

Reverend Sherman Coolidge



Sovereignty and Citizenship



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Tribal nations are sovereign, and do not derive their sovereignty from federal, state, or local governments. Additionally, Native Americans practiced self-government long before the Declaration of Independence or the United States Constitution. Today, Native Americans have the right to vote in federal, state, and local elections, as well as voting in tribal elections and may have dual citizenship in the United States and their tribe.

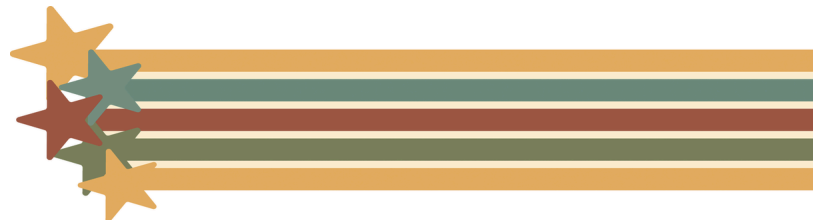
In 1924, the Indian Citizenship Act (ICA), also known as the Snyder Act, extended citizenship to Native Americans. Prior to this, American Indians were denied citizenship in both the Constitution and the 14th Amendment. And despite the promise of citizenship in 1924, the ICA did not guarantee voting rights since voter eligibility is determined by individual states. In Colorado, Native Americans did not have guaranteed voting rights until 1970, five years after the Voting Rights Act.

Although obstacles still prevent Native Americans from voting, recent Colorado legislation including House Bill 1278, 2019: specifies that an eligible voter who lives on a reservation but does not have a residence address recognized by the USPS may register to vote using the address of the tribal council headquarters or any other address approved by the secretary of the tribal council. The bill also permits tribal councils to request voter service, polling locations, and ballot drop-off locations on reservations.

Local resident Reverend Sherman Coolidge, Arapaho, was a prominent Episcopal leader and a tireless advocate for American Indian rights and sovereignty. Born Des-che-wah (He Runs on Top), Coolidge was adopted by an American military officer and his wife. After graduating from Divinity School in 1884, he spent 26 years as a missionary to the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. In 1911 Coolidge co-founded the Society for American Indians, the first national American Indian rights organization founded by Native Americans. He also served on the "Committee of 100," advising President Calvin Coolidge on American Indian policy. Post World War I, national support for Native citizenship grew when 12,000 Native Americans "proved to be courageous and rendered distinguished service," reflected President Coolidge. Today, the USO notes that, "Native Americans serve in the United States' Armed Forces at five times the national average over any other race or ethnic group."



Colorado Springs
PIONEERS MUSEUM



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COOLIDGE DECRIES INJUSTICE OF BARRING NATIVE INDIANS FROM AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

"Altho the Indian has fought in every war this country ever engaged



Canon
Coolidge

in since the war of the revolution, he is denied the privilege of citizenship, and it was not until I was 50 and had proved up on 360 acres of land that I was allowed to vote in Wyoming because as a boy I had lived on a reservation," the Rev. Sherman Coolidge, pastor of the Church of the Good Shepherd, said in an address which he delivered at the Open Forum meeting, held in the court house yesterday

gion with some difficulty and at considerable expense. He had planned an European tour this year until induced by many requests, among them that of the Legion, to forsake the trip for another concert tour of America.

Thru his phonograph records and occasional broadcasts over the radio, Werrenrath has gained a host of admirers among Colorado Springs music lovers, and millions heard him sing at the National Press club's banquet for Colonel Lindbergh at Washington Saturday night, when he was the only soloist. Altho many have never had the opportunity before of hearing him in person. Werrenrath sang here once some years ago.

Werrenrath is generally recognized by critics as America's leading baritone. He is distinctly an American product, having been born in Brooklyn, N. Y., and educated in this country. In addition to numerous concert tours, he has sung with the Metropolitan Opera company.

The Legion committee in charge of the concert consists of Thomas F. McCaffery, Jr., chairman; William I. Howbert, Frank Evans, Jr., John J. Lipsey and Darius Allen.

afternoon, on "Christianity and the Indians."

"The Indian is a subject foreign to most of the American people for they are so engrossed, in material things that they do not give much thought to other things," Dr. Coolidge said. "Even religion, the most important thing is put in the background. I was born a little savage, but I always resented that term being applied to my people because I know they are peace-loving, hospitable, generous and deeply religious. Yet they have been called 'Red Devils.'"

Befogged by Sect Squabbles.

"The Indian cannot understand the religious difference of the white people, for Indians all have the same religion, and to them one religion is just as holy as another. The Indians have their sun dance and just because Indians say their prayers at sunset, and go thru their sun dance at the break of day the white people take it that the Indian is a sun worshiper. But that sun dance is a deeply religious observance. By the Arapahoes it is called the sage hen dance.

"If you will look at the pottery, and the basketwork of the Indians you will find worked in the pattern the figure of a bird. By the Indians that bird is known as the thunderbird. To him the thunderbird is the agent of the Almighty, and when it thunders that is his voice. When an Arapahoe is under oath he says, 'in the presence of the thunderbird may he strike me down if this is wrong.' The Indian does not take the name of God in vain, to him that name is too sacred. Doesn't that show that the Indian is more religious than the white man? There is no synonym of profanity in the Arapahoe language. If the Indian wants to be profane he has to borrow the English language. They very soon learn swearing from the white man, and they do it very artistically.

In God and Hereafter.

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"So when I was sent as a missionary to my own people I knew they believed in God, and the hereafter, and that they believed lying was wrong and cheating was wrong. I knew they had a religion that was somewhat like that of the Jew who believes in an Almighty and Everliving God. The Indians also have a tradition of a universal flood. When I went as a missionary I built the Christian religion on their own religion. I knew they had a lot of foolish superstitions. I told them what those superstitions were. I tried to follow St. Paul's policy, 'I do not want what is yours but you.' and 'to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.' To test all things of the white people to leave some of them out, whisky and things like that, but to hold fast to that which is good.

"Whenever war came the Indians have always rallied to the colors and fought the enemies of this country. Seventeen thousand three hundred thirteen Indians went to the front in the World war. To you perhaps that will not sound many, but you must remember they were drawn from a population of 700,000 or 800,000. Three hundred fifty thousand Indians are now under direct control of the government. Washington and Jefferson knew it was a good thing to have the Indian friendly to the United States. During the revolutionary war Washington used them as scouts. At the time of the World war Indians were in every branch of the service they were used as both scouts and snipers. Indians knew how to cross No Mans land and bring back a prisoner without firing a shot. I had an Indian boy visit me who was in the marines during the war. In one of the fights of the Revolutionary war an Indian chief mobilized his men and aided materially in that fight against the British, and the Daughters of the Revolution have caused a tablet to be placed on the spot where many of them were killed.

Uncle Holds Purse String.

"People who have done what we have done should have the privileges of citizenship. The government has millions of dollars belonging to the Indians. If it would let loose of that, many an Indian man and woman would be glad to attend a college and university, and this money could be put to no better purpose."

The speaker for next Sunday will be the Rev. James McDermott, pastor of the Church of the Sacred Heart, whose subject will be, "The Situation in Mexico."

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