

# SCHOLARSHIPS AND ABC's

A UNITED THANK OFFERING STORY



I LOOKED WITH amazement at my friend. Mary had just asked me if I knew my ABC's. "Of course I know my ABC's," I snapped.

"I'm not talking about the alphabet," Mary retorted. "I'm asking if you know your *Americans Before Columbus* — the American Indians."

Without waiting for me to comment, she continued. "Do you know that—

"Instead of being the Vanishing American, current statistics show that the Indian population has doubled since 1900?

"That about one-half the Indian population is under twenty years of age?

"That twenty-five thousand Indians served in World War II, one of them being a member of the famous flag-raising group on Iwo Jima, and that twice that number worked in war industries?

"And that, according to another survey, the number of Indian students going beyond high school has jumped in the last decade from 500 to 5,000?"

When she paused for breath, I asked Mary what this was all about — which was really what she wanted me to say in the first place. I found out.

"I'm the United Thank Offering Chairman, and I give a brief report on one U.T.O. grant at each meeting of the Episcopal Churchwomen. Today I reported on the grant for scholarships for Indian young people in preparatory and high schools. Since you're a teacher, you'd be interested in what the United Thank Offering actually does."



Mary dug into her purse and took out a little leaflet which she handed to me. "This will tell you all about our program."

I thanked her and ran for my bus. I learned a great deal about my ABC's — *Americans Before Columbus*—by the time I reached my destination.

For instance:

The Episcopal Church has been the friend and helper of the Indian from the days of the great pioneer missionary bishops down to the present. The current United Thank Offering scholarship grant of \$60,000 is indicative of the continued concern for their welfare.

The young Indian of today is ambitious and enterprising. He seeks to take his rightful place in the government, education, and industry of this, his country.



For ten years the Episcopal Church, through its Home Department, has been giving financial assistance to young Indian students, thus making it possible for many to receive a college education.

Since 1960 these scholarships have been granted through the United Scholarship Service for American Indian Students. This association, founded in 1960, has spent much time in screening, counseling, and aiding students.

I then read something that proved disconcerting. Despite this assistance, the rate of those who drop out in their freshman year has been fifty to sixty per cent. They have not been able to keep pace with the increasingly higher standards now being set in colleges in this country. Consequently, it seemed wise

to center more attention and effort on the younger Indian students in the secondary schools so that they will be better prepared for the requirements of college.

The facts that followed were most heartening. Many of our Church-related preparatory schools have expressed interest in having American Indian boys and girls as members of their student bodies, not only to aid the Indian, but to broaden the perspective of the other students.

These schools stand ready to provide scholarship grants covering tuition, lodging, and meals for students who qualify. Additional funds are necessary, however, for travel, clothing, and incidental expenses.

At the present time the Episcopal Church has twenty boys and girls in its preparatory schools, but indications are that we should provide assistance for between fifty and sixty students per year beginning in 1965.

The questions that have been asked most often about these students are: What becomes of them after they graduate from college? Do they return to the reservations and resume the old pattern of tribal life?

And this is how the leaflet answered these questions:

A survey of the graduates who received scholarship assistance through the United Scholarship Service shows that some do return to, or near, the reservations, to help their people as teachers, nurses, and health educators. Several have chosen to do post-graduate work in medicine, education or theology.

Other jobs include accountant, clinical instructor in nursing, advisor to Indians in urban centers, teacher of mentally handicapped children, and volunteer in the Peace Corps—to name but a few.

In imagination I followed some of these graduates into their places in the world: the nurse whose ministrations touched many lives; the teacher who helped Indians adjust to the confused and frantic life of the big cities; those who volunteered for the Peace Corps . . . all of whom have given such great service for so small an investment.

My bus arrived at its destination. Our neighbor got on at the usual corner. On my way out, I passed her and couldn't resist saying "Do you know your ABC's?" as I placed the leaflet in her lap and stepped off the bus.

P. S. Now that you know your ABC's, why not pass this leaflet on to a friend?

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*Our gifts to the United Thank Offering have made and will continue to make important differences to many people throughout our nation and our world.*

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