

# THE CHEMAWA AMERICAN

H. E. WADSWORTH, Superintendent

VOLUME 18

JUNE, 1916

NUMBER 9

## YESTERDAY AND TODAY WITH MY TRIBE

THE PIMA INDIANS, *By Daniel N. Thomas*



**B**EFORE the advent of the white man in the New World, there lived along the banks of the Gila River in southwestern Arizona, an industrious, peace-loving, and independent Indian tribe, called Hohokam. The real name of this tribe is not known, but the word Hohokam is a Pima Indian word, meaning "that which is extinct."

How they passed away, no one knew. But while the red man in the East was struggling against a mightier race for the maintenance of his dominions, there came into the light of history my tribe, the Pima Indians, who became successors to the Hohokam.

The word Pima was adopted by the Spaniards who first came in contact with these Indians. A Spaniard on questioning an Indian received the reply "pimache" which means "I do not understand." The Spaniard subtracted the last syllable of the word and thus originated the name of my tribe, "Pima Indians."

When the Declaration of American Independence was signed in 1776 the Pimas saw the first glimpse of the white man's religion in the Franciscan fathers, but no instruction was given them concerning the new way until another century had passed away, the Padres being desirous as one of them said of "proceeding with circumspection."

The years which witnessed the Negro in slavery also witnessed my people enslaved in a world of superstition. It found them engaged in bloody wars with neighboring tribes, mainly the Yama and Apache Indians. Yet in spite of all these, it also found them an independent people. A century later while the Negro was being emancipated from his bondage, and the dreams of General Armstrong were beginning to put on reality, the Pimas saw the life-giving water of the Gila River gradually passing out of their hands, an event that in later years was to decide their destiny.