

OPENING DOORS FOR FIRST NATIONS' PEOPLES

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Howard Walkingstick was born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the fifth of six children, to his Cherokee Indian father and his one-eighth Cherokee Indian mother. This article is Howard's story, told mostly in his own words, from interviews and his own writings. It is about a person who grew up totally integrated with the non-Indian. Howard has spent his entire life – as a professional social worker, a 50-year member of the Masonic Blue Lodge and Scottish Rite, member and leader in a community and professional organizations – engaged in the process of tearing down signs of discriminations, planting seeds, and opening doors for Indians to walk through. Howard personifies the belief that he and all Indians belong in the world of both the Indian and the non-Indian.

Prologue

The eventual journey from Iowa to Oklahoma began in early June 1999 when a staff person of the Cherokee Nation returned my phone call, stating that she had located and spoken with Galela Walkingstick, now 89 years of age, and that Miss Walkingstick was willing to speak with me. The journey primarily was to meet and interview Galela Walkingstick, one of the early school social workers employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The work of these early school social workers was initiated by a project during the administration of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles James Rhoads in response to the numerous recommendations contained in the report entitled *The Problem of Indian Administration*. Better known as the Meriam Report (Kvasnicka & Viola, 1979), the report is little known in the social work community.

Howard Walkingstick and his older sister Galela, who had almost finished lunch when I arrived at her home in late September, graciously offered me lunch and we talked and talked. After lunch, formal interviews with Miss Walkingstick began, following up on our earlier phone interviews and after reading *Cycles of Life*, written by Howard. The copy addressed to his "friend" Jim in Iowa included the inscription: "I am a Grandpa Moses writing so late in life,

memories of excitable experiences among people and more so the Native American Indian people, nationwide as well as other minorities" (1999, inside back cover).

Howard, after our interviews were concluded for the day, offered me his home - a veritable museum of Indian paintings and artifacts - for my long weekend stay while he stayed at his sister's home, prior to my leaving for Tulsa to attend the 7th National Indian Nations Conference. Howard's generosity toward me, a stranger, was quickly evident from our very first phone interview. On Sunday, we began a long journey in Howard's car that included a visit to what would be Howard's and Galela's final resting place at the Okmulgee cemetery beside their parents. Then we walked to Tahlequah to walk around Northeastern State University where Miss Galela had attended college before receiving a Morgenthau scholarship to attend and graduate from Oberlin College. Next on our tour was the view of Seminary Hall, the elegant building that once was the Cherokee Female Seminary, which the Walkingsticks' mother had attended and where Miss Galela had taken classes. It was a memorable weekend, and after a complete day of interviews with Howard on Monday, I made the trip to Tulsa. Tape recorded phone interviews have

been ongoing with Howard, who always graciously has given his time to share his life and work.

A Life of Service: Early Years

Howard was born in Tahlequah in 1915, the fifth of six children, to Simon Ralph Walkingstick, Sr., and his second wife, Rebecca Chandler. His parents, born in different districts of the Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), married in 1904. Simon Ralph, a "4/4th (full blood) Cherokee, Indian Territory," attended the public schools of the Cherokee Nation, graduated from the Cherokee National Male Seminary, studied law, and was admitted to the practice of law before the Oklahoma and the United States Supreme Court (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 9). Simon Ralph "was elected a member of the Cherokee Senate in the fall of 1895 and was confirmed as a member of the Cherokee Delegation to Washington, to represent the Cherokee Nation before Congress in 1897" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 10). He also served on the Dawes Commission until its work was completed in 1907. In later years he returned to the practice of law in Okmulgee and was an interpreter for non-Indian lawyers. In May 1999, he was inducted into the National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians, just a little over 60 years after his death ("Walkingstick," 1999).

Howard, "9/16th Cherokee through parents on Dawes Roll" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 13), was born in Tahlequah in January 1915 and moved with the family to Okmulgee in 1917. The family included his four half-siblings and his five full siblings, of whom the youngest died in infancy (Walkingstick, 1999). Before moving to Okmulgee, the older children went to public schools in

Tahlequah. "Father," according to Miss Galela, "wouldn't let us go to Indian schools. He said that public schools were there, so we should go there. Just the Walkingsticks were in the public schools. My mother was just as strong as he was on the school issue."

None of the children, even those who had requested to go, went to Indian boarding or day schools. All of the children went to the Okmulgee public elementary, junior, and senior high schools. Howard recalls his father saying "no" to Indian boarding schools: "You are going to public schools as you have to learn to 'buck-up' against the white man" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 22). Howard and his siblings were just one of six Indian families to attend the local public schools in Okmulgee — "all prominent local Indian Families" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 41). "These Indian families . . . helped 'open the doors' to 'social acceptance'" (p. 41).

Although his father spoke Cherokee and the four other languages of the Five Civilized Tribes ("Former," 1999), neither Howard nor the other children were taught the Cherokee language. Miss Galela commented that her "father really didn't encourage it, but I never really thought about it. There was never a concern when working with the Indians. They could mostly speak English." Howard has no regrets that he didn't learn the Cherokee language. He reasons that he "wouldn't be here today"; that is, he wouldn't have had the opportunities and career that he had had. Howard thought his father "was hesitant about teaching the Cherokee language, because he thought it would interfere with the teaching of the English language. Which is true; it could have." By 1935, Howard could understand, speak, and read English, French, and

Spanish, and he could understand and speak some Creek but only understand some Cherokee (Walkingstick, 1935).

Howard "grew up totally integrated. . . Families from the neighborhood that had children, mostly white children, would come to our home for socials. We didn't have much contact with Indians, other than the five Indian families who went to the public schools. . . . We were aware of the other Indian children, but they would be away at boarding school."

His parents "believed everyone should have the right to a good education. As [his father] moved through life, he helped many Indians and orphan Indians to get an education" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 16). Howard recalls that homework was completed by the three youngest, including Howard, around the dining room table, with his parents sitting at opposite ends of the table ready to assist and check their work (Walkingstick, 1999). Excelling at education was expected of the Walkingstick children, and Howard and his half- and full siblings did excel.

Howard accelerated in school and graduated from high school at the age of 15 in May 1932, during the Great Depression. "My father and mother saw that I was a prospective college student. But everyone was feeling this terrific pinch because of the depression. I decided that I was going to work." For the next two years Howard was a student at Okmulgee Junior College and worked at the high school. "We were taught to work, and it is true that my success for where I am today in life is taking care of things. I got into the best social fraternity. The girls brought you into a different aspect of social graces. You're intermingling with boys and girls who have come from the 'better side' of Okmulgee. . . . I had no trouble there.

Everybody seemed to know Howard Walkingstick."

Shortly after graduating with an Associate of Arts degree, Howard attended the local business college for the summer. "Somehow, some way, we paid for it. It was a refresher course. Now I could get a job. Everyone had to work and . . . help out in the family living. I knew of the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] in the federal building in Okmulgee. I thought I might like to work for a social worker, and I knew there was a new job, like a clerical assistant, and that this social worker needed help."

Howard accepted a part-time, temporary appointment to serve as a typist, file clerk, and bookkeeper with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Okmulgee. His supervisor, Vera Harmon, a school social worker, introduced him to social work, relief work, and many Indians who were poor. "Here I think you see the beginning of the social worker, because Mrs. Harmon saw that I could do things neat and orderly. When she was not there, I took applications for admission into boarding schools. Then when she returned, I would place them on her desk or tell her about them. I remember one mother, the Indian father, a Creek. The bank had failed, and he was the owner of the bank. And at some point right after that, he had a heart attack and died. The mother came to the office, and she wanted to send her nine boys to Indian boarding schools somewhere. I couldn't deny her the right to applications for each one. I asked her to try to send in one or two applications for the older boys and to take the other applications home with her and bring them back and to make an appointment for her to come back to the office to see the social worker. This was

for me a very rich experience, which didn't threaten me at all with handling this case."

"We delivered commodities. I went with Mrs. Harmon, because we had sacks of potatoes, onions, garden vegetables that the Indian could have and plant and raise a garden. . . and take out clothing that came from the government. . . new clothes, shoes, underwear, coats. So we visited the families that we knew."

Some ten months after joining the Bureau, Howard noted — now 20 years of age — that he had "become well acquainted with Indians, and I feel like I could do my own race some good since having worked with them. I like Indian people and I understand them quite well"

(Walkingstick, 1935, p. 4). Howard was now ready to further his education and career. Someone in the Bureau suggested that Howard should go to Washington, D.C., and work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the Wheeler-Howard or Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934. The Act included a provision that allowed the Secretary of the Interior to establish Civil Service rules to make it easier for Indians to obtain positions in the Indian service. In August 1935, Howard applied for a permanent clerical position with the Department of Interior. Within a short time, he "was selected along with three other people nationwide to come into Washington and work."

The Nation's Capitol

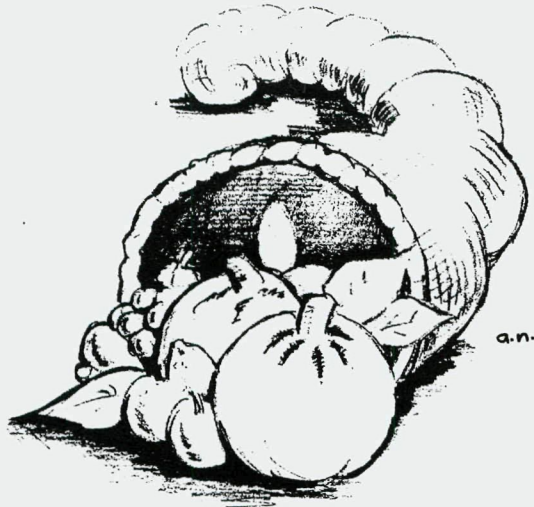
On September 23, 1935, Howard became a Junior Clerk with the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington, D. C. He

also immediately enrolled in the evenings at George Washington University, taking two to three courses each semester. Howard blossomed in his new environment. He became a member of Tau Kappa Epsilon, a social fraternity, and was elected Social Chair and then Social Chair of the Inter-Fraternity Council (Walkingstick, 1999).

He was a member of the school publication staff, food drive staff, Gate and Key, and Sociological Society (Walkingstick, 1943). A professor wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that he had "had a number of conferences with Mr. Walkingstick, and he impressed me with his interest in the sociological problems of the Indian, as well as his interest in general welfare problems. From my contacts with him, I believe him interested in the problems of his people" (Nolan, 1942).

Sixty years later, Howard recalls: "It seemed like people wanted to be around me all the time, probably because my surname was Walkingstick. The name made me as a person, and I am so proud to be a Walkingstick. . . . I am deeply indebted to my friend, Dr. Elmer Louis Kayser, Dean of the University. It was he who took me around and into society, if this is what you want to call it. I soon was in . . . the limelight. Dean Kayser showed great interest in me. Every Friday at 11:30, I met him for lunch at the Cosmos Club. He introduced me around to well-known historians, scientists, and persons known in their professions. To be a member of this group, one had to be exceptional in one's field of work. Dr. Kayser did open the doors of opportunity for me . . ."

"Every Saturday, for awhile, other students [of color] and I went to the White House to have tea with Eleanor Roosevelt. This was the beginning of the opening of doors for minority groups nationwide. I



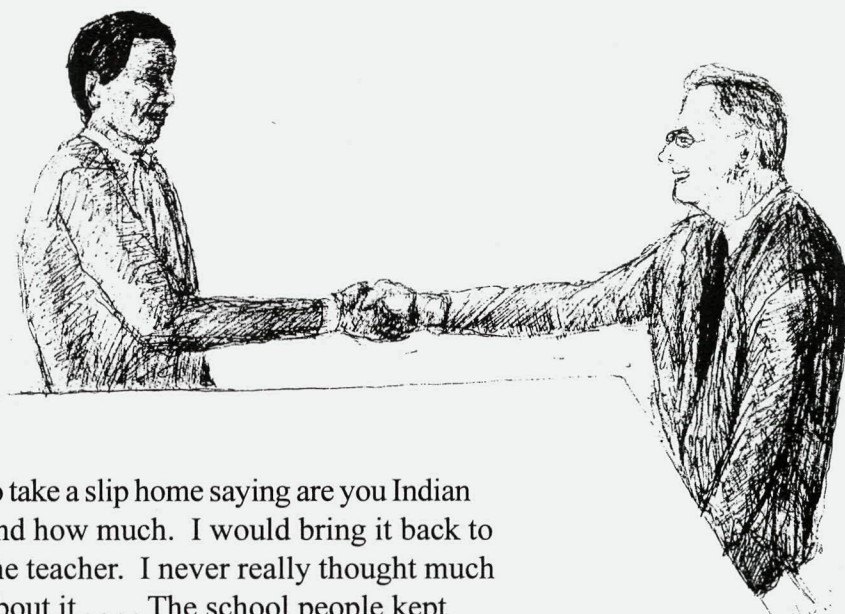
was too young to recognize this movement.”

“Just all kinds of good things were happening to me. . . . To be in the George Washington University Glee Club and Acapella Chorus were tremendous honors. . . . We traveled and performed in many places. The greatest for me was to perform at the New York World’s Fair in the Rockette [sic] Theater” (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 59).

Singing has been integral to Howard’s life. In junior and senior high school and in junior college, he was a member of the glee club, and he was also a member of the church choir in Okmulgee. For years he sang with a choral group, which performed with the National Symphony Orchestra every Sunday afternoon (Walkingstick, 1999). Recently, at his long-time foster son’s funeral services, Howard not only assisted the minister but gave the eulogy and sang “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” “Amazing Grace,” “How Great thou Art,” and the “Lord’s Prayer.”

Coming to Washington and the Bureau’s central office and enrolling at George Washington University awakened Howard to his Indian heritage. Students sought him out, in part, because of his name Walkingstick and because others commented that they had heard that he was Indian. Howard “would say, ‘yes, I’m Cherokee.’ And that in itself awakened me. And I think there may have been another reason why I was unique, because I would give talks in classes about Indians. I would write home to my father and say I needed information about my family. . . . When I came home I would visit with him about these things.”

“I guess I was aware of my Indian heritage all the way through grade school and high school, because we always had



to take a slip home saying are you Indian and how much. I would bring it back to the teacher. I never really thought much about it The school people kept after us to stay in school every day. Because they got a certain amount of money I know they wanted to keep the Indian children in school so they went all out. I never felt like I was being discriminated against. I always felt that my non-Indian friends wanted to be around me. I didn’t understand them, but I do now. Because I’m Indian and that’s different and I was intelligent and they wanted to sit beside me for the answers. The five Indian families were exceptional. Their fathers were successful”

World War II Years

The main body of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, including Howard, had been transferred out of Washington, D.C., to Chicago in August 1942, an effort to decentralize government agencies in the event of a bombing of the nation’s capitol. Howard soon became a resident at Hull House and stayed until he joined the U.S. Army on June 11, 1943. In January 1943, Howard wrote: “Now, in the evenings from 7 to 10 o’clock, I . . . [do] recreational and social work at the famous settlement house, Hull House. I have always been vitally

interested in this type of work. Here we do social case work, help with social activities of the settlement house, work in the game room with boys and girls in the neighborhood. Also, [we] work in the art gallery, music room, and various other activities of the house. I have always been interested in helping other people, and, if I were called to some foreign country to do relief work, I believe with my experience I could handle the position" (p. 5).

Howard recently recalled his Hull House days. He had a small but comfortable room on the second floor just above the main office. "It had a small bed, dresser, wash basin, chair, and a radio, if you brought your own. I was on an all men's floor. The [artist] that was next to me, I enjoyed very much. I learned to mix with others too. This in itself helped me with others, knowing how to do it." He recalled that when he returned from work, the first thing he would do "is go to his station and answer the telephones. [I] did this every night, until I began teaching English citizenship Monday through Thursday nights. After that I might go eat in the cafeteria and visit with the residents in Hull House. I found all of them interesting. Some of them had been there for years. One elderly lady, Mary Coonley, knew Jane Addams, a dear, dear soul. No recollection of her stories. I would be so preoccupied with work and class and the switchboard and stuff. I would close the switchboard at night."

Hull House was an opportunity "to have another rich experience." At that time Howard had no idea that he would become a social worker. Howard had wanted to serve in the Army, but he had punctured eardrums. At the induction center, Howard asked the physician "to just erase that I have punctured ear drums." The physician responded: "Are

you sure?" And Howard replied: "I am." Howard was sent to Camp Grant in Illinois and then to Camp Robinson in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he trained to become a medic. Shipped to Camp Beale in Marysville, California, for transport overseas, Howard "was pulled off a shipment and re-assigned permanently to Camp Stoneman in Pittsburg, California." Coincidentally, Howard had met a colonel who had once dated one of his father's sisters. This resulted in a reassignment to work for that colonel. The colonel requested that Howard's medical records be changed to indicate that he had punctured eardrums prior to volunteering for the United States Army.

Howard was assigned to the Detached Enlisted Men's List, where he ultimately was promoted to staff sergeant and supervised 50 to 60 enlisted men, performing a variety of clerical duties. On April 1, 1946, he was discharged as a staff sergeant and after a six-week furlough returned to his clerical position with the BIA in Chicago.

This time Howard became a resident at **Chicago Commons**, established in 1894 by Graham Taylor with three students (Woods & Kennedy, 1911) and did "volunteer work, after federal working hours, among the indigent people on the north side of Chicago. It was an entirely different kind of atmosphere compared to the south side and Hull House" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 62). He chose Chicago Commons because he "wanted to [learn about] the North side ... and its people. It was totally different compared to Hull House. The office would set up my home visits. Someone would say, 'Mr. Walkingstick will come and see you.' There was a schedule. I would volunteer every night. I did it a lot, because I had nothing else to do. I made home visits in the evenings.

They needed clothing or food or just some cash, or [help for]... their children in school and what they should do. To me it all seemed like family problems. I probably made two or three home visits a night. I worked until 10:00 p.m. I would get off at 5:00 p.m. at my regular job. Then it was only like three blocks [to] the Commons, so it made it accessible. I was really interested in seeing the differences in the people from one side to the other side of Chicago. We didn't eat at the Chicago Commons like we did at Hull House. Now when I got home, it was time for me to really get to my work."

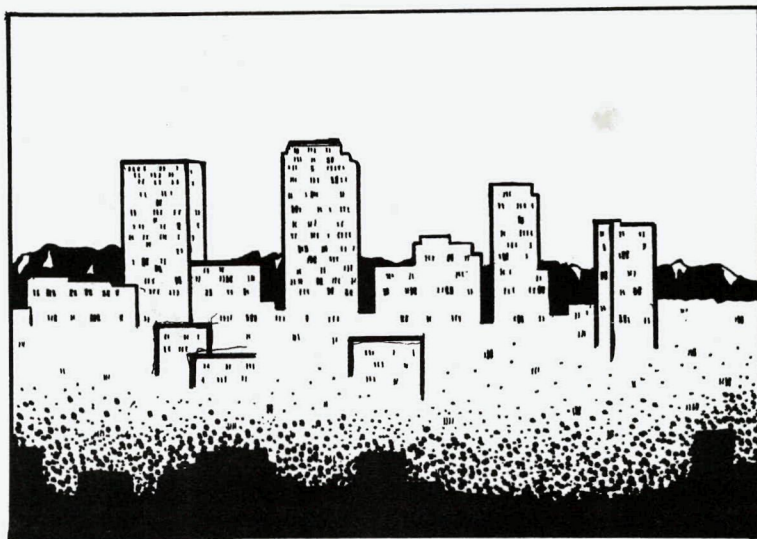
Graduate Social Work Education

Howard chose to go to a graduate social work program "because of World War II. [He saw] situations like they were, ... [that] people needed guidance and help. I'm the only one that went in the war in my family. My sister did play a role. I would stop by and see her when I stopped to see my mother. Made this decision on my own."

Howard was accepted into the M.S.W. program at the University of Denver, and, with an educational leave from the BIA, began studies on September 25, 1946. The G.I. Bill, a continued salary from the Bureau, and a work stipend from the School of Social Work gave him the financial means to go off to Denver. Howard completed the necessary course and field work during the autumn, winter, spring, and summer quarters but not the thesis requirement to obtain an M.S.W. Field work was completed at the Denver Bureau of Public Welfare and the Colorado Children's Aid Society.

Howard was granted an unpaid 60-day leave from the Bureau and was "detailed officially by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for 90 days for completing

this thesis" (Walkingstick, 1949, p. 87). His thesis, *Social Welfare Services for the Navaho Indian*, approved in December 1949, covered the period "from 1943, the year a formal social service program was established on the Navaho Indian Reservation, through the calendar year 1948" (Walkingstick, 1949, p. 5). Specific purposes of his thesis included discovering "the past and present social welfare policies and procedures utilized at the Navaho Agency, Window Rock, Arizona." Also a purpose was "to discover whether these social services seem to have been adapted to the cultural patterns of the Navaho Indian and determining to what extent the Social Service Division of the



Navaho Agency gives recognition to cultural patterns in application of these services" (p. 5). Howard's research included not only library research but also 10 to 12 trips to the Navaho Reservation, interviews with social workers, and correspondence with social workers and supervisors. The research also included interviews with Navahos with the assistance of clerk-interpreters when Howard made visits to a hogan [home] to interview clients (Walking-

stick, 1949).

Numerous recommendations were made, including the recommendation that "the social service problem of the Navaho be attacked on an over-all basis. There must be a comprehensive plan, as the critical conditions now threatening every phase of Navaho life are all interrelated and cannot be coped with successfully on a piece-meal basis" (Walkingstick, 1949, p. 102). Shortly after the acceptance of his thesis, Howard was awarded an M.S.W. on December 9, 1949, and was perhaps the first Native American Indian to graduate with an M.S.W. (University of Denver, 1949). Parenthetically, the first American Indian to receive a DSW was perhaps Ronald Lewis, also at the University of Denver.

Upon completion of his studies at the University of Denver but not the required thesis, Howard was reassigned as a community worker in October 1947 to serve the Crow Creek Indian Agency at Fort Thompson and the Lower Brule Agency in Kennebec, South Dakota. In July 1948, he was promoted to social worker. Howard's assignment lasted only three years, but during that period he helped to open doors and break down barriers.

Opening Doors in South Dakota

Howard, reassigned from Chicago to his first field assignment, was the first community worker and then social worker assigned to Fort Thompson. Howard shared many stories, including his first experience in South Dakota, and how he helped to achieve acceptance of Indians by the majority population. "When I got to Chamberlain, where the train stopped, the snow covered the train. They have severe winters. I was not used to this, but I kept telling myself, 'I'm going to make it if it's the

last thing I do.' A government employee, a Sisseton Sioux, met me and drove me to Chamberlain through [a] heavy blizzard. We went to the Derby restaurant, which was very exclusive. I said to the driver 'I see a sign that says, 'No Indians Allowed.' He said, 'Yes, but, they don't know that you are Indian.' We ate, but I was determined that I was going to break that even if it was going to kill me again."

"I was back in Chamberlain, talking with the owner of the restaurant, Mr. Derby. I wasn't different [from] anybody else. I had been around in society, and I knew how to handle myself, and I'm sure that a lot of my fellow Indians know how to handle themselves . . . I even got acquainted with his single daughter and went on dates with her later on. The owner liked me very much. This was opening . . . doors for me and for the local Sioux, who I was pulling behind me."

"There were 'No Indians Allowed' signs across the street at J.C. Penney's. I had never confronted such a situation, but I had to ask the manager. Before I left South Dakota, the sign came down. I joined Kiwanis to help them to see that I wasn't different [from] anyone else. I was thinking to myself: 'Why, yes, I'm well-educated, well-dressed, what have you.' All of this helped to plant good seeds. You must leave something behind."

"I met with the Governor, because they had a social problem with the Sioux Indian. It was about [the] local Indian people. The remnants of the band would move into the capitol and put up shacks and tepees. Winter is bad. The county commissioners were concerned about it. They tried to send them back to the reservation, and . . . they would come right back. So I told the governor that this is your problem, a social problem, and that these people are citizens

of the United States, just like you. And you all have to come to grips with it. I will work with you to see what we can do, but don't you dare send them back again, because they will just come back and squat. They're as eligible for any social service you offer to any of the residents. We will work together."

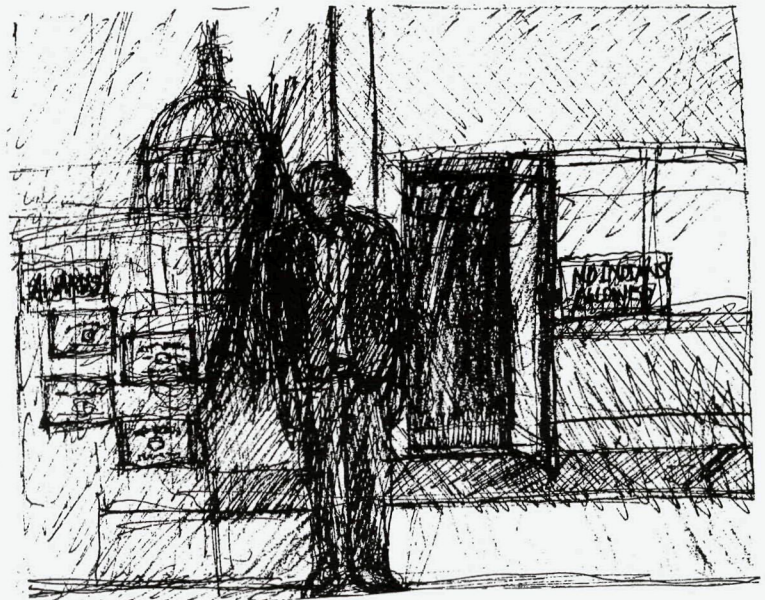
To resolve the problem, a meeting was scheduled with the county commissioners. The superintendent asked Howard to meet with the commissioners. "It was a blizzard, and I had a hard time getting there. I was a little late but got to the county commissioner's meeting. I heard one of the commissioners say, 'Oh well, Mr. Walkingstick was supposed to be here, but I guess the weather was too bad, and he couldn't make it.' I stood up and said, all bundled up, 'I'm Mr. Walkingstick.' I wish you could have seen their faces. I don't know what they expected . . . I guess an Indian who couldn't speak well or act well, so we discussed this problem too. They finally consented that they would work with the local Indians who came from the reservations to the capitol."

Howard related his first contact with the superintendent, Frell Owl, Dartmouth Class of 1927. "When I first arrived, I visited with the superintendent. He told me about the conditions of the local Indians, and then he starts telling me about himself. He mentioned that he had never been refused admission to a hotel or restaurant prior to coming to the Crow Creek Agency. And he told me how he and his family had been turned away in Rapid City. He had to go there to visit people, and they were refused admission at the Alexander Johnson Hotel, and that amazed me. And then he tells me that when he visited the capital in Pierre, a hotel there refused him admission. He said he could go into the lobby but couldn't eat or stay at the hotel. I told him I

was sorry. He said you were sent purposely to ease conditions of people like me, who work for the Bureau, as well as for the local Indians."

To continue with Howard's meeting with the county commissioners: "I also told them that my superintendent and non-Indian wife and children could not get into the . . . hotel, which was a nice one, because they were Indian. This is a disgrace. They sat in the lobby when they had to come for meetings. I said, 'I want that hotel open for everyone. I'm going to stay there myself.' This is planting the seed."

Another recollection focused on the same theme after a hearing where Howard, with an attorney, argued that a young Indian woman should be removed from a correctional school. "I said not



going to school is not a good reason to have [her] in this correctional institution, and I've come to seek your approval to take her home, and she will do fine. The judge said: 'I'm going to let you take [her]. . . . I hope she will not have to return here again.' I said: 'She will not, as long as I'm in South Dakota. But

prior to getting her, the judge said to me: 'Why don't you, Howard, and I go over to the bar and have a drink and do some social visiting.' I said: 'Judge, I appreciate the invitation, but I could not go, because there are signs up all over South Dakota in front of bars and liquor stores stating 'No Indians Allowed.' When you non-Indian people come to grips with this problem and take these signs down, then there may be a time when I will enjoy a drink with you socially at a bar, but not today.' And this is one thing I had to fight for the Indian. I know some Indians don't know how to drink and handle it, just like some white people or other racial groups, but it's not a characteristic about the Indians, that the Indians can't drink firewater. What misin[formation]. So, I really have confronted this and fought it for the local Indians that I represent. In South Dakota, I eventually got the 'No Indians Allowed' signs down."

Another way that Howard was able to effect change involved the Indian basketball team. "We had a basketball team of primarily Indian veterans who were really good. The Indians loved to play basketball. Well, that's practically all the recreation; they don't have football, but they have softball and baseball. But nine months out of the year it's very cold; inside the gym they can practice and play basketball. We traveled as a team throughout South Dakota. Our team played non-Indian teams, and [we] would win too. I would get them into hotels and stuff. I would pay their way. We traveled most weekends when I would not be officially working. We went all year round to keep them active. The non-Indians loved basketball too. So, there was always a crowd, all veterans. I was with them all the time. We went in any place. They never did refuse us."

"I recall taking them into the American Legion building. I would tell them that they are cleared, and they can go in there like anybody else. I told them that it was okay to drink, but they were not going to get drunk. Just have one or two drinks. I will be watching. We are going to open the doors to the bars. From town to town we went. We would go into a bar and have a drink or two after the game before going to another town. They acted like gentlemen and this in a way helped to ease the problem. The signs of 'No Indians Allowed' are going to come down. When I went out to South Dakota, I did see these signs and 'No Liquor Sold to Indians' signs, and they came down, because I knew how to work the problem out. I tried to get those signs removed wherever I went."

Once, when he went to Rapid City, Howard took a Bureau of Indian Affairs employee with him. Howard states: "He was a good example for me to take to Rapid City. He was very presentable; he was an athlete, intelligent, and had a position at Ft. Thompson. 'Now, Lewis, you know Mr. Owl and his family have been refused admission to the . . . hotel in Rapid City, but we're going to go and get a room there, and then we're going to visit the judge about all those Indian arrest cases from Fort Thompson, Crow Creek, or Lower Brule."

When they arrived at the hotel to register, Lewis didn't want to enter for fear of being "hurt." Howard said: " 'You won't be hurt, because I dare them to hurt us in any fashion.' I went in through the front door and up to the desk and said, 'I'm Mr. Walkingstick, and I would like two single rooms.' I signed my name and Lewis' name. I went back to the car to get the luggage, where Lewis waited, afraid to go in with me to the hotel. Lewis refused to go in the

front door but instead went through the back door. Later, I told him we are leaving through the front door and eating in the hotel restaurant. All went fine. We left the next morning through the front door.”

Before Howard left South Dakota, the Crow Creek tribe adopted Howard into their tribe. “They had a pow wow for me. They presented me with a headdress made by one of their members . . . and gave me the name ‘Sogamania.’ This means ‘Walking Cane’; they had no Sioux word for ‘stick.’ There was a songfest, Indian dancing, and a feast” (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 62). The headdress hangs proudly in Howard’s living room.

Howard’s recollections of how he opened doors in South Dakota were numerous. In September 1950, Howard was temporarily reassigned to the Albuquerque Area Office. In November 1951, Howard was transferred to the Consolidated Ute Agency in Ignacio, Colorado, which was under the Albuquerque Area Office. His final location within the Bureau occurred on June 5, 1952, when Howard was reassigned and transferred to the Anadarko Area Office, Oklahoma.

Albuquerque Area Office

“I seemed to be the trouble-shooter for the central office of the BIA. I went to ease the plight of the Navajo, the nineteen Pueblos, and the three Navajo communities: Ramah, Alamo, and Canacito. My first task was to gain public assistance for these people by having the state accept the Native Americans into public assistance programs. As time went along, I helped to organize the first New Mexico Welfare Conference. I also did a study with two University of New Mexico professors on the Utes, the Southern Ute Tribe and the

Mountain Ute Tribe, who were to share in a \$31 million judgment award. Before I knew it, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Central Office called and said, ‘Mr. Walkingstick, you are the logical one to go to Colorado and Utah and implement the plan’” (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 63).

Howard also worked with the Mescalero Apache on the Mescalero Reservation and Jicarilla Apache, primarily doing group work with children and visiting with children at the boarding schools. Howard was also responsible for working with 19 Pueblo villages in and around Sante Fe and Grant. Howard visited families, residents in nursing homes, and patients in the hospital; he made referrals to the hospital clinic located on the pueblo and consulted with the superintendent of schools to determine if children needed services.

Anadarko Area Office

When Howard, the social worker, arrived in Anadarko, Oklahoma, he commented: “There was so much prejudice and discrimination, I even had a hard time finding a place to live. One local non-Indian said to me, ‘You won’t last here long.’ Whatever I encountered as discrimination for local Indians in western Oklahoma, I seemed to overcome. I had to take two steps, not one, to show the non-Indian we were no different than any other people and that there is [sic] good and bad in all racial groups.”

Again, Howard joined community organizations. He transferred his membership in the Blue Lodge to Anadarko. He joined the Kiwanis Club. He was elected president and served two terms. He spoke at the local Rotary and Lions clubs many times. “I knew I was accepted by now in heavily Indian populated western Oklahoma, and I could interweave into the local communities the

Native American Indian" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 64). Howard became a member of the Oklahoma Health and Welfare Association, was elected vice-president, was appointed president, and then was elected president.

"There were many battles, ups and downs, but way before I retired [in 1970], I had eased many of the problems and differences for my Indian people. I, myself, had to get involved in state and local government activities. I joined many organizations statewide, and, in getting myself accepted, we became the victors" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 63).

In 1955, Howard was appointed Area Social Worker by the Bureau. One year later, he was promoted to the position of Director of Social Work, and, in 1959, Howard was promoted to Supervisory Social Worker. The area served by the Area Office was vast and included Western Oklahoma, Kansas, one county in Nebraska, and one county in Texas.

Howard's activities beyond his Bureau work were extensive. He taught social work courses in the evenings in Anadarko and Oklahoma City for the University of Oklahoma School of Social Work. He helped open the undergraduate social work program at East Central University. He also gave numerous commencement addresses at Indian schools. With two others, Howard helped finalize Oklahoma's program for the National White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1960.

Howard was a consultant to the Child Welfare League of America "and helped to integrate the acceptance of the Native American into graduate schools of social work nation-wide" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 65). A member of NASW and a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers (ACSW), Howard was elected to the national NASW

Commission for Personnel Practice and Standards and served a two-year term.

Looking Back and Moving Forward

Howard's work did not end upon retirement from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Another career with the Oklahoma State Department of Welfare began on the Monday after he retired from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Twelve years later Howard retired, after serving in numerous leadership positions with the State Department. "It was time. I decided that I'm going to relax and enjoy myself socially among my friends." Looking back over his extensive and varied professional career, Howard vividly remembers the day that he was honored by the Secretary of the Interior.

Distinguished Service Award

After a distinguished career with the Bureau and just a few years before retirement, on October 31, 1970, Howard Walkingstick received the Distinguished Service Award. The Award, the Department's highest honor, was conferred on Howard C. Walkingstick by Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall on June 8, 1967:

In recognition of an eminent and humanitarian career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Mr. Walkingstick's service with the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been distinguished by his exceptional ability in working with Indian and non-Indian groups; in community, State and Federal leadership; and in public relations. His vigorous personal leadership applies not only to organizations of the Bureau, but extends to public and private organizations concerned with the socio-economic advancement of the Indian people. He contributed greatly to alleviation of differences between welfare programs of

the State of New Mexico and the Federal Government, and organized the State's first conference on social welfare involving local Indian participation. Since June 1952 he has served as Supervisory Social Worker in the Anadarko Area Office. He developed closer relationships between the Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare and the Bureau, which resulted in many Indians being restored to public assistance rolls. In the States of South Dakota, New Mexico, Colorado, and Oklahoma he has served with distinction on numerous Health and Welfare Boards, and on committees to help the handicapped and the mentally retarded. He works constantly for the education and development of Indian youth, and was a delegate to the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth. An effective public speaker, he has been outstanding in presenting the aims and views of the Bureau to many organizations, and in helping create a better environment for Indians. For his outstanding achievements and dedication to the public service, the Department of the Interior confers upon Mr. Walkingstick its highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award.

Other Awards and Recognitions

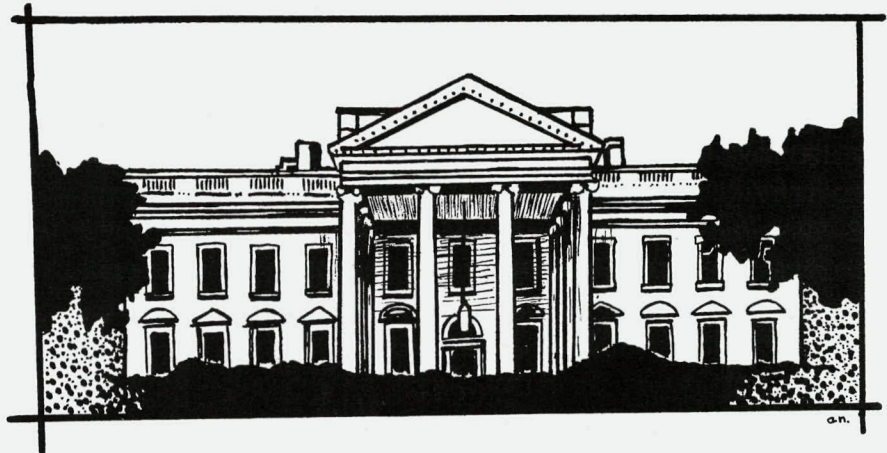
On November 14, 1967, the Oklahoma Health and Welfare Association (O.H.W.A.) awarded its outgoing President, Howard Walkingstick, a citation for distinguished service. The President-Elect began:

Mr. President: Your tenure of office will cease in a few moments, but what you mean and have meant to O.H.W.A. will never be forgotten and can never be fully recorded. Howard C. Walkingstick is completing twenty months as President of this great organization and has completely guided us through two annual conventions. Great strides of achievement have been wrought in his administration through

our organization...

Suffice it to say, his untiring energy, his total involvement in doing well the task assigned him, his love for people and their needs, has brought about a deep feeling of commendation from the O.H.W.A. . . .

(Maxey, 1967)



Howard recalled that he was the only Indian in this type of leadership position. "I was trying to get others in so they might follow in my footsteps. Planting seeds that will grow . . . and that is always in my mind. . . . At another conference, when I was helping to break the ice for the Blacks as well as the Indians, I brought in Virginia Satir. That conference was packed. . . ."

Howard responded to the question of his impact on behalf of Indian people by serving with the Oklahoma Health and Welfare Organization. "I carried the Indians. I got services for the Indians, because I was the head of the organization. I helped to break the ice for the Indian in Oklahoma City, where [they were] refused service, and the Bureau did not give assistance in Oklahoma City. It was a no man's land. I used to battle with the state in the beginning. . . . They trusted me. It was nice that I knew [the future state welfare director] before he became the state welfare director, because he knew that I was an honest man."

Howard was often an invited presenter

or group leader to the Southwest Region Personnel Management for Executives Conference. About every three months or so, for about eight years, Howard taught personnel management for executives to U.S. Army officers, with ranks between majors and colonels. U.S. Army officers would invariably write to the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs praising Howard for his contribution. To illustrate, Colonel Ratliff (1967) wrote to Howard's Director: "Mr. Howard C. Walkingstick . . . made a substantial contribution to the success of the program. In his capacity as course group leader Mr. Walkingstick carried a heavy responsibility which required extensive preparation, long hours, and keen attentiveness during the training period. It was evident by student reaction, content of the end-of-course evaluations and by letters received from organizations following the course that Mr. Walkingstick deserves recognition for his services."

The training offered by Howard to officers also presented an opportunity to talk about Indians, his background, and work with Indians. "I thought, really, that because I was a Cherokee, I was an attraction. For someone of that blood to have that kind of a position was an attraction. Officers who had completed my course would say to other officers 'try and get in Stick's class.' My classes filled up fast. I did different things. I would take them for walks, and then we would sit down outdoors to give us a different atmosphere. I might give them a party after class was out at 3:00 p.m. up in my room. I had a big suite. It was a social hour, to get better acquainted. Sometimes they wanted to provide the refreshments, so I would let them do it. They had a huge party, and they provided all the refreshments and then gave me gifts. I will never forget that."

Another letter of appreciation ad-

dressed to Howard from the Youth Development Director of Southeastern State College in Durant, Oklahoma, thanked Mr. Walkingstick for his participation in the Youth Development and Guidance Workshop Program. The Director, Leslie Lewis (1966), commented: "We feel that you made a very important contribution to this workshop. All the personnel, both staff and participants, felt that all your presentations were informative and very well done."

Another activity was the Bureau's Incentive Awards Program. Howard was the Chair of the Awards Committee for his Area Office, which included Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas. This committee approved or disapproved submitted applications. Howard would present the awards to Bureau personnel, a responsibility that he had held from 1952 until his retirement. The Chief Personnel Officer for the Bureau, who had been invited to the awards ceremony, commented that "the ceremony was very impressive and I commend you [Area Director] and your staff, particularly Howard Walkingstick for the interest and enthusiasm in the Incentive Awards Program" (Gunter, 1969).

A Freemason: Fifty Years of Service

In March 1999, Howard received a 50-year Blue Lodge membership pin from the Freemasons. On October 16, 1999, Howard was also honored as a 50-year member during the Fall Reunion of the McAlester Scottish Rite at its Masonic Center in Oklahoma. The journey had begun in 1949, when Howard was assigned to the Crow Creek Indian Reservation at Fort Thompson, South Dakota. He petitioned the Blue Lodge at Gann Valley just off the edge of the reservation. Sponsored by a non-Indian, Howard received the entered Apprentice

Degree on February 8, and, quickly, the Fellow Craft Degree on March 11 and the highest grade, the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, on April 11, 1949.

Shortly after receiving the Master Mason Degree, Howard, with a non-Indian attorney from his Blue Lodge sponsoring him, petitioned the Yankton, South Dakota, Scottish Rite to advance from the fourth to the thirty-second degree. Howard achieved the thirty-second degree in just three days. Howard believes he was the first Indian accepted into the Gann Valley Blue Lodge and into the Scottish Rite at Yankton.

Howard mentioned that he likes "the Masons because it is based purely on the Bible. It is for helping others. I think that it is a wonderful thing." Howard recalled that he "wanted to get into the Blue Lodge to get the members to see that there were some good local Indians that deserved to be in the Lodge. They never had Indian blood in there. I got my Indian superintendent into the Blue Lodge after that in Chamberlain [south of Fort Thompson]. So he and I would plant seed[s] in our local lodges." Both Howard and the superintendent sponsored about five or six Crow Creek Indians before Howard was temporarily reassigned to the Albuquerque Area Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in September 1950. "We really did start something. And I did let them see that [we] were no different [from] anybody else. They were very hard working people. They had cattle and did well and could help bring others into the lodge."

At the Blue Lodge monthly meetings in South Dakota, the membership would consider those in need. "I would give them the name of my Indian people" to be given food and clothing. "We never forgot them at Thanksgiving. And we were still helping non-Indians too. I opposed nothing for the non-Indian

families who needed help. I got them [the members] to come on the reservations. They saw me as respectable, a good person, sincere and wanting to just help people. I got the superintendent to do this kind of thing in Chamberlain."

"One of our duties at the Lodge was to consider petitioned candidates for membership. When I sponsored one of Indian blood, I would sit beside him. None of my candidates were ever black-balled, because my local brothers knew that they would make a great contribution to the lodge."

"My Blue Lodge experiences helped me open doors. I got better acquainted with the non-Indian members. They couldn't refuse me anything. After South Dakota I went to the Lodge wherever I was assigned. Once you're a Mason, you're always a Mason. I would go to the lodge whenever there was a meeting; it didn't matter where I was. I helped open the door for the local Indians in and around Sante Fe."

Upon his arrival in Anadarko from the Consolidated Ute Agency in Ignacio, Colorado, in June 1952, Howard moved his **Blue Lodge Masonic** membership to Anadarko Lodge #21. "I was the one to go and visit the neighboring lodges in and around Anadarko, if they had meetings, to help strengthen them. I was the district governor for two years. I think I was able to get the other lodges to accept the Indians as people. I was trying to do anything and everything."

Community Service at Age Eighty-Five

Howard continues to thrive, open doors, educate, lead, and care for others, in many and diverse ways. To illustrate, Howard, a Life Member of the Society, served as a vice-president, and at eighty-five, he is the President of the Holdenville Society of Painters and Sculptors.

Recently, Howard led a program at his home for the Society, which included an introduction to his many Indian paintings and artifacts that are found throughout his home.

Howard currently is not attending local Blue Lodge meetings because he has "other things to do. Like church stuff [where he serves in numerous capacities]. I opened my house recently to the mothers' club. They help children. I invited them so they could see more about the Native American, and this was another way to help."

"Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant"

The Walkingstick children were expected to live in the non-Indian world, obtain an education, live a Christian life, succeed, and be proud of their heritage. Miss Galela reflected that her father "was proud to be a Cherokee always. We were taught that too. I see myself as a human being." Looking back, Howard wrote: "We are all proud of our Cherokee Indian ancestry" (Walkingstick, 1999, p. 24). In response to the question, "How do you see yourself — a person whose heritage includes a father who was Cherokee and a mother who was one-eighth Cherokee?" Howard responded: "I really don't see any difference in that at all. If I'm with another group, they realize that I'm Indian, and they seek knowledge from me about the Indians. I just fit myself in with them comfortably. I [may be] different from other Indians, because I'm not shy and removed." In response to being different, Howard responded: "I think that I have had time to prove myself through all the education and the experiences that I've gone through in life that will automatically change you. Education will change everybody. That is the focus of why people

come into the country, to get into society."

Miss Galela noted that her "father and mother were good Christians. We were the first ones at church every Sunday. That was the Methodist church. Father was always on the board in Okmulgee."

Howard's parents, who "were always devout Christians . . . were co-founders of the First Methodist Church in Tahlequah" (Walkingstick, 1999). Howard and Miss Galela have been long-time members of the Barnard Memorial United Methodist Church in Holdenville, Oklahoma. In response to the comment that "in some ways, Howard, you have been really blessed," Howard responded: "Oh, yes, the good Lord has been taking care of me. I'm a believer, proud of it too. Saved me from cancer, because I had apparently business to take care of. That was 21 years ago. And here I'm digging away."

Isolating their children from non-Indian children, families, and communities was not their parents' way. Howard, in his *Cycles of Life* (1999), reflected that "there are thousands just like the Walkingsticks, integrated beautifully into American society" (p. 3). He lived and worked in the world of the Indian and the non-Indian and opened doors for Indians to walk through. He worked to tear down signs of prejudice wherever he went, to educate non-Indians, and ultimately for others to perceive that Indians were to be afforded equal rights.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, during the Depression, provided Howard with a modest position as clerk, while also offering unheard of adventures and opportunities for a young Indian man from Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Howard seized those opportunities. He was awarded a bachelor's degree after his discharge from the U.S. Army in 1946, and then, with a leave of absence from the Bureau, began graduate social work education at the University of Denver, obtaining a Master of

Social Work degree in December 1949. With this degree and his abilities, Howard was promoted to increasingly more responsible social work positions within the Bureau and held leadership positions in numerous organizations.

Howard has been the consummate professional social worker. Howard has the ability to join, become part of, and lead professional and civic organizations. And at 85, Howard continues to lead community organizations. A professional with authority of position, coupled with his graciousness, easy-going, non-threatening and cooperative manner, and his elegant attire, Howard personifies the belief that he and all Indians belong in the world of the Indian and non-Indian. Howard relates professionally and personally to all peoples and uses his abilities to open doors for people of the First Nations. □

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