

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 1, 1902.*

*To Agents, Allotting Agents,  
School Superintendents, and Teachers:*

Attention is called to Office circular of March 19, 1890, in regard to the naming of Indians, which is hereby amplified and reissued.

As allotment work progresses the need is emphasized of using utmost care to preserve among Indians family names. As Indians become citizens of the United States, under the allotment act, the inheritance of property is governed by the laws of the respective States, and it will cause needless confusion and doubtless considerable ultimate loss to the Indians if no attempt is made to have the different members of a family known by the same family name on the records and by general reputation.

The Indian is now half way between the old life and the new and his name should indicate it. Among other customs of white people Indians should adopt our system of family names, but, at the same time, the original Indian names should be retained as far as feasible. The practice of substituting English for Indian names, especially without regard to a family surname, should be discontinued. Doubtless in many cases the Indian word is difficult to pronounce and to remember; but in many other cases the Indian word is as short and as euphonious as the English word that is substituted, while, other things being equal, the fact that it is an Indian name makes it more appropriate. Often a name which seems difficult at first sight can easily be shortened by dropping repetitious syllables and spelling phonetically.

The allotment roll, so far as practicable, should, like the family resister, group the allottees according to their family relation, and start each allottee with a reasonable family name. Each child at school should retain that name. To give school boys and girls fanciful names or the names of patrons, ignoring a family name, is a wrong to them and tends to endless confusion and ultimately to litigation.

In helping Indians to adopt family names the following principles should be kept in mind:

(1) Establish as the family name the name of the father. If his name is easily pronounced, as, say, "On e hatch" or "Mi ah vis," it should be retained. Among the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, for instance, almost every name was found to be not only pronounceable but musical. If the name is too long, it will be found possible in nearly every case to abbre-



viate it and yet retain enough of the original to make its derivation recognizable. The Indians themselves often do this.

(2) Care should be taken in case of abbreviation to retain the root word and to avoid forming new words that are of evil significance or disagreeable to the Indians. Where there are many vowels drop out the repetitious and not the essential syllables. The Indians should be consulted as to the change.

(3) If, after careful consideration, the Indian word is found to be too long or too difficult, it may be retained in translation; but the translation should be conventionalized and written as one word, as, for example, Blackwolf, Blackbear, etc. There is no reason why the name of an Indian should mean any specific thing to the white man.

(4) Foolish, cumbersome, or uncouth translations which would handicap a self-respecting person should not be tolerated. For example, "Ghost-faced Woman," "Tail feathers coming," "Guts," "Drunkard," and all such translations (often made by cowboys or ignorant interpreters) should be dropped from the rolls. A similar meaning can often be found which will make the name unobtrusive. For instance, "Dog turning round" might better be translated "Turning Dog" or "Whirling Dog," and spelled as one word—Turningdog. But as Indians often have two names, the better of the two should be chosen.

(5) Soubriquets, or nicknames, such as "Tobacco," "Mogul," "Coffee," should not be tolerated. They are degrading, and as an Indian or his children gain in education and culture they will be annoyed by a designation which has been fastened upon them and of which they can not rid themselves without difficulty.

(6) Spell the name, whether Indian or translation, as one word, and do not use hyphens, as Onehatch or Miahvis.

(7) So far as practicable the Indian name which the parent has given the child should be preferred to an English name, using the father's name as a surname. For instance, the actual names of a Kiowa family are as follows: Gunoui, Mrs. Dāōn Gonoui, Inauli Gunoui, Ysima Gunoui, Zāpko Gunoui, Imguna Gunoui—all simple to write and easily spoken. If English first names seem necessary they should be plain and simple—John, James, Henry, Mary, Alice, Ellen—not "fancy names," nor the names of famous people which hereafter are liable to excite ridicule.

(8) Where persons have already been named by others than their parents, and are widely known by such names among both white people and red, the name may be retained as a prefix to the father's name used as the family name. For instance, Carrie Pendleton should be Carrie Pendleton Wehu or Carrie Wehu.

(9) Wherever possible the consent of parents should be secured to the names given their children, and the reason for giving and import-

ance of retaining such names should be fully explained. If the names they have given are not easily pronounced they may be induced to rename their children.

(10) Allotment rolls that have already been made should be annotated so as to show in addition to the impracticable names under which the allotments have been made the modified names which are hereafter to be known—especially in the case of minors.

(11) Suggestions as to the spelling of names which were given in connection with the family register are repeated here:

The following suggestions are given as to the spelling of the names, so that a fairly consistent and uniform system of spelling Indian names may be secured. But if any systematic spelling has already been adopted at an agency, it will be well to adhere to that, as change in the spelling of names leads to confusion:

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR SPELLING.

a	as in father, far.	u	as in pull, book.
ā	as in fate, tame.	ū	as in mute, acute.
ǎ	as in fat, man.	ŭ	as in tub, fun.
au	as in fawn, fault, fall.	oo	as in boot, fruit.
e	as in net, rest.	oi	as in oil, boy.
ee	as in meet, neat.	ou	as in pound, drown.
i	as in pin, pity.	j	as in join, gymnast.
y	as in pine, rhyme.	g	as in go, get.
o	as in not, pond.	ch	as in church, chill.
ō	as in note, bone.		

Instead of c before a vowel, use either s or k. Use no final silent e.

As soon as they can be prepared specimen pages from an allotment roll will be printed and sent you, which will serve as a guide, showing how native names can be modified and preserved, and indicate family relations; but meanwhile the suggestions of this circular should be acted upon *at once*.

Particularly in schools and on Indian employee rolls every effort must be made to ascertain and adopt the actual names of the Indians or such as should be permanent designations. A copy of this circular must be furnished every teacher, and these rules must be carefully observed in enrolling pupils. After Indians' names have been simplified and written a few times, so that the teacher has the outline as well as the sound of the word in mind, very little difficulty will be experienced in using them.

Yours, respectfully,

W. A. JONES,  
*Commissioner.*