SOCIAL REVIEW

The American Indian

THE 1960 Census listed 523,591 Indians in the United States. In addition there were some 28,000 Aleuts and Eskimos in Alaska, eligible for the programs of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and who are generally considered part of the Indian population. The 1970 Census is expected to show a substantial increase, since at present Indian birth rates are about double those of the United States as a whole. Whatever the increase, the total will still be below the number of Indians—somewhere around one million—estimated to have been in what is now the United States when Columbus discovered America in 1492. During the next 400 years there was a steady decline in the Indian population, due to the steady advance of white settlers, wars with Americans attempting to push Indian tribes into reservations—the last Indian "uprising" was as late as 1891—disease and poverty. By 1900, Indians numbered only a quarter million. The 20th century has brought a salutary change.

Today's 600,000 to 700,000 Indians are found in all states. The ten states with the largest Indian population (in 1960) were

Arizona	83,387	South Dakota	25,794
Oklahoma	64,689	Montana	21,181
New Mexico	56,255	Washington	21,076
California	39,014	New York	16,491
North Carolina	38,129	Minnesota	15,496

An additional 11 states had between 15,000 and 5,000 Indians—Alaska, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Michigan, Oregon, Texas, Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada and Utah. (Any roll call of states reminds one of the debt to the Indians for hundreds of America's best known and most beloved place-names.)

More than half of today's Indians live on some 300 reservations, comprising over 53 million acres of land, distributed among nearly 300 different tribes. A considerable number, however, have left the reservations and make their homes wherever they wish.

Much reservation land, quite arid, especially in the Southwest, is used for cattle and sheep grazing. Many Indians depend upon the tourist trade for financial support. In the East many Indians, while retaining their family and racial ties, work in factories or on construction projects. Under the direction of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs—now headed by a full blood, Louis R. Bruce—efforts are being taken to assist Indians who have tried to eke out a living on their reservations. A considerable number of industrial plants have been built by private industry on reservations. Congress has also voted substantial sums to establish schools and vocational educational programs for Indian youth. Various church bodies have made enormous contributions for schools and programs for the Indians.

Since 1924 the Indian is an American citizen. He is free to leave the reservation and to move about like everyone else. He has the right to vote, must pay taxes and is subject to service in the armed forces like other Americans. Indian tribes, generally like other local communities, have their own governments, usually a tribunal council. Qualifications for voting in Indian tribal elections depend on tribal resolutions and ordinances.

While Indian lands—more than 50 million acres—are owned by Indian tribes or individual Indians, they are held in trust by the United States. The lands are used as a place for Indians to live, and also, so far as possible, to grow agricultural crops, timber, graze livestock, and as a base for economic development. At present, however, few reservations have enough resources to support their Indian residents.

American Indians speak more than 50 different Indian languages. Since 1900 the degree of illiteracy has steadily declined and an increasing number of Indians are able to speak, read and write English. English, indeed, is replacing the sign language as a means of intertribal communication. Today most Indian children are in school and are or will be literate. Some of them are being helped by grants and scholarships from the Bureau of Indian Affairs

and several private organizations to attend college.

If American Indians still have a long way to attain equality with America's other ethnic and racial groups, they have already come many steps on the path. President Nixon's special message to Congress this summer on Indian affairs is significant. Another is the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Louis R. Bruce, himself an Indian, appointed by Mr. Nixon.

There is another aspect concerning Indians and us all: The path we follow through time that can lead to our eternal home. On this path a young Indian girl, Venerable Kateri Tekakwitha, is a sure guide.

Bishop Edwin B. Broderick, Albany, N. Y., had Sept. 5, 1970, as a day of prayer in his diocese for the cause of Venerable Kateri. A Kateri Holy Hour was conducted by Father Joseph McBride, S.J., vice-postulator, at St. Peter Chapel, Fonda, N. Y., followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the Auriesville, N. Y., Shrine. Auriesville is Kateri Tekakwitha's birthplace and Fonda, once known as Gandaouaga, site of her baptism.

Marilyn Eynon Scott, poet laureate of Ohio State, has written the story of the passage of this Indian girl from paganism to Christianity and eternity in poetry. "Tekakwitha, Lily of the Mohawks," which follows, can be obtained from Rev. Joseph S. McBride, S.J., 12 Central Park Plaza, Buffalo, N. Y. 14214:

Tekakwitha, Mohawk maiden,
daughter of a chief,
knew the gossip of the grass,
the language of the leaf.

She heard the willow's shy lament,
the river's deep blue cry
and listened to the wind's white wrath,
the corn's bright tasseled sigh.

But always deep within her heart
there was a sound that stirred,
of something as elusive as
the darting humming bird.

Oh like a song it held her heart
and throbbed within her brain
as fragrant and refreshing as
the silver-arrowed rain.

But not until a Blackrobe came,
gaunt and strangely pale,
to place his hand upon her head
and tell a wondrous tale—

Of love and mercy and his God,
the great Rawenniio,
did Tekakwitha comprehend
the song she cherished so.

Then swifter than the pale-blue lightning
there flashed across her mind
the village of her childhood and
Kahenta, mild and kind.

II

For deep in the Mohawk valley once,
in Ossernenon village
a proud young chief set forth one day
to hunt and burn and pillage.

And in Algonquin land he found
Kahenta, good and wise,
a Christian maiden with the peace
of brown hills in her eyes.

Kahenta bore the Mohawk chief
a slender, dark-eyed daughter
who learned and locked within her heart
the creed her mother taught her.

Kahenta bore a bright-skinned son
but brief the chief's delight
for through the valley stalked a scourge
whose breath was like a blight.

The brave, so bold in battle once,
a conquered warrior lay
and soon his wife and newborn son
fell victim to its prey.

But Tekakwitha, child of the Mohawks,
who could not write or read
(four summers old, in a pagan tribe)
clung to her mother's creed.

III

Although the epidemic left
its pock-marks on her face,
her uncle, now the tribe's new chief,
observed her youth and grace.

He knew her humble modesty,
her unassuming way,
would surely bring young braves to court
and win her hand some day.

He had no children of his own
and being shrewd and sage
he knew a strong young hunter could
provide for his old age.

And so it was that Tekakwitha,
orphaned and alone,
was soon adopted by her uncle,
treated as his own.

Then Tekakwitha, gentle maid,
obedient and good,
attended her new parents as
an Indian daughter should.

When other children hunted herbs
she had to stay behind;
the scourge that scarred her copper skin
had left her almost blind.

And she whose eyes once followed when
Areskoi, the sun,
leaped like a hunter across the sky
with arrows golden-spun,

No longer watched his ruddy hair
as it skimmed the tallest tree
or touched her mat of beaver skins
and plunged in a red-gold sea.

Within the darkened tent she sat
and sewed and dyed the pelts
or sorted rainbow-colored beads
and wove the wampum belts.

But as she cooked the elk and hare
and formed a wooden bowl,
the light of God was in her eyes,
His song was in her soul.

And when at last the Blackrobes came
her heart was softly stirred
to hear her mother's faith once more
reecho in each word.

Her uncle, Chief Iowerana,
at first would not relent
but fearing she might run away,
he gave a gruff consent.

Then Tekakwitha, Mohawk maiden,
felt the cooling water
bathe her brow as she became
Rawenniio's true daughter.

IV

One day Wild Eagle came to call,
a hunter brave and bold;
her uncle smiled for he was then
many summers old.

The young brave's words, though eloquent,
were just as well unsaid
for Tekakwitha had resolved
that she would never wed.

And from that day her life became
a persecuted path
of constant torture, taunts and threats
to fit the old chief's wrath.

She suffered humbly, patiently,
till heart could bear no more,
and weakened by disease and pain
she died at twenty-four.

Then swifter than Areskoi,
in the time of the deep white snow,
she skimmed the trees, the hills, the clouds,
to meet Rawenniio.

V

When all the Indian tales are told
no legend will endure
as that of Tekakwitha, baptized
Kateri, the Pure,

Whose face in life was sadly scarred
but radiant in death—
almost as though it had been touched
by the kiss of the Bridegroom's Breath!

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Fatima Group

BISHOP Sylvester Treinen of Boise, reported *The Wanderer,* Jan. 15, 1970, sounded a warning about a group headquartered in Coeur d'Alene, Ida., which has condemned Pope Paul and accused the American bishops of being in heresy because of recent changes in the Liturgy. *The Wanderer* report follows:

Formerly affiliated with the Blue Army, the group has since splintered from the Blue Army (an organization which has ecclesiastical approval) and now calls itself the Fatima Crusaders Center or the Mary Immaculate Queen of the Universe Center.

In his pastoral warning, Bishop Treinen said that "the Fatima Crusaders distribute literature by mail to many parts of the country. The literature is intended, among other things to spread devotion to Mary and to promote decency in dress. They conduct cell meetings for children of all ages, though most of their leadership-training courses on the high school level are held outside the State of Idaho. They also have a small school in the Rathdrum, Ida., area. . . ."

Bishop Treinen declared that he and several priest-theologians have "dialogued" on several occasions with members of the group. The bishop said that "for well over a year" members of the Fatima Crusaders "have considered the bishops and the priests of the United States as being in heresy because of the vernacular Eucharistic prayers in the Mass. Masses offered in English are invalid, they maintain. If they cannot attend Mass in Latin on Sunday, accord-

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