White Man's Club
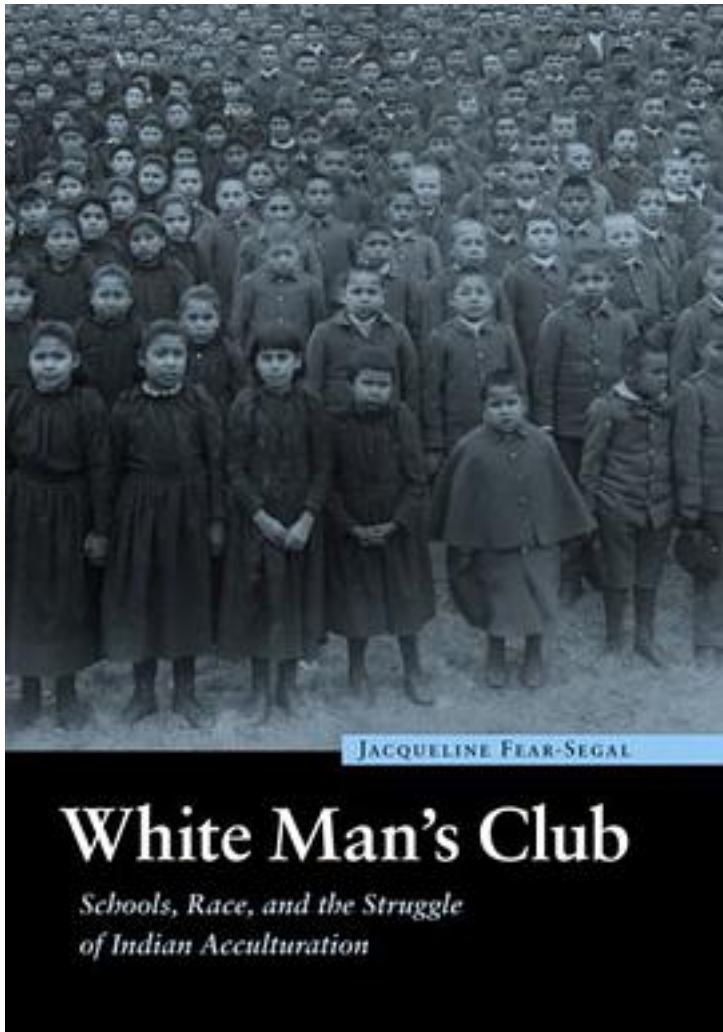

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Tens of thousands of Indian children filed through the gates of government schools to

be trained as United States citizens. Part of a late-nineteenth-century campaign to eradicate Native cultures and communities, these institutions became arenas where whites debated the terms of Indian citizenship, but also where Native peoples resisted the power of white schooling and claimed new skills to protect and redefine tribal and Indian identities. In "White Man's Club", schools for Native children are examined within the broad framework of race relations in the United States for the first time. Jacqueline Fear-Segal analyzes multiple schools and their differing agendas and engages with the conflicting white discourses of race that underlay their pedagogies. She argues that federal schools established to Americanize Native children did not achieve their purpose; instead they progressively racialized American Indians. A far reaching and bold account of the larger issues at stake, "White Man's Club" challenges previous studies for overemphasizing the reformers' overtly optimistic assessment of the Indians' capacity for assimilation, and contends that a covertly racial agenda characterized this educational venture from the start. Asking the reader to consider the legacy of nineteenth century acculturation policies, "White Man's Club" incorporates the life stories and voices of Native students and traces the schools' powerful impact into the twenty-first century. Fear - Segal draws upon a rich array of source material. Traditional archival research is interwoven with analysis of maps, drawings, photographs, the built environment, and supplemented by oral and family histories. Creative use of new theoretical and interpretive perspectives brings fresh insights to the subject matter.

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