

The Alice Piper Project

Summaries of Alice Piper Readings

Wollenberg (1976) All Deliberate Speed – Chapter 4 – The Tragedy of Indian Education

In this chapter, Wollenberg summarizes the history of Native American education in California. He describes the development of reservation and boarding schools in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He explains that some Native children were able to attend public schools as early as 1892, because the Federal Government agreed to pay tuition expenses. However, that changed in 1893 when the state legislature amended the law to require Native children to attend separate schools. Community activists and sympathetic educators fought against these laws in the early 1900s. But the California legislature persisted creating a law that stated, “in school districts in California where the United States government has established an Indian school, or in an area not to exceed three miles from the said Indian school, the Indian children of the district or districts, eligible for attendance upon such Indian school, may not be admitted to the district school.” This, he explains, was the law Alice Piper and her family successfully challenged in 1924.

Wollenberg explains that in 1921, local school trustees in Big Pine urged Native Americans to vote for a measure that would finance the construction of new educational facilities with the understanding that Native children would be admitted to the school. However, in 1923, the trustees refused to honor that promise. He reviews the facts of the case and explains that this decision, in conjunction with the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act by Congress, which granted citizenship to all Native Americans born in the United States, opened up public schools for all Native American children in California. Wollenberg specifically addresses the *Piper* case on pages 91-98.

Blalock-Moore (2012) Piper v. Big Pine School District of Inyo County: Indigenous Schooling and Resistance in the Early Twentieth Century

In this thesis, Blalock-Moore provides a detailed account of the case, relying on archival documents such as court documents and letters, newspapers, and oral histories. Like Wollenberg, she outlines the history of segregated education in California and in Owens Valley, specifically. She provides several details of all the parties involved, including, but not limited to, the attorneys, activists, and community members. Her thesis provides the most newspaper coverage of the case.

Martinez-Cola (2022) *The Bricks Before Brown*-Chapter 4-*Piper v. Big Pine*—the Forgotten

In this chapter, Martinez-Cola, like Wollenberg and Blalock-Moore, summarizes the state of Native American education across the country and in California. In her account of the case, she provides more photographs of Alice Piper and outlines the modern-day efforts to memorialize Alice Piper in the form of a life-sized statue. She also analyzes the case using TribalCrit, which is a branch of Critical Race Theory. While it is an academic book, Martinez-Cola writes about Alice Piper and her family in an accessible manner that could be understood by high school students.