extraordinary adversity. The Winnebagos lost their lands in Wisconsin in 1837 through a blatantly illegal treaty. About half the tribe refused to move. The government hunted them down, rounded them up, and shipped them west. Even so, some Winnebagos filtered home and managed to reestablish themselves in their ancestral lands.

Such minor victories only served to emphasize the massive human devastation wrought among the Indian peoples by the removals. Opponents of removal could view it as a conspiracy between the federal government, the state governments, and large numbers of their citizenry to defraud Indians. Supporters of removal claimed it was in the best interest of the Indians. Faced with the apparently overwhelming strength of the invaders, the native Americans endured.

In Oklahoma the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and Creeks began painfully rebuilding their republics. The exiled peoples north of the Ohio began rebuilding their lives. To their west powerful independent nations remained, but the context of Indian lives had altered. The Americans had the power to dictate, and the force and patience to impose their will. As they boldly annexed Texas in 1845, it was clear they no longer needed Indian peoples as Europeans had once needed them, and Indians lacked other Europeans to play off against them.

Mexico, the heir to Spain, would soon be forced from the Southwest. And outside of Oregon, which would be ceded the following year, the English had already withdrawn from the competition. Indian peoples faced a new and challenging world. Their successes of the eighteenth century seemed behind them.

—RICHARD WHITE

WILLIAM APESS

As Indian removal proceeded and Indian power diminished, white Americans pushed claims of Indian racial inferiority and white superiority. Whites proclaimed themselves the darlings of God, destiny, and history. But nonwhite voices, too, embraced the language of race.

William Apess was a Pequot Indian whose parents were laborers. He lived in New England, a society where Indian peoples survived only on the margins. Deserted by his parents, abused and beaten by his often drunk grandparents, indentured to neighboring whites, he overcame his own problems with drink. He sought not to escape his own broken past, but to build upon it, to ally it with other pasts, to turn it into a weapon.

He became a Christian and a Methodist minister, but he maintained a strong sense of his Indian identity, and he came to live in the Indian town of Mashpee on Cape Cod. In 1833 as a literate, Christian Indian, he addressed a white audience in print:

Now let me ask you, white man, if it is a disgrace for to eat, drink, and sleep with the image of God, or sit, or walk and talk with them. Or have you the folly to think that the white man, being one in fifteen or sixteen, are the only beloved images of God? Assemble all nations together in your imagination, and then let the whites be seated among them. . . . Now suppose these skins were put together, and each skin had its national crimes written upon it—which skin do you think would have the greatest? I will ask one question more. Can you charge the Indians with robbing a nation almost of their whole continent, and murdering their own women and children, and then depriving the remainder of their lawful rights, that nature and God require them to have? And to cap the climax, rob another nation, to till their grounds and welter out their days under the lash with hunger and fatigue. . . . I should look at all the skins, and I know that when I cast my eye upon that white skin, and if I saw those crimes written upon it, I should enter my protest against it immediately and cleave to that which is more honorable.