

these date back to 1819, 1815, and all these reports we painted a pretty good picture here in Eastern Oklahoma and tried to convince Washington that we were the best. I think that probably we had the highest "esprit de corp" of many Indian tribes probably in the United States. And whether our pains were justified, whether our schools were that good or not, I cannot say. I can say that as quickly as the Federal Government stepped in, took over at the Curtis Act that our schools immediately began to deteriorate. I think that at least from my observation we continued to deteriorate considerably until 1869. I would close in making this statement that I think that the peak of education that I talked about tonight when we were at our highest, the Cherokee Board was functioning under Chief, the Assistant Chief, and the Executive Committees, and probably this was the highest quality of education that probably that we've known and maybe even what we're producing now. I think we reached a greater percentage of people. I think teaching what they needed, to adjust to their lives much more than they are now. I think that teachers even were probably had as much quality then if not more than we have now because of various factors. In fact, in many, many readings that I've read about the academies, most of the teachers, the early teachers in the academies were graduates from Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts, preparatory school back east. The majority of Indian leaders who assumed any sort of leadership in terms of school, sometimes it was the Chief, sometimes it was just a member of the Board of Education. These men typically were not full-bloods, they were quarters, eights, they were and most of them, in fact, the famous ones that you see pictures of in our museum and in our library,