵⁹ Charles E. Shell, Superintendent in Charge of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency could only find 115 Indians out of more than 2,700 whom he could recommend for independent status.⁶⁰ The effectiveness of the program, however, is further reduced when one finds that many of those included in the 115 were mixed bloods who had lived outside of the influence of the Indian policy for over a generation.