

John P. Livingstone, *Same Drum, Different Beat: The Story of Dale T. Tingey and American Indian Services* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003).

Chapter 6: American Indian Services

John P. Livingstone

Dale thought he might return to supervising seminaries and institutes, but that opportunity was gone by the time he came home in the summer of 1971. The seminary and institute administrator, William E. Berrett, had retired in 1970, and the Church Board of Education had completely overhauled the administration of Church schools and had renamed the entire organization the Church Educational System. Neal A. Maxwell (a future member of the Quorum of the Twelve who was not yet a General Authority) was named the new commissioner of education, and Joe J. Christensen became associate commissioner. Frank Day, Dan Workman, and Frank Bradshaw became assistant administrators, and the organization was under completely new management. ^[1]

When Dale visited with Joe J. Christensen (later to become a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy), a choice was offered to him between taking the leadership of the Institute of American Indian Studies and Research at BYU (later American Indian Services) or filling a position as a professor in Religious Education there. He discussed his options with Elder Spencer W. Kimball, whom he had come to know while serving as a mission president. The Apostle encouraged him to take the assignment with the institute rather than Religious Education. Elder Kimball suggested that Dale could do much good among Native Americans now that he had served among them. So Dale made the decision that would place in him in a more permanent relationship with Native Americans. The new president of the Southwest Indian Mission, Paul E. Felt, had been the previous director of the institute. Thus, he and Dale effectively traded places. Dale's commitment to helping Native Americans in any way he could would place him in what would ultimately become a lonely position at BYU, championing a cause that would eventually diminish in the eyes of university leaders as Native American Indian issues went from the limelight created by President Kimball's efforts. As reservation schools, along with public and business services, became more amenable and more accessible, Church programs such as the Indian Student Placement Service and the Indian Seminary program became less essential. Even the unique Indian missions (the Southwest Indian Mission and the Northern Indian Mission) would later be supplanted with more conventional mission organizations that would be organized geographically rather than racially. But Dale's decision to follow the advice of President Kimball would keep him close to the pulse of Native America, and Church leaders would seek his counsel often in relation to Church affairs among American Indians.

The president of Brigham Young University at the time was still Ernest L. Wilkinson. A lawyer, Wilkinson was famous for negotiating and litigating a land claims settlement for the Ute Indians against the federal government of the United States of America. While in Washington, D.C., in the early years of his law practice, he fathered legislation that allowed all Indian tribes access to sue the United States government under the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946. Like the Utes, many tribes had ceded land to the United States through treaties but had not been compensated by the government. Wilkinson's efforts not only brought about the Act but also won a judgment of \$31,928,473 on 13 July 1950 for the Utes against the federal government. ^[2] The case was hailed as a landmark decision, and Wilkinson was widely recognized for his tremendous effort in bringing both the legislation and judgment to pass. Together with other judgments he negotiated for the Utes, the tribe won about \$45 million. ^[3]

Dale's past service as a seminary supervisor on the university's administrative council had earlier put him in proximity with this venerable, hardworking, and hard-pushing BYU president. This may have given the institute some additional status in the eyes of other school administrators who had known Dale earlier.

It seems clear from early correspondence that the BYU Institute of American Indian Studies and Research was patterned, to some degree, after the Institute of Indian Studies at the State University of South Dakota. S. Lyman Tyler, director of the BYU library, had an academic interest in North American Indians and had recommended the South Dakota program to President Wilkinson, who then contacted that school and paved the way for a visit by Lyman. ^[4]

Lyman returned from his trip with a review of South Dakota's program for President Wilkinson. ^[5] Things progressed ^[6]

to the point that academic vice president John Bernhart authorized an institute budget on 22 March 1960. Lyman was appointed director of the Institute of American Indian Studies and Research on 30 September 1960, and the organization was born.^[7]

President Wilkinson wanted to keep a close eye on institute developments and often made suggestions and sent memos and newspaper clippings to Lyman about potential activities and goals of the institute. Lyman realized the necessary budget limitations on the institute's activities and tried to move the institute forward on a conservative footing.

A flurry of early memos to Lyman Tyler point to President Wilkinson's desire to develop a relationship with the Ute tribe, and President Wilkinson asked Lyman to try to get something going. In a 25 July 1961 memo he pressured Lyman by asking if he or Robert F. Gwilliam had any close contacts with the Utes or if Wilkinson needed to "find some other way of maintaining contact with them."^[8] He recognized that, in spite of his obtaining large financial judgments in behalf of the tribe, he had not taken the time to sit and listen to their troubles. "Patience has never been one of my virtues," he wrote. "One has to continually cultivate the Indians to keep them on his side."^[9] He was embarrassed that his earlier legal activities had not translated into better BYU connections with the tribe when he became president of the university.

Lyman had the unenviable task of balancing the desires of an advisory "Institute Council," which was chaired by Elder Spencer W. Kimball, an indefatigable proponent of helping American Indians in his assignment as an Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, against the practical and budgetary restraints of a university struggling through its developing years. A new General Authority, Elder Boyd K. Packer, served on the institute council, as did then Relief Society general president Belle Spafford. President Wilkinson himself also served as an ex officio member of the council.

The institute began with several missions in mind: first, to "serve the various agencies of the Church with programs that relate to the Indians of the Americas"; second, to study Native Americans; third, to consult with tribes on issues and services important to them; and fourth, to assist American Indian students at BYU as they completed their education.^[10] Lyman was perhaps most comfortable with the study of Native Americans because that had been his area of interest and publication for several years. Bob Gwilliam, from the office of the dean of students, took responsibility for BYU Indian students. The aspect of service to tribes was up in the air a little and would be more clearly defined as the organization matured.

In the first council meeting, President Wilkinson indicated a desire to see the institute become a major help to the Church in working with Native Americans. This would later become a challenge as Church goals and university interests clashed in the mind of President Wilkinson. Lyman would at times need to justify to the university president expenditures and activities that he felt had been mandated by General Authorities on the institutes council.^[11] But President Wilkinson would remind Lyman that the Church leaders were only "advisory" to the council. Vice President John Bernhard would encourage Lyman to be strong and definitive in his role as director of the institute.^[12] No doubt Lyman felt pressed in his responsibilities.

Lyman's successor, Paul Felt, mentioned the initial phone call regarding his February 1964 assignment as director of the Office of Indian Affairs at BYU: "I received a call from Dr. Earl C. Crockett, academic vice president under Ernest L. Wilkinson. I was informed that I was being appointed as the Director of Indian Affairs at BYU which would include a small Indian enrollment of some 44 students who were then being supervised out of the office of [the] Dean of Students."

Paul's assignment later included replacing Lyman as the director of the Institute of American Indian Studies and Research. A short time later, Elder Boyd K. Packer, representing the Lamanite Committee and the Board of Trustees, introduced Paul to the faculty and explained the intent of the board with respect to the expanding Indian program. In his announcement, Elder Packer made it clear that it was the intent of Church leaders to move forward aggressively in a program that would establish the Church and the university as highly visible resources to American Indian people. Paul was to answer directly to the president of the university.^[13]

Paul then began the daunting task of coordinating the university's programs regarding American Indians. He was also trying to look for ways to increase BYU's visibility to Native American leaders. Years earlier, he had been the BYU student body president following his service in the Central States Mission from 1937 to 1939. And several years

later, after successful seminary and institute assignments where leaders found Paul to be an outstanding recruiter, he was invited to BYU by President Ernest L. Wilkinson as the coordinator and director of student affairs.^[14] This was during the period of transition when BYU was eliminating “social units” and creating wards and stakes to meet student social needs. The social units were not unlike fraternities or sororities with exclusive membership and other characteristics that some saw as undesirable at BYU. Paul effectively presided over the dissolution of social units as mandated by the Board of Trustees in September 1961.^[15] After five years in this assignment, he left the post to teach religion full time at BYU. But he only taught for one year before he was invited back into administration by Earl Crockett to serve as Director of the Office of Indian Affairs.^[16]

Without much experience among Native Americans, he nevertheless stepped forward and faced this call that he considered “to be more challenging than anything that had come to me before.”^[17] It was clear to him that BYU and Church leaders wished to make the resources of the university available to Native Americans in a major way. While there were relatively few American Indian students at BYU at the outset of his assignment, the next eight years saw considerable growth. He met weekly with the Lamanite Committee of the Church, headed by Apostle Spencer W. Kimball. The Committee was very active and influential among Church leaders. They coordinated efforts directed toward helping Native Americans by utilizing Church organizations such as seminary and LDS Social Services (now LDS Family Services).^[18] The Indian Seminary and Student Placement Programs represented significant initiatives toward offering help to Native Americans.

Other developments aimed toward helping Native Americans that occurred during Paul’s tenure at BYU included the formation of the Lamanite Generation, a BYU performing group featuring Native Americans as well as Polynesian and Latin American students. Paul had tried for some time to get a group of Indian students for the BYU Program Bureau to work with. Several applied, but so few that it was not practical to try to put together an entire show using only Native Americans.

In November 1970 Dale Tingey contacted Janie Thompson of the Program Bureau and asked if she could help with a group of Polynesian and Native American missionaries and youth that he had put together to tour the Southwest Indian Mission, where he was presiding as mission president. Janie was busy with a BYU performing group, the Young Ambassadors, and could not make any commitment to Dale at the time. But a Navajo member of the Young Ambassadors, Margie Upshaw, nearly died during that tour. She endured an emergency tracheotomy, which touched Janie’s heart and caused her to reflect deeper on Dale’s request to help organize a touring group of Indians that would augment missionary efforts among tribes in the Southwest.

One of Dale’s newly returned missionaries, Danny Stewart, contacted Janie a few weeks later about Dale’s request, and she consented to help with a March 1971 tour of the mission. With the help of six of her non-Indian “regulars” from BYU, she staged a successful show. It was the first time the Indians outnumbered the Anglos in one of her productions. It went well enough that she also agreed to train a group that would tour the mission again during the summer of 1971.

By this time Dale had been released as mission president and was back home in Provo. Several native returned missionaries, a few talented high school students, and even a few performers who were not Church members made up an all-Native American group that Danny suggested they call the “Lamanite Generation.” They arrived in Provo on a Monday and worked with Janie until the following Monday, when the tour began. All that week they slept and ate at the Tingey’s. This touring group, which sang and danced its way into the hearts of everyone it entertained, was led by Janie, who would work exclusively with the group until her retirement from BYU in 1987. The Lamanite Generation was loved by native and non-native audiences alike, and they spent many weeks each year touring, ultimately visiting several continents.

As early as 1950, the “Tribe of Many Feathers” for Indian students at BYU had been organized by returned missionaries of the Southwest Indian Mission.^[19] President Golden Buchanan of that mission had suggested such an organization to help with the socialization of native students at the university. Back in those days, American Indian students were entering what they saw as a very intimidating environment because of the unfamiliarity and distance from home. While the Church’s Indian Placement Program had oriented numerous students to life away from the reservation, many dropped out of university, longing to return to familiar surroundings and culture at that point in their lives.

As more Native American students came to BYU and responded favorably to socialization efforts, retention rates stabilized. Soon a critical mass of Native American students who were succeeding in the college environment

existed on campus. Shortly after Paul's assignment as director of Indian affairs, the "House of Jacob" was purchased from a family called the Jacobs and was used by the office of Indian affairs.^[20] It also became a sort of hangout for American Indian students attending BYU. It still stands (in 2003) at 562 East on 1430 North, across the street south of the Marriott Center, and serves as a studio for the Art Department's master's degree-seeking students.

The theme song "Go My Son," by Native American students Arlene Nofchissi and Carnes Burson, was written in the basement of the House of Jacob. Paul and the others in the Office of Indian Affairs had been encouraging Arlene and Carnes to put a theme song together for the Indian program. They had been given a target of three months to complete the song, and the time was almost up. Arlene said, "Kirt Olson insisted that we go into the next room (we were down in the basement). He set up the recording equipment—I think he had had a recording studio back in Albuquerque—and we recorded it down there."^[21] Arlene remembered it being written in twenty to forty-five minutes. She remembered the words being written down on the back of a sheet of paper outlining upcoming BYU events. Carnes wrote the words on the back of the flier while Arlene experimented with tunes on the guitar. At the time she said she could only play in the key of C. As she strummed, Carnes said, "That's it!" He would say "Sing it," and then he would write down the words. A year or so later, Arlene said she found the old flier with the words on the back and discovered that Carnes had never erased words in the writing process but only underlined them for emphasis as Arlene learned the song. They sang it for Kirt, and then they recorded it.

An annual Indian Week, at times called Lamanite Week, was also instigated, featuring Native American entertainment, artifacts, workshops, and symposia.^[22] It was begun in 1965 and drew many students and their parents and friends onto the BYU campus.^[23] It was only natural for Native Americans assembling for such a large event to enjoy getting together and feeling more comfortable on a large campus. Soon drums, dancers, and singers were putting on a display of Indian dances. Paul was somewhat concerned about traditional Indian dances that were performed at the Indian Week gatherings. He seemed to wrestle with whether the dancing was merely social or actually religious. As a result, a ban on powwow-type dancing was imposed on Indian Week, and some student remonstrated. The dances were reinstated later and continued through future Indian Weeks and the subsequent multicultural events that superceded the "Indian" programs on campus.

The Department of Indian Education was organized in 1966 within the General College, with Royce Flandro as chairman.^[24] This allowed the formalization of a university entity to assist American Indian students coming to BYU. Royce and his staff could now help students coming from reservations and cities adapt to the environment of a major university while receiving moral and psychological support that might ensure their success in the face of a culture shock of academic and social complexities not previously experienced. The department goal was to help Indian students make the cultural change into academic life by placing them in smaller classes and by providing them with personal counseling. These efforts united with the social interaction among other Native American students and the BYU student population generally, retention rates improved dramatically, and many more American Indian students not only attended but graduated from BYU.

Efforts were also made to help American Indian Services personnel become familiar with reservation leaders. Early in Paul's assignment, Elder Packer made an appointment to take Paul to meet with Navajo tribal chairman, Raymond Nakai, and show him the newly completed Church film, *Bitter Wind*, a story about a Navajo youth whose parents struggled with alcohol addiction. When they arrived in Window Rock, a secretary informed them that the chairman would not be able to keep the appointment. Paul said: "The secretary was obviously . . . very embarrassed over the fact that apparently Chief [Nakai] had deliberately chosen to absent himself from this appointment to which he had agreed. Elder Packer then suggested to the secretary that since we had come down for that purpose he would like to be able to show this film to some people. He urged the secretary to invite different people in this large, spacious building that accommodated a number of different Navajo leaders, to be a part of this premier showing. A fairly large room was provided and we had about ten or twelve Navajo people attend the premier showing."^[25]

While Elder Packer and Paul were disappointed with the chairman's poor response to their invitation, Paul arranged to come back another time and took Wilson Sorenson, the president of the Utah Technical College (now Utah Valley State College), when he visited again. Chairman Nakai had a friendly visit with them for about an hour. He was invited to visit BYU and did so a few months later. During his visit he spoke to faculty and was taken to the BYU Motion Picture Studio, where he saw the film *Bitter Wind*. He loved it. By coincidence, the BYU performing group "Curtain Time USA," headed by Janie Thompson, had a performance scheduled at the George Albert Smith Fieldhouse.

Chairman Nakai was invited to attend, and he later asked if the group could come to the reservation and perform. A concurrent performance at Arizona State University by the group provided the finances for a reservation stopover in Window Rock.

Years later, in 1971, Janie Thompson would again visit the reservation, but this time with the Lamanite Generation from BYU. By then Paul Felt would be mission president there. Janie turned virtually all of her time and attention to the development of talented young Native Americans through the Lamanite Generation. In later years the name of the group would be changed to the Living Legends.

Native American student enrollment climbed through the 1960s. Arrangements were made so that students were able to take classes at the Trade Technical Institute of Vocational Schooling in Provo while attending BYU, allowing them to combine academic and vocational opportunities. This caused other reservations to take note of the significant educational opportunities available in Provo for their students. Using BYU faculty and resources, Paul Felt began trying to reach out to reservations that were interested in projects that might assist their people economically. By the 1972–73 school year, 494 Indian students were enrolled at BYU.

Institute projects on reservations were divided into three categories. Type A projects were local Church projects supporting members and sponsored by an LDS ecclesiastical unit. Type B projects were contractual between BYU and tribal or band leaders with the support of local ecclesiastical units. Type C projects were those in which BYU acted solely in a consulting role to assist tribal or band leaders. ^[26]

Several BYU faculty freely gave of their time and effort to the Institute. Dr. James R. Clark of Religious Education helped with necessary research, while Robert Blair assisted with Native American history and languages.

They exerted much effort in aiding economic development projects among Indian tribes in Montana. ^[27] Dr. Raymond B. Farnsworth helped with agricultural projects relative to soil and water management. He was called upon to testify before a 1984 Presidential Commission on Indian Reservation Economies in Page, Arizona, regarding BYU's efforts to help Indians with agriculture. He reported that the institute had been involved in over one hundred projects between

1965 and 1984. ^[28] Earlier, in 1982, Dr. Farnsworth had been honored by American Indian Services in late 1982 after his retirement from BYU. He had assisted with Native American projects that stretched from Alaska to Mexico. ^[29]

When Dale took over as director, he determined to increase the number of projects being sponsored and knew that an airplane would help him get around to projects much more cheaply than would be the case otherwise. He was able to initiate several new farming projects across the Navajo and Pueblo Reservations. While serving as mission president, Dale had seen missionary work among the Pueblos almost come to a halt at times because of various circumstances, and these new projects seemed to be another way to foster helpful relationships with leaders and residents. One old Pueblo leader was a little doubtful about Dale's intentions when he visited and offered farming assistance. Dale said, "The old chief looked at me and asked, 'What do you really want?' I told him that we wanted to share with him a better way of life. He said, 'That's good and fine, but we'll take the farming programs first.'" ^[30]

It is interesting that Dale would end up helping Native Americans by providing seeds and farming implements donated to American Indian Services, thus helping them with gardens and farms in much the same way as his great grandfather Henry, grandfather Thomas, and father, Wesley, sought to feed and foster the pioneer communities immediately north of Salt Lake City.

Helping with farming and gardening projects was not the only thing Dale was involved in among American Indians. One day President Spencer W. Kimball called and asked if he would go down to Moccasin, Utah, to try to mediate a dispute that had erupted between the in-town Mormons and the reservation Indians over the digging of a well. The townspeople were upset that the Indians were digging a well on a hill above the town, feeling that their town wells would be compromised. The town had closed and locked a gate that prohibited access to the well-digging project, and the reservation had retaliated by limiting access to the town. Dale took President Jackson of the Kanab Stake as well as Stewart Durrant of the Church's Lamanite Committee to help with the negotiations. The two groups sat separately, and the air was thick with discontent and indignation when they arrived at the meeting place. No one spoke. Dale recorded:

I thought I would just wait until I had the chance to hear both sides to see if there was some way we could negotiate a treaty or an understanding. I was surprised when the tribal leader said, "The first person we would like to hear from is Dale Tingey." It gave me no time to prepare to do anything; I had expected him to call someone different, like their stake president. I didn't even have enough time to see how

volatile the situation was. It left me with the responsibility to start the negotiations. I started out by saying that for many years they had worked to help each other, that this was not time to destroy that relationship, and that we should be able to work something out that was agreeable to both sides. To my amazement two or three Indians said, "That's right." They continued to talk of some of the cowboys from Moccasin with whom they had been friends, and they wanted to know why they were doing this to them. [The townspeople] began to explain that if [the Indians] drilled a well above [the town], then they would not have enough water. . . . It opened up a good discussion and ended on a friendly note with the agreement that they would work things out together. It was a great blessing because I had been praying that we could bring peace and good will back around, but I also prayed that they would be the ones to take the lead of the whole thing and work it out for themselves, which they did.^[31]

Dale felt that the Lord had intervened and saved the two groups from further division and rancor. Diligent prayer and a willingness to step into issues and faithfully pray for things to work out seems to have been a common feature of Dale's approach to life.

[1] Berrett, *A Miracle*, 183.

[2] Ernest L. Wilkinson and Leonard J. Arrington, eds., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), 3:507.

[3] Ernest L. Wilkinson to S. Lyman Tyler, memorandum, 17 November 1960, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; hereafter L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

[4] John T. Bernhard to S. Lyman Taylor, memorandum, 24 August 1959, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

[5] S. Lyman Tyler to Ernest L. Wilkinson, memorandum, 8 September 1959, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

[6] John T. Bernhard to S. Lyman Tyler, memorandum, 22 March 1960, L. Tom Perry Special Collections; for fall 1960, \$3,500 (including \$1,200 for research); for 1961 calendar year, \$10,000 (\$4,000 for research).

[7] S. Lyman Tyler was appointed director on 30 September 1960 and Robert Gwilliam was appointed secretary. Council members were also approved: Spencer W. Kimball, Mark E. Petersen, Harvey L. Taylor, Boyd K. Packer, J. Edwin Baird, Margaret Keller, John Sorenson, and Ernest L. Wilkinson (ex officio) Qohn T. Bernhard to S. Lyman Tyler, memorandum, 30 September 1960, L. Tom Perry Special Collections).

[8] Ernest L. Wilkinson to S. Lyman Tyler, memorandum, 25 July 1961, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

[9] Ernest L. Wilkinson to S. Lyman Tyler, memorandum, 17 November 1960, L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

[10] Paul E. Felt and S. Lyman Tyler, "The Institute of American Indian Studies at Brigham Young University," *BYU Studies* 6, no. 3 (fall 1964): 52–54.

[11] Several memos dated from 1 February to 1 March 1963, in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, show Lyman responding to direct questioning by Ernest Wilkinson regarding institute activities and expenditures.

[12] John T. Bernhard to S. Lyman Tyler, memorandum, 20 November 1961, L. Tom Perry Special Collections. John Bernard encouraged Lyman to "take the initiative as Director of the Institute!" and not to "act too gun-shy, even if you have to be a super diplomat!" Lyman was encouraged to assert himself and interact more boldly with President Wilkinson.

[13] Paul E. Felt, letter to Dale T. Tingey, dated 1 August 1990, in Dale T. Tingey, *The History of American Indian Services and Research Center* (Provo, Utah: n.p., n.d.), 11.

[14] Paul E. Felt, "*I Remember When*": *Personal History of Paul E. Felt*, typescript (Provo, Utah: n.p., n.d.), 101.

[15] Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), 4:352.

- [16] “New Focus on Indians,” *Church News*, 22 February 1964, 8–9. Dale L. Shumway (SWIM, 55–57) was adviser in the Indian Education office; Dr. S. Lyman Tyler, BYU Librarian, “directed the research into all phases of Indian history and culture as head of the Institute of American Indian Studies.”
- [17] Felt, “*I Remember When*,” 101.
- [18] “Indian Committee Organized,” *Improvement Era*, September 1948, 580.
- [19] Ernest L. Wilkinson and W. Cleon Skousen, *Brigham Young University: A School of Destiny* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), 737.
- [20] Afton Felt (Paul Felt’s wife) interview, 2 October 2001, interviewed by author.
- [21] Arlene Nofchissi Williams interview, 10 January 2002, interviewed by author.
- [22] Felt, “*I Remember When*,” 107.
- [23] “American Indian Week” of 24–29 April 1967 was announced from the American Indian Education Department House of Jacob on 14 April 1967 as the “third successive year” (see UA 552, box 1, folder 6; L. Tom Perry Special Collections).
- [24] Wilkinson and Skousen, *Brigham Young University*, 736–37.
- [25] Felt, “*I Remember When*,” 102.
- [26] Hal Williams, ed., *The History of American Indian Services and Research Center* (Provo, Utah: n.p., n.d.), 17–18.
- [27] Williams, *History of American Indian Services*, 21.
- [28] Williams, *History of American Indian Services*, 25–26.
- [29] “Farnsworth Honored by AIS,” *Buffalo Hide* 5, no. 5 (1982): 4. The *Buffalo Hide* was the official Publication of American Indian Services at BYU from 1978 until 1987.
- [30] Tingey journal, 93.
- [31] Tingey journal, 95–96.