

“A GREAT CURIOSITY” –
THE ROLE OF PERFORMANCE AT CARLISLE INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL,
1879-1904

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INTRODUCTION:

Setting the Stage – Carlisle and the Context of Indian Performance

On the first of November 1879, Richard Henry Pratt opened his off-reservation school for Indian students in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He intended to assimilate his students into white society through instruction in the English language, skill in “civilized industry,” integration and the abandonment of tribe, and book education.¹ Pratt and the Carlisle Industrial Indian School’s administration strove to present an Indian image to the American public which contrasted with commonly held stereotypes yet showed the need for assimilation, taking pains to ensure that the general public perceived the students as assimilable, patriotic, cultivated boys and girls. Though Pratt often expressed an aversion to “show Indians,” Carlisle relied upon the audience’s expectations of Indian performance to display representations of Indianness. The performances, however, often presented strikingly contradictory images and ideas, which were complicated further by the students’ participation in the creation of these images.

Pratt initially conceived of the possibility of an off-reservation Indian boarding school during his time as an Indian jailor. In 1874, a group of allied Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe, rather than accept the newly established government boundaries, insisted upon freedom to hunt. General Philip Sheridan, a Union general in the Civil War and active participant in the frontier wars of the 1860s and 70s, suggested to President Ulysses S. Grant that the government select the “worst of the masses” and send them to a remote Eastern military fort

¹ Richard Henry Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School: Its Origin, Purposes, Progress and the Difficulties Surmounted* (Carlisle, PA: Hamilton Library Association, 1908), p. 42.

“until they had learned it was hopeless for them to continue further hostilities.” Officials selected Pratt, an army man with roots in the Civil War and eight years experience in Indian Territory, to escort seventy-two chained and shackled prisoners from Fort Sill, Oklahoma to Fort Marion in Saint Augustine, Florida.²

Once in Florida, the war department granted Pratt freedom of judgment in the methods of the prisoners’ care.³ As a firm believer that “Indians were entitled to a full, fair chance for development in every way,” Pratt did his best to provide material and educational resources for his prisoners.⁴ After Pratt had their shackles removed and their hair cut, he outfitted the prisoners in military attire and taught them “how to be neat in the care of their clothing.” Due to apprehension on the part of the prisoners toward the guards, Pratt risked his commission by organizing the prisoners into a company and loaning them old guns so they might guard themselves.⁵ Pratt provided daily instruction in the English language and encouraged opportunities for prison industries and outside employment.⁶

It was here that Pratt realized the potential for performance in shaping public image. Believing it was his duty to correct prejudice in both whites and Indians, Pratt invited visitors so they might judge the Indians by their appearance and manners, rather than through race hatred and false history. The Fort Marion prisoners taught archery, offered fishing excursions, sold pictographic drawings as “curiosities,” and created Indian crafts (such as bows, arrows, and painted fans) to sell to the white community and potential sympathizers. Government officials, writers, artists, and northern vacationers came to see the “hostiles,” and Pratt arranged for the

² Linda F. Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School: Carlisle, Pennsylvania 1879-1918* (Harrisburg, PA: Huggins Printing Company, 2002), pp. 2-5.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁴ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 6.

⁵ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, ed. Robert M. Utley (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 118-120.

⁶ Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School*, pp. 4-8.

visitors to trade and talk with the Indians to promote their accomplishments. After much cajoling by visitors, Pratt allowed the prisoners to dance publicly twice, yet thereafter refused to comply with further requests, preferring the performance of industry and discipline. However, Pratt noted in his autobiography that “forever after that, [had] I been so minded I could have handled the Indians more wisely and out “Buffalo Billed” Mr. Cody in his line.”⁷

After the prisoners’ release in 1878, Pratt worked diligently to find a place in the east where they might continue their education, fearing that a return to reservations would dissipate their progress. Facing prejudice and fear from most northern white agricultural and mechanical schools, the former prisoners were accepted by Hampton Institute in Virginia, an educator of recently-freed slaves. Pratt quickly came to believe, however, that rather than combine the Indian and “negro” problems, Indians needed to create their own fellowship with whites.⁸ This belief prompted Pratt to request permission to open an off-reservation boarding school for the assimilation of Indian students.

Pratt’s firm belief that the Declaration of Independence gave “both races, in words, at least, a real place in our national family” drove the mission of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. For Pratt, this meant that the United States government should allow Indians the same rights and privileges accorded to whites through educational, industrial, and moral training, making Indians “equal competitors for the benefits of American life.”⁹ A direct product of this mindset, Carlisle offered its students a type of “citizenship training” which taught the fundamental principles of democratic government, the institutional and political structure of American society, the rights of citizens under the constitution, and the role and sanctity of law in

⁷ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 120-121, and Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School*, pp. 4-8. For a detailed look at the Indian war prisoners at Fort Marion, see Brad D. Lookingbill’s *War Dance at Fort Marion: Plains Indian War Prisoners* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

⁸ Donal F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995). p. 29.

⁹ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 5.

democratic society. This also entailed engendering devotion to the nation and flag through the internalization of national myths, including those emphasizing western migration, which justified the removal of Indian populations.¹⁰

Besides Carlisle's goal of providing Indian students with a fair shot at assimilation and development, the school aimed to eradicate existing prejudices on both sides of the racial divide. Pratt viewed Indian education on reservations as inadequate; he believed Indians could never become "real, useful American citizens by any system of education and treatment which enforces tribal cohesion and deny citizenship associations." He compared the present state of Indian affairs to that of foreign populations living within the United States. For instance, Pratt believed the United States' black population could not differentiate each other by native tribe due to "constant participation in American opportunities" which eradicated tribal differences.¹¹ Rather than a tribal identity, Pratt encouraged students to follow a path of individualization. Individual interests took precedence over those of the tribal communities, and Carlisle taught students not only practical skills and trades, but the values and beliefs of possessive individualism, with an emphasis on private property, self-reliance, and accumulation of wealth as a moral obligation.¹²

In Pratt's mind, the Indian Bureau kept the Indian "ignorant and inexperienced" to "maintain its domination and supervision," encouraging Indians to remain isolated on reservations. Pratt believed the level of civilization and citizenship one could attain hinged directly on environment and training. It was not that the Indian had innate or inherent qualities that "condemn[ed] him to separation... or to generations of slow development." Rather, Pratt saw the Indian as "a man like other men" who could acquire all the abilities and attributes of

¹⁰ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp. 21-24.

¹¹ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, pp. 6, 19-21.

¹² Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 21-24.

white civilization if placed in a suitable environment and given adequate training. The “whole purpose of the Carlisle school from the beginning was to make its pupils equal as individual parts of our civilization.”¹³

Pratt realized quickly that the success of the school depended in part on performance, noting in his memoirs that “the progress of the school and the appreciation of the public went hand in hand.”¹⁴ Performance at Carlisle included both carefully planned and less controlled events on a variety of platforms both on campus and off school grounds. The need for fundraising, Pratt’s desire to promote his methods, and the students themselves influenced the content and display of performances. Many of the images coming from Carlisle are those one might expect to find, emphasizing the students’ new education and “whiteness,” thus proving their capabilities and assimilation. In the face of many who viewed Indians as culturally foreign and backward, students performed their competency and Americanness as convincing orators, musicians, and actors to increase moral and financial support of the school.¹⁵

Yet the images of Indianness presented by Carlisle’s performances varied, even within the context of a single performance. Though the adoption of white habits may have changed value judgments of Indians – they may no longer have appeared as uncivilized, incompetent savages – Indians continued to maintain their status as an “other” through racial difference. Carlisle took advantage of a long-standing tradition of staging Indians, what Pratt referred to as a desire to see and know about “race peculiarities,” to garner attention for the school and

¹³ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁴ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 276.

¹⁵ Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880-1930* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2004), pp. xxii, 21, 42-45 and Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 19.

students.¹⁶ While many of Carlisle's performances focused upon the increasing "whiteness" of the Indian students, the need to contrast the students with their kin on reservations forced performances to constantly exhibit tribal customs and traditions. The students were not static pawns in this process, and through their active participation in these performances they learned what it meant to "play Indian." Carlisle's performances offered the students the opportunity to produce their *own* image of Indianness, and became skilled at persuading whites they were both Native and civilized.¹⁷

The significance of Carlisle's performances lies not just in the manner in which they displayed students, but that students were *always* on display. Carlisle required its students to constantly demonstrate their Indianness, in the classroom, on stage, and in public venues. Pratt took advantage of the public's expectation of performance wherever Indians appeared to further his aims and increase Carlisle's exposure. His inability to control all aspects and interpretations of Indian performance, however, led to Carlisle's production of an amalgam of images of Indianness.

Despite his attempts to control images of "Indianness," Pratt's creation of Carlisle did not occur within a cultural void. Since their arrival in the Americas, Europeans had staged Indians in a variety of contexts. When Columbus exhibited six Indians for the King of Spain, he set a precedent for other early explorers who brought Indians back to Europe. Europeans, in hopes of gaining information about the New World or confirming widely-held prejudices, interviewed those Indians who could make themselves understood. Indians generated capital for European

¹⁶ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 120.

¹⁷ Rayna Green and John Troutman, "By the Waters of the Minnehaha: Music and Dance. Pageants and Princesses," in *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences*, ed. Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), pp. 81-83.

entrepreneurs as a source of entertainment, exhibiting their strange habits, physique, and talents. Many curious Indians visited Europe willingly as early political delegations. These delegations, however, became ostentatious performances; when a theatre owner advertised the attendance of a 1710 delegation of one Mahican and three Mohawks, other audience members became more interested in the Indians than the stage.¹⁸ After winning independence, United States officials invited Indian delegations east to ensure Indian neutrality, deter warfare, and negotiate treaties and agreements. These, like the European delegations, often manifested as performances. A general peace council in Washington, D.C. called by government officials to establish peace between the Sac and Fox and Santee Sioux in 1837 became the “highlight of the social season,” attracting large crowds with its “carnival atmosphere.” Public singing and dancing became routine for larger delegations to Washington, and crowds would gather at the delegates’ hotels, hoping to catch a glimpse of the exotic visitors.¹⁹

This tradition of staging persisted for decades, creating an expectation of Indian performance among white audiences. Whites themselves embraced Indian imagery. Nearly every historical pageant included at least one Indian episode, yet white participants, recruited from organizations with an interest in Indian lore such as the Boy Scouts, took most Indian roles. Such pageants depicted chronological time as beginning with the arrival of the first white settlers and the “inevitable” decline of the Indians; one popular scene depicted a “Medicine Man” foretelling the demise of his people shortly before the Europeans’ arrival.²⁰ Henry Wadsworth

¹⁸ Christian F. Feest, “Europe’s Indians,” in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies*, ed. James A. Clifton (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), pp. 318-321.

¹⁹ Herman Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), pp. 22-29, 34-36, 116, 141-146.

²⁰ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), pp. 114, 139-140.

Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*, first published in 1855, was a wild success, narrating the episodes and myths in the life of Hiawatha.

Everyone mythologized Indians, from the popular media to scholars, through art and literature. Often this mythology reflected the images' creators more than Indians themselves:²¹ at a mythical level, these images validated the status quo between Indians and whites, and helped to dismiss lingering guilt over the Indian people's displacement. "Good" Indians recognized the inevitability of white conquest and attempted to aid whites, while white cultural images condemned Indians who did not fit the cultural paradigms created for them. When Indians resisted domination, they appeared as bloodthirsty savages; when they did not appear as picturesque noble savages, they were lazy drunkards.²² These images changed over time, often in relation to national events. After the military confrontations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the English had ceased, the Indian came to stand as a symbol for the past virginity of the continent in an attempt to create a mythic past for Americans separate from that of England.²³ Throughout the remainder of the century, white Americans often perceived Indians as noble savages, rapacious killers, lazy "coffee coolers" (a term meaning opportunists or petty crooks), plains raiders (most often Sioux warriors on horseback), or a combination of these.²⁴

For many white Americans, their only contact with Indians was through the medium of performance; likewise, many American Indians' only way of representing themselves to white Americans was by performing. In many cases, whites arranged these performances with specific

²¹ Gretchen M. Bataille, "Introduction," in *Native American Representations: First Encounters, Distorted Images, and Literary Appropriations* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 4.

²² S. Elizabeth Bird, "Introduction: Constructing the Indian, 1830s-1990s," in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 2-4.

²³ Sally L. Jones, "The First but Not the Last of the 'Vanishing Indians': Edwin Forrest and Mythic RE-creations of the Native Population" in *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 14

²⁴ L. G. Moses, "Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian, 1887-1914," *South Dakota History* 14 (1984): pp. 194-195.

political or money-making motivations. In other cases, however, in an attempt to control and exploit their performative role, Indians managed their own performances.²⁵ Paiute Indians Sarah Winnemucca and her father, understanding the profitable nature of white curiosity, took to the stage in the early 1860s. Their initial performances, in which Sarah would translate her father's speeches on the importance of friendship between whites and Indians, morphed into more theatrical performances. Relying on white stereotypes, Sarah and her father performed *tableaux vivants*²⁶ with scenes titled "The War Council," "Taking a Scalp," and "Grand Scalp Dance." While the forest scenery, buckskin outfits, and scenes depicting Pocahontas saving the life of John Smith did not realistically portray Paiute life, they filled auditoriums.²⁷ Pauline Johnson, billed as the "Mohawk Princess," toured Canada and the United States from 1892 to 1909, performing her own poetry in a fringed buckskin dress for the Indian portion of her performances.²⁸ While these Indians and others took advantage of the white expectation of performance, they also reinforced expectations about Indian performance and stereotypes. However, in the words of historian Lucy Maddox, "if the newspaper reporters came to see the live Indians dancing and drumming in a pageant, they might stay to hear speeches and resolutions as well."²⁹

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the Wild West Show provided yet another opportunity to stage Indians, and became one of the strongest points of contention between those involved in the argument over Indian image. The conflict between Wild West shows and Indian-policy reformers revolved largely around a struggle to determine whose image

²⁵ Lucy Maddox, "Politics, Performance, and Indian Identity," *American Studies International* 40 (June 2002): p. 9.

²⁶ *Tableaux vivants*, meaning "living picture" in French, are displays in which actors recreate a scene without moving or speaking. These, along with other forms of pageantry, became increasingly popular near the turn of the twentieth century.

²⁷ Sally Zanjani, *Sarah Winnemucca* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), pp. 72-76.

²⁸ Lucy Maddox, "Politics, Performance, and Indian Identity," p. 16.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 33.

of the Indian would prevail.³⁰ Reformers in the 1880s found it imperative that Indians appear assimilable; Indians must not only liberate themselves from traditional customs but also adopt farming practices and the dominant social structure in order to transition from savagery to civilization.³¹ Christian reformers and others attacked Wild West shows as detrimental to the creation of proper attitudes among Indians toward work and productive citizenship. The shows, they claimed, encouraged unsettled habits and brought Indians into contact with disreputable characters.³² Furthermore, the shows were not just morally, but ethnographically reprehensible. E. H. Gohl, publishing in the *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians*, believed the shows to be blameworthy in providing spectators “no real knowledge of the manners, costumes, and institutions of the Indian... All is burlesque. The whole thing is deception.”³³

This dialogue occurred not simply among whites; just as Indians actively chose to participate in the Wild West shows, so too did Indians stand up against the shows. Chauncey Yellow Robe, a former Carlisle student, berated the shows as an “evil and degrading influence” from which Indians should be protected. Image once again became a central part of his argument, as Wild West shows taught young children “that the Indian is only a savage being.”³⁴

As an ardent assimilationist, Pratt took a vocal stance against the Wild West phenomenon, proclaiming Buffalo Bill to be “the monumental enemy of the best interests of the Indian,” and the shows to be “degrading and disastrous,” the downfall of “worthy and educated

³⁰ Moses, “Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian,” p. 194.

³¹ Frank Goodyear, “The Narratives of Sitting Bull’s Surrender: Bailey, Dix & Mead’s Photographic Western,” in *Dressing in Feathers*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 36.

³² L. G. Moses, “Interpreting the Wild West” in *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, ed. Margaret Szasz (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), p. 162 and Moses, “Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian,” pp. 198-199.

³³ E. H. Gohl, “The Effect of Wild Westing,” *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians* 2 (July-September 1914): pp. 226-228.

³⁴ Chauncey Yellow Robe, “The Menace of the Wild West Show,” *Quarterly Journal of the Society of American Indians* 2 (July-September 1914): pp. 224-226.

young Indians.”³⁵ To most residents of the United States, non-Indians encountered native peoples mainly as performers, primitive and exotic spectacles in Wild West shows in World’s Fairs.³⁶ Pratt attempted to portray his students as something different: examples that supported the idea that, given favorable circumstances and a helping hand, Indians were just as capable as whites at succeeding in white society. Carlisle staged its students as directly opposing the shows, stressing their negative image and how Carlisle actively worked to combat it. Yet this staging merely created a different kind of “show Indian,” one who performed in the classroom rather than on horseback.

This thesis investigates performances of all types during Pratt’s tenure at Carlisle and the images they created. The first chapter looks at Carlisle’s periodicals, which are our main documentary source for performances on and off campus, and a kind of performance itself. Administrators and students alike used the periodicals as a virtual stage upon which images of Indianness were enacted. While many of the images contrasted reservation Indians with the students, other illustrations contradicted these clear-cut definitions. Student participation and the need to cater to white expectations further complicated the periodicals’ images.

Chapters two and three explore the variety of real-time performances in which Carlisle students participated. Chapter two describes the performances which took place around the nation, including fair exhibits, band performances, outings, and athletics. These exhibits often targeted the general public, on whom Pratt relied for donations and support. While administrators carefully organized and even scripted some of these events, others were less deliberate and slightly more improvised. Chapter three describes the functions that took place on

³⁵ Moses, “Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian,” p. 216.

³⁶ Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha*, p. 170.

the Carlisle Indian Industrial School campus, including events starring both students and Indian visitors. Attendance at these events varied, but government officials made up a large part of the audience. The performances' location on campus allowed for a clearer emphasis on the assimilated student aspect of the Carlisle Indians' identity.

While most of this thesis focuses on the school's first twenty years, the epilogue briefly discusses the transformation of performance and image at Carlisle near the turn of the century, and at the policy modifications prompting this change. Though the images of Indianness changed, the use of performance as a means to promote these images persisted. This performance continued to cater to the expectations of Indian performance, yet also taught students to tailor these performances to fit their own needs.

CHAPTER ONE:

“The Indian Helper Helps the Indian”¹ – Carlisle’s Periodicals as Performance

Carlisle’s periodicals provided an explicit means of performance, reporting and recreating student performances, offering those who could not visit a chance to “see” the school and students. More subtly, the periodicals crafted a variety of images of “Indianness,” even within single accounts, by reproducing events, discussions, speeches, and more. Central to the performance of “Indianness” was an emphasis on the dysfunction of reservation life, contrasting it to the civilized life the students pursued. Students used the publications as a forum for their own voices. The images, performances, and attitudes displayed in Carlisle’s periodicals reveal the complexities which students experienced; Carlisle’s periodicals provided a stage upon which students acted out an incongruent mix of emotions and purposes.

Carlisle published a variety of periodicals during its first twenty-five years, beginning with *The School News* in 1880. School news and editorials, as well as student writing, provided the bulk of the material for this monthly publication. The *News* reprinted school essays, student speeches, descriptions of student activities and events, and students’ letters home. The publication’s promotion of sobriety, use of the English language, good habits, and other directives to students highlighted the paper’s assimilationist goals; these directives also would have applied to the literate readership on reservations, as school administrators encouraged

¹ *Indian Helper*, “Do You Wish to Help the Indian Helper Help the Indians?” Vol. 9 No. 13, 22 December 1893.

students to send copies of the *News* to their families out West.² *The Indian Helper*, which was “printed weekly for the special edification of the pupils both past and present and for circulation among their parents and people in their remote homes,”³ replaced the *School News* after only three years, but published much of the same content.

Both periodicals claimed that students authored the material. The *School News* reminded the reader that its articles were “not any white man’s writing but all the Indian boys writing... They gave us the paper they write and then we take it to the printing office and print it. We want to show the people how they can do.”⁴ The *Indian Helper*, on the other hand, while still providing students an outlet for their writing, no longer carried the pretense of having an Indian editor. The paper stated quite clearly that “the Indian Helper is PRINTED by Indian Boys, but EDITED by The-man-on-the-bandstand, a person of another race and color.”⁵ Though never explicitly identified, even in the face of repeated (and published) letters to the editor requesting his identity, The Man on the Bandstand who saw “everything and everybody” is commonly assumed to be either Pratt or Marianna Burgess, a white Quaker missionary who managed production and circulation of the periodicals for almost twenty years.⁶

In March 1880, Carlisle began distribution of another periodical, *Eadle Keatah Toh*; the name changed to the English translation, *The Morning Star*, in 1882, and then to *The Red Man* in 1888. Again, although never explicitly stated, most observers assumed Pratt edited the

² Linda F. Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School: Carlisle, Pennsylvania 1879-1918* (Harrisburg, PA: Huggins Printing Company, 2002), p. 40.

³ Richard H. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, ed. Robert M. Utley (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 297.

⁴ *School News*, Samuel Townsend, Vol. 1 No. 1, June 1880. Though scholar Beth Haller contests the authorship of material in Carlisle’s publications, without solid proof to the contrary, we must accept (though perhaps with some skepticism) that students wrote material for and edited the *News*.

⁵ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 1 No. 12, 13 November 1885.

⁶ Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 41 and Jessica Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race: Writing and Resisting the Discourse of the Carlisle Indian School,” (Ph. D diss., George Washington University, 2005), p. 11.

publication. The *Eadle Keatah Toh*, *Morning Star*, and *Red Man* featured news about students, visitors, teachers, and the school, and heavily proselytized Pratt's philosophy with articles comparing reservation and non-reservation schools.⁷ The periodicals included reprints from other publications, school reports, correspondence, and materials from Carlisle's leaders.⁸ Pratt described the publication as "especially designed for informing the general public as well as the administrative, legislative, and agency authorities."⁹ Its mission was clear; single-sentence proclamations on the front page asserted common themes, especially Pratt's philosophy that Indians, away from reservations and tribal settings, could easily assimilate and were no less capable than whites.¹⁰

Carlisle published a school paper for a variety of reasons. Writing and printing the publications provided a training ground for Indian youth: student printers learned methods of composition and layout, and familiarized themselves with operating the print machine and managing the steam engine and boiler.¹¹ Additionally, in the face of whites who "believed the worst in an array of stereotypes and myths," the paper played an integral part in the success of the school by embracing and promoting Pratt's philosophy.¹² Carlisle distributed its publications to Congressional members, Indian agencies, Pennsylvania officials, distinguished U.S. newspapers, and general subscribers.¹³ Circulation ranged from 2,000 in the initial stages of the school to over 10,000 subscriptions distributed throughout the United States.¹⁴

⁷ Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 40-41.

⁸ Beth A. Haller, "Cultural Voices or Pure Propaganda? Publications of the Carlisle Indian School, 1879-1818" *American Journalism* 19 (2002): p. 73.

⁹ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 297.

¹⁰ *Red Man*, Vol. 13 No. 8, March 1896.

¹¹ Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School*, pp. 40-42.

¹² Haller, "Cultural Voices or Pure Propaganda?" p. 71.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

¹⁴ Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 42.

Beth Haller, in an article on the propagandistic nature of Carlisle's periodicals, notes many potential problems with Carlisle's periodicals: Carlisle's non-Indian leaders' control over content, the possibility that these leaders manipulated or fabricated student work, and the dearth of opinions which run contrary to Pratt's methods.¹⁵ Each of these claims is important when using the periodicals as historical sources. Certainly the periodicals included value judgments Pratt wished his readers to embrace: that Indians could attain an education just as easily as whites, reservation life barred Indians from an effective education, and that commonly held superstitions reinforcing Indians as "curiosities" were detrimental and misplaced. Yet Haller's suspicions that "Pratt or one of the teachers may have written some of the articles... and passed them off as student work,"¹⁶ and "*forced* [students] to express disdain for their own families and cultures"¹⁷ are mere guesswork, as there is real evidence to prove or disprove this claim. It is just as likely that administrators convinced students (separated from their parents and traditions) that their old ways truly were sinful, illogical, or slovenly. In fact, anecdotal evidence from Carlisle graduates shows they often had difficulty reacclimating to reservation homes, a life they had come to view as "dirty" and un-Christian. Furthermore, Elaine Goodale Eastman, a turn-of-the-century Indian rights supporter and wife of Charles Eastman,¹⁸ claimed Pratt rarely censored students' writings and encouraged them to express themselves freely and publicly.¹⁹

Though Pratt and administrators selectively chose opinions that best suited their needs, Indian voices *were* present in the periodicals. School administrators could easily have quelled

¹⁵ Haller, "Cultural Voices or Pure Propaganda?" pp. 71-72, note 38, p. 84. That the Carlisle periodicals downplayed negative experiences is not necessarily true. While the periodical are certainly not dominated by negative experiences or statements that go "against the grain" of white ideas, they do exist and are notable in number.

¹⁶ Ibid. note 38, p. 84.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 81. Emphasis added.

¹⁸ Charles Eastman was a prominent writer, lecturer, reformer, and one of the first American Indian physicians. Eastman spent time as a physician, outing agent, and recruiter at Carlisle.

¹⁹ Haller, "Cultural Voices or Pure Propaganda?" p. 74.

viewpoints which clashed with the assimilationist philosophy,²⁰ yet statements expressing resistance to white culture or prevailing attitudes about Indians do exist. Haller's assertion that these publications lack "true cultural voices of Indian youth" draws a line where perhaps there is none.²¹ What is an "authentic" Indian voice? Does the voice of an Indian student lose its "Indianness" if the student becomes acculturated to white ways? Students were complex individuals with many sources which influenced them, including their parents' attitudes and advice, homesickness, separation from all they had ever known, Carlisle's administration and teachers, long-held cultural traditions, and their sudden immersion in a new and foreign culture.

One must keep critical questions in mind when reading Carlisle's publications: Were students instructed to write pieces containing certain ideas, or were they allowed freedom of opinion? Or, as Haller suggests, were students writing these pieces at all? The motivation behind student writing published in Carlisle's periodicals is unclear, and to some extent, unknowable. However, whether students actually wrote these pieces does not alter the fact that readers still understood them to be student writings.²²

By examining Carlisle's periodicals as a "public performance" on a number of levels, we are able to address some of these perplexing questions. Most obviously, the publications provided a literary "stage" on which Carlisle could reenact their real-time performances for a wider audience. It is unclear how many outside observers attended some of Carlisle's

²⁰ Ibid. p. 71.

²¹ Haller, "Cultural Voices or Pure Propaganda?" p. 81.

²² For later chapters, much of the evidence for performances within and without the school comes directly from Carlisle's periodicals. One may question the veracity of the descriptions, given that content was at the very least influenced by the administration. However, because Carlisle circulated their periodicals to the same group that attended these performances (Congressmen, Pennsylvania legislators, Indian officials, and local residents), it is difficult to believe that the periodicals would do more than slightly embellish descriptions of events. As they are, in many cases, our only sources of information, we must interpret while acknowledging the possibility of embellishment or exaggeration.

performances, especially those held within the school; one can assume, given Pratt's penchant for placing his students on display, that guests attended most of Carlisle's performances, if only local friends of the school or the occasional bureaucratic visitor. However, by describing these performances in detail in the pages of Carlisle's periodicals, the school's administration created a "virtual tour" which allowed the more far-flung readers a chance to "visit" and view the students' progress and the school's successes.

The students' class- and work-room activities were one "performance" enacted daily for visitors. For those unable to make the trip to Carlisle, the school's publications provided a glimpse into the day-to-day activities of its students, as evidenced by a speech given by Frederick Douglass, a noted African-American abolitionist, reprinted in the *Indian Helper*:

I saw [the Indian] as a student devoted to his studies; as a mechanic, successfully pursuing his work; as a soldier apt in drill; and in the use of arms, prompt in obeying orders. But what impressed me most was the music furnished by the Indian band... a people that can be trained to handle musical instruments as they did, can be trained to do more in the race of higher civilization, and are not to be relegated in the thoughts of men to permanent barbarism. I wish all... could visit your school, and see as I saw, the evidences of the progress of your Indian pupils.²³

Douglass's wish was, in a way, granted – his description of what he saw during his visit, as well as the conclusions he drew from these observations, circulated to many who gleaned their only impression of the school from its newspapers.

Some descriptions of performances demonstrated the students' assimilation. The *Helper*'s rendition of the seventeenth anniversary of the school's opening noted student Alex Upshaw's bible verse recitation and the singing of "America" by the student body, both of which reminded readers of the students' acculturation. The bulk of the article reprints Pratt's appeal to the students, which reinforced that the students' "place was NOT on the reservation. Their place

²³ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 9 No. 44, 27 July 1894.

is in the WORLD. They have a right to develop their powers of brain and skill of hand to compete with the best.”²⁴ The article instructed the general public (by way of the *Helper*) about the possibilities and appropriate methods of Indian education. This single article, then, described a campus event for those who could not attend, demonstrated the students’ Americanization, and contributed to the dialogue on Indian education.

The publications presented Indians, first and foremost, as capable of attaining an education. Carlisle’s periodicals refuted many misconceptions – from the extreme belief that Indians were worthless and animal-like, with elimination as the only solution, to the less radical idea that Indians were merely ignorant and incapable of learning.²⁵ “Just give [the Indian] a fair chance,” one article proclaimed, “and he will soon find his way into the pulpit, the legislative hall, the commercial house and the scientist’s laboratory, as others of his race have already done.”²⁶ While embracing an optimistic view of the ability of Indians to assimilate, the periodicals displayed Carlisle as the Indian’s “fair chance,” the one institution that could assist them in gaining an education.

Carlisle’s publications preached the importance of English-only teaching methods to the school’s success. Oneida student Dennison Wheelock, in an article published by the *Helper*, described Indian languages as “the cord that pulls down the race, who have been bound by the same cord to ignorance and barbarism for centuries;” teaching in native languages was as pointless as “a goose trying to stand on its wing.”²⁷ This essay did more than promote the benefits of an English-only education; it displayed the ability of a Carlisle student to write

²⁴ *Indian Helper*, “The Seventeenth Anniversary of the Birth of our School,” Vol. 12 No. 1, 9 October 1896.

²⁵ *School News*, “What Michael Burns, an Apache Boy thinks on the Indian Question,” Vol. 1 No. 11, April 1881. and *School News*, Samuel Townsend, Vol. 1 No. 3, July 1880.

²⁶ *Indian Helper*, “An Experience with the Wild West Show,” Vol. 11 No. 16, 24 January 1896.

²⁷ *Indian Helper*, “Is it Right for the Government to Stop the Teaching of Indian Languages in Reservation Schools? Dennison Wheelock, Oneida Tribe,” Vol. 3 No. 15, 18 November 1887.

succinctly in English and manipulate his words to form crafty metaphors. Wheelock emphasized this ability by reinforcing the barbaric Indian condition, stereotyping the Indian character to show how it could be overcome. Carlisle's students, it seems, were proud of their ability to speak English, as evidenced by a diary entry published in the *News*: "I went to town, then one man, he said to me 'Boy, this dog, what do you call it in your language?' But I said, 'I will not tell you.' He said, 'Why?' I said 'Because at this School we Speak only English.'"²⁸

The periodicals also visualized Carlisle's distance from reservations as crucial to Indians' education. The *Helper* drew a picture of children in reservation homes as "poorly fed, living in dirt, with long hair and blankets, surrounded by ignorance and evils of all kinds."²⁹ Accounts often associated traditional Indian cultural practices with disease and indigence, rationalizing the students' removal from their families and dehumanizing those who remained on reservations.³⁰ While it was "hard to grow to be good men and women"³¹ out west, the periodicals depicted eastern institutions as providing favorable conditions for learning, insisting that continued attachment to Indian customs and reservations prevented Indians from educating themselves. The threat of Carlisle's relocation to Kansas prompted a vocal demonstration, using language which hinted that Indian culture was a contagion: "It is good for Indian boys and girls to be away from tribes. Learn more. Not think so much about Indian way all the time, dance, fight, steal, hunt buffalo, smoke. Away off from Indians, think about farming, make money, work, books."³² Advocacy for off-reservation education simplified Indian and white life ways – the periodicals described Indian culture in terms of immoral, unhealthy, and slothful activities, whereas white ways were held as productive and industrious. These displays of the disfunctionality of

²⁸ *School News*, "From Diaries," Geoffrey (Sioux), Vol. 2 No. 12, May 1882.

²⁹ *Indian Helper*, "For Our Boys and Girls," Vol. 3 No. 1, 12 August 1887.

³⁰ Ruggieri Matthews, "Killing a Culture to Save a Race," pp. 89-93.

³¹ *Indian Helper*, "For Our Boys and Girls," Vol. 3 No. 1, 12 August 1887.

³² *School News*, "No Change," Vol. 2 No. 3, August 1881.

traditional Indian culture and reservations helped persuade readers that Carlisle was a necessary establishment; the [periodicals represented traditional Indian cultural practices as an ailment, and Carlisle, far from reservations, was the only cure.³³

Administrators found it important to showcase former students' lives to as demonstrative of Carlisle's long-term successes. The *School News* published a letter from former student Julia Good Voice, describing how young Indian men in blankets sought her attentions upon her return to the reservation. Julia, however, did "not want to do any Indian ways any more... I would like to keep on the right road. I would not marry without the Christian ways." Julia married fellow Carlisle student Ralph Iron Eagle Feather quickly upon returning home because she did "not want to marry any Indian man don't know anything about the white man's ways."³⁴

Good Voice stood not only as a paragon of a Carlisle-educated Indian for white reformists, but also as a model for Indians on reservations. From a bureaucratic perspective, Indians too needed to view their cultural practices and life ways as unhealthy; the reservation system had proved costly and cumbersome.³⁵ Luther Standing Bear, a member of the first group of students to attend Carlisle, defended students who returned to reservations; he himself returned to his reservation for a time and "met nearly every returned student of this agency, all in citizens clothes, and all doing honorable labor. It is unjust and cruel that the fall of one or two returned students in the past, who have been in school [only] a few months [and] have returned to the Indian life again, should be put upon the shoulders of earnest, faithful superintendents and graduates of these Eastern schools." Standing Bear thus accepted the white perception of "honorable" labor; his use of the word "fall" in relation to traditional Indian life ways suggested

³³ Ruggieri Matthews, "Killing a Culture to Save a Race," p. 89.

³⁴ *School News*: "Good News: Ralph Iron Eagle Feather and Julia Good Voice were Married Soon After their Return Home," Vol. 2 No. 4, September 1882.

³⁵ Ruggieri Matthews, "Killing a Culture to Save a Race," p. 101.

the sinfulness of traditional practices. Other accounts describe educated Indians who returned to traditional ways of life as having suffered a “relapse,” again relating reservation life to an infection to emphasize the necessity of assimilation and Carlisle to Indian and white readers alike.³⁶

It was not just that Carlisle provided the best opportunity for Indian children to gain an education; the publications portrayed students as innately motivated, industrious, and capable. In order to emphasize the students’ successes, periodicals included anecdotes which elucidated the natural ignorance of Indians. One humorous yet telling example stated that if “*uncivilized* Indians were traveling in the cars they would not know which way to go they would be lost, if no white man was with them.”³⁷ The student author portrayed the reservation Indians traveling in cars in a way which presented them as antithetical to automobiles. Assimilationists, accepting the doctrine of linear cultural evolution, expected Indians to progress from savagery to barbarism to civilization, in that order. To them, an Indian adhering to traditional customs and beliefs was situated firmly in barbarism, and could therefore not utilize the modern civilized technology.³⁸ This contrast clearly staged the *need* for transformation, if Indians were to be assimilated into white society. The author’s refusal to identify him or herself among the “uncivilized” Indians (identifying instead with Indians who “don’t want to be ignorant [and] want to know something”)³⁹ shows the *possibility* of transformation. In another instance, student editor Samuel Townsend relied upon automobiles to emphasize students’ progress and ability to overcome an ignorant and culturally and technologically backward past, noting that “if every

³⁶ Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race,” p. 92.

³⁷ *School News*, Vol. 1 No. 5, October 1880. Emphasis added.

³⁸ This sentiment is especially ironic, given that thirty-five years later, Carlisle students would find themselves working in the automobile industry in Detroit as part of the outing system. For more on Indians and automobiles, see Philip Deloria’s “I Want to Ride in Geronimo’s Cadillac” in *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

³⁹ *School News*, Vol. 1 No. 5, October 1880.

Indian boy and girl were in school it would not take long to civilize all the Indians... When all the Indians are civilized why they can make cars and do most anything."⁴⁰

Carlisle's publications strove to present the students as industrious members of society. Industrial training, both in the specific sense of manufacturing or commercial enterprise and in the broader context of energetic diligence, made up a large part of Carlisle's curriculum. Periodicals illustrated many examples of industry at Carlisle; for instance, when a portion of the Carlisle student body attended the World's Fair in 1893, the *Helper* reminded readers that students paid their own expenses, rather than relying on government funds. Students made these funds through "good, honest WORK," including agricultural and domestic chores.⁴¹ Periodicals often created an image of industrious Indians, however, by contrasting Carlisle students with slothful reservation Indians. Administrators rarely tolerated actions construed as idle or slothful. The *News* responded forcefully to accusations of student laziness:

[A] boy or girl who is lazy we don't think will ever become a good and useful man and woman. [T]hey are the ones that will go back to their blankets, put them around themselves and live in the dirt. [T]he lazy ones will just eat what some body gives them, they will soon die. They are no good in the world, not any better than the animals.⁴²

Thus the paper contrasted Indian students (who strove to gain an education by assimilating themselves with white ways) with Indians who remained on reservations, condemned as stubbornly clinging to old customs. By portraying the reservations as problematic, the periodicals both showed the necessity of Carlisle and implied that Indians' success relied upon the adoption of white ways. The Indian readership must be remembered as well; just as with Julia Good Voice's letter, this negative depiction encouraged Indians to reject reservation life and send their children to boarding schools such as Carlisle. That an Indian author, in this case,

⁴⁰ *School News*, Samuel Townsend, Vol. 1 No. 2, July 1880.

⁴¹ *Indian Helper*, "Carlisle Indian School at the World's Fair," Vol. 9 No. 3, 13 October 1893.

⁴² *School News*, Vol. 2 No. 2, July 1881.

the editor of the *News*, Samuel Townsend, issued these sentiments would have strengthened the illustration of reservation life for both Indian and white readers alike.

Readers, however, needed to see why Indians were worthy of reform.⁴³ Many articles highlighted similarities between whites and Indians to show Indians as assimilable and able to separate their culture from their individual identity. The *Helper* insisted that one could not detect a “particle of difference” between the behavior and comportment of white and Indian children. Rather, “to those... whose knowledge of the Native American is obtained solely from... grotesque pictures [wherein] feathers are made conspicuous and seem to grow out of their very heads, the new Indian [of culture and refinement] is even a greater curiosity.”⁴⁴ The dichotomy presented between the “new” Indian and the (unspoken but implied) “old” Indian did more than suggest Indian cultural heritage was a thing of the past, while white “culture and refinement” were the present. A new image of “Indianness” supplanted the generic stereotype of feathered Indians, yet the usage of the word “curiosity” was telling; rather than holding the “new Indians” as equals, observers were still drawn to the students for their peculiarity and the entertainment value they provided. Even when showing how Indians were worthy and capable of reform, the periodicals reinforced the desire among Americans to see Indians perform.

Publications often presented Indians and their culture as fading into, or already a part of, the past. One student proclaimed that “Indian ways will never be good anymore, it is all passed, gone away... We shall all be glad when we all get into the civilized way of living.”⁴⁵ Discourses such as these, validated through the Indian identity of their author, allowed for the removal of

⁴³ Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race,” p. 17.

⁴⁴ *Indian Helper*, “Yes, the Indian Child Cries and Laughs and is Punished in His Reservation Home,” Vol. 11 No. 31, 8 May 1896.

⁴⁵ *School News*, “Do the Indians Want to Learn to Take Care of Themselves?” Vol. 1 No. 11, April 1881.

white guilt and the continued use of the timeless (yet extinct) noble savage paradigm.⁴⁶ Carlisle prompted students themselves to not “think so much of the things that are past, but think more of the things in the future.”⁴⁷ The *News* may also have meant this as a directive to its readers; by 1882, the Indian Wars appeared to have come to a close, and the era of assimilation as government policy was under way.⁴⁸

Though Carlisle’s periodicals put the Indian students’ capabilities on display, some material characterized Indians as at fault for their own ignorance and inability to assimilate. Student Michael Burns admitted “[t]here is no doubt, that we are in fault. We had the opinion that we could not get beaten by any other nation. Now we know ourselves that we will have to change.”⁴⁹ In other instances, this suggestion exists only in the subtext, such as in student Harry Rave’s speech, where he describes how a Congressman told him if Indians “learned to speak the English language the bad white people can’t cheat us and we will be able to help ourselves.”⁵⁰ Students and visitors alike placed blame not on “bad white people,” but on Indians themselves for not adapting and learning the English language. Yet both students display the Indians’ ability to become self sufficient, not just in their content, but in their fluency in the English language. Instances such as these, where periodicals staged or reenacted conversations, made pedagogical points about the distance students had come and the constant threat of regression by reminding readers of the students’ heritage.

⁴⁶ David Wallace Adams explains how whites increasingly accepted the idea that Indians had been terribly wronged in the late nineteenth century. Emblematic of this growing opinion is American author Helen Hunt Jackson’s *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government’s Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes*, a widely read book published in 1881 which chronicled the betrayal and hypocrisy displayed by whites in their mistreatment of Indians. David Wallace Adams, “More Than A Game: The Carlisle Indians Take to the Gridiron, 1893-1917,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32.1 (2001): pp. 39-40.

⁴⁷ *School News*, “Let Us Stay In,” Vol. 3 No. 2, July 1882.

⁴⁸ Though many at this time believed the Indian Wars to be over, a dispute (triggered partially over the Ghost Dance religious movement) arose again in 1890 in what is known as the Pine Ridge Campaign, climaxing in the Massacre at Wounded Knee.

⁴⁹ *School News*, “What Michael Burns, an Apache Boy Thinks on the Indian Question,” Vol. 1 No. 11, April 1881.

⁵⁰ *School News*, “Speech by Harry Rave, Arapahoe, Entirely His Own,” Vol. 3 No. 11, April 1883.

Students themselves helped craft images of Indianness, gaining a public voice through the periodicals in a variety of ways. The publications offered a platform on which students could speak to an audience which had a predetermined notion of “Indianness,” and students often relied on irony and sarcasm to enhance their argument. The students’ increasingly excellent grip on the English language and the rhetorical devices it provided displayed an image of a vocal, intelligent Indian student.

Carlisle’s periodicals offered students an opportunity to practice and display the new skills they had learned. Examples of letters written by students to their families on reservations were published from the periodicals’ inception, and usually displayed students’ instructions to parents to accept white ways or discard Indian traditions. One student wished her uncle would learn “about the English books, so you can tell how wonderful the white people are.”⁵¹ After the death of a fellow student, Luther Standing Bear wrote to his father:

You think we felt sorry and cried walked around and killed horses and gave them away the things which we have? or cut ourselves and crying for him every day because we love him? ... You know it is not right to do that way. If we are truly civilized. ... I want you must turn to the good way... the way of which is God love. Try to be civilized while we try to get a good education... Don't think just your children shall be civilized and you just keep on the Indian way.⁵²

These letters displayed not only a desire for their families to realize the error in Indian ways, but also a disconnect between the students’ new lives in the east and their families in the west, fulfilling Carlisle’s need to show the necessity and possibility of assimilation. Students themselves used these letters to demonstrate their competency and adoption of white ways for a number of audiences: their parents, teachers, and, through the periodicals, a wider white audience.

⁵¹ *School News*, “The Earth How She Goes,” Vol. 3 No. 11, April 1883.

⁵² *Eadle Keatah Toh*, “Letters from our Boys and Girls,” Vol. 3 No. 7, February 1883.

In order to present Indians as assimilable and worthy of reform efforts, Carlisle needed to depict the Indian character, mobility, and habits of living in a positive light.⁵³ Students took advantage of this necessity, arguing both implicitly and explicitly for the positive aspects of Indian culture. One student described how “in those days,” the Indian’s school was the woods. “The Indians taught the white man many... things. There were times... when that knowledge saved [the white man] from starvation. So while the Indian may have many good things for which to thank the white people, the white people also have reason to feel grateful toward the Indians.”⁵⁴ While other articles displayed Indians as capable of learning a western set of values and knowledge, here the author suggested Indian cultures had equally positive attributes. However, the student couched the sentiment in something strikingly similar to a nature-oriented noble savage paradigm – in fact, this stereotypical Indian portrayal became part of the curriculum at many Indian schools, with instructors stressing history’s progression from savagery to barbarism to civilization.⁵⁵ This too is seen in the article; the student’s use of the past tense highlighted the natural fading of Indian culture. The student role-played a typecast Indian, stereotyping Indian character and habits to show how they could be overcome.

Given the focus on assimilation, it was surprising when students occasionally rebuked negative aspects of white culture. While Carlisle utilized the periodicals to display Indianness to suit their needs, students too used the periodicals to “talk back,” producing different and sometimes contrasting messages. One Indian author made clear that neither “utter[ing] an oath” nor “us[ing] intoxicating drink” existed as a part of Indian culture before contact with whites: “While [whites are] a highly favored race, that claim to have Divine revelation containing the

⁵³ Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Race to Save a Culture,” p. 17.

⁵⁴ *Indian Helper*, “The Indian of Long Ago: What the White man Learned From Him,” Vol. 9 No. 11, 8 December 1893.

⁵⁵ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp 145-148.

purest moral precept, [they] breathe out fearful curses against [their] God [and] freely indulge in intoxicating drink, and induce the Indian to partake of it in order to cheat him.”⁵⁶ It is understandable that Pratt or other administrators would include this piece; in the nineteenth century, many stereotyped Indian men as drunken good-for-nothings, and this article clearly absolves the Indians of blame. However, the author also implies the hypocrisy inherent in the white stereotypes on which Carlisle relied to prove their necessity and effectiveness, and portrays Indian cultures as superior to the culture of whites. Yet the article ends in a distinctly different fashion, noting: “But now the Indians have a better chance than they ever had before, and have more friends among the white people, who are willing to help the Indians more than before. So the Indians need always to be kind to the people of these United States.”⁵⁷ The article clearly sent multiple messages which readers could perceive variously: Indians as romantic characters lacking the vices of modern civilization, as victims of abuses by hypocritical whites, and as willing beneficiaries of the philanthropic efforts of whites.

Other authors argued against whites’ unfair portrayal of Indians. In 1896, one author painted reservation Indians as “repulsive, stolid creatures, with sullen stare, long, begrimed locks and filthy blankets full of fleas” – examples of Indians with which white travelers were apt to judge all Indians. The author quickly pointed out, however, that “[t]he Indian traveler in the East would have as good a right to judge the white race from the greasy, begrimed and benighted creatures seen on the back streets of the average eastern city.”⁵⁸ Yet no apology closed this article; it simply pointed to the hypocrisy of white judgments. This can only be explained by a relative freedom of opinion and publishing decisions. Though pointing out the flaws in these white judgments, the Indian author accepts the image of reservation Indians – the family

⁵⁶ *School News*, “Learning How to Use Bad Things,” John Downing, Vol. 1 No. 2, June 1880.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Indian Helper*, “The Indian Race Not Fairly Judged,” Vol. 11 No. 29, 24 April 1896.

members the student left behind – as “begrimed” and “filthy.” This public degradation of their families and friends perhaps exhibited to many their complete assimilation and acceptance of white ways, even in the face of their defense of the appearance of reservation Indians.

While it is unclear whether the author of the previous article blamed the “repulsive” Indians and “benighted” city-dwellers, or the government for not providing better for its people, occasionally, students blamed whites for the Indians’ circumstances. Samuel Townsend declared: “It cannot be shown... that the Indian was ever first to break an agreement with the white man.”⁵⁹ Townsend’s ironic tone added emphasis to the hypocrisy of the commonly held image of Indians as ignorant and incapable of learning, since many “never read about... and they do not know anything about [the Indians], but sometimes they talk bad about us.” Rather than the Indians being the ignorant ones, Townsend continued, “maybe those white folks don’t know anything.”⁶⁰

Indian voices in the periodicals often promoted full citizenship and political representation for Indians. After David Williams Parker, president of Jones University of Colored Youth in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, spoke to the students and faculty, the *Indian Helper* declared that “we, six hundred native Americans... who are not citizens of the United States, but would like to be, send greetings to the adopted citizens of our native land, the students of Jones University[.]”⁶¹ The ironic juxtaposition of both student groups emphasized the argument – the government denied Indians, native to the Americas, citizenship, while giving citizenship to “adopted” residents of the *Indians*’ native land. One argument for representation revolved around a Navajo dispute over dropping wool prices: “They are too ignorant to know what the

⁵⁹ *Indian Helper*, “The Indian of Long Ago: What the White Man Learned from Him,” Vol. 9 No. 11, 8 December 1893.

⁶⁰ *School News*, Samuel Townsend, Vol. 1 No. 3, July 1880.

⁶¹ *Indian Helper*, “Formal Greeting of Native Aliens to Adopted Citizens,” Vol. 9 No. 31, 27 April 1894.

tariff is but are plainly sensible of the effects of the tariff war. Where is THEIR representative in Congress? The Navajoes have occupied the country longer than any people represented in Congress.”⁶² The Indians’ supposed lack of familiarity with the details of national politics did not free the Navajo from the effects of the tariff. Furthermore, the depiction of Indians as both “too ignorant” and “plainly sensible” acknowledge the conflicting expectations of Indianness; contemporaries saw Indians as inherently incompetent, yet required their competency. The suggestion of Congressional representation took Carlisle’s aim of assimilation to its logical conclusion, yet the author argued it was Indians’ status as indigenous people, rather than their assimilation, which entitled their inclusion as full citizens.

The *School News*, *Indian Helper*, *Eadle Keatah Toh*, and *Red Man* provided another vehicle for performance in their frequent advertisements for student photographs. The photographs taken by Carlisle photographer J. N. Choate included images of the buildings and grounds, visiting chiefs, and before-and-after prints of students (shot upon their arrival and again between two months and two years later). These photographs served many purposes: they alleviated anxieties of parents, encouraged reservation agents to help in recruiting efforts, and illustrated Carlisle’s successes to local, state, and national political and administrative officials. Perhaps most importantly, the distribution of photographs encouraged donations; often the advertisements offered photographs as incentives for the purchase of newspaper subscriptions. In one instance, Carlisle provided photographs as gifts to those who contributed enough money to “pay for one brick” in a new school dormitory.⁶³

⁶² *Indian Helper*, Vol. 9 No. 33, 11 May 1894.

⁶³ Lonna Malmshemer, “‘Imitation White Man:’ Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School,” *Studies in Visual Communication* 11 (Fall 1985): pp. 62-64.

Pratt first used the medium of photography at Fort Marion, circulating stereographs among reformers and the more general commercial networks alike, and continued this practice at Carlisle. Advertisements (Fig. 1) took advantage of what scholar Lonna Malmshiemer referred to as the “immediate interest of eastern whites... to see a ‘real live Indian’ in ‘native garb.’”⁶⁴ One 1895 *Indian Helper* ad offered a variety of sizes, including a “full figure [image] from the Eagle scalp feather to moccasins,” stressing that this might be the last contrast photo to ever be taken, as “camp Indians seldom come to Carlisle now-a-days, in camp dress.”⁶⁵ Other advertisements offered photographs unassociated with Carlisle in conjunction with the before-and-after images, such as an 1894 offer of an image of “a charming little Indian baby in its own native cradle.”⁶⁶

Photographs as a medium in 1880s America were extremely persuasive, and the photographs of Carlisle students convincingly performed the process of assimilation. The before-and-after images were “iconic representations of the cultural transformation that was the central aim of the school,” exaggerating the contrast between the two typified states of barbarism and civilization and focusing on groups regarded as especially recalcitrant, isolated, or hostile. Even skin color appeared to change between the two images; in the original prints, students appear to literally become whiter (Fig. 2).⁶⁷ Like one nameplate of the *Indian Helper* which depicted the transformation of a long-haired traditionally attired Indian into a suit-wearing, short-haired “civilized” Indian,⁶⁸ the photographs depicted the students’ acculturation as a spectacular transformation that occurred with ease and serenity. This transformation of body, dress, and demeanor signified to many, including students and their parents, a transformation of the identity

⁶⁴ Lonna Malmshiemer, “‘Imitation White Man,’” pp. 56-57.

⁶⁵ *Indian Helper*, “Still A Better One,” Vol. 10 No. 30, 36 April 1895.

⁶⁶ *Indian Helper*, “List of Interesting Photographs,” Vol. 9 No. 20, 9 February 1894.

⁶⁷ Malmshiemer, “‘Imitation White Man,’” pp. 54-74.

⁶⁸ Haller, “Cultural Voices or Pure Propaganda?” pp. 75-76.

and culture. Yet the contrast photographs simultaneously simplified the Carlisle education into a single transformation and overstated the actual change that could have occurred during the period of time that normally ensued between the shooting of the two portraits.⁶⁹

Actual photographs rarely found their way into the pages of the periodicals, especially in the first decade of print, but occasionally their appearance caused clear discordance. One of the most obvious examples is the placement of an image of newly arrived Navajo students in their traditional garb (Fig. 3) immediately above an article entitled “Answers to the Probable Questions of the Commencement Visitor.” In the article, a fictitious commencement visitor interviewed a representative from the school. After the visitor expressed their desire to “see a party dressed in their blankets and ornaments... They look immensely more picturesque,” the school representative chastised the visitor, retorting, “We do not deal with the picturesque Indian especially. You may see him in a wild west show. Only the rising young Indian claims the special attention of our Carlisle effort.”⁷⁰ The ironic juxtaposition of photograph and commentary displayed Carlisle’s use of public interest in Indianness while at the same time attempting to portray the need for assimilation. Furthermore, it undermined the line the “representative” drew between “picturesque” and “rising young” Indian, as the Navajo students pictured fulfilled both roles, wearing native dress yet taking their first step toward assimilation by attending Carlisle.

Carlisle’s students conveyed, through the school’s periodicals, a number of often conflicting messages for readers eager for Indian performance. Pratt used Carlisle’s periodicals to establish himself as an authority on Indian education, market the school and gain both

⁶⁹ Malmshemer, “‘Imitation White Man,’” pp. 54-74.

⁷⁰ *Indian Helper*, “Answers to the Probable Questions of the Commencement Visitor,” Vol. 12 No. 22, 12 March 1897.

ideological and monetary support from whites and Indians, and control students on and off campus.⁷¹ However, though Pratt believed he could control Indian performance (especially in periodicals, where he most likely had final say on what was printed), performance itself led to inherent contradictions. The periodicals simultaneously depicted Indian culture as beneficial and deadly and reinforced the connection between the industrious, competent students and their dirty, slovenly background. Articles couched evidence of students “progress” with displays of what they had escaped.

In the midst of evidence of the students’ acculturation, the thread of Indian performance, especially through the students’ own voices, is found throughout the newspapers’ content. An anecdote published in the *Helper* described how a teacher remarked, during a lesson on the adventures of Captain John Smith, that “it was ‘very different then you know, the Indians were here and it was dangerous.’” One student, in response, asked, “Well, are not the Indians here now?”⁷² This story recalls a number of images commonly associated with Indians: their hazardous disposition, their communion with nature, and of course, the story of Pocahontas. Yet the student’s rejoinder, witty and well spoken, displayed an image of the educated, assimilated Indian. Once again, the periodical staged a debate; here between student and teacher, in which the student got the last word.

⁷¹ Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race,” p. 11.

⁷² *Indian Helper*, Vol. 9 No. 33, 11 May 1894.

A NEW PHOTOGRAPH!
Any Person Sending us
 Three Subscriptions
 —FOR—
THE RED MAN
 ACCOMPANIED BY \$1.50 (the subscrip-
 tion price for three) AND FOUR CENTS TO
 PAY POSTAGE,
Will Receive in Return
 A Combination Photograph
 Containing miniatures of 33 interest-
 ing views of our buildings, as
 well as faces and
Contrast Groups,
 Showing how pupils appeared
 when they entered Carlisle, in
 contrast with several months
 after, when civilized dress
 and education began
 to tell.
 The picture is on a card 8x10 inches
 AND EACH VIEW IS
Appropriately marked.

A most excellent combination photo-
 graph of all the prominent buildings of
 the Carlisle school represented as nearly
 as possible in their respective positions
 (without faces on the card) may be had for
 three subscriptions of the RED MAN, as
 above.

STANDING OFFER.

For ONE new subscriber to THE RED MAN, we will
 give the person sending it a photographic group of the 15
 Carlisle Indian Orphan boys, on a card 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, worth
 20 cents when sold by itself. Name and tribe of each boy
 given.

(Persons wishing the above premium will please enclose
 a 1-cent stamp to pay postage.)

For TWO, TWO PHOTOGRAPHS, one showing a group of
 pupils as they arrived in wild dress, and another of the same
 pupils three years after; or, two photographs showing a still
 more marked contrast between a Navaho as he arrived in
 native dress, and as he now looks, worth 20 cents apiece.

(Persons wishing the above premiums will please en-
 close a 2-cent stamp to pay postage.)

For THREE, we offer a GROUP of the better schools
 6x14 inch card. Faces show distinctly, worth sixty cents.

(Persons wishing the above premium will please en-
 close 5 cents to pay postage.)

Unless the required postage accompanies the names, we will
 take it for granted that the premium is not desired.

Fig. 1. An example of an advertisement for contrast
 photographs (above). While this example is reprinted from
 an issue of the *Red Man*, similar examples can be found in
 the *School News* and the *Indian Helper*.
 Taken from *Red Man*, Vol. 9 No. 7, June 1889.



Fig. 2 (above). John N. Choate's photograph of Tom Torlino, a Navajo student, in 1882 and 1885, one of the most prolific examples of Carlisle's contrast photos (below). Note how skin color appears to change between the two photographs. Taken from Cumberland County Historical Society postcard.



GROUP OF NAVAJO PUPILS, FROM ARIZONA, AS THEY ENTERED CARLISLE, SOME YEARS AGO.

Fig. 3 (above). Image placed above an article entitled "Answers to the Probably Questions of the Commencement Visitor." The juxtaposition of photograph and content show the discordance of the periodicals' messages.

Taken from *Indian Helper*, Vol. 12 No. 22, 12 March 1897.

CHAPTER TWO:

“Of course I am Indian”¹ – Carlisle’s Off-Campus Performances

Carlisle placed its students on a number of different stages, both literal and figurative, traveling often to a variety of locales as visitors and performers. Away from the Carlisle campus, audiences found the Carlisle Indians’ role as “students” less apparent; the American public was, after all, used to traveling Indian performers from the romantic spectacle of Wild West shows and historical pageants, to ethnographic exhibits centered upon the idea of linear evolution, to individual Indians such as Sarah Winnemucca performing on the lecture circuit.² Pratt carefully planned events to show the acculturation of his students, but many audiences desired more stereotypical performances of “Indianness” which often crept into Carlisle’s performances. While Carlisle’s performative nature exhibited itself every time students found themselves off campus, this chapter examines some of the most conspicuous examples of prearranged and impromptu off-campus performances: fairs and expositions, band performances, the outing program, and the football program.

Carlisle’s students traveled for a variety of reasons. Often, administrators treated trips as educational; in Philadelphia, for instance, students observed the operation of printing presses, visited Independence Hall and the Federal Mint, met the Mayor, and took a boat ride on the

¹ *School News*, “A Little Country Boy In Trouble”, Vol. 3 No. 12, May 1883.

² Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), p. 4.

Delaware River.³ School trips increased Carlisle's visibility; as a result, Pratt and other administrators insisted upon good behavior, school uniforms and military precision in marching off school grounds. This held true even on purely recreational trips: on their way to the circus in 1880, uniformed students marched their way through town.⁴ Luther Standing Bear recalled how "Captain Pratt was always very proud to 'show us off' and let the white people see how we were progressing," displaying an awareness of the required performances that came with attending Carlisle. Administrators drilled students before attending an event to ensure "correct and proper" deportment.⁵ Pratt intended many trips exclusively to "enlighten the public" and increase public awareness of the need for Indian education.⁶ On September 6, 1880, ten boys and seven girls gave speeches in front of a Mechanicsburg audience. Alfred J. Standing, assistant superintendent of Carlisle, and others bracketed the student speeches with their own, promoting Carlisle and its method.⁷

Most trips encompassed a mix of educational, recreational, and promotional aspects, both showcasing and benefitting the students' development toward citizenship and civilization. Students practiced more than their English and oratory skills on these ventures; students also learned how to perform in front of large groups of interested audiences, a skill many students used later in life for the benefit of themselves and their people. The participation of Carlisle students in the March 1887 inaugural ceremonies for President William McKinley exemplified how school trips benefited both student and school: students visited the Smithsonian and other

³ *School News*, "About Our School," Vol. 1 No. 2, July 1881, and *School News*, Vol. 2 No. 10, March 1882.

⁴ *School News*, Vol. 1 No. 4, September 1880.

⁵ Luther Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1928), p. 166.

⁶ Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, ed. Robert M. Utley (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 283.

⁷ *School News*, Vol. 1 No. 5, October 1880.

landmarks in the morning, and carried examples of their schoolwork in the afternoon parade.⁸ While most students probably found these trips fun, exciting, and educational, some found them frightening. Pawnee student Lizzie Walton noted after a public appearance in Philadelphia that she was “so frightened [she] could not hardly breathe.”⁹ Others merely found the attention tiresome; one student wrote that she could not escape the attention of those around her: “Some stop and look just to see how an ‘injun’ walks. I get tired of being stared at.”¹⁰

Administrators portrayed students on most trips as paragons of the “civilized” Indian, displaying their advancing knowledge and acceptance of white society. Student Dessie Prescott publicly impressed John Wanamaker on a visit to his Philadelphia department store by proving her knowledge in darning stockings and washing dishes; her teacher, Miss Hyde, felt compelled to add that the girls even waited on the teachers when at school.¹¹ Regardless of the ways in which students and administrators conveyed the image of the “civilized” Indian, Pratt and the popular press alike applauded the result. After the participation of a group of Carlisle students in the York Centennial parade, one newspaper report noted: “the boys were courteous and polite in their manners, and in their general conduct are the perfection of good behavior, the fruits of strict, judicious discipline... Their behavior in every respect is a credit to the school.”¹²

Many of the students’ public visits, however, offered images which conflicted with this primary representation of the “civilized” Indian. Pratt objected to the methods of Samuel Armstrong at Hampton Institute, who dressed Indians in native garb for fundraising events. Yet while Pratt described these events as “traveling circuses” whose purpose was akin to that of the

⁸ *Indian Helper*, “The Indian School Battalion Off For Washington,” Vol. 12 No. 21, March 1897, and *Indian Helper*, Vol. 12 No. 22, March 1897.

⁹ *School News*, Vol. 1 No. 11, April 1881.

¹⁰ *Indian Helper*, “Camp Items,” Vol. 3 No. 50, 27 July 1888.

¹¹ *School News*, Vol. 2 No. 10, March 1882.

¹² *Indian Helper*, Excerpt from *The Age*, Vol. 3 No. 8, 30 September 1887.

Wild West shows, it did not escape Pratt's notice that Indian customs grabbed the attention of audiences.¹³ At the close of a concert given by the Carlisle choir in 1883, student Susie Martinez gave a recitation in full Indian costume.¹⁴ In another instance, Pratt provided sinew and feathers to Carlisle students on a camping trip and instructed them to make bows and arrows. While many visitors to the camp enjoyed setting up nickels and dimes as targets for the students, administrators also hoped visitors would observe how quickly Carlisle's students had acquired white habits.¹⁵

As with any institution that relies even partially upon the charity of the public, Carlisle had to cater at least in part to its audience. Luther Standing Bear remembered an evening in which, during a formal performance of Carlisle students, a request was made for both song and words spoken in an Indian tongue, with which Standing Bear complied.¹⁶ Given the tradition of Indian staging, this most likely seemed a reasonable request; as early as twenty years prior to Standing Bear's performance, many Native activists, including Sarah Winnemucca, Pauline Johnson, and Charles Eastman highlighted their Indianness through their speech and attire.

Sometimes administrators staged Indian culture to simultaneously intrigue the audience and testify to the necessity of assimilation. "When We Were Little Girls and How We Lived Then," a speech written by Carlisle graduate Nellie Robertson and read by student Mabel Buck at a local church benefit, exhibited this dual-usage perfectly. The first half of the speech upheld commonly accepted views concerning Indian gender relations, illustrating Indian women as having a low status in tribal society.¹⁷ Robertson depicted her culture as favoring boys over

¹³ Donal F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), p. 183.

¹⁴ *Eadle Keatah Toh*, Vol. 4 No. 3, October 1883.

¹⁵ Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*, pp. 154-155.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.

¹⁷ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp. 173-179.

girls; Indian women were subservient to their “lazy, good-for-nothing” hunter/warrior husbands, “slave[s] to [their] husband, working for and waiting upon him almost constantly.” Polygyny, wife selling, and forced marriages, seen as common tragedies in Indian cultures by whites, also found their way into Robertson’s speech : “Sometimes [she was sold] to the one of all her suitors she most favored, oftener to some man old enough to be her grandfather.” The Indian life described in this speech emphasized its savagery, replete with medicine men, dog feasts, and self-mutilation.¹⁸

The second half of the speech contrasted this savagery with a description of Indian women’s progress. As whites settled among Robertson’s people, Indian women began to favor civilization over “barbarism:” girls married whom they chose, moved into frame houses, and dressed their babies in bright calicos. No longer did they live like “birds and squirrels,” but instead traveled east to attend school. By depicting reservation life in such a negative light, the first half of the speech necessitated Indian education and assimilation, if only to save young girls from miserable lives. The second section, enhanced by descriptions of savagery, advertised for boarding schools which improved Indian girls’ lives by teaching civilized pursuits, such as housekeeping, sewing, washing, ironing and cooking. Students could then lead useful lives in both the East and West as doctors, nurses, teachers, and “good educated wives.”¹⁹

The most common displays in which Carlisle students took part were events “arranged [events] to show the public what the school was doing.” On one tour through Philadelphia, New York City, and Brooklyn, visitors observed 142 students engaged in different industrial work: the girls, for example, created, laundered and mended garments, darned stockings, washed dishes and set tables. Students worked on schoolroom activities in a fabricated classroom setting. A

¹⁸ *Indian Helper*, “Past, Present, and Future of the Indian Woman,” Vol. 10 No. 6, November 2, 1894.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

government official prompted students to answer questions about the internal organization and administration of the nation's government. The band played a selection of music, and students gave speeches to the audience. Pratt charged an admission to raise money "for the large boys' building and the cost."²⁰

Displays such as these proliferated at the turn of the century. As pageantry became increasingly popular in the late nineteenth century, the BIA took advantage of the phenomenon in their campaign of assimilation.²¹ Indian educators were not alone in their use of pageantry; educators of Indians and whites alike introduced dramatic skits, songs, and dances into their classrooms to teach a variety of subjects, believing this type of play contributed to the students' education, social solidarity, and citizenship.²² The Bureau of Indian Affairs led a campaign to convince Americans that assimilation was working: the old Indian ways were dead, replaced by "civilized" ways. Exhibits in fairs and other productions focused on Indian education, the most successful of the assimilationist ventures.²³ Pratt included his students in a number of events that displayed Carlisle as a leading example of this success.

In 1882, Carlisle participated in the Philadelphia Bicentennial Exposition parade, which illustrated the country's past and progress. The marching cadet corps and band accompanied floats exemplifying mechanical and scholastic work, the main float depicting William Penn's

²⁰ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 322-323.

²¹ It should be noted that, beginning in the 1880s, the general consensus in the United States was that the solution to the "Indian problem" lay in the philanthropic ideal of assimilation, yet education was only one of the methods working to attain this goal. The General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act, passed in 1887, attempted to destroy the tribal connection and promote self-sufficiency by dividing tribally-held land into individual allotments distributed to individuals under a twenty-five-year trust arrangement. Allottees automatically became U.S. citizens, and received legal title to their land after the trust period. Lucy Maddox, "Politics Performance and Indian Identity," *American Studies International* 40 (June 2002): p. 7.

²² David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 52-55.

²³ Robert A. Trennert, "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904," *American Indian Quarterly* 11.3 (1987): p. 203.

treaty.²⁴ In his writing on American historical pageantry, David Glassberg suggests that historical pageants portrayed an idealized portrait of social relations, displaying a past society imbued with moral values out of which a new society could grow.²⁵ Regardless of whether William Penn actually met with Indians under an Elm tree, to those viewing the parade the scene portrayed specific historical precedents – an instance in which Indians and whites met peaceably, and whites treated Indians fairly would have soothed American minds increasingly filled with guilt.²⁶ That educated, “civilized” Indians were performing this tableau served to erase this guilt. It is unclear if the students identified with the myth; regardless, their ability to perform convincingly in “the civic ritual of commemorative pageantry” signified their competency as citizens.²⁷

The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago exemplified an exhibit proclaiming the merits of Indian education.²⁸ It was no coincidence that, the same year the Indian Office suggested Indian schools celebrate Columbus Day, instructors at Carlisle and other Indian schools began to teach students that Columbus’ accomplishments helped the development of the Indian race.²⁹ A group of male Carlisle students marched in the October 1892 Columbus Day parade, the opening event of the fair. Like other parades in New York City and Chicago in which Carlisle participated, students walked behind a banner reading “United States Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Into Civilization and Citizenship.” Marching in ten platoons, each student carried items representing the school: books, slates, and the implements

²⁴ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 280.

²⁵ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, pp. 2-4, 124-126.

²⁶ See Chapter 1 Note 46 for a discussion on the expression of white guilt.

²⁷ Lucy Maddox, “Politics, Performance, and Indian Identity,” p. 8.

²⁸ One of the best examples of an Indian using the World’s Fair as a platform to deliver a message in a staged setting is the opening day speech given by Potawatomie chief Simon Pokagon. An excellent discussion of this speech in the greater context of Indian performance can be found in the introduction of Lucy Maddox’s *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

²⁹ Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 191-192.

and results of printing, agriculture, baking, carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, harness making, tinsmithing, and tailoring.³⁰

Initially, Indian Commissioner Thomas J. Morgan suggested the opening-day parade be “headed by 20 or more Indians, mounted, dressed in their native costumes of blankets, leggings, feathers, paint, [and] moccasins,” with the Carlisle band following to add a comparative element. Though Carlisle’s performances often juxtaposed its students with the negative aspects of reservation life, contrasting them with visually compelling, crowd-pleasing Indians in native garb would have done little to further the assimilationist goal. Pratt opposed public reference to aspects of tribal culture when its purposes differed from his own,³¹ and discarded the idea of following “savages.”³² He understood the importance of the students’ appearance at the fair communicating the potential of a “civilized” comportment of Indians, and instructed his boys to march with their “heads up, shoulders back, eyes front, lines straight, [and in] perfect step... I want them to see that you... are as good material for our army as any other people. We must do all we can to make them think well of us.”³³

Carlisle’s presence at the fair was situated among other carefully planned and orchestrated demonstrations of Indianness. As an event commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas, it “seemed appropriate to include the past, present, and predicted future of the original American.”³⁴ The fair supplied an ethnographic display of objects collected by the Smithsonian Institution and two “live” exhibitions: a series of

³⁰ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 294-296.

³¹ Lonna Malmsheimer, “‘Imitation White Man’: Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School,” *Studies in Visual Communication* 11 (Fall 1985): p. 69.

³² Trennert, “Selling Indian Education at World’s Fairs and Expositions,” p. 206. It is interesting that Pratt would object to this aspect of the parade; just months before Carlisle’s participation in the World’s Fair, Pratt allowed his students to follow a “mounted party of twenty painted and war-bonneted Indians brought in from western tribes” in Philadelphia’s Bicentennial Exposition. Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 280.

³³ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 296.

³⁴ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education at World’s Fairs and Expositions,” p. 204.

replicated Indian villages which displayed Indians from various tribes performing “typical” Indian tasks, and an Indian school exhibit, including a model school.³⁵ Indian education provided the most visible success story in the Bureau of Indian Affairs’s (BIA) campaign of Indian assimilation, and the Columbian Exposition was the first of many exhibitions and trade fairs in which Indian education held a prominent role.³⁶ Delegations of Indian students from several BIA schools, such as Haskell Indian Industrial Training School and Chilocco Indian Boarding School, demonstrated their “civilized” accomplishments: reading, writing, and the performance of skilled manual labor. Indian Commissioner Morgan designed the model Indian school to contrast with the ethnographic exhibits and the Wild West Shows performed daily just outside the fair grounds.³⁷

Pratt refused to participate in the model school, and to prevent any association between Carlisle and the exhibit, disallowed assistant superintendent Alfred Standing from running the school.³⁸ Pratt “urged the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to eliminate anything like an aboriginal and Wild West feature [but his] views were not accepted.”³⁹ *The Indian Helper* reflected Pratt’s disapproval of the government’s exhibits: “[The] folklore of the Indian and the Indian in his wild state held the most prominent place, while the progress he had made in civilization was displayed in a faulty cramped-up school building... reserved, as it were, from the civilized surroundings of the great exhibition.”⁴⁰ The irony of this article lies in the fact that, while negating folklore and the “wild state” of the Indian, the author uses a reference to reservations to drive his point. Just as the BIA intended the ethnological exhibits to contrast with

³⁵ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians*, p. 2.

³⁶ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education at World’s Fairs and Expositions,” p. 203.

³⁷ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians*, p. 2-3.

³⁸ Trennert, “Selling Indian Education at World’s Fairs and Expositions,” p. 208.

³⁹ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 303-304.

⁴⁰ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 11 No. 1, 4 October 1895.

the school exhibit, so too did Carlisle rely upon a comparison between reservations and civilization.

As a result of his disagreement with the BIA, Pratt planned a special exhibit to represent Carlisle, displaying student industrial work and providing visitors with an administrator and an Indian student to answer questions.⁴¹ Rather than emphasizing the Indian students' past, as did the government-sponsored exhibits, Pratt believed his permanent exhibit aptly illustrated how Carlisle students moved "Into Civilization and Citizenship."⁴² Nonetheless, Pratt implicitly used the other exhibits as juxtaposition; the Carlisle exhibit became yet another exhibit depicting Indianness. Pratt's exhibit, however, along with the Bureau's model school, was a relative disappointment; neither attracted as many visitors as the exhibits displaying traditional Indian culture and the Wild West shows.⁴³

Pratt also organized a student trip to the fair, arranging a week's free admission for each student in return for public military drills and band performances.⁴⁴ The students arrived conspicuously: each student, wearing a yellow satin badge reading "United States Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, PA., Excursion to World's Fair October 1893" and headed by the band, marched "with stately tread" through the fair to its center. From there, administrators allowed students to tour the fair as they wished. The visit, funded by the students themselves, provided opportunities for Carlisle to persuade spectators of the merits of Indian education and for students to answer questions about their people and their school.⁴⁵ The exposition was the perfect confluence of positive Carlisle propaganda, student education, and enjoyment. Scholar Rosemarie Bank described how the lines between Indian visitors and Indians on display were

⁴¹ Trennert, "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions," pp. 209-211.

⁴² Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 303-304.

⁴³ Trennert, "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions," p. 211.

⁴⁴ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 299-300.

⁴⁵ *Indian Helper*, "Carlisle Indian School at the World's Fair", Vol. 9 No. 3, 13 October 1893.

“extremely fluid;”⁴⁶ this held true for Carlisle’s students as well. The students “interestedly looked at the Fair, and modestly and politely answered... thousands of questions in regard to themselves, their people and the school.”⁴⁷ Yet these efforts provided no guarantee that everyone would accept Carlisle’s message, as one exchange shows:

A very poor but intelligent young man... was one of the crowd as the Carlisle battalion passed on parade. ‘What a magnificent sight!’ he exclaimed. ‘Yes, pretty good, for wild injuns,’ was the reply of another. ‘Wild Indians!’ said he. ‘Educated INDIVIDUALS, they are every one of ‘em!’ which we regard as the most complimentary comment overheard while there.⁴⁸

Clearly, one of the participants in this dialogue continued to view Carlisle students through the lens of his preconceived notions, as wild Indians. Yet the article relied on this comparison with “wild” Indians to enhance the image of Carlisle’s students, emphasizing their individuality as opposed to the tribal identity commonly associated with reservation Indians.

Historian Lucy Maddox describes the versatility of the Columbian Exposition in providing and creating multiple (and often incongruent) representations of Indianness. Different images of Indian life offered several definitions of Indianness: extinct peoples represented by their curious artifacts, living vestiges of an ethnographically interesting culture, mythologized warriors in a fight for the frontier, tragic remnants of a disappearing people, and “docile trainees in white America’s grand benevolent project of uplift and civilization.”⁴⁹ These definitions were not mutually exclusive, as an account from the *Springfield Union* aptly shows: “The students of Carlisle... represented the savages Columbus found. But instead of appearing as savages, they marched in their present character as intelligent, well-dressed and well-bred young men... But

⁴⁶ Rosemarie K. Bank, “Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition,” *Theatre Journal* 54 (2002): p. 596.

⁴⁷ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 9 No. 3, 13 October 1893.

⁴⁸ *Indian Helper*, “Carlisle Indian School at the World’s Fair”, Vol. 9 No. 3, 13 October 1893.

⁴⁹ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians*, p. 3.

for the coming of the white man these Indians would be savages still, but today they are in a fair way to become the equals of any of us in civilization and citizenship.”⁵⁰ This account encompassed many of the possible definitions of Indianness addressed above. Like the observation that the students were “educated individuals,” the reporter makes a clear distinction between savagery and intelligence. If Pratt was to prove that Indians could be civilized, the public could not forget that the students were savage Indians at heart, tamed by the Carlisle method. Furthermore, the self-congratulatory tone of the *Union*’s commentary further reminded the reader of the natural barbaric state of the Indian; the Indians might acculturate themselves to white society, but they needed white men (whether Columbus or Pratt himself) to aid them.

Just as administrators planned the Columbian Exposition exhibits meticulously, the Carlisle band performed in carefully orchestrated events. These performances fulfilled the goals of federal Indian policy in a number of ways – they celebrated American patriotism, reinforced Anglo-European social customs and favored forms of artistic expression, and aided in the erasure of Native culture and history.⁵¹ Yet these goals were not reached uniformly; Carlisle’s band, like the Columbian exposition, provided performances which depicted Indianness in a variety of ways.

During the first summer at Carlisle, Pratt did not prohibit students’ native musical expressions, allowing drums and Indian songs. The first year, especially for the initial group of students, was a difficult one, and Pratt believed the students’ cultural heritage would gradually disappear as a result of prolonged exposure to white society. Within a year of the school’s

⁵⁰ *Springfield Union* as reprinted in Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 191-192.

⁵¹ Rayna Green and John Troutman, “By the Waters of the Minnehaha: Music and Dance, Pageants, and Princesses,” in *Away From Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences*, ed. Margaret L Archuleta, Brenda J Child, and K Tsianina Lomawaima (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), p. 61.

opening, a benefactor donated instruments for a brass band, and Pratt latched on to the idea that “civilized music would soon drive out the Indian music.”⁵²

In a matter of weeks, the band began performing in evening dress parades for town visitors.⁵³ The band had humble roots; Luther Standing Bear recounts their pride in playing their first song in public: the alphabet song. “[It] was a good thing we were not asked to give an encore,” he remembered, “for that was all we knew!”⁵⁴ Rather than native musical tradition, instructors taught students in Indian boarding schools “safer,” more American forms of music: western and classical-style compositions played with woodwinds, strings, brass, and the piano. Because boarding schools often utilized military organization, marching bands became the most common form of musical expression.⁵⁵ The Carlisle band especially was “widely sought for as a feature on public occasions and for entertainment throughout the eastern states,” playing in fairs and parades throughout the nation.⁵⁶

One necessary role the band fulfilled was fundraising. The *Indian Helper* described an 1896 concert as a success, the band “clear[ing] between 80 and 90 dollars.”⁵⁷ The *Helper* also advertised an upcoming performance, reminding readers that tickets were only 25 cents (trolley fare included), and that all proceeds went to the band.⁵⁸ The band’s most redeeming purpose, however, at least in the eyes of Pratt and his supporters, was that it showed the Indian as a civilized individual. The *Helper* described the musical changes taking place at Carlisle:

In the first years of Carlisle, when our students were mostly non-English speaking... frequently the lonely hours of night were made mournful by weird sounds from a crude Indian flute... The player was generally a young

⁵² Richard Henry Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School: Its Origin, Purposes, Progress and the Difficulties Surmounted* (Carlisle, PA: Hamilton Library Association, 1908), p. 29.

⁵³ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 30.

⁵⁴ Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*, pp. 148-149.

⁵⁵ Rayna Green and John Troutman, “By the Waters of the Minnehaha,” pp. 62-63.

⁵⁶ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 30.

⁵⁷ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 11 No. 17, 31 January 1896.

⁵⁸ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 14 No. 9, 6 December 1898.

man of medicine and wardance experiences... This is the sort of music we never hear now-a-days, the cornet trombone, clarinet, violin, etc., having taken its place. The band drove camp music out, never more to return.⁵⁹

Carlisle and its band did more than simply drive “camp music” out of its grounds; it drove the “medicine and wardance” Indians out as well, leaving behind students acculturated to white society.

After hearing the band play a series of difficult compositions, a correspondent for the *Harrisburg Telegraph* believed the students had “all the finish and proficiency of the best military bands in the country.”⁶⁰ The students’ performance of patriotic compositions displayed their readiness for citizenship. After students played “The Stars and Stripes Forever” and “The Star Spangled Banner” for soldiers at a parade in Mount Gretna, one observer felt that “never before has that noble selection had such a depth of thrilling patriotism as when so ably played by Prof. Wheelock’s skilled musicians this morning.”⁶¹ To an audience, the band playing these nationalistic, pride-inspiring songs with such gusto and talent signified their acculturation.

Yet many performances depicted students as both civilized and stereotypically “Indian.” One issue of the *Red Man* referred to the band as a “band of savages,”⁶² which seems surprising given that the professed purpose of the publication was to promote “interest [in] Indian education and civilization.”⁶³ The inclusion of Herman Bellstedt’s “Indian War Dance” in many public performances exemplifies this fusion. In the late 1880s, popularized, sanitized, and stereotyped “Indianist” compositions by non-Indian composers praised a romanticized ideal of Native identity. Though they evoked images of the Indian maiden and the noble savage, administrators

⁵⁹ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 11 No. 12, 20 December 1895.

⁶⁰ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 13 No. 32, 27 May 1898.

⁶¹ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 13 No. 29, 6 May 1898.

⁶² *Red Man*, “Our Graduating Exercises, The Eighth and Anniversary Exercises, The Seventeenth”, Vol. 13 No. 8, Mar 1896.

⁶³ *Red Man*, Vol. 13 No. 8, March 1896. Emphasis added.

often had no qualms with the performance of these pieces given their “civilized” musical style.⁶⁴ Dennison Wheelock, a former Carlisle student, composed and performed at the seventeenth anniversary of the school an original composition, entitled “From Savagery into Civilization,” which progressed from the sounds of tom-toms to “the sweet and classic strains of civilized horns.”⁶⁵

When played alongside other classical western pieces, the contrast was notable, and the audience remembered “The Indian War Dance” at the expense of the rest. Attendees found the “war-whoops” at one performance “so blood curdling that a young son of Africa who occupied the gallery is said to have turned several shades paler and given rise to the supposition that he was becoming white.”⁶⁶ Rather than presenting Carlisle’s students as ready for citizenship, this report from the *Indian Helper* drew very clear race lines between white, Indian, and black. The account created a thoroughly confusing picture, reminding readers of the racial divide, but also suggesting that one could (metaphorically) move between races. However, it was abject fear of the Indian race which prompted this racial mobility. Furthermore, the way in which the black child “turned white” was so ludicrous it might instead point to the apparent absurdity of Indians attempting to assimilate and become white themselves.

At the pinnacle of the Carlisle band’s popularity, a forty-voice choir and thirty-piece band toured many eastern cities, including Washington D.C., Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, New York, and Brooklyn.⁶⁷ Unlike the Wild West show’s “erroneous ideas and hurtful influences[,] giving people a wrong idea of what the American Indian is capable of performing,” the Carlisle band provoked a larger interest in Indian education, educated whites in the abilities

⁶⁴ Rayna Green and John Troutman, “By the Waters of the Minnehaha,” pp. 67-69.

⁶⁵ *Indian Helper*, “The Seventeenth Anniversary of the Birth of Our School.” Vol. 12 No. 1, 9 October 1896.

⁶⁶ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 11 No. 11, 13 December 1895.

⁶⁷ *Indian Helper*, “Return of the Band and Choir and Observations on the Way by One of the Party.” Vol. 9 No. 30, 20 April 1894.

of Indian students under “favorable conditions,” and helped to eradicate prejudice.⁶⁸ As with the trip to the Columbian Exposition, Pratt expected the students as well to gain something from the trip. The *Indian Helper* hailed the tour as “broadening the intellect,” providing inspiration and incentive that would “forever banish from our minds the idea that we can ever contentedly shut ourselves up on a reservation to lead a life of idleness with the outside world pushing and driving as it is toward the high civilization of which if we do not become a part, we shall in time be deservedly crushed out of existence.”⁶⁹ This commentary exemplified the Carlisle students’ indoctrination; instructors expected students to adopt the linear cultural evolution of the nineteenth century, as well as the belief that the Indians’ destruction resulted from their failure (mostly as a result of laziness – the opposite of American industry) to embrace white culture.

Band performances often attracted “large and fashionable” audiences,⁷⁰ convincing many affluent observers (and possible benefactors) of the potential of Carlisle students. The students played first in Washington D.C. for a large audience in Metzgerott Hall under the patronage of the first lady and the ladies of the cabinet.⁷¹ Government officials, representatives from both the Senate and the House, members of the clergy, and other important Washington residents⁷² attended what the *Washington Post* referred to as “interesting and... unique entertainment.”⁷³ One of the most notable aspects of the performance in Washington was the opening address given by student Elmer Simon:

Your civilization has conquered us, your beneficence is educating and training us, and we have entered the race for the good things of life with you,

⁶⁸ *Red Man*, “The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour,” Excerpt from the *Philadelphia Press*, Vol. 12 No. 5, March/April/May 1894.

⁶⁹ *Indian Helper*, “Return of the Band and Choir and Observations on the Way by One of the Party,” Vol. 9 No. 30, 20 April 1894.

⁷⁰ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 9 No. 23, 2 March 1894.

⁷¹ *Indian Helper*, “The Concert Tour”, Vol. 9 No. 29, 13 April 1894.

⁷² *Indian Helper*, “Return of the Band and Choir and Observations on the Way by One of the Party,” Vol. 9 No. 30, 20 April 1894.

⁷³ *Indian Helper*, “The Concert Tour”, Vol. 9 No. 29, 13 April 1894.

adopting your dress, learning your language, occupations, and refinements... [We] are progressing and hope to demonstrate to you that even your music charms and wins us Savages... We know we are scattered tribes imprisoned on reservations and we are not yet counted a part of the people. That among the wise men, who in yonder Capitol guide the affairs of the Nation, we are without representation. [We] hope our appearance and efforts may help to dispel unreasoning prejudice and bring nearer the day of our full freedom and opportunity, when our own representative man through the equality of rights you preach, shall appear in Congress or possibly preside at the other end of the Avenue.⁷⁴

This Indian students' heartfelt exhortation captured in essence what all Carlisle performances attempted to show. The speech opened humbly: Simon significantly acknowledged the conquest of Indians and their territory, admitting both that Indians were lacking, and that white men's efforts were slowly enabling Indians to survive in civilized society. The speech upheld (and given the Indian identity of the speaker, confirmed for a white audience) common perceptions of reservations as "prisons" which encouraged sloth and slovenliness. Simon ostensibly meant his use of the word "savages" as a jest, as the *Indian Helper's* report of his smile and the audience's subsequent laughter suggested. Yet it reminded the audience that, however civilized the students appeared, they still differed from the audience itself. Simon took the celebrated transformation of savages into civilized members of society to its logical conclusion, suggesting not only the necessity of Indian representatives in United States government, but the possibility of an Indian president. While many in the audience may simply have seen Simon as a curiosity, Simon's proposition and his own competency as a potential citizen gains credibility through his outstanding oratory skills. By setting Indians' past beside the present state of Carlisle students (the plea for representation), the audience could fully grasp the students' advancement.

Most accounts overlooked Simon's desire for representation, focusing instead on the gratitude he expressed toward the white race, and almost all contained an emphasis on the

⁷⁴ *Indian Helper*, "Return of the Band and Choir and Observations on the Way by One of the Party," Vol. 9 No. 30, 20 April 1894.

group's "Indianness." The *Washington Star* condescendingly began its description of the performance by announcing that "Washington is under the rule of Indians today. The authorities, however, promise that they are tame." Journalists often tempered the students' Indian identity with comparisons to a more stereotypical image of Indian identity. Reporters held students above Wild West Indians as a "civilized class," with a vocabulary and ease of English speech that is nothing like the "rough guttural sounds emitted by the savage while speaking."⁷⁵ Their smiles, laughter, and intelligent discourse stood out against the "empty and stolid expression" of the "blanket Indian."⁷⁶ Against this background, many found the students' advances extraordinary.⁷⁷

Given their attitude and appearance, most reports considered Carlisle students an improvement over reservation Indians. This did not keep these same reports from recalling the students' foreignness and potential danger. The *Washington Star* contrasted the student's "weapons" (songs, solos, horns, and drums) with their ancestor's "curdling whoops," knives, and tomahawks.⁷⁸ Another account suggested the students' fathers and grandfathers would have scalped the audience without hesitation.⁷⁹ While Carlisle students may have looked and performed like whites, the accounts reminded the reader of the students' (sensationalized) heritage.

The theory of linear cultural evolution and the inevitable demise of Indian heritage often found their way into images of Indianness produced by the popular press. The *Wilmington*

⁷⁵ *Red Man*, "The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour," Excerpt from the *Philadelphia Item*, Vol. 12 No. 5, Mar/April/May 1894.

⁷⁶ *Red Man*, "The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour," Excerpt from the *Baltimore Sun*, Vol. 12 No. 5, Mar/April/May 1894.

⁷⁷ *Red Man*, "The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour," Excerpt from the *Baltimore American*, Vol. 12 No. 5, Mar/April/May 1894.

⁷⁸ *Red Man*, "The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour," Vol. 12 No. 5, Mar/April/May 1894.

⁷⁹ *Red Man*, "The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour," Excerpt from the *Baltimore American*, Vol. 12 No. 5, Mar/April/May 1894.

News, after giving a positive review of the students' performance, reminded readers that "in the natural course of events the Indian tribes will ultimately become extinct, just as the wild bison and other native animals of the far West have become extinct."⁸⁰ In this paradigm, cultural change is organic and sure in its course, with the emphasis on extinction lending a social Darwinist bent. Surely this author was not being intentionally ironic; beyond the potentially offensive comparison between Indians and animals, the abrupt extinction of the western bison was due in large part to the actions of white settlers and visitors to the west. A problematic parallel exists between the disappearance of Indian culture (or Indians themselves) and buffalo: if whites assumed even partial responsibility for the latter (through unnatural and unnecessary over-hunting), they would be partially responsible (in an equally unnatural and unnecessary way) for the former.

Audiences especially enjoyed instances in which students themselves found their heritage distasteful, laughable, or a thing of the past. The *Baltimore Sun* appreciated the Indians' sense of humor in a skit in which an Indian student sang in a "Yankee twang" about a rejected lover who traveled west only to be scalped by Indians (at which point the student pointed "laughingly" at his comrades on stage).⁸¹ Exactly *who* took artistic license in including and scripting this portion of the performance is unclear, but Pratt allowed the performance, and an Indian separating himself from stereotypical and frightening Indian behaviors would have soothed many white minds. The student, however, acted in a stereotypical *white* manner, mocking both Indians and the white "Yankee twang." This complex situation raises a number of questions. What caused the white audience to laugh: the overblown characterizations, or the improbability of an Indian

⁸⁰ *Red Man*, "The Band and Choir Make A Little Tour," Vol. 12 No. 5, Mar/April/May 1894.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

student acting white? How did the student himself feel about this performance? These cannot be answered, but point to the complexities inherent in all Carlisle performances.

It should be noted that, though accounts often emphasized the sensational rather than the assimilationist elements of performances, the *Red Man* reprinted them. The publication only commented that other periodicals “were kind enough” to speak of the tour, and refuted none of the accounts.⁸² Perhaps Pratt believed any publicity was good publicity; none of the accounts were entirely negative, and most commented extensively on the gains students had made in their assimilation. The focus on reservation life and a savage past may have provided a contrast which enhanced the perception of students’ progress. Occasionally periodicals commented on how events were reported, such as one article in the *Indian Helper*: “[The band’s] aim is perfection, regardless of our being Indians, and we will get as near to that point as possible. Away with the notion that ‘They play well for Indians!’ [We play] very well for Indians and for any other race.”⁸³ The press explicitly described students as different from Wild West or blanket Indians, yet still “Indian” regardless of their advances, and many saw the “civilized Indian” as an oddity, rather than an equal. It is clear that old stereotypes remained in the forefront of many American minds, yet their existence was crucial in emphasizing the benefits and necessity of assimilation and the Carlisle method.

While many events, such as band performances and fair exhibits, lent themselves easily to careful planning and occasionally even scripting, other events, though more informal, were just as important in creating the image of a civilized, assimilable Indian. One example was Carlisle’s outing system, which sent students to live and work with families in exchange for

⁸² *Red Man*, “The Band and Choir Make a Little Tour,” Vol. 12 No. 5, March/April/May 1894.

⁸³ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 13 No. 41, 29 July 1898.

nominal pay, room and board. The system forced students to speak English (administrators restricted non-proficient English-speakers from applying), and immersed them in “civilized living.”⁸⁴ Outing also encouraged students to manage money; Pratt bragged that during the summer of 1900, students earned a total of \$27,255.52, and saved nearly 60% of those earnings.⁸⁵ Not all students found outings pleasant – abuse and runaways were rare but a reality, and outing often compounded students’ feelings of isolation. Yet outings were mostly successful, offering students the opportunity to travel and experience new things, and, occasionally, providing long-lasting relationships between students and sponsors.⁸⁶

Beyond forcing students to acculturate quickly in a hands-on manner, outing also answered the dilemma produced by summer breaks; assimilationists feared regression if students returned to reservations.⁸⁷ During Carlisle’s first summer, twenty-four boys and girls were sent into the countryside to “work for pay, live in and be treated as members of the family, and to generally conform to the habits and customs of the home life of our best agricultural population.” Nearly half of this first group failed to remain out the entire summer due to poor English, insufficient training and industry, and the fears or prejudices of both students and sponsors.⁸⁸ The next year saw better results. Pratt sent children farther afield from Carlisle to make escape more difficult, placing out one hundred and nine students. Twenty-nine remained out for the winter semester to continue their acculturation and education in private schools. By 1900, Carlisle had placed eight hundred and ninety-three students in area homes.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Cumberland County Historical Society, Indian Industrial School Gallery, “Outing,” visited 20-23 October 2007.

⁸⁵ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, pp. 19-26.

⁸⁶ Cumberland County Historical Society, Indian Industrial School Gallery, “Outing,” visited 20-23 October 2007.

⁸⁷ Brenda J Child, and K Tsianina Lomawaima, “Making a Willing Worker,” in *Away From Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences*, ed. Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K Tsianina Lomawaima (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), pp. 35-37.

⁸⁸ Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School*, p. 19.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 19-26.

Though Pratt hailed the outing system as the “supreme Americanizer,” the program also acted as a supreme advertiser for the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.⁹⁰ Pratt used student success stories, such as a promotion Luther Standing Bear received at Wanamaker’s department store, as evidence of Carlisle’s ability to assimilate Indian students.⁹¹ The *School News* expressed pride in student Wilson Toome, placed out on a farm; when a ring came off a harness, he fixed it quite handily using skills learned at Carlisle. “He was not afraid to show what he had learned at this school... People who saw him were very much pleased.”⁹² Another student described an encounter with a local resident. Initially, the students’ Indian heritage caught the resident’s attention; the man asked the student to which tribe he belonged, and the student’s real name in both English and his “Indian tongue.”⁹³ Clearly the resident expected the student to behave in a certain way, and thought nothing of asking this student to put his Indianness on display, yet the student’s proficiency in English and smart appearance set him apart from other Indians the resident had met. The student’s heritage piqued the resident’s interest, but the student’s acceptance and ability to adopt white culture earned the man’s respect; the contrast not just in appearance, but in expectation, was a large part of performance at Carlisle.

Many students found the outing experience difficult, especially those new to Carlisle. Students placed out expressed a realization that they were on display, some quite explicitly. “[T]hey are very kind to me but I get tired with my mouth answering the ladies and men when they ask me anything about Carlisle Indian Training School but I let my mouth go on talking,” recalled a Nez Perce student, out for over two years.⁹⁴ It is evident that this student realized quickly that one role they were to play while outed was performative, and grew tired of being

⁹⁰ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, p. 311.

⁹¹ Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux*, p. 184.

⁹² *School News*, Vol. 2 No. 2, July 1881.

⁹³ *School News*, “A Good Letter”, Vol. 3 No. 8, January 1883.

⁹⁴ *School News*, “Letter From The Country,” Vol. 3 No. 5, October 1882.

under the spotlight. Other students, especially younger ones, lacked the awareness that outing meant performing. One child begged Pratt to allow him to return to school: “I don’t like stay here any more because those boys are make fun of me... I say to them, it would not make me died if I don’t play with you. They call me Indian. Of course I am Indian. I can’t help it.”

Though this is seemingly an acknowledgement of failure, the letter is followed by an admonition from the editor that “the boy who wrote this letter must be more manly and show those white boys how to behave.”⁹⁵ Whereas this student identifies himself as “Indian,” other students at least subconsciously recognized that “Indianness” embodied many roles played at different times for different people: the “civilized,” “savage,” and “noble” Indians, among others.

Athletics at Carlisle, like outing, drew the public gaze but did not permit careful planning of image. Students could not predetermine the outcome of the games, but still managed to coordinate an image through fair play, good sportsmanship, and athletic excellence. The most prominent stage on which Carlisle students exhibited their athletic prowess in the school’s first two decades was the football field. Pratt shut down the school’s football program when a student suffered a broken leg in a game against Dickinson College, but later reinstated the program with two conditions: that students would always play fairly, for if they “slugged” people would see them as savages beyond saving; and that they beat the best football team in the nation.⁹⁶

Pratt recognized football’s ability to produce an Indian image complementary to Carlisle’s mission. Carlisle’s football team showed “brainy, self-disciplined, gentlemanly athletes who could beat the white man at his own game,” a fitting juxtaposition to the Wild West shows which showed Indians as “frozen in savagery.” Success on the football field created the

⁹⁵ *School News*, “A Little Country Boy In Trouble,” Vol. 3 No. 12, May 1883.

⁹⁶ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 316-318.

potential to win white friends for the assimilationist cause: many believed the acculturation of the Indian students enabled their success at a white sport against white teams. Football also became a powerful acculturating tool, reinforcing the American value system, which focused on teamwork, order and discipline, obedience, self-reliance, self-control, and hard work.⁹⁷

That football is, in its essence, a struggle for territory led to an interesting dynamic in white-Indian competition. Though most thought the Indian Wars a thing of the past, spectators remembered “red savages resisting the advance of white civilization.” Occasionally this connection was explicit, as in one account: “The wily aborigines had led the pale-faced bucks into an ambush, and as minute succeeded minute it looked as though a slaughter like unto that of Braddock’s men over a hundred years ago was about to be witnessed... [Carlisle] struggled for each inch of ground as desperately as ever their forefathers did centuries ago.”⁹⁸ French and Indian forces had routed the troops of Braddock, a British commander in the French and Indian War, at the Battle of Monongahela. The account mirrored the fight for territory on the football field with the fight for territory since the arrival of Europeans in the New World, imbuing moral values into the struggle. Furthermore, the reference to “wily Indians” calls to mind specific expectations about the Indian physique; one contemporary sportswriter noted how the Indian’s “heritage is all outdoors [and] his reflexes are sharp.”⁹⁹ To many, the Indians’ grace, elusiveness, and speed naturally suited them to athletic performances.

David Wallace Adams, in his analysis of football at Carlisle, describes the gridiron as a “mythic space” where Indians and whites played out, experienced, and reinterpreted the social drama of the frontier conflict. While many reports, like the one above, portrayed white teams as

⁹⁷ Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 181-190.

⁹⁸ *Philadelphia Press* as reprinted in *Indian Helper*, “Six Inches From Goal, But Lost,” Vol. 12 No. 6, 13 November 1896.

⁹⁹ Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), p. 121.

victorious in their battle for territory against a savage enemy, some spectators allowed Indians a moment of triumph in light of the terrible wrongs they had endured. Because football was only a game, white audiences found this triumph to be ideal. If Carlisle won, nothing was risked; most Indians still found themselves on reservations, and white hands continued to hold the real frontier.¹⁰⁰

As Pratt hoped, Carlisle's successes on the field increased their exposure and elicited glowing praise. The *Philadelphia Ledger* placed Carlisle a step above her white comrades, reminding the reader that "Yale and Harvard claim a team can only play two hard games a season: the Indians have already played three, with two more scheduled for them, thus showing the fallacy of such a claim." The *Evening Telegraph* described the Carlisle players as "in line with the best,"¹⁰¹ and a visitor to Carlisle recalled a game he witnessed in Chicago between Northwestern and Carlisle in which "those Indian fellows just walked right away with us... They are athletes."¹⁰² In some instances, competitive sports at Carlisle acted partially as a social leveler: observers focused on skill and ability rather than race.

Yet while many extolled the Carlisle players' abilities, accounts usually included reminders of the students' stereotypical "Indianness." One headline in the *Philadelphia Press* read: "Pennsylvania had found that they were pretty 'Good Indians' and they weren't dead ones, either."¹⁰³ Reports referred to Carlisle players in terms of their black hair and eyes and red or

¹⁰⁰ David Wallace Adams, "More Than A Game: The Carlisle Indians Take to the Gridiron, 1893-1917," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32.1 (2001): pp. 28, 39-42.

¹⁰¹ *Indian Helper*, "The Great Game", Vol. 13 No. 5, 12 November 1897.

¹⁰² Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI 1-1-47: Letter from Unknown to Masters Matthew and Wendell Jones, 19 August 1906.

¹⁰³ This headline plays off of the popular proverb "the only good Indian is a dead Indian," occasionally attributed to General Philip Sheridan. Though it has its roots in the frontier wars of the 1860s and 1870s, its use continued into the era of assimilation; Pratt's infamous words "kill the Indian [to] save the man" alluded to the proverb. The *Indian Helper* often had recurring articles entitled "An Indian Better Alive Than Dead," which gave examples of upstanding Indians. For a more detailed discussion of the origins and importance of the proverb, see Wolfgang

“dusky” skin color, and some could not resist recalling the “noble savage” in their descriptions. In one portrayal of a game in Chicago, a writer likened the Carlisle team to “a herd of buffalo on a stampede.”¹⁰⁴ Their language was also a point of contention: “At the Carlisle School, the pupils are allowed to speak only English. When this field goal had been kicked, a member of the band shouted to the team: -- ‘Ttreht htertahdtmh htrtdo htrter frfr rhthafrgdk warf rftadwoaly rfodw rf [sic].’ The outbreak was really pardonable.”¹⁰⁵ This passage managed to simultaneously emphasize the students’ English-only education and denigrate their language as incomprehensible and silly. That the student speaking in his native language constituted an “outbreak” represented an allusion to tribal practices and reservation life as diseased and disgusting, something in which Carlisle’s periodicals themselves often engaged, and perhaps provided the reason for the *Indian Helper*’s reprint of this passage.¹⁰⁶

Though accounts of games constantly reinforced the image of students playing “clean and gentlemanly” games, that Indian students did not become dangerous savages on the field shocked many observers and prompted at least some of this praise. Football at the end of the nineteenth century allowed for extreme violence; in the 1903 season alone, the American Medical Association attested to thirty-five deaths, eleven cases of paralysis, and over 500 severe accidents as a result of intercollegiate football.¹⁰⁷ Carlisle players and coaches were not immune to the danger or the press coverage, and perhaps their self consciousness forced the Carlisle team to play in a less violent, more skillful manner. One report spoke of “an uneasy kind of feeling that in these fierce contests Indian savagery might burst out and make things unpleasant.” The

Mieder’s “‘The Only Good Indian is a Dead Indian:’ History and Meaning of Proverbial Stereotype,” *De Proverbio: An Electronic Journal of International Proverb Studies* 1(1995).

¹⁰⁴ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 14 No. 7, 2 December 1898.

¹⁰⁵ *Indian Helper*, “The Great Game”, Vol. 13 No. 5, 12 November 1897.

¹⁰⁶ Jessica Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race: Writing and Resisting the Discourse of the Carlisle Indian School,” (PhD. Dissertation, George Washington University, 2005), p. 94.

¹⁰⁷ Scott McQuilkin, “Brutality in Football and the Creation of the NCAA: A Codified Moral Compass in Progressive America,” *Sport History Review* 33(2002): p. 4.

commentator discovered, however, that Carlisle was “as safe and dependable as any college team” and these attributes showed “Carlisle has succeeded in civilizing these wards of the nation in other ways than book learning.”¹⁰⁸ The reference to students as “wards of the nation” easily evoked the image of Indians as child-minded, needing civilizing guidance. Nonetheless, the report approved of the end result: safe, “civilized” Indians.

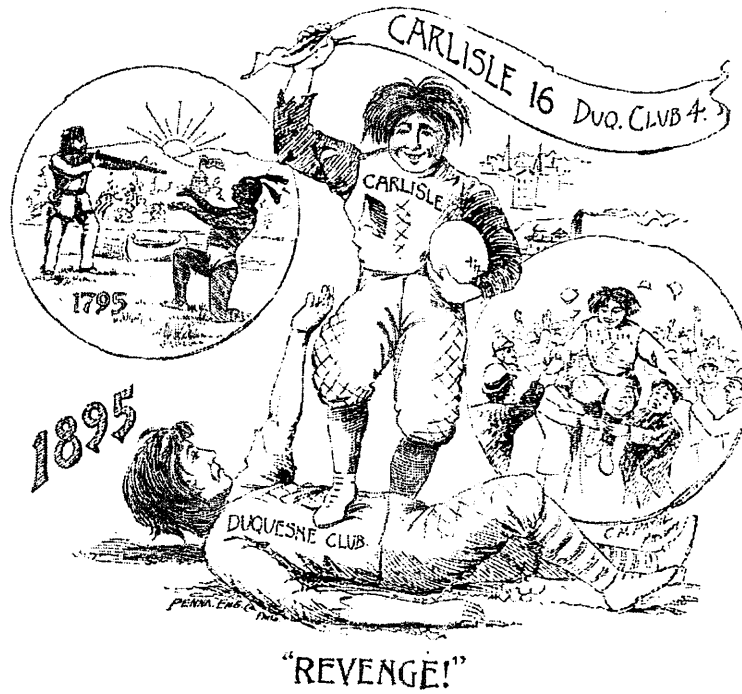
A cartoon published in the *Indian Helper* after Carlisle’s win over the Duquesne Club in Pittsburg in 1895 (Fig. 4) displayed a concordance of nearly all of the images of Indianness associated with the Carlisle football team. The attached article explicitly connected the students’ success at football with their assimilation successes, asserting that “If he can do it at foot-ball, he can do it in the arts and sciences.” The image and article avoided any connection with the potential “savagery” of Carlisle’s players; the victorious Indian student was shown smiling, indicating what the author declared a “cheerful revenge,” and the students’ gentlemanly playing was stressed. While the article celebrated the football victory, it did so in a way which focused on the necessity of assimilation and Carlisle’s ability to achieve that goal.¹⁰⁹

Football, fair exhibits, band performances, and the outing system allowed Pratt and other administrators to provide audiences with carefully supervised examples of the successes of Carlisle. These events demonstrated the students’ ability to learn and assimilate, yet the performances inherent at these events provided audiences with more popular Indian images and stereotypes to attract the public’s attention and enhance the “progress” the students had made. Carlisle’s presentations stood alongside other contemporary depictions of Indianness, working both to bolster and contradict the ideas they portrayed. Though David Wallace Adams limited his reference to football, the idea of a “mythic space” in which Indians and whites played out

¹⁰⁸ *Indian Helper*, “The Great Game,” Vol. 13 No. 5, 12 November 1897.

¹⁰⁹ *Indian Helper*, “Gentlemanly Playing Wins,” Vol. 11 No. 4, 25 October 1895.

social dramas – savagery, inferiority, assimilation – can be seen on the rural homesteads in the outing system, in the performance of Indianist compositions by the Carlisle band, and in Carlisle's presence (amidst a variety of other performances of Indianness) at the Columbian Exposition.



"REVENGE!"

GENTLEMANLY PLAYING WINS

The above original drawing was sent to David McFarland the next day after the football victory of our boys in Pittsburg. The cartoon bears study. In the days of Ft. Pitt it was the white man who had the upper hand. A hundred years have passed and the Indian comes out on top. If he can do it at foot-ball, he can do it in the arts and sciences. All he needs is a fair chance, and Carlisle is fast opening the way. He will always be at the mercy of the whites, (as is shown in the view in the left circle) as long as he is penned in on reservations or in any way encouraged to cling together in ignorant masses. The

whites know that. Carry education, incentive, ambition to the community and thus expect to lift them up? That has been tried long enough. It never was a success and never can be. Carlisle has shown repeatedly and for a thousand times has proclaimed the truth that all the Indians want is a chance to lift THEMSELVES up, and then like the boy in the right circle the multitudes will carry them along. "Revenge," is written below the illustration, but it is a cheerful if determined revenge. Mr. Charles Payne, the artist and member of the Duquesne Club, says in his letter of transmittal, "From one of the many friends you boys have made here by your gentlemanly playing."

Fig. 4. A cartoon depicting Carlisle's win over the Duquesne Club in Pittsburg. The article attached explicitly connected the students' success at football with their success at assimilating into white society. Taken from *Indian Helper*, Vol. 11 No. 4, 25 October 1895.

CHAPTER THREE:

“Ming[ling] with the educated Indian”¹ – Performances on Carlisle’s Campus

On Carlisle’s campus, surrounded by the students’ scholarly pursuits and trade items, the Carlisle Indians’ role as “students” became more apparent to observers. Government officials visited the school often, prompting a careful structuring of on-campus events which focused on the academic and acculturated aspects of the students. Yet as with the off-campus performances, administrators, students, and visiting Indians provided observers with images of Indianness through a multitude of performances, each crafted to suit each party’s needs.

Since his days at Fort Marion, Pratt had found a place for visitors and public performance alongside his “civilizing” techniques. Pratt allowed visitors on the school grounds most days except Sunday,² and issued invitations to Pennsylvania state legislators, Congressmen and other Federal government officials, prominent urban citizens, and foreign dignitaries. Visitors often toured the school grounds, shops, and classrooms, entertained by student singing, recitations, and school work. Distinguished guests often spoke to students, encouraging their progress. Visitors taught as well as observed the students; the Secretary of the Interior Henry Moore Teller told students: “as I am the Secretary I will help you all I can. But if you all don’t help yourselves I can’t do much for you all.” After the Secretary’s speech, one student recounted how “these words made us feel glad, and gave us more courage to try harder. And it brought us right to our

¹ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 12 No. 46, 27 August 1897.

² Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, ed. Robert M. Utley (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 120.

school motto: ‘God helps those who help themselves.’ We believe in helping ourselves while others are helping us.”³

Guests saw students’ progress first-hand; a group of visitors from Harrisburg, for example, saw children in the classroom “reciting and reading out loud and behaving themselves,” demonstrating that “the Indians were learning something.”⁴ While Pratt found broad public support imperative for school’s success, he also needed the support of government officials; Pennsylvania legislators were “very much interested and surprised to see how many things the children [could] do.”⁵ Visitors even came from abroad; one Osage student described the Duke of Southerland’s visit, remembering how “them men looking all school rooms, he look how they learn, they see some boys learn pretty good.”⁶

Visitors helped not just the image of the school, but also the Indian image among whites by proving the students capable of learning the English language and other western knowledge. One Washington Territory resident came to Carlisle with preconceived notions of reservation Indians as “dirty and lazy,” but after touring the grounds and visiting the shops and school rooms, the visitor had a change of heart: “Now I believe the Indians can learn something if you take them away from home to learn.”⁷ By printing this example in the *School News*, the editors emphasized the need to remove Indians from reservations and their native cultures.

Carlisle’s periodicals commonly relied upon visitors’ accounts to prove the groundlessness of common prejudices. One *Indian Helper* article focused on questions common to many visitors, such as if administrators feared for their safety, or if students were difficult to

³ *School News*, Vol. 3 No. 1, June 1882.

⁴ *School News*, “Visitors from Harrisburg,” Vol. 1 No. 1, June 1880.

⁵ *School News*, “About Our School,” Vol. 1 No. 11, April 1881.

⁶ *School News*, “One of the Osage boys writes to his friend after the visit of the Duke of Southerland at our school,” Vol. 1 No. 12, May 1881.

⁷ *School News*, “Items,” Vol. 3 No. 11, April 1883.

control. The *Helper* described visitors with questions like these as having “had limited opportunities themselves,” and “need[ing] to mingle with the educated Indian to become enlightened... Whites seeing that the Indians are the same as other people when under similar conditions lose [their] fear of the Indian and they become as brothers.”⁸ The presence of visitors turned the teacher-student paradigm on its head; rather than white visitors schooling Indians students in western ways, Indian students taught white visitors about the wrongs and inaccuracies of prejudice. Meanwhile, periodicals reminded readers that these advances could not be made (and perhaps that many whites’ prejudices would hold true) had these students remained on reservations.

Students were aware that both the administration and visitors expected them to perform. A group of young girls sang for Baltimore attorney Edgar Johnson and his mother upon their visit; Johnson awarded the students two dollars.⁹ “The little boys don’t learn any trades,” lamented the editor of the *School News*. “They have nothing to show when any visitors come so they making mud images horses, buffaloes and cows.”¹⁰ The students exhibited this awareness especially during annual examinations of the school, at which government officials tested students in “the various scholastic branches and in the mechanical arts.” Pratt welcomed other “prominent persons,” as well as Carlisle residents, to these events.¹¹ In 1881, so many visitors from Philadelphia came to the examinations there was “no room in the school rooms.”¹² Administrators structured the 1883 examinations more carefully; visitors heard recitations in the classrooms, watched a dress parade, and observed girls displaying their new-found cooking skills during the day. In the evening, Pratt invited visitors to the gymnasium to watch a staged event:

⁸ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 12 No. 46, 27 August 1897.

⁹ *School News*, “About Our School,” Vol. 2 No. 3, August 1881.

¹⁰ *School News*, Vol. 2 No. 4, September 1881.

¹¹ *New York Times*, “Indian School Commencement,” 24 May 1883.

¹² *School News*, “About Our School,” Vol. 2 No. 1, June 1881.

the band played “Nearer My God to Thee” and students drew maps and solved mathematical problems. The event closed with students and visitors singing “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” in unison.¹³

The anniversary of Carlisle’s founding provided another opportunity for Pratt to invite guests to the school. Students performed recitations, songs, band music, and piano selections at the nineteenth anniversary celebration. The closing *tableau* opened with an image of the first group of Indians to attend Carlisle, garbed in their native dress. This “sorry looking company... brought down the house in one tumultuous roar of applause,” the “audience appreciating the great strides taken since that day.” The following scene displayed the “cultivated student of today.” Once again, Carlisle relied upon images of the savage Indian to promote the new, civilized Indian, emphasizing the linear evolutionary development from savagery to civilization. This *tableau*, like other historical pageants at the turn of the century, showed a “new society” as the natural outgrowth of a past “society,” as well as utilized imagery to invent an appropriate tradition in support of reform. The *tableau* depicts a seamless change from old ways to new, emphasizing the inevitability of the change.¹⁴

After 1889, Commencement became the most significant yearly event. While some students went on to earn advanced degrees, the Bureau of Indian Affairs assumed most would not aspire to or be fit for such education. Due to a lack of proficiency in the English language among Carlisle’s earliest students, the first class of students to graduate did so ten years after the school’s opening. Few students graduated, but administrators awarded industrial certificates to

¹³ *School News*, “Report of Our Examination,” Vol. 3 No. 12, May 1883.

¹⁴ David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 4.

those who became proficient in their trade.¹⁵ Carlisle's periodicals extensively covered commencement ceremonies – students graduating proved Carlisle's success in educating and assimilating Indians.

Attendance at Carlisle's Commencement grew over the years, and included the presence of federal officials, Cabinet members, Senators, Representatives, and foreign dignitaries. The attendance of outing patrons allowed "representatives of the country homes... [to give] the other visitors the best evidence possible by their presence and their kindly words in favor of the Carlisle system." More than one hundred guests from Washington and Philadelphia traveled to the 1894 Commencement.¹⁶ By 1896, interest in the ceremonies had increased to the extent that the assembly hall could no longer accommodate the audience; in fact, on one occasion students missed out on the festivities to give way to guests.¹⁷ By the late 1890s, crowds of more than 3000 came to the event, so many that not all who wished to attend could gain entrance.¹⁸

Exhibits at commencement varied. Visitors enjoyed watching military, gymnastic, and calisthenics drills, in which students performed daily-executed exercises which supposedly offered "excellent health results."¹⁹ Girls also participated in a physical education program emphasizing grace and correct posture.²⁰ Despite the widely held belief in the biological inferiority of Indians, the students' "perfection of movement, the skill, dexterity and poetry of action charmed" many.²¹ Spectators toured shops, industrial departments, and classrooms, where they observed students operating sewing machines; making clothing, shoes, harnesses, tin

¹⁵ Cumberland County Historical Society, Indian Industrial School Gallery, "School Life," visited 20-23 October 2007.

¹⁶ *Indian Helper*, "Commencement News in Brief," Vol. 9 No. 24, 9 March 1894.

¹⁷ *Indian Helper*, "Commencement," Vol. 11 No. 22, 6 March 1896.

¹⁸ *Indian Helper*, "Our Own Account of Commencement," Vol. 12 No. 23, 19 March 1897.

¹⁹ *Indian Helper*, "Commencement News in Brief," Vol. 9 No. 24, 9 March 1894.

²⁰ John Bloom, "Show What an Indian Can Do," in *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences*, ed. Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), p. 101.

²¹ *Indian Helper*, "Commencement of Ninety-Nine," Vol. 14 No. 20, 10 March 1899.

objects, wagons, and cabinets; welding iron; washing and ironing; darning stockings; and painting and printing. “Instructors and pupils went ahead as nearly as possible as at routine work,” noted the *Indian Helper*, “just as though there were not hundreds of people watching every movement of hand and eye.”²² Carlisle displayed examples of written work and manufactured articles proudly in the hallways to passersby.²³

Student orations, especially those given by the graduates, dramatized how “the obstacle of language, at least, may easily be removed through proper means and wholesome environment.”²⁴ After years of education and separation from their families and cultures, these events gave students the opportunity to display their complete assimilation in dress and language, and allowed them to finally speak among whites as equals. At the 1896 Commencement, Cynthia Webster promoted the employment of Indian girls as school teachers, Delos Lonewolf discussed the necessity of Indian development, and Elmer Simon defended the “Indian man.” These eloquent, “stirring appeals for the red man... touched the hearts of the audience.”²⁵ Commencement ceremonies paired student speeches with words from distinguished guests, often Indians themselves, who praised Carlisle and its students and provided examples of the benefits of Indian education. The *Indian Helper* described Reverend Sherman Coolidge, a Northern Arapahoe Episcopal missionary, as an “Indian of commanding presence [and] intelligent countenance... brought up and educated in American civilization, exemplifying by his discourse and demeanor that the education out and away from the tribe ennobles, enlarges and fits for

²² *Indian Helper*, “Our Own Account of Commencement,” Vol. 12 No. 23, 19 March 1897.

²³ *Red Man*, “Our Graduating Exercises, the Eighth and Anniversary Exercises, the Seventeenth,” Vol. 13 No. 8, March 1896.

²⁴ *Indian Helper*, “Commencement of Ninety-Nine,” Vol. 14 No. 20, 10 March 1899.

²⁵ *Indian Helper*, “Commencement,” Vol. 11 No. 22, 6 March 1896.

usefulness.”²⁶ Coolidge’s presence provided a positive example for both students and visitors alike.

Organizers planned commencement events with a distinctly patriotic bent, draping platforms with red, white, and blue banners this was meant to show that Carlisle transformed its students into English-speaking, patriotic, productive young men and women. Yet the presence of an outside audience at Commencement, and the manner of activities in which they partook, still identified Indian students as different from white visitors and evoked a sense of performance. Chas B. Landis, a member of the Committee of Indian Affairs,²⁷ “asked the school, girls and all, to give three cheers for the flag” during the 1896 Commencement ceremonies. The students “responded so heartily that they were encored, and had to repeat it.”²⁸ Such patriotic flair became more common in the decades approaching the turn of the twentieth century, not just at Carlisle but in public schools as well, where flag exercises and other displays of national allegiance showed an intensification of “Americanist” sentiment, partly in response to a dramatic increase in immigration.²⁹ These displays were especially important at Carlisle; the school existed, after all, to integrate Indian students into American society seamlessly. Graduating students behaved in a civilized manner, wearing “looks of serious thought and manly and womanly purpose.”³⁰

²⁶ *Indian Helper*, “The Carlisle Indian School Commencement for 1898,” Vol. 13 No. 21, 11 March 1898.

²⁷ The Committee of Indian Affairs, a Senatorial committee, “has jurisdiction to study the unique problems of American Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native peoples and to propose legislation to alleviate these difficulties. These issues include, but are not limited to, Indian education, economic development, land management, trust responsibilities, health care, and claims against the United States.” In existence since the early nineteenth century but disbanded in 1946, the Senate reestablished this committee in 1977 and made it permanent in 1983. “Committee Background,” (United States Committee on Indian Affairs), <http://indian.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=About.History> (accessed 8 March 2008).

²⁸ *Indian Helper*, “The Carlisle Indian School Commencement for 1898,” Vol. 13 No. 21, 11 March 1898.

²⁹ Lucy Maddox, “Politics, Performance, and Indian Identity,” *American Studies International* 40 (June 2002): p. 10.

³⁰ *Indian Helper*, “Our Own Account of Commencement,” Vol. 12 No. 23, 19 March 1897.

It is impossible to verify whether these visits were “successful” in their fulfillment of possible positive aims for the school, but one visitor’s detailed account helps determine what an average visitor saw and experienced while at Carlisle. In a letter to his children, the visitor recounted his experience with the “real Indians” at Carlisle, repeatedly describing the similarities between the Indian students and his family – students played croquet and tennis and set type “just like [he] used to.” How well and often students spoke English impressed the visitor; he juxtaposed the “old Indians” who were unintelligible to whites with the students who “can talk English just about as well as white boys.”³¹

The experience positively influenced the visitor, yet he still stressed the differences between Indians and whites; though these students came close to being the equals of white children, in some ways they would never be comparable. The visitor, in recounting Carlisle’s history, remembered when the Indians were “dangerous,” and how strange it seemed that “this same spot which was once the place to kill Indians should now be used to educate them.” He recalled one student who seemed frightened of him: “Her eyes were as black as ink and she looked wild, as if she would run like a deer if I came very close to her.” Near the turn of the twentieth century, it was common for Indians to appear in public displays as part of the natural landscape, timeless beings that barely disrupted nature’s rhythm.³² By describing a student as such, the father reminded his children that, regardless of the similarities, Carlisle students were still different from white children: they were part of nature and savage at heart.³³

³¹ Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI 1-1-47: Letter from Unknown to Masters Matthew and Wendell Jones, 19 August 1906.

³² Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, p. 139.

³³ Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI 1-1-47: Letter from Unknown to Masters Matthew and Wendell Jones, 19 August 1906.

Just as reservation schools often encouraged parents to visit their children and witness firsthand their children's success, off-reservation boarding schools often invited tribal delegations to visit. Indian leaders had traveled to the nation's capital since the inception of the United States, and the experience of visitors to Carlisle very much resembled that of the delegates on federal business. In fact, many filled both roles; Oglala Sioux Red Cloud, for instance, stopped at Carlisle en route to Washington, D.C. These trips to Carlisle built more than support for boarding schools among tribal leaders: like the government-sponsored trips to the capital, they also built a respect for the geographical scope of the nation's industrial and material might. Pueblo, Ojibway, Crow, Shoshone, Bannock, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Lakota delegations had visited either Carlisle or Hampton Institute by the early 1880s.³⁴ Carlisle treated visiting tribal leaders much like other dignified guests, hosting tours of the grounds, classrooms, and student performances.³⁵ Yet Indian visitors, especially those who had previous experience in the east, were aware that their presence evoked performance, and used the opportunity to construct their own versions of Indianness. Carlisle used these performances as well, often in ways that bolstered commonly held perceptions.

Indian leaders' messages to students varied. Black Horn, a Lakota Sioux visiting in 1899, noted a commonly observed change in the students when he reported how much like white children the students appeared. Big Foot, Black Horn's traveling companion, gave a speech redolent with images of Indian inferiority. He remarked how he wished his forefathers had the opportunities his children were given, because his "forefathers did not know how to bring up their children as you're being brought up; we were like cattle." He "learned that it was best to send my child to school as you are here. If the children learn to be like white people, they will

³⁴ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), pp. 244-255.

³⁵ *School News*, "About Our School," Vol. 1 No. 8, January 1881.

learn to be able to take care of themselves.”³⁶ While it is unclear whether Big Foot’s intended meaning came through in these words (many interpreters at the time were notoriously incompetent, taking a large amount of artistic license),³⁷ students received a clear message: Indians’ past was animalistic and barbaric, and in order to succeed, they must fully transform into white people. Statements such as these must have held more weight coming from a tribal leader than from white instructors, especially among Lakota Sioux students, who comprised a large proportion of students in the school’s first years.

Pratt often paraded noted chiefs before student assemblies to provide endorsements of the Carlisle system, yet visitors rarely sent straightforward messages to students, and occasionally objected to the environment in which they found their children. During a visit of thirty-one Sioux chiefs, Spotted Tail, making his first appearance at the school, loudly proclaimed his dislike for the uniforms and drilling, the sleeping accommodations and food, and the punishments given. After further disagreements, Spotted Tail removed his children from Carlisle, though Pratt insisted the children wished to remain.³⁸

Student Maggie Standslooking recounted a speech by Sioux Chief Red Cloud during a visit in 1883:

...my heart was very much pleased because that you can work as well as anybody... When I go home at the west I will tell all your friends and family and I know they will be very glad to hear from you all because you all learn about great many things... If any man don't try to work, why he will never

³⁶ *Indian Helper*, “Last Saturday Night,” Vol. 14 No. 17, 17 February 1899.

³⁷ Many interpreters were reliable, paid employees, usually of mixed Indian and white ancestry. However, the odd case of abuse of position grabbed the attention of many. Luther Standing Bear recounts how an interpreter introduced Sitting Bull in Philadelphia as the “man who killed Custer,” something Standing Bear knew to be false. The interpreter then “translated” Sitting Bull’s speech, in no way describing Sitting Bull’s words. Eventually the bureau developed a corps of its own interpreters, and official delegations often traveled with two interpreters: one of the delegates’ own providing, and one employed by the BIA, each “checking on” the other. Standing Bear, *My People the Sioux* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1928), p. 185, and Herman Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), pp. 116-120.

³⁸ Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, pp. 236-239.

have any cent in his pocket. So you boys must try hard to learn to work so that when you all go home far off at west you will earn money for yourself.³⁹

After visiting the quarters, Red Cloud expressed both gratitude that the students had all the accoutrements of white children and pride in the students' abilities to write and speak English. Though his speech suggested an acceptance of the acquisition of money as the civilized, American embodiment of success, Red Cloud made clear his wish that students would return home to reservations after graduation, something Pratt vehemently opposed. Other Indian leaders joined Red Cloud in expressing their hopes that graduated students would aide families and friends out west. Big Foot ended his speech by utilizing a "deaf and dumb" argument used by other Indian delegates at Carlisle; Buffalo Meat, for instance, proclaimed reservation Indians were "blind and cannot hear for [them]selves."⁴⁰ Big Foot, like Red Cloud, emphasized how students, after they left Carlisle, should "help the old people to do like the whites... your parents will depend upon you and you can tell them what you know."

Pratt's inability to control all aspects of these visits often forced him to publicly object to points he found offensive. Pratt responded to Red Cloud's speech immediately, in front of the student assembly, arguing that the students should help themselves, not those on the reservations. In fact, Pratt used this opportunity to "feed lines" to the Indian delegates:

I want you to come to see us again, and the next time you come I want you to stand up and advise my boys to get out into the business of the world by themselves and work themselves up. You have said that they look like white people... but this thing that you ask my boys to do, is not like the white people, it is like the Indians. I want them to become merchants, and farmers, and lawyers. and doctors, and to do what is right.⁴¹

Pratt contested not Big Foot's request for students to help their people, but the students' potential return to reservations. Believing students could not simultaneously be Indian and "white," Pratt

³⁹ *School News*, "Red Cloud's Speech," Vol. 3 No. 8, January 1883.

⁴⁰ *Indian Helper*, "The Indian Chiefs," Vol. 14 No. 9, 16 December 1898.

⁴¹ *Indian Helper*, "Last Saturday Night," Vol. 14 No. 17, 17 February 1899.

felt that by staying east as upstanding, hardworking citizens in white society his students helped their people by proving white stereotypes wrong and providing an example for their families on reservations.

The presence of Indian visitors on school grounds displayed alternative versions of Indianness, dramatizing a notable juxtaposition between the visitors and students. Upon introducing his friend Buffalo Meat, Pratt remembered how he had the “unpleasant duty” of placing Buffalo Meat in chains and escorting him to St. Augustine as a prisoner. After giving his speech, Buffalo Meat spoke a Christian prayer in his own language, earning the title of the “first Christian chief, uneducated, who ever prayed orally before the Carlisle school.”⁴² The layers of identification in this interaction among students, Pratt, and Buffalo Meat are complex: while Buffalo Meat and Pratt enjoyed a friendship, Pratt had imprisoned him; while Buffalo Meat worshipped in a Christian faith, he lacked a formal education, which marked him as different from both whites and Carlisle’s students. Rather than conforming to Pratt’s conception that one must “kill the Indian [to] save the man,”⁴³ Buffalo Meat’s prayer showed the ability of Indians to adopt white beliefs and values without discarding their own cultural customs.

Like Buffalo Meat, other Indian guests showcased alternatives or challenges to the images promoted by Carlisle. Chief Big Heart, present at the 1898 commencement, was the “only Indian this year, dressed in blanket and other toggery, which of course made him very conspicuous.” Most took his physical appearance and refusal to speak in anything but his native language to mean he could not speak English; many were surprised when it turned out he could

⁴² *Indian Helper*, “The Indian Chiefs,” Vol. 14 No. 9, 16 December 1898. See Chapter 2 Note 98 for Christianity at Carlisle.

⁴³ Jessica Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race: Writing and Resisting the Discourse of the Carlisle Indian School” (PhD dissertation, George Washington University, 2005), pp. 1.

“use the Queen’s tongue as well as any body.”⁴⁴ Black Heart, a Sioux Chief who traveled to Europe with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, was “politeness itself” during his 1898 Carlisle visit. Having picked up a number of phrases in various languages during his travels, the *Indian Helper* remarked that “it quite takes one’s breath to have a blanket Indian step up to you and in courtly manner, ask: ‘Parlez-Vous francais?’”⁴⁵

Both instances involve appearances deceiving the audience, yet the school’s periodicals and other reports of their visits gave neither Chief Big Heart nor Black Heart any credit for their intellect: the focus of Chief Big Heart’s story is his dress, and the *Indian Helper* portrayed Black Heart as a curiosity who performed in Wild West Shows and parroted back phrases in foreign languages to an audience. Both figures, while in their own separate ways gaining educations and livelihoods, continued to carry the moniker of “blanket Indians.” These Indian visitors made conscious decisions (such as their style of dress or their use of their native tongue) which created their own display of Indianness, yet their continued material expressions of traditional Indian culture spoke more than their words. Observers viewed (and Carlisle’s periodicals promoted) the visitors, with their knowledge and ability to speak English and French, as oddities and spectacles.

Outward appearance was usually the most obvious difference between students and visiting Indians. Unlike Carlisle students who were held to a strict dress code, Indian visitors often made their appearances their own, and displayed themselves in ways in which they wished to be portrayed. While many visitors wore white “citizens” clothing, they often included elements of their own cultural dress, and some maintained their long hair, an attribute that often

⁴⁴ *Indian Helper*, “A Ninety-Six Graduate Sold,” Vol. 13 No. 22, 18 March 1898.

⁴⁵ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 13 No. 37, 1 July 1898.

drew comment in school accounts of their visits.⁴⁶ Occasionally this caused little comment; the *Indian Helper* described Big Foot as having long hair “neatly brushed, and his suit was of good fit and scrupulously clean.” This statement alone appears to have only positive values attached; it is followed, however, by a portrayal of Big Foot standing “straight as an arrow,” once again reminding the audience of his stereotypical Indianness, despite his “citizens” clothing.⁴⁷

In other instances, visiting Indians offered Carlisle opportunities to juxtapose the visitors’ appearance with Carlisle’s success in removing all traces of Indianness from students. While the *Indian Helper* described the contingent of chiefs that came to visit in March of 1895 as “no longer savage,” they were still “the real article – veritable untutored men of the plains.” If this was how observers pictured “real Indians,” they certainly would not classify Carlisle students, now educated and living in the east, as such. These chiefs wore “citizens’ clothing,” but expressed their discomfort, feeling as if they were “tied up all the way through.”⁴⁸ Visiting chiefs of some tribes maintained their “scalp lock,” a thin lock of tightly braided hair worn in the center of the crown. While many “clung” to this fashion “tenaciously, even after many of the other Indian ways are given up and more civilized habits and customs are adopted,” the *Helper* expressed gratitude that a few of the visitors “discarded this relic of barbarism.”⁴⁹ This phrase suggested that, so long as the Indians continued to wear this hairstyle, they too were a surviving

⁴⁶ If Indians visiting Carlisle were official (or even occasionally unofficial) delegates to Washington, they would have been gifted items worth thousands of dollars, included complete wardrobes. To some minds, making them *appear* like white men was a step in the right direction toward assimilation; Pratt insisted on military attire at Carlisle for much the same reason. Herman Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins*, pp. 117-120.

⁴⁷ *Indian Helper*, “Last Saturday Night,” Vol. 14 No. 17, 17 February 1899.

⁴⁸ The *Indian Helper*, while noting their discomfort in the trappings of Western culture, is quick to point out that “the Indian of fifty and sixty who is brave enough to stand the miseries of the white man’s dress deserves far more credit for his courage than he usually gets.” This may be a nod of agreement to the uncomfortable or unnatural qualities of “citizens” clothing. It may also suggest, however, a deep entrenchment of the older generation of Indians in traditional Indian culture. Many assumed this older generation could not be assimilated, and any attempt on their part to adopt white ways might have been seen as especially “courageous.”

⁴⁹ *Indian Helper*, “A Visit From Notable Chiefs,” Vol. 10 No. 26, 29 March 1895.

memorial of something past; only by abandoning their traditional customs could they progress into civilization and the future.

An account of the Commencement of 1899 underscored a sharp distinction between the physical appearance of students and Indian visitors. As the *Indian Helper* remarked,

The dark visaged men of the forest and plain who in beribboned locks and deeply furrowed brows... unable to understand the proceedings, formed a background which brought into conspicuous contrast this young man of race and scholastic merit, thereby presenting a wonderful exhibition of the expansive gulf which lies between ignorance and superstition on one hand and education and refinement on the other.⁵⁰

Like many of the articles seen previously in Carlisle's periodicals, this report juxtaposed students with the visitors from reservations, displaying them as two different entities utilizing a vocabulary that evoked vivid images: one dark, natural, ignorant, and superstitious; the other educated, young, and refined. The account makes clear that the students and visitors both are on "exhibit;" rather than evoking the image of the first group of students through tableaux on stage, Indian visitors provided Carlisle a living example with which Carlisle staged the students' ability to bridge the "expansive gulf" between barbarism and civilization.

⁵⁰ *Indian Helper*, "Commencement of Ninety-Nine." Vol. 14 No. 20, 10 March 1899.

EPILOGUE:

Harnesses and Tomahawks – The Continuity of Indian Performance at Carlisle

In 1901, Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones declared the prevailing Indian policy a failure. The forty-five million dollars spent over the course of twenty years on Indian education had made Indians neither less dependent on the federal government nor more willing to turn their children over to boarding schools. Jones believed he and others had expected too much of Indian schools – though students returning to reservation homes were a positive force, they could not possibly transform Indian society on their own.¹ Jones' successor, Francis Elington Leupp, began a reorientation of Indian policy in 1905. Leupp doubted the possibility of total assimilation and specifically condemned the Carlisle method, preferring a more gradual approach. One of the main components of Leupp's new policy was the incorporation of Indian culture in the curriculum. Students practiced English composition by retelling tribal legends or describing their home life, while instructors encouraged the development of Indian arts and crafts programs built around the students' heritage. Leupp believed that preserving and building upon the artistic heritage of the Indian students did not contradict the aims of Indian schooling; rather, just as whites embraced simple stories of days past such as Cinderella, Indians too should be allowed to remember tales that represent a simpler stage in *their* social evolution.²

¹ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), p. 307.

² Adams, *Education for Extinction*, pp. 307-308, 315-321.

Carlisle was not immune to the restructuring of Indian policy. Theodore Roosevelt's progressive administration, especially the BIA, increasingly lent their support to reservation rather than boarding schools. Pratt's refusal to accept anything less than total assimilation away from reservations led to his political demise. After Pratt delivered a speech in 1904 attacking the BIA as "a barnacle that should be knocked off sometime," he was relieved as superintendent at Carlisle.³

The change at Carlisle was immediate. Pratt's successor, Captain William A. Mercer, implemented the *Uniform Course of Study*,⁴ a new curriculum focused on vocational training for male students and a domestic curriculum for the girls rather than the rigorous academic instruction of Carlisle's first twenty years.⁵ The periodicals changed noticeably; the *Arrow* replaced the *Indian Helper* in 1904, offering glimpses of Indian customs and traditions in articles with titles like "The Bear Star," "The Adoption Dance," and "How Medicine Originated Among the Cherokee."⁶ The arts and crafts program blossomed; a course catalog from 1910 described the aims of the Department of Native Indian Art as "to develop and improve the native arts and industries of the Indian." Well-respected Indian artist Angel De Cora, a Hampton graduate, taught the first classes in 1906, and crafts offered included: weaving, both in the Navajo and Hopi methods, as well as the Persian method "with the application of Indian designs;" beadwork; designing and making felt cushion covers; and wood burning.⁷

³ Linda Witmer, *The Indian Industrial School: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1879-1918* (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 2002), pp. 50-51.

⁴ Cumberland County Historical Society, Indian Industrial School Gallery, "Capt. William A. Mercer 1904-1908," visited 20-23 October 2007.

⁵ Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, "Making a Willing Worker," in *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences*, ed. Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Phoenix, AZ: Heard Museum, 2000), p. 32.

⁶ *Carlisle Arrow*, Vol. 7 No. 3-4, September 1910.

⁷ Cumberland County Historical Society, Kramer Gallery. *An Odyssey Continues*, "Student Work," visited 20-23 October 2007.

The new art department provided a source of income for the school through the sale of cultural items.⁸ The Indian Crafts department sold items made by students, as well as crafts produced out west. Catalogs offering these goods for sale promised these goods were not sold “for profit, but to assist and encourage Indian Art.”⁹ Lists of items for sale included Sioux war clubs; “scarce” tomahawks; scalp lock ornaments; feathered war bonnets; necklaces of beads, seeds, deer hoofs, and cattle teeth;¹⁰ and “other things made by Indian Men and Women, which we handle more to help the Old Indians than for any other reason.”¹¹

Ensuring the success of the Indian by encouraging native crafts seems anathema to Carlisle’s mission statement for its first two decades. However, the student artwork of the first Carlisle’s two decades was very similar to that of its last two; both provided a display of Indianness. While at Carlisle, Pratt saw no value in preserving Indian art or life ways, and believed working along “race lines” denied Indians the wider opportunities afforded to them;¹² instead, instructors attempted to change and “civilize” students’ values, including their artistic values.¹³ Students learned useful crafts and trades as a way to enter honorably into American society, and this often materialized itself in the production of “Indian crafts,” though not in the traditional sense.¹⁴ The *Indian Helper* occasionally printed advertisements for goods produced by students, “the first attempts of the little Indian boys and girls at handling tools, and they are

⁸ Cumberland County Historical Society, Kramer Gallery, *An Odyssey Continues*, “Native Art Program,” visited 20-23 October 2007.

⁹ Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI-10: “Arts and Handicrafts of the Indian,” Indian Craft Department, printed after 1906, p. 7.

¹⁰ Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI-10: “Arts and Handicrafts of the Indian,” Indian Craft Department, printed after 1906, p. 30.

¹¹ *The Indian Craftsman*, Back Cover, Vol. 1 No. 1, February 1909.

¹² Donal F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 177-185.

¹³ Cumberland County Historical Society, Kramer Gallery, *An Odyssey Continues*, “Art and Education,” visited 20-23 October 2007.

¹⁴ Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880-1930* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2004), p. 41.

very creditable attempts.”¹⁵ In one instance, a Mrs. Baker from Boston, upon visiting Carlisle, purchased a student-made harness which she installed in her home. Mrs. Baker charged visitors one cent to see the harness, and sent the proceeds (three dollars and twenty-six cents) to the Carlisle student responsible for the work.¹⁶

Twenty-seven years later, Carlisle provided a live exhibit for the Department of Indian Education in Cleveland, featuring a rug-weaving demonstration as well as the performance of native songs and dances by five Indian students in tribal costume.¹⁷ While this illustration differs drastically in appearance from the one Mrs. Baker and her harness provide, both rely on the implicit presentation of Indianness to an audience. Carlisle clearly adjusted the message to fit new policies at the turn of the century. In the aftermath of the frontier wars, Carlisle required of its performances both a reminder and denigration of native cultures to show the need and evidence for total assimilation. The new message encouraged the advertisement of the students’ Indian backgrounds and culture. Yet the continued use of performance as integral in delivering this message is a common thread that can be traced through the school’s entire existence.

As this thesis has shown, performance of Indianness was an integral part of life at Carlisle. Administrators, students, and Indian guests used the stages provided by school and its periodicals to demonstrate images of Indianness to a number of audiences. By relying on a preexisting tradition of staging Indianness, however, Carlisle created not one but a variety of images which contrasted with and supported commonly held stereotypes.

Carlisle continued to provide students with a platform on which they could practice their own performances of Indianness. One student essay described a trip to Philadelphia in 1909 to watch the football team play Pennsylvania University. The student recalled how they “marched

¹⁵ *Indian Helper*, Vol. 11 No. 28, 17 April 1896.

¹⁶ *School News*, Vol. 2 No. 4, September 1881.

¹⁷ *Carlisle Arrow*, Vol. 5 No. 1, 11 Sep 1908.

through the crowded streets where people were standing and staring at us as if we suddenly fell from mars and stood before them.” Before the game, chaperones took the students to a department store, where the girls “gave songs and yells for the amusement of our palefaced brethren that rushed to Gimbels just to catch a glimpse of some of the real Americans.” The students then traveled to the game in cars provided by the department store, with printed signs displayed on each vehicle which proclaimed “Gimbels is as big as a reservation.”¹⁸

The student writing this essay was aware of her performative role, almost satirizing the ease with which she could entertain the white observers. However, more than just gaining awareness, this student *owned* her performance, turning the situation on its head and taking some semblance of control. It is not the amusement of the *white* audience that is so interesting here, but that the *students* apparently found the rapt attention of their audience amusing. The student used the situation as a means of performance both in real time and later in print, mocking the white observers and claiming an authenticity (through her use of the term “real American”) that she felt her white audience could not.

This self-performance of Indianness became especially important for many students during the twentieth century, providing them with a public voice. Former student Luther Standing Bear provides the most visible example, performing in Wild West shows and Hollywood films; Standing Bear speaks proudly of his time spent as a “show Indian,” and wished to see more Indians publicly perform their talents.¹⁹ Other students took different avenues; after leaving Carlisle, Dennison Wheelock led what was hailed as “The Only Professional American Indian Band in the World... Comprising Forty-five Picked American

¹⁸ Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI 6-10: Student Essay, “A Day in Philadelphia,” November 1909.

¹⁹ Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 158-159.

Indian Musicians, Graduates of Carlisle School and Other Famous Institutions in the United States.”²⁰

Though Pratt expressed self-consciousness about staging Indians in his autobiography, performance during Carlisle’s first two decades manifested itself both on and off campus, implicitly and explicitly, visually and in print. These displays promulgated ideas about Indianness both to the benefit of Carlisle and the students themselves, who practiced their own performances within Carlisle’s structured and unstructured exhibits. Even after a drastic change in governmental policy, Carlisle still relied upon performance to deliver ideas about Indianness until its demise in 1918. Perhaps, in this way, Pratt “out ‘Buffalo Billed” Mr. Cody after all.

²⁰ Cumberland County Historical Society, Box PI-10-3: Advertisement.

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