ON THE FRONT LINES IN THE CLASSROOM:
THE CAREERS OF WHITE AND AMERICAN INDIAN WOMEN TEACHERS AT
THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL, 1875-1933

BY
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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education Policy Studies
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the careers and lives of white and American Indian women teachers who taught at the first federal off-reservation Indian boarding school, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 1875-1933. It analyzes the ways teachers responded to federal Indian educational policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that were designed to assimilate Native Americans into modern America. These federal policies attempted to solve ‘the Indian problem’ by creating a curriculum that was crafted to rid Indian people of their cultures and languages, extinguish tribal ties to land, and weaken familial and community relationships. The first two chapters introduce the study and explore the evolution of the school’s first teacher, Sarah Mather, and her impact on Army Captain Richard Henry Pratt who would later go on to create the Carlisle Indian School and staff its classrooms. The third chapter examines the civilization and citizenship curriculum at Carlisle and teacher’s daily work of assimilation inside the classroom. The characteristics and motivations of white and American Indian teachers is the topic of the fourth chapter. This chapter also analyzes the benefits white and Native American teachers derived from their work, including the ways they used the prominence of the school to benefit themselves professionally. The fifth chapter explores the relationships teachers created and maintained with students and the ways some teachers used these relationships to attempt to more thoroughly carry out federal policies. The sixth chapter examines how American Indian teachers both accommodated important aspects of federal Indian educational policies in their work and lives but also, when needed, used the school system they themselves had been educated in to advocate for students and their families. This historical analysis reveals that many white women
teachers at Carlisle either reproduced federal policies, fully embracing their new status as agents of the state or, dispirited by the male dominated Bureau of Indian Affairs, passively accommodated federal policies, accepted their paychecks and bid their time until retirement. Native teachers, however, more often resisted federal policies of cultural extinction by advocating for students and their families. While American Indian teachers at Carlisle accepted the idea that Native people had to assimilate, they sought to have a role in defining the contours of that process and, in their work and lives, modeled for Native children how to retain important aspects of their cultural identity, redefining what it meant to be a federal Indian school teacher.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank my dissertation committee who helped to guide me through this project: Dr. Christopher Span, Dr. Yoon Pak, Dr. Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert and Dr. James Anderson. Their incisive comments and sage advice in the preliminary stages of this project were invaluable. I feel fortunate to have been their student. I would like to thank Dr. Christopher Span for being a wonderful advisor. His guidance throughout this project, his steadfast support and his confidence in my work were crucial to my completion. I am grateful to Dr. Yoon Pak for always responding to my questions and concerns and for constantly being a source of information, advice and supportive calm during the trying moments of graduate student life. Dr. James Anderson is an incredibly thoughtful and wise scholar. His observations about teachers and teaching in this time period and his overall feedback were vital to my study. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert (Hopi). The first course I took at the University of Illinois was the history of American Indian education taught by Dr. Sakiestewa Gilbert. His engaging teaching style and his ability to tell stories through his research drew me to this topic. Dr. Sakiestewa Gilbert encouraged me to pursue graduate study and consistently was available to listen to my research ideas and to read my work. My thinking and writing have been strengthened as a result of his formative feedback. I am deeply grateful to him for his unfailing support and his mentorship. He will always remain a model of the kind of research professor I hope to be someday. Askwali, Matt!

The professors at the University of Illinois are unparalleled and I am grateful to have been a graduate student there. In the College of Education I would like to thank Dr. Tim Cain for his counsel, words of encouragement and career advice throughout my
graduate school career and to Dr. William Trent and Dr. Daniel Walsh for their masterful teaching in the education courses I took from them. In the Department of Anthropology, I would like to thank Dr. Alma Gottlieb for renewing a love for anthropological methods. In American Indian Studies, I am grateful to Dr. Robert Warrior (Osage). A gifted teacher and scholar, Dr. Warrior’s comments in class or on my papers resonated with me for long periods after he generously offered them. Although he typically used few words, Dr. Warrior’s feedback usually improved my writing or thinking about a subject by leaps and bounds.

My interest in teachers and teaching stems from my admiration for the master teachers I have had the privilege of learning from. Thank you to: Tom Weible, for your passion; Dr. Walter Konetschni, for introducing me to the joys of teaching while still an undergraduate; and Dr. Alice James and Dr. Christine Loveland for instilling a love of anthropology and history, a curiosity about other cultures and a desire to share my intellectual passions with students.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the many archivists I encountered throughout my research on this topic. I would like to thank the archivists at the Cumberland County Historical Society in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka, Kansas, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri and the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington D.C. These professionals are incredibly knowledgeable about their collections and many, many times directed me to resources that proved invaluable. In particular, I would like to thank Barbara Landis at the Cumberland County Historical Society. Everyone who has done research on the Carlisle Indian School is
familiar with Barbara and is indebted to her knowledge, generosity and resourcefulness. I am now in the ever-growing Barbara Landis fan club. A human repository of knowledge about the Carlisle Indian School, she is an irreplaceable gem.

I want to offer my thankfulness for my friends and graduate student colleagues at the University of Illinois. In particular, thanks to the graduate students in Dr. Pak’s oral history course. This group of amazing scholars inspired and humbled me with their personal stories and struggles and provided a network of support. I hope we continue to be there for each other and push ourselves collectively towards excellence.

I owe a big thank you to my girlfriends who constantly cheered me on as I worked toward this goal and who provided me with much-needed time away from my work. Dawn and Deanna and I spent many an afternoon eating good food, watching our children play and discussing the dreams we had for our lives. Thank you, ladies, for being a part of this dream, for listening to me vent my frustrations about the journey and for never letting me quit.

Both of my parents passed away during the time I was in graduate school at UIUC. In many ways the ultimate inspiration for this dissertation originated with them. My Mom instilled a desire for advanced education. She wanted to go to college to become a teacher but because of limited financial resources, only her brothers were permitted to go. My Mom was determined that all of her children would earn a college degree, which we all accomplished. She would have been tickled to see me earn the Ph.D. Both my Mom and Dad were steelworkers and at the end of long, physically exhausting days all they wanted to do was watch TV. My Dad often watched documentaries on historical or anthropological topics and it was through conversations
about these topics, that my love for history and other cultures was born. My Dad would have loved having a Dr. Reilly in the family. I know they both are proud of me. Thank you also to the remaining members of my family who provided encouragement and unconditional love, especially my brother Bob and his wife Cass.

I would like to thank Sherri and Charlie Treat, my “outlaws” for being wonderful bonus parents. Whenever we needed someone to pick up children or attend a soccer game in our stead they were there for us. They cheered me on throughout graduate school and were especially nurturing as I walked through the loss of each of my parents.

I am blessed to have Aidan, Sydney and Owen Reilly-Treat in my life. Thank you to my babes who endured my absences, welcomed me home with loving hugs and left me alone when I needed to write. I am confident that one day they each will have a deeper understanding of why writing this dissertation was important to me.

Last, I am grateful to Tod Treat, my best friend and the love of my life. Thanks for being a sounding board for my ideas, the fish tacos and cold beer on hard days and for being an amazing Dad when I was writing and away on research trips. Out of all the blessings I have been granted, sharing my life with you is the greatest.
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CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING
THE CAREERS OF CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS:
LITERATURE REVIEW, SOURCE CONSIDERATIONS, AND STUDY OUTLINE

In the late nineteenth century, after most of the wars against American Indians had resulted in their loss of land and confinement to inhospitable and impoverished Indian reservations, the federal government recruited an altogether different set of troops to wage a new battle for the hearts and minds of future generations of Native Americans. Enlisting a “standing army of school-teachers,” the United States moved the front lines in to the classroom, creating federal Indian schools and calling on white women teachers to educate and assimilate Native children into modern American society through cultural uplift and what they hoped would be a “conquest of the individual.” “Armed with ideas, winning victories by industrial training and by the gospel of love and the gospel of work,” America’s women teachers became agents of the state and swore an oath to teach American Indian children the superiority of Protestant cultural norms, including self-sufficiency, individual property ownership, the value of developing a strong work ethic and accumulating material wealth, and the logic of capitalism along with the Protestant family relations that supported it.1 While some white teachers eagerly flexed their newfound power over students and their families and others went to great lengths to impart the lessons of civilization and citizenship, some white women developed misgivings about aspects of the curriculum they were expected to deliver.

When the first federal non-reservation boarding school, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, opened its doors in 1879, older, white, single, middle-class women,

primarily from the Northeast, responded to the call for government service. These women were united in important ways: they felt an urgent sense of advocacy for American Indians, fueled by books such as Helen Hunt Jackson’s *A Century of Dishonor* and widely circulated newspaper articles that told of countless tragedies unfolding on Indian reservations; they had a fervent desire to do good in the world and employed the rhetoric of evangelical Christian benevolence to explain their work; they were profoundly influenced by emerging scientific theories about the evolution of the races and often animated these theories to understand the class distinctions and cultural differences they encountered among Native children; and finally, at Carlisle, particularly under Superintendent Richard Henry Pratt’s leadership, they held progressive educational ideas about the capacity for individuals to be transformed inside institutions.

After the first groups of American Indian students graduated from Carlisle, some Native women, who valued aspects of western education, remained at the school to teach Native American students. While white women teachers predominated in the earliest years, as the federal Indian boarding school system expanded, more and more American Indian women joined the ranks of teachers in federal Indian schools. Native teachers at Carlisle shared important commonalities: they came of age in bi-cultural/bi-racial families where their fathers emphasized the value of schooling; they arrived at off-reservation schools able to read, write and speak English well, having previously attended schools near their homes; and finally, like white women, they felt teaching in federal schools allowed them to fulfill a moral duty that they felt was encumbered upon them. Many Native American teachers were motivated to teach in federal schools because they wanted to help “their people.” American Indian teachers often confronted significant
obstacles in fulfilling their perceived duty, however, and thus were also on the front lines in a battle over the hearts and minds of Indian children. In addition to the racism and prejudice they experienced from white peers, Native teachers encountered resistance from white administrators when they attempted to advocate for their students within an educational environment designed to eradicate Indian cultures.

Literature Review

In the past twenty-five years, the scholarly research in educational history on Native American boarding schools has grown substantially. While some scholars have focused on federal policies, the history of specific boarding schools and the negative impact of the schools, others have written about the unintended positive consequences of schools including the fact that schools fostered a pan-Indian identity, which, along with a common language, facilitated the emergence of Native political advocacy groups in the twentieth century. Recently, a trend has emerged which positions American Indian people as active agents within the oppressive institutional structures of boarding schools and uncovers the ways children used the schools for their own purposes or actively resisted the lessons they were being taught.

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Despite the growth of scholarship on federal Indian boarding schools, there are few studies on the experiences of white or Native women teachers, who comprised the largest category of employees in the schools. This is surprising given the fact that Indian school teachers were not only responsible for interpreting federal educational policies and delivering the content of assimilation “on the ground” inside classrooms, they also had the most interactions with students. Understanding the perspectives and experiences of both white and American Indian teachers would yield interesting insights and undoubtedly generate new lines of inquiry.

To provide any information about the broader experiences of teachers, virtually every piece of scholarly research on the subject relies on five books written by former Indian schoolteachers, intended for popular audiences and published in the early twentieth century. While these sources are valuable and provide insight into some aspects of Indian school teachers’ work lives, the authors clearly intended them for the early twentieth century public’s demand for the nostalgic views of the romantic savage and the plucky, adventurous schoolteacher committed to saving him. While Patricia A. Carter’s article, “Completely Discouraged,” examines the work of Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers and provides some biographical information on them, it explores only


white teachers’ resistance to federal policies as well as the way white teachers negotiated the male dominated bureaucracy of the BIA.\textsuperscript{5}

Few studies have examined American Indian teachers in federal Indian schools. One of these is “Indian Heart/White Man’s Head” written by Anne Ruggles Gere which explores Native teacher’s experiences including the effects they had on their students and the ways they negotiated their complicated positions in schools.\textsuperscript{6} In addition, three books written or co-authored by American Indian teachers provide valuable insight into their lives and work and demonstrate the way these women retained their Native identities and advocated for children while teaching in schools designed to assimilate them.\textsuperscript{7}

The field of post-colonial studies has greatly impacted the scholarship on American Indian government schools, most notably through the work of Margaret D. Jacobs and Cathleen Cahill.\textsuperscript{8} In this research, Indian schoolteachers are positioned as “the Great White Mother” and, for example, their role in the removal of American Indian children from their families and communities has been examined. These scholars have demonstrated how women’s reform organizations, missionaries and female BIA workers contributed to the assimilation of Native Americans, especially American Indian women and children. Jacobs contends that a powerful discourse emerged among white women “civilizers” of the time that characterized Native women as drudges, unfit mothers,

sexually promiscuous or alternately as victims of sexual oppression by the males in their
family. The “Great White Mother” considered Native people to be child-like, casting
them as her children, and sought to nurture them toward civilization and citizenship.\(^9\)

In the last two decades there has also been more scholarly consideration of the
history of women teachers, by historians of education and historians influenced by
feminism.\(^10\) Indian schoolteachers, however, have not been included within this
scholarship. For example, in *Woman’s True Profession*, a history of women teachers,
women’s historian Nancy Hoffman documents the range of experiences of frontier
teachers, Yankee schoolmarm who taught freed Blacks, urban teachers, teachers of
immigrant children and African American teachers in boarding schools, yet there is no
mention of the Indian school teacher. Putting these teachers in relationship to one another
may yield significant insights. For example, some Carlisle teachers attended and spoke at
national education meetings in the early twentieth century while others requested the time

\(^9\) Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*.

\(^10\) See Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-
Century Massachusetts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *A
Generation of Women: Education in the Lives of Progressive Reformers* (Cambridge: Harvard University
Press, 1979); Kate Rousmaniere, “Good Teachers Are Born, Not Made: Self-Regulation in the Work of
Nineteenth-Century American Women Teachers,” in *Discipline, Moral Regulation and Schooling: A Social
of Teachers in American History,” in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald
Warren (New York: Macmillan and AERA, 1989); John L. Rury, “Vocationalism for Home and Work:
Edward McClellan and William J. Reese (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); David B. Tyack and
feminist historians on teachers, see Patricia Anne Carter, “‘Everybody’s Paid But the Teacher’: The
Teaching Profession and the Women’s Movement” (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002); Nancy
Hoffman, *Woman’s True Profession: Voices from the History of Teaching* (Boston: Harvard University
Press, 2003); Polly Welts Kaufman, *Women Teachers on the Frontier* (New Haven CT: Yale University
Press, 1984); Kate Rousmaniere, *City Teachers: Teaching and School Reform in Historical Perspective*
(New York: Teachers College Press, 1997); Kathleen Weiler, “Women’s History and the History of
or funds for various professional development opportunities. This study will situate these women first and foremost as teachers and will consider the prospect of teaching in the government’s Indian schools as a choice, which presented women with different benefits, challenges and drawbacks from other teaching experiences available at the time.

Source Considerations

This study necessitated the generation of a list of the names of Carlisle’s teachers. As a start, Linda F. Witmer’s book, *The Indian Industrial School*, which lists some of the names of faculty and staff who worked at the school during its existence, was helpful. Employee rosters for each federal Indian school are included in the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, but only beginning in 1887. Along with names, the positions, annual salary and dates of service for each employee are also included. Categories of gender and “color” were added in 1894. Beginning in 1906, however, employees’ names were no longer recorded and only aggregate data on employees’ sex and race were listed for each school. Thus, from 1879-1886 and 1907-1918, other means were employed to uncover teachers’ names. One of the most fruitful methods was to do a comprehensive search of the Carlisle Indian School’s newspapers, especially *The Indian Helper*, which often reported on the comings and goings of faculty and students.

Teacher’s names were then used to access personnel information at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), in St. Louis, MO. Prior to service beginning in 1908, only service record cards are available. After 1908, Department of the Interior Official Personnel Folders were

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created for each employee. These folders contain all official correspondence related to the employee, including applications for employment, employee requests for transfers and salary increases as well as federal responses. They include disciplinary letters, teaching evaluations and vocational reading reports (teachers were required to submit a list of the periodicals and books they were reading to remain current in their field). A few of the personnel folders even contain a picture of the teacher. Names of white teachers used for this study are listed in the Appendix.

American Indian teachers who did not attend the Carlisle Indian School as students also had personnel folders housed at the NPRC, if their service began after 1908. A glaring difference in these folders is the “Indian Application for Employment” which required the applicant to divulge much more personal information than white teachers were asked to provide. Throughout the existence of the federal Indian school system, white Indian school administrators continuously sought personal information from Native students in an attempt to monitor them. When American Indians entered the federal school system as teachers, they discovered that they were still under scrutiny. For Native Americans who attended the Carlisle Indian School and later became teachers there, employment information was located in their student folders, which are housed at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington D.C. Names of Native teachers under consideration for this study are listed in the Appendix.

Additional archival analysis was completed on the correspondence between teachers at Carlisle and the school’s founder and Superintendent Richard Henry Pratt in the collection of his papers at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University; the Clarice A. Snoddy papers located at the Kansas Historical Society in
Topeka, Kansas (Snoddy was both a public school teacher in Kansas as well as a teacher at the Carlisle Indian School), and the archival data on Carlisle’s teachers found at the Cumberland County Historical Society in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

**Study Outline**

While the Carlisle Indian Industrial School opened in 1879, its seeds were germinated in the work Richard Henry Pratt and Sarah Mather did in St. Augustine, Florida four years earlier. In 1875, Pratt was ordered by the Army to take captured Indian warriors from Fort Sill, Indian Territory to Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida and to remain there overseeing their three-year detainment. Convinced that the American Indian men were redeemable, Pratt created a school for them, enlisting the help of Sarah Mather and other former teachers to teach the men English and the rudiments of civilization. The second chapter examines Pratt’s educational experiment and the role Sarah Mather played in helping Richard Henry Pratt organize the Carlisle Indian School. After traveling west to help Pratt convince Sioux parents to relinquish their sons and daughters for the school, Mather and some of her friends from St. Augustine began work as the first federal Indian school teachers at Carlisle. The third chapter explores their earliest work, shedding light on the daily work of assimilation, the kinds of lessons taught and the work students produced. The fourth chapter describes the characteristics of this group of women and the motivations they had for teaching at Carlisle. It also analyzes how, as federal funding for Indian education waned in the early twentieth centuries, progressive policies shifted towards an emphasis on vocational education and the “dignity of labor.” During this time, women teachers who wanted to advance professionally often used more racist rhetoric to
promote themselves as civilizers of Indians. The fifth chapter looks at the relationships white teachers created with Native students. While interactions with students made some white women question federal policies and occasionally intercede on a student’s behalf, other white teachers used the relationships they forged with students to more effectively assimilate them. Fannie I. Peter, a teacher in the 1900s, used correspondence to monitor and influence the behavior of former students when they lived as far away as the Arctic Circle. Her retirement from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1933 and the circumstances surrounding it, serves as the ending date for this study. The sixth chapter examines the work and lives of American Indian teachers, detailing their educational histories, their experiences as students at Carlisle and their desire to become the first Native federal Indian school teachers. While an exploration of their lives and careers reveals that they accommodated important aspects of federal Indian educational policy, they used their work to serve their people and to advocate for the students and families who needed their assistance. Other Native American teachers modeled for students how to retain their cultural identities while advancing themselves professionally and contributing to American society. The conclusion examines the legacy of these teachers and begins to articulate the implications of their work and lives for future research.
CHAPTER TWO
SARAH MATHER AND THE EVOLUTION
OF THE FIRST FEDERAL INDIAN SCHOOL TEACHER

Introduction

Prior to the establishment of Carlisle in 1879, there were few women, of any race or ethnicity, employed by the federal government. In 1869, among the 625 employees working for the Indian Service, only 28 (less than 5 percent) were women. But, according to historian Cathleen D. Cahill, author of *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, a social history of the United States Indian Service, in less than 30 years, the percentage of women in the Indian Service would grow to 42 percent. In 1898, women would comprise 62 percent of the 2,649 Indian School Service employees. In addition to rising numbers of women in the Indian School Service, well-educated white women rose to levels of prominence in the 1890s and the early 1900s, including holding positions as allotment agents, superintendents of individual federal Indian boarding schools and most notably, as the second highest ranking official in the Indian Office, the superintendent of Indian Schools.

As increasing numbers of women teachers came to work in the United States Indian School Service, they took up the federal government’s colonial curriculum which had, as its primary goal, to assimilate American Indian children. Civilization and citizenship were at the heart of the colonial curriculum and federal policymakers believed

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12 U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistics of Women at Work: Based on Unpublished Information Derived from the Schedules of the Twelfth Census, (1907)*. Women over the age of 16 who were breadwinners and who worked in the federal government were usually employed as postmistresses.


14 Ibid.
women teachers were the ideal category of person to administer these lessons. According to Cahill, “reformers and administrators had developed assimilation policy using a theoretical model of influence that made employees into ‘object lessons’ who would teach through example.”¹⁵ The earliest white women federal Indian school teachers understood that they needed to model particular characteristics to be hired by the Indian School Service, including embodying a civilized and civic-minded womanhood.

Before arriving at Carlisle, Sarah Mather came to know Richard Henry Pratt in St. Augustine, Florida when he enlisted her help in teaching the Indian prisoners of war at Fort Marion. At Fort Marion, while Pratt developed a philosophy of Indian education that would eventually inform the organization of the Carlisle school, Mather was crafting a role for herself as a female federal Indian schoolteacher, which would impact Pratt’s conception of the ideal Indian schoolteacher. Sarah Mather proved indispensable to Pratt in the organization of the Carlisle Indian school, including facilitating introductions to her considerable social network composed of nationally recognized philanthropists, reform workers, and educators. Mather also taught Pratt the extent to which the ideologies of domesticity and Christian benevolence might be taken up by white women schoolteachers and deployed, both on behalf of the state to accomplish its goal of assimilation, and by Pratt himself, to further his career as the preeminent Indian educator of the assimilation period. Finally, Mather’s association with Pratt and federal Indian education provided personal benefits to her, including elevating her status among her peer group of reform workers.

The idea for the Carlisle Indian School was planted in Capt. Richard Henry Pratt’s imagination in 1875 when he was charged with overseeing the detainment of a group of

¹⁵ Ibid, 65.
Indian prisoners at Fort Marion in St. Augustine, Florida. Pratt recalled his instructions from the war department and his interpretation of their meaning:

“My orders from the war department directed me to take charge of the prisoners and see that their proper wants were supplied. I reasoned that their proper wants included all the gains, morally, physically, intellectually and industrially that could be made for them while undergoing this banishment. Against the protest of the commanding officer at St. Augustine I assumed that I was entirely responsible, and that it was my business to determine what to do and how to do it.” 16

As Pratt believed he could do just about anything with these men, he decided to run a living educational and social experiment at Fort Marion. He hypothesized that by exposing the English language and the rudiments of white, Protestant cultural norms to the prisoners – some of the last remaining Principal Chiefs and warriors among the free Plains Indians – that he could literally transform them from rude savages bent on waging war against America and white Americans into civilized men who would conceive of themselves as part of America and work alongside whites towards the nation’s modernization and progress. An integral part of Pratt’s laboratory at Fort Marion was his use of white women teachers to deliver instruction to American Indian men and to model white Protestant cultural norms for them. 17

In the 1870s, St. Augustine, Florida was a vacation destination for wealthy white easterners seeking an escape from harsh northern winters, and because of Pratt’s work there, Fort Marion became something of a tourist attraction for wealthy individuals. Among this group of tourists and visitors to the Fort were white women who had previously been trained as schoolteachers. Before too long, Pratt engaged some of these women to volunteer to teach English to Native men. The curriculum that Miss Mather

16 ARCIA, 1891, 82.
and the other teachers devised coupled “basic literacy and language lessons with Bible study and Christian hymns.”

He recalled, “excellent ladies, who had in their earlier years been engaged in teaching, had volunteered to give daily instruction to the prisoners in classes.” Sarah Ann Mather was one such “excellent lady” who volunteered to assist Pratt in his educational experiment at Fort Marion.

In many ways Sarah Mather became indispensable to Pratt as he began to formulate his plan for the Carlisle Indian School. Born in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1819 and a direct descendant of Cotton Mather, Sarah Mather was one of the first women to graduate from the Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary. Mather taught in private schools in Virginia for fifteen years before arriving in St. Augustine in approximately 1857. After arriving, she established Sarah Mather’s School for Young Ladies, which in addition to English, offered the daughters of St. Augustine instruction in Latin, French, music, drawing and painting.

Prior to meeting Capt. Pratt, Mather also owned and ran a boarding house along with a woman she jokingly referred to as her “wife,” Rebecca Perit, a women several years her senior, who lived with her from at least 1860 to Perit’s death in 1893. During the Civil War, Mather and Perit “quietly” housed Union officers from New York’s 48th

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22 Mather referred to Perit as “my wife” in a letter to Richard Henry Pratt, dated August 21, 1879, Box 6, Folder 195, Richard Henry Pratt Papers. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Hereafter Richard Henry Pratt Papers. I referenced the letter to demonstrate the close relationships like-minded, single women forged with one another. The two were actually buried under a shared headstone marked “Perit-Mather.”
regiment and later the two women raised funds to build an African American church and school: the Mather Perit Memorial Presbyterian Church and School. A beloved member of the St. Augustine community, Mather also raised funds to both build a church for indigent whites and was instrumental in the organization and building of a home for older impoverished African Americans.

Imbued with a missionary zeal to convert Pratt’s prisoners of war to Christianity and to help them understand the superiority of white Protestant cultural norms, Sarah Mather and Rebecca Perit each became responsible for the instruction of a class of men at Fort Marion. Throughout the time the men were imprisoned at Fort Marion, there were at least four classes “almost constantly under instruction.” Mather and Perit were among a handful of women teachers who taught the prisoners on a regular basis for the three years the men were imprisoned at Fort Marion.

Visitors to the Fort during this time were met with an unimaginable scene. Henry Whipple, an Episcopal Bishop who, by the late nineteenth century had become synonymous with the cause of Indian reform and, himself was well connected to government officials and philanthropists, described what he saw when he entered the Fort. Whipple wrote, “here were men who had committed murder upon helpless women and children sitting like docile children at the feet of women learning to read.” Esther Baker Steele, a prominent textbook writer of the time, also visited Fort Marion during Pratt’s educational experiment. In an article for the National Teachers’ Monthly, she underscored the potential of the work of Mather and the other white women. She wrote,

23 St. Augustine Evening Record, 8 August 1908.
24 Harvey, Daring Daughters.
25 Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom.
26 Quoted in Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, 163.
“Lieutenant Pratt believes the American Indian to be a human being, quite as capable of civilization, and presenting quite as desirable a field of missionary labor as the far-off denizens of Borrioboola-Gha.”

Sarah Mather’s work at Fort Marion demonstrated to Pratt the potential that white women offered to him and others interested in using education to assimilate American Indians. “Pratt soon came to believe that it was the work of these women in the classroom that most significantly carried out his educational, cultural and civic mission.” He praised Mather and the other women saying, “‘to the faithfulness of these and other fine women was largely due the quick progress in intelligence the Indians made’ as well as, ‘the rapid growth among our people of a Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution sentiment in the Indians favor.’” Rather than traveling to distant shores to uplift the degraded and downtrodden, it was becoming apparent to teachers with a missionary zeal, that they could assist the government in solving ‘the Indian problem’ as well as serve God at home.

By the time Sarah Mather was teaching at Fort Marion she was a well-connected and beloved figure in the community of St. Augustine. She was also a proven fundraiser. Both she and Perit worked on Pratt’s behalf when the federal funding for the detainment of the Indian prisoners had run its course and the prisoners were due to be released. At the time, Pratt was directed by his superiors to offer the Native men a choice: to return to their reservations or to continue their education in the east. Not surprisingly, most of the older men with families chose to return to their reservations. Many of the younger men, who in the intervening years of prison life came to understand that their traditional way

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27 Ibid., 181.
28 Enoch, Refiguring Rhetorical Education, 78.
of life could never again be realized, chose to remain in the east with Pratt. Pratt sought
to arrange for the continued education of these men and turned to the well-connected
Mather.

In an effort to secure donations from the wealthy families of St. Augustine,
Mather staged a fundraiser featuring the children of the community in a production of
*Mother Goose*. Mather asked the Indian men to join in the production and they
entertained the audience with a traditional love song and other performances. The
fundraiser was a success and persuaded several families to undertake the educational
expenses of the men until the remaining twenty-two were provided for.²⁹

Sarah Mather possessed a great deal of social capital as a result of her network of
friends and acquaintances in prominent reform organizations. Some members of her
network had attained national prominence for their work, including her friend, Harriet
Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Stowe often accompanied Mather when
she taught the Indian men at Fort Marion and later brought national attention to Pratt’s
educational endeavors with her articles on the Indians of St. Augustine.

Mather was also a close friend to nationally renowned educator, Samuel Chapman
Armstrong, the head of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, a
school Armstrong organized for the education of newly freed slaves after the Civil War.
Mather wrote a letter to Armstrong on Pratt’s behalf in order to introduce Pratt and his
work and to inquire whether Armstrong would take the Indian men as students in his
school.³⁰ At first Armstrong agreed to accept only a few of the young Indian men. Later

²⁹ Harvey, *Daring Daughters*.
³⁰ Sarah Mather, Undated letter, Box 6, Folder 195, Richard Henry Pratt Papers.
after repeated correspondence with Mather, he was convinced to educate the rest of the party.

Most boarding school historians have neglected the role of women in the organization and maintenance of federal Indian schools. But without Sarah Mather’s relationship with Samuel Chapman Armstrong and her ability to use the ideology of Christian benevolence to appeal to him on behalf of Pratt at this moment, the Carlisle Indian School might never have materialized. While Pratt’s educational experiment at Fort Marion yielded impressive results from the Army’s perspective, he did not, at this time, have the ability to command high-level attention to his innovative idea of educating American Indians. Only later, after he and Armstrong became acquainted and began to work together to raise awareness and money for Indian education, did Pratt’s name begin to be associated at the highest levels of government with Armstrong’s prestigious work and with American Indian education. It was Armstrong, not Pratt, who successfully engineered a visit by President Hayes, Secretary Schurz, and other members of the cabinet to see the Indians at Hampton.31 According to Everett Arthur Gilcreast, who wrote a dissertation on Richard Henry Pratt, “it is also open to question whether Pratt could have continued longer in the work of Indian education if circumstances had not placed him in association with Armstrong.”32 As a result of her political connections and her ability to exert her influence with these prominent people, Sarah Mather became very valuable to Pratt.

In 1879, when the Indian Committee of the House and the War Department approved of the use of the Army barracks at Carlisle for an Indian school, Pratt was

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32 Ibid, 26-27.
ordered to the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Agencies to secure Sioux children for the school. At the time of Pratt’s trip, tensions between the Sioux and the U.S. government were high because of recent wars over rights to the Sioux’s sacred Black Hills. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Ezra A. Hayt demanded that Sioux children be among the first to be taken to Carlisle “because the children would be hostages for the good behavior of their people.”

As evidence of how valuable she was to him, when Pratt arranged his trip, he sought only one person to accompany him on the crucially important journey west to the Sioux agencies, then sixty-three year old Sarah Mather. As Pratt contemplated the task ahead – persuading Sioux parents to allow him to take their children east to undergo white education – he thought carefully of who, in addition to himself, would be the most effective spokesperson for his enterprise. Evidently, Pratt decided that the best category of person to accompany him into hostile Indian territory to help him face what he knew would be fierce opposition to the idea of taking Sioux children away from their families was a white woman teacher. Pratt knew that the white woman teacher would serve as an important symbol for anxious Sioux families, unwilling to part with their children. The white woman teacher held the promise that she would educate children; she would teach Native children to read, speak and write English so that American Indian communities might more equitably face a modern America. At the same time, being a woman and

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33 Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, 220. In the immediate years before Pratt’s trip to the Sioux agencies, gold had been discovered in the sacred lands of the Sioux and a tide of miners and settlers encroached upon the Black Hills in violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. As the U.S government refused to uphold their treaty obligations to protect the Black Hills, the Sioux, led by Crazy Horse, had no choice but to defend their lands. A series of conflicts ensued with the U.S. government intent upon forcing the remaining “hostile” Sioux on to their reservation. While Custer’s remarkable defeat in the Battle of the Little Bighorn emboldened the victorious Sioux, it infuriated the U.S. government and afterwards the Army relentlessly hunted any and all remaining bands of Sioux and their allies. In 1877, Crazy Horse surrendered and the last remaining bands were all confined to reservations. See Thomas Powers, The Killing of Crazy Horse (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).
embodying nurturance and maternalism, she simultaneously held the promise that she would care for the pupils she taught and be a substitute mother for them while they were far from home. In particular, a woman teacher was an important inclusion on the trip because she implied that she would care for the Native girls that Pratt was demanding the Sioux relinquish. American Indian parents were particularly reluctant to give up their daughters and Pratt knew that he would never be able to accomplish his goal of solving “the Indian problem” by just civilizing boys. By asking her to accompany him, Pratt believed Mather would help him win the trust of the parents of Sioux daughters.34

Historians of federal Indian boarding schools have also, until very recently, all but omitted women from their analyses of the ways white and Native women contributed to the assimilation of American Indians.35 While recent analyses have explored the ways in which women, working for the federal government, contributed to the assimilation of American Indian children, few have examined why women were drawn to the Indian service and the various benefits they derived from their work. When they have included women, they have often resigned them to passive or supportive roles and not as social actors with political motivations or any kind of agency. For example, in his examination of the role Mather played in the organization of Carlisle, as revealed in correspondence between the two, Gilcreast proffered the motivation behind Sarah Mather’s work on Pratt’s behalf. He wrote that Pratt,

34 Sarah Mather, Letter dated 18 August 1879, Box 6, Folder 195, Richard Henry Pratt Papers; Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*.

35 Margaret Jacobs has explored the maternalism of women in the removal of indigenous children in the American West and Australia. See *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880 – 1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011). In *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, Cathleen Cahill also argues that the Indian Service operated as a maternalist agency, where women were encouraged to view themselves as mothers whose jobs it was to raise to adulthood their dependent children, American Indian people.
“had a special talent for ingratiating himself with women, particularly with the older, matronly members of that sex. Though he was not handsome, he was a tall man with an impressive military bearing, and both his face and figure suggested virility and power. Throughout Pratt’s career, benevolent women were to be his most loyal and vigorous supporters and were to exert influence, in places inaccessible to him, on his behalf.”

Sarah Mather wanted to be the white woman teacher to accompany Pratt west. In her correspondence with him, she lobbied for the position, argued that she was uniquely qualified to do the work, and reassured him that she could withstand any challenges along the way. In the midst of advocating for herself, in her letters, Mather also lavished Pratt with compliments, gushed with admiration for him and his work and railed at his critics.

Historians are remiss if they interpret such devotional rhetoric on the part of a nineteenth century woman as apolitical. While Gilcreast assumed it was Pratt’s physical prowess that evoked Mather’s support and loyalty, in fact, Mather, who was good friends with Hampton Institute’s Samuel Chapman Armstrong, understood the potential of Pratt’s nascent school and, for her part, wanted to be associated with it. In this time period, ideologies of domesticity and benevolence relegated women like Sarah Mather to a conscripted sphere of influence and also shaped nineteenth century women’s rhetoric, especially when communicating with powerful men. By using such adoring and devotional rhetoric and interspersing it within her argument to accompany Pratt west, Mather animated powerful gender stereotypes of the time period in order to more effectively convince Pratt that she should be the white woman teacher to make the trip with him. She would be his helpmate, his support, his partner on the journey.

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36 Gilcreast, “Richard Henry Pratt and American Indian Policy,” 11-12.
For example, she wrote to him, “(y)our trip has been constantly on my mind since I received yours [letter] and the more I think of it, the more I think I should like to go anywhere you go.” When Pratt expressed concern regarding the primitive conditions they might face on their trip west, she reassured him. In her letter, she recalled for him how she and her long time companion, Miss Perit, “slept in soldiers quarters between army blankets for six weeks” years before when they were involved in the abolitionist movement. She told him, “I mainly mention this to let you see I can rough it.” Alluding to the fact that she was older than he, she added playfully, “I hope no old fogey will say I can’t go.”

In her letters, Mather reminded Pratt of the difficulty of the task ahead and her skills and abilities derived from her years of teaching children. She chastized Pratt’s critics in the federal government, “I should like to see them going out among those people picking up their children and carrying them off.” She reminded him of the delicate nature of securing children for the school, “I am afraid you will have a hard time in doing it, capable as I believe you are to do anything any other living man can do.” She continued, “Be assured if there is anything I can do anywhere to help you. Call on me.” Reminding him of her experience with children she wrote, “You know I have been studying children all my life… I’ll help you make good selections!” Finally, in a chilling statement that may have, in Pratt’s mind, clinched her inclusion on the trip, she informed Pratt of one of her most special talents. She wrote, “Not that I think I could be of much use, but perhaps I might. I have been thinking of the trinkets I would take along and dresses for the girls to coax them to come for.”

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38 Sarah Mather, Letter to Pratt, 21 August 1879, Box 6, Folder 195, Richard Henry Pratt Papers.
39 Sarah Mather, Letter to Pratt, 21 August 1879, Box 6, Folder 195, Richard Henry Pratt Papers.
In her letters to Pratt about the trip, as she writes about her willingness to use her knowledge of children’s development to manipulate Sioux children to come to Carlisle, Mather begins to develop an important aspect of the role of the federal Indian schoolteacher. While the symbol of the woman Indian schoolteacher implied that as a woman, a teacher would extend care and affection for Native children under her watch while they were away from the protection of family and community, in practice, many white federal Indian schoolteachers manipulated and exploited Native children to help the federal government’s goal of assimilation.

After acting as an agent of the federal government in negotiations with some of the most renowned Native warriors and leaders of the time, Mather traveled to Carlisle to become one of the first teachers at the school. By this time, her standing among reform workers had increased substantially as a result of her work with Pratt. In a letter to him, she wrote about a meeting of a Woman’s Board on the topic of American Indian education held at a local church near her family’s Massachusetts home. “I was urged to go. It was the second time I had ever met such a body of ladies. They were from India, Turkey… their missionaries had long letters to read … about their Indians.” She continued, “I thought ours were quite as important and I told them. I thought they never would get through to give me a chance. My introductory remark … waked up the whole church. You never saw such interest as they manifested!” Their attention won, Mather remarked that, “I own Etahdleuh’s letters,” referring to the former St. Augustine prisoner Etahdleuh Doanmoe (Kiowa), and “handed them through the crowd and asked them if they could show any such progress among their Indians.”

40 Ibid., emphasis added.
In the competition over whose Indians were more ‘important’ (or perhaps whose Indians were in need of attention by white women teachers) and which set of benevolent workers more efficient in civilizing them, Mather apparently won and “they questioned me all over the church and I had a doz. invitations to tea…and] invitations to visit in the various towns represented.”41 Mather’s experience with this group of reform workers demonstrates another aspect of the way Carlisle’s white women Indian schoolteachers began to create a role for themselves within the bureaucracy of the federal government and in the larger humanitarian reform movement that nineteenth century middle and upper class women participated in.

In his memoir, Pratt wrote that he “could have no better assistant” to accompany him into Sioux territory than Sarah Mather.42 This however, is the limit to his recognition of Mather’s role. According to Pratt, after he made his initial argument to Siňté Glešká, (a.k.a. Spotted Tail), it was Mather who closed the deal with the Principal Chief of the Rosebud Sioux. He told Spotted Tail, “(t)his good lady came with me to look after the girls. She will talk to you and then we will go with the interpreter to the agent’s house, sit on the porch and wait for your answer.” He continued, “Talk it over. Be sure of your ground, and then come and let me know.”43 Later they repeated the negotiation with Maȟpiya Lúta or Red Cloud, Principal Chief of the Pine Ridge Agency to “let us have their children.”44 In the end, the pair was successful and they left with more than the number of children they initially came for – the first (of many) contingents of students that would occupy Carlisle Indian School for the next forty years.

41 Sarah Mather, Letter dated 18 August 1879, Box 6, Folder 195, Richard Henry Pratt Papers.
42 Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 220.
43 Ibid, 224.
44 Ibid, 225.
Conclusion

Women figured prominently in the late nineteenth century educational experiment Richard Henry Pratt conducted at Fort Marion, and later at Carlisle. Sarah Mather, and women like her, became indispensible to Richard Henry Pratt in the assimilation of American Indian children through federal boarding schools. Mather was an experienced fundraiser and worked tirelessly when she believed that there was a social need that should be addressed. Before Pratt became known as the preeminent Indian educator, it was Mather who raised funds to continue the education of Pratt’s prisoners of war at Hampton Institute. Mather also offered Pratt access to her considerable network of social reformers, philanthropists and educators. Without her close friendship to Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Superintendent of Hampton Institute, it is unlikely the Carlisle Indian School would have materialized when and how it did, if at all. Her introduction of Pratt and her subsequent correspondence with Armstrong facilitated a relationship between the two of them that allowed Pratt to visit Hampton Institute and to observe the educational program Armstrong had created.

Finally, in her work with Pratt, Mather both embodied and defied stereotypes of nineteenth century women. Embodying gender stereotypes, throughout her work with Pratt, Mather used the rhetoric of benevolence to frame her work on behalf of Indian children. Her perceived moral superiority as a woman and her duty to serve God and her country permitted her work in the public sphere, “uplifting” Indians. Educated at Mount Holyoke, Sarah Mather was a former teacher of both wealthy white children and African-American children. With her knowledge of children’s psychological development and
their emotional needs, Mather was skilled at working with children, but when the need arose, could also turn these abilities towards manipulating children to do her bidding. Defying stereotypes of nineteenth century women as soft, maternal, and nurturing, Sarah Mather demonstrated for Richard Henry Pratt that even a grey-haired sixty-year old woman could face some of the most powerful and reputedly violent Indian leaders, communicate the federal government’s educational aims to them, and convince Native mothers and fathers to allow her and Pratt to take their children away from them hundreds of miles away to Carlisle.
FIGURE 2.1: SARAH MATHER AND SISSETON SIOUX GIRLS, 1879-1880

(DESSIE PRESCOTT, JENNIE LAWRENCE, MATHER, NELLIE ROBERTSON, KATIE LACROIX)

Photo by John N. Choate. Used with permission from CCHS.
CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCING THE INDIAN TO AMERICA: THE DAILY WORK OF ASSIMILATION AND CITIZENSHIP TRAINING AT THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL

Introduction

The work of the earliest teachers at Carlisle had been untried and untested. Carlisle teachers had to either invent or borrow teaching methods devised for other groups. While teaching English was the first priority, American citizenship was the ultimate goal of the daily assimilation work at the school. Introducing Indians to republicanism and the responsibilities of citizens in a representative democracy were part of these lessons. “Civilized progress” was another important feature of citizenship training. Teachers were advised to instruct Native American students that their transformation was inevitable, an outcome of unrelenting historical forces. Using social evolutionary theories borrowed from the nascent field of anthropology, they explained that man naturally progressed through the stages of savagery and barbarism to civilization. Carlisle teachers taught Indian students to recognize themselves in this framework, to identify with an inferior stage of social development and to desire progress towards civilization.

Carlisle teachers instructed Native students that to become civilized and prepare for citizenship they needed to: abandon tribalism and communal property holdings and accept individual, private ownership of land; become economically self-sufficient; shift their political loyalties away from tribe and to the American republic; and gain the

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46 Ibid.
civilized intellectual and moral capacity to participate in the political, economic and social institutions that defined America.

Carlisle teachers taught another important facet of civilization and American citizenship – the proper roles and responsibilities for women and men in American society. Despite defying convention themselves, women teachers often reminded students, particularly with regard to vocational training and extracurricular activities, that whatever gender roles and relationships they had absorbed prior to coming to Carlisle, the proper work for civilized women and men kept women in the household, caring for their families and doing domestic work (in their households or others), while men were properly located outside the household, not in offices, but on the farm, working their allotted land.

Claiming superiority derived from their positions as white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans, white Carlisle teachers flexed newfound power in order to teach American Indians that their cultures, especially their traditional gender roles and relations as well as their marriage and family structures, were not civilized and would not be compatible with American citizenship. Carlisle teachers taught Indians that in order to become American citizens, they had to accept the prevailing racial, cultural, and gender ideologies of the time, including those that placed them in the lowest strata of these hierarchies.

The citizenship and civilization education that arose at Carlisle, prepared American Indians to assimilate into American society only at the very lowest of socioeconomic classes. Another iteration of schooling for second-class citizenship, the

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47 On how federal Indian boarding schools created an indigenous proletariat see: Alice Littlefield, “Indian Education and the World of Work in Michigan, 1893-1933,” in Native Americans and Wage
federal Indian boarding schools existed alongside segregated schools for African Americans. According to historian James D. Anderson, “both schooling for democratic citizenship and schooling for second-class citizenship have been basic traditions in American education.” He continues, “both were fundamental American conceptions of society and progress, occupied the same time and space, were fostered by the same governments, and usually were embraced by the same leaders.”

Inherent in American Indian schooling for second-class citizenship was the fact that American citizenship education was gendered. In the late nineteenth century, American citizenship demanded different responsibilities and duties from men than it did from women; it also conferred different rights and privileges on one sex versus the other. While American Indian men were expected to become independent wage earners as farmers or tradesmen and to accept ownership of an allotment of land, American Indian women were expected to completely abrogate any claims to economic and political participation and to be satisfied with dominance only in the domestic sphere of the household. For some American Indian girls whose societies conferred upon them considerable social power – in some Native cultures the social power women possessed was comparable to that of their men – American citizenship was not an elevation of status but a diminution of social power.

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The Language of Citizenship

In the earliest days at Carlisle the first priority for Sarah Mather and the other “pioneer” teachers was teaching the English language in preparation for citizenship. As one of the teachers, Miss Anna C. Hamilton said, “my first thought in teaching [them] was that they must learn to speak the English language, if they [are] to become American citizens.” According to Pratt, learning English was the first step for American Indians to learn the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. He said, “the barrier of language is the great wall between the whites and Indians. That broken down, the Indians can get information and instruction from everybody and much more rapidly learn to take care of themselves as citizens.”

In one of the first reports to Pratt about the teachers’ progress with students, Carrie M. Semple, the first principal of the Carlisle Indian School, described the curriculum she designed. Educated at the Western Female Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, Semple was the superintendent of schools in St. Augustine, Florida, and taught freedmen at Fiske University, before being recruited to teach at Carlisle. A fundamental principle Semple and the earliest teachers shared with Pratt was that Native children and white children were equal in their capacity to learn. She wrote of the teachers’ belief that “the faculties of the child-nature develop in the same order, and without radical differences, whether in the Indian or the white race.”

Semple wrote about the difficulty inherent in teaching “everything pertaining to civilized life” especially to a group of students who spoke a “babel of different tongues.”

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51 C. M. Semple, “How It Is Done at Carlisle,” IAPI OAYE 11 no. 3 (1882): 23
Given the difficulty of the teachers’ tasks, she said, “it seemed necessary to allow teachers the largest liberty consistent with principles which we consider fundamental.” According to Semple, in teaching English, the teachers took advantage of the children’s natural curiosity, “which prompted to the study of the countless objects new and strange around them” and they began by “directing and stimulating that faculty.”

Instead of providing the children textbooks, the teachers presented objects and taught the Indian children their names and uses; “observation and imitation” led to describing names and actions. “Measures, rulers, articles of food, and household furniture, tools from the workshops … find place in the schoolrooms and furnish material for lessons.” At first oral lessons were given. After the oral lesson, the child was required to “write a description, or reproduce in writing sentences which have been drawn out by questioning.”

The teaching of English, however, also involved manipulating students’ bodies to make them conform with teacher’s expectations for how proper English should be heard and spoken. For example, students were drilled in vocal gymnastics to improve pronunciation and Semple wrote that it was “often necessary to show the Indian pupil the proper position of the teeth, tongue and lips, and insist upon his imitation.” Other boarding school scholars have examined how Native students’ bodies were the focus of white teachers’ assimilation efforts. K. Tsianina Lomawaima demonstrates that matrons and teachers at the Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma focused on “inculcating the correct handling of a needle and thread” and correct posture as they taught female

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52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
students to sew properly. Miss Verna Dunagan, Carlisle’s music teacher in the mid 1910s, also disapproved of the way American Indian students positioned their mouth, lips, teeth and tongue when they sang the patriotic songs they learned. Dunagan complained that as “true Indians, they were not particularly musical.” “The Indians sang through their teeth. In the Indian way of singing, the sound was much more important than words.” Dunagan forced them to sing “with three fingers in their mouths” to achieve “round, full tones,” not the “whiny” sound they achieved singing through their teeth.

Carlisle teachers found fault with Native American children’s singing, much as they did with their drawing and whatever other skills and abilities they brought with them to school. This was one of the ways white teachers reminded Native students of their cultural inferiority and their relatively low level of progress in the savagery/barbarism/civilization framework. Although singing and vocalization had a long tradition in American Indian cultures, teachers attempted to construct a different reality for students. Carlisle teachers characterized the musical styles derived from Euro-American traditions as superior and encouraged students to adopt them as signs of their progress.

Teachers also used physical movement to reinforce students’ learning. For example, “Harry ran” was taught through movement and imitation. To expedite the process of learning words and sentences, white teachers manipulated students’ bodies to

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54 Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light*, 93.
56 Newspaper article, Undated and unidentified local paper, Verna (Dunagan) Whistler file, Cumberland County Historical Society.
57 Verna (Dunagan) Whistler, Oral History collected September 1976, Cumberland County Historical Society.
their own ends when they wrote text on the board and then after almost completely erasing it, guided the students’ “little hands … in tracing the characters.” Finger songs were employed to teach the smallest children. While it was not followed in detail, these were some of the principles borrowed from Superintendent John Robinson Keep who ran a school for deaf mutes in Hartford, Connecticut and who wrote the book *First Lessons for the Deaf and Dumb*, which Miss Semple used as the first teaching manual at Carlisle.59

To teach Native students to write, read and speak English effectively, teachers at Carlisle had to move beyond the acquisition of words and simple sentences. To do so, they also needed to be creative in the design of their lessons. For example, in 1885, Miss Bender had Room 2. “Frank and cheery,” she taught a number of different groups of students in the same classroom. One group was composed of the older children from an Apache party that was recently brought to Carlisle. “Several columns of words were written on the blackboard, and the class were erasing words indicated to them by action or description.” Bender shrugged her shoulders and shivered which led one Apache boy to erase the word ‘cold,’ “proving that he associated the idea with the written word, and not sound without sense.” Bender then said, “The color of your coat,” which led another student to erase the word ‘blue.’60

A different English lesson was being conducted in the central room on the first floor, which belonged to Miss Vincentine T. Booth and her students. Booth’s students were all boys and they read from a first reader composed of stories about different breeds of dogs. Booth’s students had been at Carlisle for at least one year, as according to Miss

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58 Semple, “How it is Done at Carlisle,” 23.
59 Ibid.
Semple’s directions, teachers were not supposed to introduce textbooks until after students had oral instruction in English for approximately 9 months. After reading stories, Booth “exercised” students “on the names and choice of dogs as pictured in the reader.” They wrote on the board the names and actions of the dogs as pictured in the reader to learn the difference between nouns and verbs. According to an observer, “Miss Booth’s methods … are calculated to interest her pupils and cultivate an accurate observation of words and engravings.”

Next to Booth’s classroom was the room of M.E.B. Phillips. Phillips wrote an example of a letter on the board and the students read aloud from it. Excerpts of Bible verses were incorporated into the letter. In her room were copy books written by boys from “the Florida batch of Apaches” who were “hardly 100 days out of the woods” as well as slate drawings of buffalo that her pupils had completed. Phillips also conducted phonics lessons in her classroom. Following her lead, “a class of a dozen exploded the vowels and aspirated and sibilated and indicated the consonants with all the fervor of a Boston elocutionist giving his first lesson.”

Teaching Civilization and Citizenship

In the context of teaching English, Carlisle teachers also taught important lessons about civilization and citizenship. The blue coats of the Carlisle boys’ uniforms, breeds of dogs and Bible verse were choices Carlisle teachers made. They did not, for example, choose adjectives to describe clothing that “traditional” Indian children wore or elect to read about the different species of animals found on any reservation. Instead, in their

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61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
pedagogical choices Carlisle teachers attempted to prepare Indian students for a civilized life, apart from reservations, among white people where they would live and dress like other American citizens, farming or working a trade being self-sufficient and productive.

Figure 3.1 is a powerful illustration of the teaching of civilization and citizenship at Carlisle. In the picture, an unidentified Carlisle teacher and her students are examining a desk chair, which is elevated and is at the front of the room on the teacher’s desk. On the board is written: “Conversation Lesson Subject – The Chair.” While on one level, from the teacher’s perspective, a chair was as useful an object as any other to teach students an English word, a chair also served as an important symbolic device for a lesson on civilization. We can imagine the teacher’s words as she points to the chair: ‘Civilized girls and boys sit in wooden chairs and not on the floor, so close to dirt and mud. Sitting in a chair keeps clothes clean and because the body is erect and is elevated off the floor, it prepares a girl or boy to more readily engage in useful work.’

Carlisle students not only examined the uses of the chair in the classroom, they were also taken on ‘field trips’ to the shops to see how these items were manufactured and to discuss the object’s physical properties. In taking them to the shops to show them the production of a chair, teachers were demonstrating appropriate vocational roles for Indian students.

Carlisle teachers created these object lessons, examining – in excruciatingly minute detail – the artifacts of Western civilization and American citizenship in order to reinforce the differences between technologically backward Indian cultures and a modern American society. During the 1907-1908 school year, Carlisle teachers blended academic and vocational citizenship training when they took their academic classes to observe the production of a chair, teachers were demonstrating appropriate vocational roles for Indian students.

63 Picture by Frances Benjamin Johnston, used with permission from CCHS.
vocational work done in the sewing room, blacksmith shop, boiler house, wood shop, tin shop, harness shop, tailor shop, print shop, Indian art department, paint shop and the shoe shop. For example, Miss Hawk took her class to the laundry room to examine the work done there. Afterwards, eleven-year-old Mohawk student Mitchell Farbell had twenty spelling words pertaining to the laundry room to memorize, including the word “wringers.”

Nine-year-old Edna Bissonette (Sioux) wrote an essay on the types of things washed in the laundry, which machines were there and the process of how clothes were laundered.

Peter Mora (Chittimache) was given two word problems pertaining to laundry soap, which reinforced multiplication and division skills. Finally, eleven-year-old Sioux student Wilbert Deon was directed to cut out of black construction paper shapes of a washtub, clothespins, clothesline with clothes, wringer and scrub board.

Both boys and girls were taken to all the shops, despite the fact that for example, laundry was designated as female labor and woodworking as male labor. Examining the work produced by over one hundred Carlisle students after they visited these shops demonstrates that while they were learning about different vocations and the artifacts associated with them, they were also learning about gender roles, specifically what labor is appropriate for which sex. Fifteen-year-old Emily Mitchell (Penobscot) wrote a poem after visiting the blacksmith shop in which she described the masculine attributes of the village blacksmith.

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64 Mitchell Farbell, “The Laundry,” Academic assignment for Miss Hawk, PI 4-2-3, Carlisle Indian Industrial School Manuscripts, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA. (Hereafter CIISM, CCHS).
65 Edna Bissonette, “The Laundry,” Academic assignment for Miss Hawk, PI 4-2-4, CIISM, CCHS.
66 Peter Mora, “The Laundry,” Academic assignment for Miss Hawk, PI 4-2-6, CIISM, CCHS.
67 Wilbert Deon, “The Laundry,” Academic assignment for Miss Hawk, PI 4-2-8, CIISM, CCHS.
68 Emily Mitchell, “Blacksmith Shop,” Academic assignment for Miss Ellis, PI 4-6-1, CIISM, CCHS.
blacksmithing as hard, physically demanding work and wrote about the economic independence the blacksmith had as a result of his hard work. Similarly Sioux student Jennie Blackshield wrote about tinning and the fact that only boys make things from tin.\(^6^9\)

Carlisle teachers embedded ideologies about the proper gender roles and relations American Indian children should adopt within their civilization and citizenship lessons. When the first group of Pawnee, Sioux, and Cheyenne girls and boys entered Carlisle, they brought with them different ideologies of gender based on their particular cultural histories. Native girls and boys of different cultural backgrounds had particular understandings of the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society and their own unique conceptions of how the activities of women and men were valued by their communities. For example, prior to the assimilation era, Sioux women and men had a complementary relationship rather than a hierarchical one. The Sioux valued women’s and men’s work equally, though there was a rigid sexual division of labor.\(^7^0\) Lakota society also offered a third gender role – the *winkte* – which was accepted as normative. The *winkte*, usually a man, dressed in women’s clothes and was regarded as womanlike, yet engaged in some masculine activities, including hunting and accompanying war parties.\(^7^1\) Like other two-spirits, these individuals were regarded as having spiritual qualities and had important ritual and ceremonial functions including naming children and dispensing herbal medicines.\(^7^2\)

\(^{69}\) Jennie Blackshield, “The Tin Shop,” Academic assignment for Miss Kaup, PI 4-7-1, CIISM, CCHS.

\(^{70}\) Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, *The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas and Sabine Lang, *Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality and Spirituality* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997). Two-spirits are indigenous people who defy binary masculine and feminine gender identification and claim a gender identity that is a mixture of existing gender roles and attributes.
Despite the fact that Sioux women’s work was as highly valued as men’s, white women teachers taught Carlisle girls and boys that their gender roles and relations were uncivilized and would be unacceptable in their future lives as American citizens. Although white teachers at Carlisle were challenging their society’s own gender roles and living unconventional lives relative to their married, home-bound sisters, they rarely acknowledged the diversity of gender roles lodged in the community memories of the students they taught. Instead they adhered to rigid and deeply held stereotypes that implied that American Indian men were lazy and women were drudges who labored under oppressive men.73

White women teachers also found fault with Native family organization and childrearing techniques, at least when they deviated from white’s Protestant Christian cultural norms. Sioux women could easily initiate divorce from their husbands. After a divorce, Sioux children followed their mother.74 While these rights could have been interpreted as an indicator of high social status for Sioux women, Carlisle teachers cast them as markers of female promiscuity. Carlisle teachers also denigrated plural marriages, calling them immoral and degrading to women. Yet among the Sioux, polygyny (the marriage of one man to more than one woman) was considered normative and like all marital arrangements had advantages and disadvantages. While Sioux women favored polygyny because it divided up household labor, it also fostered jealousies among co-wives over a husband’s limited resources. Carlisle teachers were faced with

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73 The stereotypes of Indian men as lazy, “indolent braves” who disappeared for days at a time hunting for leisure and pleasure while their oppressed “squaw drudges” were forced to do all the work around the household, dates back to the seventeenth century and to the writings of Virginia colony’s John Smith. For more on the evolution of these stereotypes and the ways the federal government used them to further their goals, see David D. Smits, “The ‘Squaw Drudge’: A Prime Index of Savagism,” *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 4 (1982): 281-306.

74 Albers and Medicine, *The Hidden Half*. 
students who brought experience with a diversity of marital arrangements and family structures with them to school. Rather than evaluating the benefits different indigenous marital arrangements offered, teachers characterized them all as immoral and dismissed them as an index of savagery.

An example of how the academic work and gendered vocational roles for women were taught and used by American Indian girls at Carlisle is illustrated by the experiences related by Carlisle teacher, Miss Corson. In a New York Times article titled “Hints For The Household,” Miss Corson wrote about her experiences of teaching English and housework to Indian girls. She explained that she necessarily had to teach the Indian girls words related to cooking that they previously did not know. She commented that, while in the midst of a lesson on cookery, that she had to use signs as well as words, “for they had not yet learned my mother tongue.” Miss Corson also related how she encouraged an Indian girl named Lizzie MacNac to contribute her newly acquired vocabulary and cooking knowledge to the New York Times, remarking that it would be “the first of Indian contributions to the literature of cookery.” She also provided some insight into the ways in which Indian girls combined some of their lesson on homemaking with writing and literacy. Miss Corson wrote that Captain Pratt informed her that, “the letters of our girls to their homes are full of cookery this month.”

Miss Corson’s account demonstrates how a lesson on cooking necessarily integrated the teaching of English and the roles for women in 19th century American society. For example to impart the skills necessary to the nineteenth-century American housewife, particular words and phrases were taught to girls that were never taught to

76 Ibid., 9.
77 Ibid., 9.
boys. The skills taught to American Indian girls were not to be deployed in the market for economic benefit - rather they were to be used inside the home in service to husband and family.

While these object lessons were designed to impart important messages about American technological progress and proper vocational gender roles for each sex, students at Carlisle also contested these lessons. After a visit to the sewing room, nineteen-year old Ernest Quickbear (Sioux) drew a sewing machine decorated with Indian designs and a border. After visiting the sewing room, Hopi student Nallace Qouhojirma (sic) wrote an essay about the iron. Outlining its physical properties, he drew a picture to accompany his essay. In his essay Qouhojirma described an iron, the work done by Mrs. Canfield, Carlisle’s seamstress, and specifically wrote about what the girls used irons for. Qouhojirma’s classmate, twenty-year old Glenn Josytewa (Hopi) wrote an essay about a needle and thread after the same visit. Josytewa wrote that girls use needles and thread and explained what they did with them. However, he also asserted that boys were capable of using a needle and thread and could sew buttons, when needed. Josytewa’s assertion that boys were just as proficient with a needle and thread reflects the fact that in Hopi culture, men did all the weaving. Josytewa’s statement is an example of the way Native students resisted the gendered vocational ideologies offered by Carlisle teachers.

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78 Ernest Quickbear, “The Tailor Shop,” Academic assignment for Miss Scalps, PI 4-10-1, CIISM, CCHS.
79 Nallace Qouhojirma, “The Sewing Room,” Academic assignment for Miss Hetrick, PI 4-5-2, CIISM, CCHS.
80 Glenn Josytewa, “The Sewing Room,” Academic assignment for Miss Hetrick, PI 4-5-8, CIISM, CCHS.
81 Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, personal communication with author, 12 March 2014.
As American Indian students became more proficient in their use of English, more advanced topics such as geography, civics and history were taught. These classes also served more advanced American Indian students and future teachers like Jemima Wheelock (Oneida), Nellie Robertson (Sioux) and Rosa Bourassa (Chippewa) who attended western schools on or near their reservations and were already proficient in English when they arrived at Carlisle. Advanced subjects were also useful as they allowed teachers to craft more complex lessons about the meaning of civilization and citizenship for Native students.

Teachers at Carlisle did not focus on topics with which Native students were familiar, particularly in their geography, history and civics classes. Many American Indian children were much more informed about particular geographical areas and topics than women teachers would ever be. Yet, these were not the subjects white women chose to teach. They chose topics that they imagined American Indian children had no experience with. Miss Crane, among others, taught geography at Carlisle. In the late 1880s, an observer witnessed Miss Crane teaching her students about major rivers in the U.S., inquiring from students: “How wide is the St. Lawrence river at Montreal?”

In an examination of thirty-five personnel records, women teachers taught the following topics in geography: “Navigating the U.S.,” which focused on major centers for industry, including where chief centers for dairying or quarrying were located, “Major Rivers,” which allowed teachers to discuss major shipping routes for export of American goods, and “Major Cities,” which facilitated discussion of population growth and urbanization. In history, women teachers taught “Major Civil War battles,” “Early French and Spanish explorers,” and lessons on the administration of various U.S. presidents.
Civics education at Carlisle took many forms. In 1887, an observer witnessed Native “pupil teacher” Jemima Wheelock (Oneida) teaching a recitation on the U.S. Constitution. While Miss Shears normally taught in that classroom, when she or another teacher fell ill, “pupil teachers” substituted for them. “Pupil teachers” were the American Indian female students who expressed a desire to teach and who, in Pratt’s eyes, were model students. Other popular civics lessons involved the study of the electoral process.

Geography, history and civics lessons were a critical part of the citizenship education Native children received at Carlisle. No other subjects communicated the idea of Manifest Destiny more powerfully than these lessons. Topics such as urbanization, the major exports of the U.S., or the growing influence of Western states imparted to students an understanding of the federal government’s growing economic and political power, including America’s expanding international influence that the nation was building for itself at the end of the nineteenth century. For white teachers, Pratt and federal policymakers, having Native instructors teach from this curriculum made the lessons even more powerful. Native women who taught the idea of Manifest Destiny implied that they abandoned their cultural traditions and beliefs and had accepted the inevitable historical forces that vastly increased whites’ land ownership while confining Indian people to reservations. Despite this perception, in reality, Native teachers defended their cultures and modeled for students how to retain their identities.

Gendered Vocational Instruction

82 N. Rubyer, Another Trip to Carlisle. Randolph Register, Randolph NY, Thursday 14 July 1887. 83 Personnel Folders, NPRC.
One of the most ardent voices for the citizenship curriculum was Thomas J. Morgan, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1888 – 1893. Morgan equated education with preparation for citizenship, asserting, “we mean that comprehensive system of training and instruction which will convert them into American citizens, put within their reach the blessings which the rest of us enjoy, and enable them to compete successfully with the white man on his own ground and with his own methods.”

Morgan instructed Superintendents of Indian Schools,

“to teach American history, elementary principles of government – including instruction in their duties and privileges as citizens – respect for the flag, patriotic songs, and the observance of National holidays – including the anniversary of the passage of the Dawes Act (1887) on February 8th.”

Morgan also directed federal Indian school teachers to teach “‘the lives of the most notable historical characters’ and to not ignore the injustices committed against the Indian people but that these should ‘be contrasted with the larger future open to them, and their duties and opportunities rather than their wrongs. And, in order to ‘appeal to the highest elements of manhood and womanhood in their pupils...they should carefully avoid any unnecessary reference to the fact that they are Indians.’”

As critical theorists have argued, curriculums are not simply a grouping of courses but are social constructs that reflect the ideological purposes of those who have the power to administer educational programs. At Carlisle, students were given academic citizenship training for half the day and the other half of the day vocational

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citizenship training. The vocational education taught by Carlisle’s teachers was not
designed to uplift American Indian students into the professions, rather it prepared Native
Americans to assimilate into American society only at the very lowest socioeconomic
classes.  

At Carlisle, the half academic, half industrial curriculum was also intimately
associated with federal designs on tribally controlled land and resources. In 1879, when
Carlisle was founded, American Indians still controlled a significant land base, were
politically and legally autonomous and, for the most part, practiced their traditional
customs within the boundaries of their reservations, which, according to historian
Frederick Hoxie, they considered “their most important possessions.”

Tribes owned lands and the resources within them and for centuries structured
their use through extended kinship networks, some of which were matrilineal. Matrilineal
kinship networks are systems in which descent is traced through maternal ancestors and
sometimes involved property inheritance. In many, not all, matrilineal societies, women
also had a relatively high social status and figured significantly in the political systems,
economies and religions of their societies.

88 On how federal Indian boarding schools created an indigenous proletariat see: Alice Littlefield,
“Indian Education and the World of Work in Michigan, 1893-1933,” in Native Americans and Wage
Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives, ed. Alice Littlefield and Martha Knack (Norman: University of
Oklahoma Press, 1996), 100-121; Adams, Education for Extinction; Reyhner and Eder, American Indian
Education; Lomawaima, They Called it Prairie Light; Trennert, The Phoenix Indian School; Sakiestewa
Gilbert, Education Beyond the Mesas.
89 Frederick E. Hoxie, A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920
(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 42.
90 For anthropological works on American Indian women’s social status prior
to colonization see, Ramona Ford, “Native American Women: Changing Statuses, Changing Interpretations,” in Writing the
Range: Race, Class and Culture in the Women's West, ed. Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage
(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 42 - 68; Susan Hazen-Hammond, Spider Woman’s Web:
Traditional Native American Tales About Women’s Power (New York: Perigee Publishers, 1999); Beatrice
Medicine, “Warrior Women: Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women,” in The Hidden Half:
Studies of Plains Indian Women, ed. Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine (New York: University Press of
In 1887, the Dawes Act was passed which imposed private land ownership on American Indian communities for whom communal land ownership structured by kinship networks had been a way of life. Individual Indian men were able to receive land allotments of up to 160 acres. Women were excluded. During this time Congress also adopted a blood quantum standard so that one could only be legally declared Indian unless he had one-half or more Indian blood. Later the standard was reduced to one quarter. After the allotment system ended, Indian landholdings were reduced from 138 million acres in 1887 to only 48 million acres by 1934.91

As federal legislators planned to divide the tribally held land bases into individually owned allotted land, Carlisle’s teachers taught Native children that collective ownership and the kinship ties that structured it were primitive and led to indolence and immorality. At Carlisle, in both the academic and vocational curriculums, Native students learned that only male ownership of land and male control of property stimulated a capitalistic work ethic and defined citizenship in American society. Women were taught that their place was not in the economy or political system but in the home, supporting their husbands and children and any influence they exercised was dependent upon their moral authority as mothers and wives. According to Bell, these “notions of gender were… a salient, but often silent, feature of assimilation” at Carlisle.92

While white women teachers taught that the proper place for Native women to be was in their homes, exercising moral authority over husbands and children, they themselves adopted a different standard. In their personal lives most white women

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91 http://www.understandingrace.org/history/gov/us_control.html
teachers defied the stereotypes of their day and remained single. Many chose to teach at Carlisle so that they might have “a purse of their own.” Indeed, independence and self-reliance were important personal benefits that working at Carlisle offered. As some of the first female agents of the state, responsible for interpreting federal Indian educational policies, white women teachers also defied the professional stereotypes for women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Women who turned down safe, comfortable teaching jobs in white public school systems to teach Native children were perceived as adventurous, brave and in some accounts, crazy.\textsuperscript{93} Despite the fact that almost every aspect of their lives defied convention, Carlisle teachers believed that inculcating Protestant gender roles in American Indian children would help them to become proper American citizens.

While the academic lessons and vocational training that white teachers offered were highly gendered in that any and all lessons conveyed the proper roles and responsibilities of women and men in American society, the vocational training was especially so.\textsuperscript{94} In the earliest years of its existence, the only vocational training offered for Indian girls was in the “domestic arts” of sewing, cooking, and housekeeping. Boys, on the other hand, could choose from among the trades offered including blacksmithing, carpentry, tailoring, printing, and shoe making, etc. In this period, farming and agriculture were strongly emphasized as well because the federal government was in the process of developing the aforementioned policy to reduce tribal land holdings. Federal policymakers assumed that by teaching Indian boys farming they would be prepared to

\textsuperscript{93} Estelle Aubrey Brown, \textit{Stubborn Fool: A Narrative} (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1952); Adams, \textit{Education for Extinction}.

farm their allotment of land and girls would become farmer’s wives. It is important to
note that while the boy’s vocational program had more offerings, it still was industrial in
nature; designed to create, according to Littlefield and others, not a professional class of
Indian politicians, doctors or lawyers, but an indigenous proletariat.95

Despite offering very limited vocational training to Indian girls, Pratt and other
contemporary Indian reformers believed their education was of the upmost importance.
According to Pratt, “it is impossible to overestimate the importance of careful training for
Indian girls, for with the Indians as with all other peoples, the home influence is the
prevailing one.” He continued, “it is the women who cling most tenaciously to heathen
rites and superstitions and perpetuate them by their instructions to the children.” Pratt
said that perhaps the education of girls has been neglected because “the training of girls
involves care and responsibility so much greater” and that while a boy is taught only one
trade, “the girl who is to be a good housekeeper must acquire what is equal to several
trades.”96

One of the most influential reformers and “friends of the Indian,” was German
refugee Carl Schurz, who, in 1881 said the need to educate Indian girls was “of peculiar
importance” and referred to Indian women as “beast(s) of burden” whose husbands
treated them “alternately with animal fondness and with the cruel brutality of the slave-
driver.” On the purpose of education for girls he said, “nothing will be more apt to raise
the Indians in the scale of civilization than to stimulate their attachment to permanent
homes, and it is woman that must make the atmosphere and form the attraction of the
home.” In schools they should be kept busy “in the kitchen, dining-room, sewing-room,

95 Littlefield, “Indian Education and the World of Work.”
and with other domestic work . . . (i)f we want the Indians to respect their women, we
must lift up the Indian women to respect themselves.”

Creek scholar K. Tsianina Lomawaima argues that the domesticity training that
Indian girls received at federal Indian boarding schools was designed not to provide them
with self-sufficiency as wage earners but to teach Indian girls subservience and
submission to authority. Unlike the boys whose trade skills were being developed, once
girls learned how to darn a shirt, for example, they were not given advanced training in
sewing or needlework. Instead, the number of shirts they had to darn increased. Pratt’s
report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs confirms Lomawaima’s analysis. In his
1885 Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Pratt described the school
industries of the boys and girls. He provided a one and a half page detailed description of
the boys work in each trade. Of the boys, he emphasized the quality of the work and the
development of their skills over the amount they produce and remarks “in the workshops
little machinery is used, the object being to make competent workmen in each line, rather
than simply to turn out the largest possible amount of work.” He went on, “the quality of
the work elicits frequent commendation from those who are competent judges.”

Of the girl’s industrial work he summarized it in two sentences saying simply, “At
the school they are taught sewing, cooking, laundry and household work. They are
diligent and attentive, and learn rapidly.” Then he provided two charts (see Tables 3.1
and 3.2) showing the work of the girls over the past year, the first is the quantity

98 Lomawaima, They Called it Prairie Light; Also see Robert A. Trennert, “Educating Indian Girls
at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920,” The Western Historical Quarterly 13, no. 3 (July 1982):
271-290.
manufactured, the second, the quantity repaired. He concluded his report on the girl’s industrial work, noting that with some assistance, “the girls have done the washing and ironing for the entire school. Through the winter the washing averaged about 5,000 pieces per week.”

Repairing 41, 177 pairs of hose over the course of a year and washing 5,000 items of laundry per week was tedious and repetitive work and demonstrated unquestionably that Carlisle’s female students acquired those skills. Instead of emphasizing different skills or particular skill development, in his report, Pratt focuses on the quantity of items produced and derives pride that the girl’s labor supports the entire school. As Lomawaima concludes in her analysis of Indian girl’s work at the Chilocco Indian School, at Carlisle, Native girls were given training only in industries designed to maintain the school itself not to empower girls to embrace the opportunities that they were told await them after graduation. The only practical use for this domesticity training was in subservient positions in boarding schools themselves, as domestic servants in white households, or as housewives.

**Extracurricular Gender Assimilation**

The federal government expanded the Indian educational school system – using Carlisle as a model – in the years 1890-1900. Thomas J. Morgan became the Commissioner of Indian Affairs during this time and instituted a series of reforms which included establishing uniform grade levels, adopting textbooks for each grade level, placing all

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100 Ibid., 443.
101 From 1879 – 1889, the number of off-reservation boarding schools opened was 7. In the next decade, the federal government created 17 of these schools. The last non-reservation boarding school opened in 1902. See Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 57.
employees under the civil service act, including teachers, and organizing summer institutes for teachers. He believed these reforms would result in the creation of a “consolidated national Indian school system.” Under Morgan, more Indian children received their first English language training and other basic education at federal Indian schools located on or near reservations.

According to historian Frederick Hoxie, “Morgan’s reforms paralleled those taking place in school systems throughout the nation.” Similarly, many of those individuals involved in “systematizing’ the Indian schools also played prominent roles in reforming the nation’s public schools.” Believing that the ultimate goal of federal Indian education was citizenship, Morgan pronounced his faith in schools, stating that they were “the medium through which the rising generation of Indians are to be brought into fraternal and harmonious relationship with their white fellow citizens.” Eventually Morgan planned to integrate American Indian children into the public schools close to their reservations.

At Carlisle, Pratt had the political capital to ignore most of Morgan’s reforms and he continued to hire older Christian women who either had experience teaching in the public schools or teaching Indians through missionary/benevolent organizations or at agency schools. While Pratt could refuse to acknowledge civil service rules, he could not ignore the ramifications of Morgan’s reforms: increasingly American Indian children

103 Ibid, 8.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
arrived at Carlisle with at least four or more years of education, literate in English and equipped with basic academic and vocational skills.\textsuperscript{106}

Morgan’s reforms forced Pratt to offer even more advanced courses at Carlisle and to greatly expand extracurricular activities. “In this period, Carlisle witnessed the explosion of clubs, debate societies, sport teams, literary groups and a student-produced newspaper – \textit{The Indian Helper}, later \textit{The Arrow and The Red Man}.”\textsuperscript{107} While teachers had always been expected to supervise students outside the classroom, Morgan’s reforms resulted in an increased workload for Carlisle teachers. For example, on December 16, 1898, teachers were assigned to the various debating and literary societies that recently were created at Carlisle, “Misses Forster and Miles will attend the Invincible Society tonight; Miss Cutter and Miss Luckenbach the Standards; Miss Ericson and Miss Shaffner, the Susans.”\textsuperscript{108}

Kate Bowersox’s abundant work outside the classroom is illustrative. Every Thursday evening students were required to attend a prayer meeting, which Bowersox often led. Bowersox also took turns with other teachers acting as superintendent of the Sunday School. Teachers were encouraged to make speeches at various campus events as well. Bowersox spoke at the opening exercises of the school as well as on other occasions “on such diverse topics as Charles Lamb, Alfred the Great, Chinese literature, Greek civilization and Japanese education.”\textsuperscript{109} During her time there, Bowersox also participated in a supervisory role in all of the debating and literary societies at Carlisle. Of course, like the academic work, the meaning of citizenship was defined through the

\textsuperscript{106} Bell, “Telling Stories Out of School.”
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} \textit{The Indian Helper}, 16 December 1898.
\textsuperscript{109} Bashaw, \textit{Stalwart Women}, 23.
creation of and participation in particular extracurricular activities. At Carlisle, most of the extracurricular activities were centered around preparation for American citizenship and inculcating Protestant American gender roles.

According to historian Katrina Paxton, extracurricular activities like these encouraged not only cultural assimilation but also gender assimilation. In her article, on gender assimilation at Sherman Institute, Paxton used archival information gathered at the Sherman Indian Museum to understand how administrators at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, used YWCA social programs to achieve gender assimilation.

Sherman Institute and the Riverside chapter of the YMCA worked in tandem to deliver gender programs to American Indian girls. Some meetings were held at Sherman while others were held at the local YMCA with the help of young white women volunteers, who themselves were involved with the YMCA. Although Paxton does not mention the involvement of Sherman’s teachers, they undoubtedly played an important role during these meetings. Boarding school students were always supervised and the young white women volunteers had probably never taught American Indian girls before. Sherman teachers probably helped facilitate better communication between the two.

According to Paxton, “two of the Victorian era’s most prominent domestic gender ideologies: the ‘cult of true womanhood’ and ‘separate spheres’” were taught during YMCA meetings. Defining appropriate traits for women, these ideologies held that women should be pure, pious, obedient, selfless, passive, clean, meek, good mothers and devoted to their families. They also advocated that women should restrict their

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111 Ibid., 178.
activities and influence to the household and to create a loving family environment for
their husbands and children, for whom they were responsible. Men, on the other hand,
were to exert their influence in the public sphere where they worked, pursued education,
and performed the civic duties required of them as full citizens. Some of the topics of
meetings were: “Living for Others,” “Things We Should Remember and Things We
Should Forget,” “Righteous Living,” “Pure Thoughts Make a Pure Life,” and “Help
Somebody.”

Sherman administrators encouraged their female students to attend meetings by
advocating the merits of participation in the YMCA through articles in the school
newspaper. They advised girls that by attending YMCA meetings, they could get help
with homework as well as become more social. Perhaps, Sherman administrators also
saw the YMCA meetings as a way to facilitate relationships between the local white girls
and their female students, believing as Pratt did that the more interactions American
Indian children had with whites and the more they participated in white social
institutions, the quicker they would become civilized.

At Carlisle, Kate Bowersox supervised the activities of the King’s Daughters, a
group devoted to Bible study and Christian service. According to teacher Ruth Shaffner,
in 1896, there were over two hundred girls who were engaged in the work of the
organization. Among the other activities of the organization, the girls raised money to
supply the small children at Carlisle with Christmas presents, helped to fund missionaries
at work on Indian reservations and abroad as well as to send delegates from Carlisle to
national meetings of the organization.

112 Ibid., 178.
113 Ruth Shaffner, “Civilizing the American Indian,” The Chautauquan 13, no. 3 (June 1896): 266.
In much the same way as Paxton has noted for the YMCA’s involvement at Sherman, The King’s Daughters organization at Carlisle promoted the cult of true womanhood and separate spheres ideologies. For example, to address social problems, Carlisle girls were not encouraged to make public speeches or run for public office, rather instead, they were told that to properly exert their influence on such matters they do so only through their roles as benevolent churchwomen.

**Conclusion**

The first task for Carlisle teachers was to teach Native students English. At every opportunity, along with English language training, teachers added instruction in civilization and citizenship. Every new topic created an opportunity for teachers at Carlisle to demonstrate the superiority of the U.S. government and white, Protestant, Euro-American norms, beliefs and values. Even such mundane items like a chair or a pair of scissors became object lessons and served ideological purposes. As students gained increased facility with English, Carlisle teachers added advanced topics such as geography, history and civics. On a daily basis, teachers created lesson plans to inform Native students of America’s growing influence in the world and the scope of its technological progress. Each day teachers reminded students of the superiority of republicanism, representative democracy and the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship. The narrative of Manifest Destiny permeated these academic lessons. Teachers lectured Native students that their cultures were inferior and primitive and erosion of their land base was inevitable. They argued that America and its people were exceptional, that they were endowed with special virtues, had a mission to spread
American institutions wherever possible, and were destined by God to lay claim to Indian land and, in the late nineteenth century, other territories such as Hawaii, and the Philippines.

In their civilization and citizenship instruction, Carlisle teachers also taught the proper vocational roles for women and men. Despite defying contemporary gender roles for white women, Carlisle teachers lectured Native girls on the virtues of marriage and taught them to contribute their domestic skills in unpaid labor either to their own households or the houses of others. Boys were taught trades or farming. Neither Native American boys nor girls were trained to become doctors or lawyers. Carlisle’s extracurricular program was also gendered and designed to reinforce Protestant gender roles. In introducing the Indian to America, Carlisle teachers attempted to prepare American Indians to assimilate into American society only at the very lowest of socioeconomic classes and to accept second-class citizenship.
CHAPTER THREE TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 3.1: ADULT PRIMARY CLASS SCHOOL ROOM, 1902

Photo by Frances Benjamin Johnston. Used with permission from CCHS.
Andrew Hornmegravea.  
Age 16 years.  
In school 1 yr.  
First grade.  

This is a desk.  
It is made of light wood.  
The desk has four wheels.  
The wheels are made of iron.  
It is Miss Canfield's.  
Miss Canfield is a sewing teacher.  
She keeps many things on the desk.  
The thimble is in a box.  
The needles are in the cushion.  
Some thread is on the desk.  
The desk has four drawers.  
She keeps many things in the drawers.  
She has dress patterns.

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FIGURE 3.3: STUDENT ASSIGNMENT, 1908

Reproduced with permission from CCHS.
TABLE 3.1:

QUANTITY OF ITEMS MANUFACTURED BY INDIAN GIRLS, 1885

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles Manufactured</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Articles Manufactured</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aprons</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>Sheets</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemises</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>Shirts</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coats</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>Shirts, flannel</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawers</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>Shirts, night</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>Slips, pillow</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses, night</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>Towels</td>
<td>938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skirts</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3.2:

QUANTITY OF ITEMS REPAIRED BY INDIAN GIRLS, 1885

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles Repaired</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Articles Repaired</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aprons</td>
<td>4,436</td>
<td>Pants</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coats</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>4,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses</td>
<td>2,170</td>
<td>Vests</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hose, pairs</td>
<td>41,177</td>
<td>Overcoats</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER FOUR
THE CHARACTERISTICS AND MOTIVATIONS OF TEACHERS
AT THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL

Introduction

Federal Indian boarding school scholarship has derived much of what is known about teachers from narratives written by white and Native teachers. These narratives have different purposes and were aimed at different audiences. Some, written by white women, seemed to be designed to capitalize on prevailing stereotypes in the dominant culture about the plucky young white woman who, throwing caution and familial expectations to the wind, defied gender norms to travel west to teach “savage” Indians. Others written by white women conveyed some of the real difficulties women faced when they traveled west to teach American Indians including confronting rather primitive conditions established for Indian school personnel and some of the ironies and contradictions women faced in trying to get Native people, living on reservations and in very different environments, to desire the material goods and technologies white women enjoyed in the East.

Native teachers’ narratives detail the fact that they were often raised in families where both indigenous and Western educational traditions were valued. While attending a

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distant federal Indian boarding school was difficult because they were apart from their families, communities and cultures, for the most part, they enjoyed school and admired and were influenced by the white and Native teachers who taught them. Later when they became federal Indian school teachers they sought not to destroy Indian children’s cultures and ways of knowing, rather they attempted to teach future generations how to thrive in both worlds, taking the best from both cultural traditions and always being proud of the fact that they were American Indians.

In this chapter, the motivations of Carlisle Indian schoolteachers are explored. The “pioneer teachers,” as Pratt called them, who worked prior to the twentieth century, understood their work as agents of the state in terms of Christian benevolence and as an extension of their missionary work. Teacher’s motivations changed after the turn of the century, however, as professional roles for women expanded and women entered the labor market as educational administrators, doctors and lawyers and increasing numbers of women signed up to be federal Indian schoolteachers. During this time, the federal Indian school system became a feminized work environment where middle-class women saw opportunities to exert their influence, authority and power. At Carlisle, concomitant with a reduction in funding for federal Indian schools, teacher’s rhetoric around Indian education shifted towards blaming Native American families for the lack of progress toward assimilation. In this period, white and Native women teachers found a niche for themselves in the Indian school service, particularly with regard to teaching other Native girls and young women how to work and mother in their homes.
Characteristics of Carlisle’s Pioneer Teachers

In the early days at Carlisle, “finding suitable teachers … was a part of the anxieties” and Pratt said that he found “it no easy matter to find good teachers.”\textsuperscript{115} Eventually Pratt assembled a faculty of women and men, many of whom remained at Carlisle for many years. Pratt was “highly selective about whom he recruited to teach at Carlisle.”\textsuperscript{116} When teachers were needed, he usually chose women, ensuring each teacher had strong Christian principles.\textsuperscript{117} He “screened them carefully by letter and insisted on a face-to-face interview in which personal habits and religious views were given priority.”\textsuperscript{118} Previous normal education was not a requirement for teaching at Carlisle under Pratt and, in fact, many of the earliest teachers were not formally educated in normal schools. Pratt, however, encouraged teachers to take classes for professional development during the summers.\textsuperscript{119}

According to John L. Rury, at the turn of the century, most public school teachers were young and unmarried, however at the Carlisle Indian School, Pratt preferred to hire older single or widowed women, in their thirties and forties.\textsuperscript{120} Given Pratt’s need to maintain military-like discipline at the school, he may have believed younger women to be less capable of reprimanding American Indian boys and young men. Most of the early

\textsuperscript{117} See Table 1 in the appendix.
\textsuperscript{118} Everett Arthur Gilcreast, “Richard Henry Pratt and American Indian Policy, 1877-1906: A Study of the Assimilation Movement,” (PhD diss, Yale University, 1967), 55.
\textsuperscript{119} There are many examples in Carlisle’s student newspapers of teachers attending summer schools for professional development. For example, “Mrs. Canfield brought back from the Chautauqua summer school, which she attended for six weeks, specimens of her handiwork in basketry, which are very artistic in make and design.” \textit{The Carlisle Arrow}, 15 September 1916.
female teachers he hired were from the Northeast.\textsuperscript{121} Perhaps, due to the school’s location, women from the area were drawn to work there. It is also likely that Pratt, who believed strongly that people in the northeast had less race prejudice against Native people, preferentially hired women from this area. While an “unwritten requirement” for male teachers was that they abstain from alcohol and tobacco, female teachers had to be morally upstanding Christians, devoted to the individual uplift of Carlisle’s students, and responsible and punctual in their duties. All female and male teachers were carefully chosen as they were modeling proper behavior for students.

Pratt’s method for selecting teachers was personal and he resisted any attempt by the Indian Office to interfere in staffing issues, including trying to make political appointments at Carlisle. Pratt hired individuals who he believed would care for the individual needs of students but who would, at the same time, best serve his goal of total cultural assimilation of the students. The teachers Pratt hired remained working at Carlisle “considerably longer than elsewhere in the service” and, in their writings and speeches expressed respect and admiration for him throughout their lives.\textsuperscript{122}

Pratt had a domineering personality and evolved a steadfast, uncompromising philosophy of Indian education, which he consistently communicated to his staff, students and to other reformers and policymakers. Pratt was convinced that the outcome of a Carlisle education should enable an Indian student to gain an industrial skill and the rudiments of an education “to compete as citizens in all the opportunities of our American life.”\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{121} See Figure 4.1.
\textsuperscript{122} Bell, “Telling Stories Out of School,” 65.
to learn to read, write and speak English and to learn a useful industry to become self-supporting. Early on he conceived of the “outing system,” a program in which American Indian pupils lived with and worked for white families in exchange for room, board and a small wage. By living and interacting with whites, Pratt hoped that students would soak up white Protestant cultural norms. He believed the best place to do this was at eastern schools located deliberately far from reservations. In fact, he abhorred Indian reservations and constantly referred to them as prisons. He believed in the complete individualization and assimilation of American Indians, including intermarriage between whites and Indians.

In her article comparing the educational philosophies of Pratt and Hampton founder, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Jacqueline Fear-Segal asserts that Pratt’s views derived more from Enlightenment thinkers who believed in universal human capacities while Armstrong held social evolutionary views. Armstrong, for example, expected that African Americans (and all races) would reach parity with whites after a long, slow evolutionary process while Pratt was convinced that after five years spent learning civilization and citizenship at Carlisle, American Indians would be equipped to compete with whites on equal terms. In fact, for students who demonstrated academic promise and a willingness to pursue higher education, Pratt went to great lengths to secure funding (usually through religious organizations) for the continued education of students. Ironically, many of these students became the first generation of American Indian professionals and later formed the nucleus of the Society for American Indians, the first pan-Indian advocacy group.

As Fear-Segal points out in *White Man’s Club*, however, while Pratt and Armstrong operated on two very different sets of assumptions about human capacity, the discourse around Indian reform was neither pure in its formulations nor unanimously agreed upon. Lake Mohonk conferences were the primary forums for “friends of the Indian” – well-educated middle-class Protestants – to meet to discuss and debate Indian affairs. Indian reformers and wealthy philanthropists gathered yearly at Lake Mohonk in New York and the conclusions they drew there were compiled, printed and sent to federal policymakers and government officials. At these conferences, evolutionary discourses ran concurrently with discourses derived from Enlightenment philosophies. “A strong commitment to Christianity,” however, united this very powerful and influential segment of society and allowed those with different views to work together for a common cause. *125* White women teachers, also brought to campus different beliefs about the social evolution of the races and assumptions about American Indian potential, intelligence and motivation and like their Lake Mohonk counterparts were united in their desire to educate the Indian.

The earliest teachers had a variety of different preparations and experiences before coming to Carlisle. Among the “pioneer teachers,” were: Miss Sarah Mather and Miss Rebecca Perit; Miss Carrie M. Semple, the first Carlisle principal and former Superintendent of the St. Augustine schools as well as a former Freedmen’s Teacher; Miss Mary Hyde, the first matron of the school who took care of the girls for the first ten years; Miss Worthington, the daughter of the widow of an army officer Pratt found living in a vacant building on the Carlisle grounds when he arrived; Miss Marianna Burgess,

*125* Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 37.
who taught at the Pawnee agency before coming to Carlisle and whose father was the Pawnee Indian Agent and Miss Annie Ely, the companion of Miss Burgess, whose brother Samuel Ely was a teacher at the Otoe agency and later became Otoe Indian Agent.  

While a few of the earliest teachers had worked only in the public schools, most of the earliest white women teachers who came to Carlisle had previously worked to ‘uplift’ American Indians or African Americans through their teaching for benevolent and religious organizations. Either having been missionary teachers at Indian agencies themselves or having fathers or brothers who did the work, many women brought with them the valuable prior experience of teaching American Indian students. Undoubtedly, Pratt hired these women because he perceived their previous work experiences as valuable and desirable as he set up the nation’s first federal Indian boarding school. 

Jesse Cook is an example of a teacher Pratt desired to include on his faculty. Born in Connecticut, Cook entered the Indian School Service in her late thirties. She graduated from Cambridge Academy, a high school in New York and became a missionary teacher at the Pine Ridge Indian Agency during the time some of her family members worked among the Sioux. After becoming an Indian School teacher, she attended summer schools

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126 The term “pioneer teachers” was used in The Carlisle Arrow, 25 February 1910; Burgess and Ely quickly became important cultural figures at Carlisle with Burgess editing the school newspapers and Ely acting as the outing agent. They each worked at Carlisle for more than twenty years and their importance to him is evident in their salaries, which equaled his own in a few short years. For more on Marianna Burgess and Annie Ely see Jacqueline Fear-Segal, “Eyes in the Text: Marianna Burgess and The Indian Helper” in Blue Pencils & Hidden Hands: Women Editing Periodicals, 1830-1910, ed. Sharon M. Harris (Lebanon, New Hampshire: Northeastern University Press, 2004). 
127 Teachers who taught on Indian agencies before the formation of federal Indian schools, did so as a result of Grant’s peace policy, which President Ulysses S Grant created to transform federal Indian policy. Part of the policy established the Board of Indian Commissioners, expanded funding for American Indian education and directed missionary organizations to take responsibility for administering particular American Indian tribes. However, by the late 1870s, reformers, philanthropists and American Indians became disillusioned with these policies as a result of corrupt Indian agents and the deplorable conditions on reservations.
in Martha’s Vineyard, Ypsilanti, Michigan, Leviston, Maine, New Haven, Connecticut and in New York City. It is likely that Cook entered the Indian Service after her husband died as she had a son to support. She taught in Indian Schools throughout her adulthood, arriving at Carlisle in 1898 and remaining until 1902. Because Pratt ignored most of the efforts by the federal Indian Office to document the performance of his employees, there is no record of employee evaluations during Pratt’s tenure. At the end of her career however, Cook was rated, “excellent” as a teacher. She was described as “one of the most admirable employees in the Indian Service.” A supervisor of hers at Chilocco wrote that “she combines with ability as a teacher of high order a womanhood that is intended to bring out the best in every child that comes within her influence.” Undoubtedly, Cook’s womanhood and her use of it to influence children were also attractive to Pratt, which is why she was included on his staff.

Motivations for and Benefits Derived from Teaching

Little is known about any aspect of Indian schoolteachers’ lives. What is known is found in the comprehensive works on federal Indian schools and in a small number of articles and narratives written by a handful of women. In Education for Extinction, David Wallace Adams describes the primary motivations of white women Indian schoolteachers as economic considerations, independence and a sense of autonomy as well as a desire for adventure. Indeed, many women taught at Carlisle for economic considerations. The Carlisle Indian School may have paid better than many public schools at the time. For

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128 Jesse Cook, Record Card. Personnel Folder, National Personnel Records Center, National Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.
129 Jesse Cook, “Efficiency Report,” 1 November 1916, Personnel Folder, National Personnel Records Center, National Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.
example, M. E. B. Phillips was a local resident and a public school teacher in Carlisle and
took a job at the Indian school because Carlisle’s salary was higher. Perhaps high wages
at Carlisle drew public school teachers from other parts of the state as well.

As most early Carlisle teachers were older on average than new public school
teachers, many Carlisle teachers had dependents and occasionally took responsibility for
the support of extended family members. Allah Saxon, who taught in the 1900s, was a
widow and the mother of sons. She transferred to Carlisle because her new position
meant a higher salary. The Carlisle Indian School offered another benefit to Saxon,
however. In her transfer request she specifically mentioned her desire to enroll her sons
in the highly regarded public schools of Carlisle.130 Kate Bowersox taught at Carlisle in
the 1890s and 1900s, at least in part, because she was the breadwinner in her family and
provided support to her mother and semi-invalid brother.131

In the late nineteenth century, teaching allowed a woman to achieve a measure of
independence from her family and provided a socially acceptable alternative to marriage.
The Carlisle Indian School might have been even more attractive in this regard as the
school provided room and board for teachers and allowed a woman to escape from their
hometowns and the watchful eyes of family and friends. Carlisle teacher, Estelle Aubrey
Brown wrote that she resented the expectations of people in her upstate New York
hometown who believed a woman’s only role was as “an appendage ... to be wagged by

130 Allah Saxon, Letter to The Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 4 May 1908, Personnel
Folder, National Personnel Records Center, National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, MO.
Hereafter NPRC and NARA.
131 Carolyn Terry Bashaw, “Stalwart Women”: A Historical Analysis of Deans of Women in the
South (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999).
men.” She entered the Indian School Service because she wrote, “I wanted a purse of my own.”

Adams also cites a sense of adventure among the motivations drawing women to the Indian Service. While Carlisle, Pennsylvania was probably not a location that inspired adventurous souls, it drew women who were attracted to the adventure of teaching American Indians and to the thrill of interacting with Indians from different cultural groups. Early in the twentieth century, after the creation of a number of federal Indian schools in such desirable locations as California and Arizona, Carlisle teachers used their ability to transfer from school to school as means for travel and adventure. For example, Miss Curtis requested a transfer “further South – Arizona preferred.” Lucy Case had an almost anthropological interest in American Indians and requested several transfers to work with different Indian “types.” In one of her requests for transfer she indicated a desire to teach at a different school to “study yet another tribe and locality.”

Many women were motivated to teach at Carlisle by a unique constellation of factors, and these varied according to personality, personal situation and time period. A unifying motivation for women teachers at Carlisle, especially in the late nineteenth century, was the ideology of evangelical Christian benevolence that informed, to differing degrees, their work as teachers in Indian schools. Other prominent motivations that inspired women to teach at the Carlisle Indian School included a sense of national

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134 Mabel Curtis, Letter to the Hon. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 14 July 1909, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
135 Lucy Case, “Request for Transfer,” 5 May 1912, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
duty or citizenship, to broaden their professional opportunities and to use the notoriety that Carlisle offered to advance their careers both in and outside of the Indian Service.

Ideologies of evangelical Christian benevolence permeated almost every role and responsibility of women in the nineteenth century, eventually outlining a “cult of true womanhood” which shaped women’s behavior through their enactment of the virtues of piety, purity, domesticity and submissiveness.\(^{136}\) Teaching became women’s work during this time because advocates like Catherine Beecher were effective in their arguments to frame teaching as an extension of domesticity and Christian benevolence.\(^{137}\) One of the most prominent voices for the feminization of teaching during this time, Catherine Beecher argued that women’s moral virtues qualified them to teach in the nation’s common schools. In *The Duty of American Women to Their Country*, she further argued that teaching in the common schools was a woman’s duty, in order to protect America’s fledgling democracy. Calling for ‘an army of teachers,’ Beecher wrote that it was the American woman’s moral duty to educate the nation’s children intellectually, morally and religiously, including in western frontier towns in need of the taming influence of civilized women.\(^{138}\)

Almost as soon as common schools expanded throughout the nation, there were individuals and organizations that rose to effect barriers to exclude the children of American Indians, African Americans and some immigrant groups in tax supported schools. White women were also called on to teach these “others” through home


missionary societies. Women’s teaching in home missionary societies was called “uplift,” instructing American Indian and African American children in white Christian middle-class morals, attitudes, beliefs, values and habits in order to elevate their social status. Cultural and racial uplift not only was the Lord’s work, however, it was also America’s work. The various problems that were believed to beset the nation in the late nineteenth century, including “the Negro problem” and “the Indian problem,” were being addressed directly by benevolent women teachers. According to Peggy Pascoe, in post-bellum America, “a new burst of Protestant evangelicalism, this one strongly flavored by American nationalism, rejuvenated charitable organizations.”

Although the white women that worked in them had no religious or political authority, “by virtue of their identification with piety and purity, they enjoyed unprecedented influence.”

Carlisle’s “pioneer teachers” then wrote and spoke of their work mostly in terms of evangelical Christian benevolence, because of nineteenth century gender roles, their prior work experiences, and because they knew Richard Henry Pratt expected them to. For example, asked to speak at a summer teacher’s institute in Santa Fe in 1894, Carlisle teacher, E. L. Fisher who taught from 1884 – 1890 read a paper on, “The Results of Indian Education.” Taking up the topic of Christianity in the Indian schools, she said, “Much has been said with reference to Christian work. We (Carlisle teachers) feel very strongly the need of Christian work. We need the spirit of Christ in the heart.” In the same speech Fisher also spoke about the need for higher educational opportunities for American Indian students and talked at great length about a young female student of hers.

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140 Ibid., 4.
who excelled at her studies and who was a gifted pianist. Fisher’s speech reveals that her philosophy about American Indian capacity for equality with whites derived more from Enlightenment thinkers than emerging evolutionary science.

Anna Hamilton who taught at Carlisle from 1889 - 1894 also used evangelical Christian benevolent rhetoric when she was asked to speak about her experiences at a Lake Mohonk conference in 1893.

“There is a better day dawning for the Indian race. There are many things to cheer us . . . The environment which has surrounded the Indian in the past is changing. The missionary has done grand work. The banner of the cross has been set up among this people east and west, north and south. The young are being elevated; there is hope for their future. I am thankful the Lord has called me to be one of his servants in this work.”

In the same speech, however, Hamilton hinted at another motivation that she and other white women had for teaching in the Indian School Service: to fulfill their duty as American citizens. Working for the federal government and missionary work were often blended together for Indian schoolteachers. She told the assembly before she became an Indian school teacher she was “resting among the Green Mountains” of Connecticut when she received a letter from John D. Miles, Indian Agent for the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency, asking her to teach at the agency. She said “it did not take long to decide” and she was in route the next day. Teaching Indian youth in order to elevate them was a duty she was called to do on behalf of her nation. She said, “the American people are becoming awakened to the responsibility that rests upon them.” Hamilton, at least in part, chose to leave her restful situation in Connecticut to fulfill her responsibilities as

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143 Ibid.
a female American citizen: to teach Indians civilization and citizenship in service to God and her nation.

Given the fact that in the late nineteenth century, while women had moral authority and exercised their influence primarily through benevolence organizations, without the right to vote or serve in the military, they had few opportunities to either exercise political authority or demonstrate their loyalty to their nation. At Carlisle, white women teachers had an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill their duties as benevolent women and American citizens in service to both God and their country.

Estelle M. Aubrey Brown, a teacher at Carlisle in the early twentieth century, illustrates the way some women felt upon entering government service to teach Indian children. Prior to arriving at the Crow Creek agency to teach for the first time, future Carlisle teacher, Brown recalled the limitations her sex placed upon her in her hometown. She wrote, “I early came to resent the hamlet’s smug assumption that women were not really members of the human race.” While initially Brown entered the Indian Service to earn her own living apart from a man, she soon discovered how exciting it was to be acknowledged as a federal employee working on behalf of her nation.

Upon raising her right hand and taking the oath of office for the first time at the Crow Creek agency in 1903, she wrote, “When I lowered it I had sworn to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, so help me God.” Later in her life as a notary public she, herself, administered the oath of office to other young women entering the Indian service. Brown wrote that she never administered the oath “without remembering my secret elation in that Crow Creek office. There I came of

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age in awareness, in the realization that I was an entity in my own right, no longer merely an appendage to someone else’s life.”¹⁴⁵ According to Cathleen D. Cahill, “such an oath was rather an astounding act for a woman in 1900; it endowed her with qualities that Americans thought of as male attributes: authority, power, and an implied identity as a citizen-soldier.”¹⁴⁶

In the second decade of the Carlisle school, others began to articulate an additional, distinctively more professional, aspect of their identities. Kate Bowersox was born in 1869 in rural central Pennsylvania. In 1870 her father, Reuben was a farmer in the census but by the 1880 census was listed as an Episcopal minister. Heart disease claimed Kate’s father’s life early: he died at the age of 36. Bowersox took responsibility for her mother and her two brothers, one of whom was disabled. She enrolled in the nearby Bloomsburg Literary Institute and State Normal School and attended summer school at various institutions but never earned a degree. Later she explained, “I went to school during the summer and worked the rest of the year to support my mother and semi-invalid brother.”¹⁴⁷

Although she was a religious person, unlike most of the earliest teachers at Carlisle, Bowersox saw herself first and foremost as a professional woman with a career. Never having worked as a missionary or at an Indian agency, Bowersox taught exclusively in the Pennsylvania public schools before taking the position at Carlisle. After arriving as a teacher in 1893, Bowersox quickly rose to head of the normal department and served in that capacity for eight years. In 1902, she became an

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 28.
¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Bashaw, Stalwart Women, 22.
administrator, taking the job of principal.\textsuperscript{148} In a letter to Pratt responding to his request that she consider the position of principal, she wrote,

“my reputation and success as a teacher are of first importance to me. It is my life work. I recognize the opportunity for growth which the work would give to me but I know full well also the needs are great and must be met.”\textsuperscript{149}

Just before taking up the topic of her salary, she wrote about her commitment to the work at Carlisle, “…I shall throw into the work all the powers of mind and body which I can command. Time will make no difference.” Asking for an increase in salary to “make it worth while for me to assume the extra responsibility and work,” she also indicated that she had offers elsewhere but decided to stay at Carlisle. Recognizing the importance of loyalty to Pratt, Bowersox wrote that it was because of the “opportunity of growth” and the “many broadening influences at Carlisle” that led her to stay.\textsuperscript{150}

Interestingly, Bowersox’s correspondence contains little benevolence rhetoric, no mention, for example, that the Lord had called upon her to serve Him through her work. Instead, Bowersox’s motivations are oriented more toward herself and her own professional development. While she mentions the opportunity to continue her work with American Indian children, she seems primarily motivated by a desire to grow and to challenge herself professionally. Bowersox, seeking more opportunities for growth, left Carlisle in 1907 to assume the position of one of the nation’s first Deans of Women at Berea College. Carolyn Terry Bashaw, who wrote about the first Deans of Women, in \textit{Stalwart Women} said that Bowersox’s choice of Berea is not surprising given the

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Katherine Bowersox, Letter to Richard Henry Pratt, dated 20 August 1902, Box 1, Folder 36, Pratt Papers.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
similarities between the two institutions. In the early twentieth century, Berea’s mission was the education and uplift of African Americans and Appalachian youth.  

Similarly, other Carlisle teachers used their work as a springboard to pursue more advanced professional opportunities both outside and inside the Indian Service. For example, Alice Seabrook taught at Carlisle from 1884-1893 and “did much in the way of nursing which was noticed by Capt. Pratt.” In her early thirties when she taught at Carlisle, Pratt encouraged her to become a medical doctor. After graduating from the Women’s Medical College in 1895, she worked as superintendent of the Methodist Hospital for five years and then as medical supervisor of the Women’s Hospital in Philadelphia. Dr. Seabrook eventually became the first woman physician on the Pennsylvania State Medical board.

Pratt also urged Fannie I. Peter to become a lawyer. Peter who is discussed at greater length in a subsequent chapter taught at Carlisle from 1896-1904. She earned her Bachelor of Laws degree from Washington College of Law at American University in Washington D.C. in 1907. Later, she became a clerk in the office of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C. and used the knowledge she gained at Carlisle, particularly about Omaha kinship systems and indigenous inheritance lines, to aid the federal government in their legal battles over land rights with American Indian tribes.

The careers of Carlisle’s women teachers suggest that most of the teachers felt supported by Pratt. As the cases of Seabrook and Peter demonstrate, Pratt encouraged the

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151 Bashaw, *Stalwart Women*. 
152 Margaret (Seabrook) Kepner, Letter dated 2 December 1974, Cumberland County Historical Society. The letter was accompanied by “gifts” given to Dr. Seabrook from Carlisle students. Included were the following items: beaded neckwear, beaded medicine bag, child’s beaded moccasin and four pair of beaded moccasins.
153 Fannie I. Peter, Service Record Card, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
advancement of women into the professions. He also supported the educational advancement of Native women at Pennsylvania normal schools, which will be discussed in a later chapter. In the early twenties, he sent a letter to Alice Robertson, a Carlisle teacher from 1880-1882, expressing his support for her Congressional bid, which she won, becoming the second woman to hold a seat in Congress. In the congratulatory letter he wrote to her he said, a “(h)eavy burden is laid upon you because you are to prove the wisdom of this revolution so successfully accomplished for your sex.”\textsuperscript{154} Pratt was likely a supporter of women’s suffrage as his wife, Anna Mason Pratt and some of the teachers, including Jeanette Senseney, Marianna Burgess and Lillie Ruth Shaffner, attended Women’s Suffrage Association meetings off campus.\textsuperscript{155} Anna Mason Pratt and many of the other teachers were involved with numerous national reform organizations including the WCTU, which frequently met on campus. Anna Pratt, Marianna Burgess, Kate Irvine and others were also members of a local women’s organization, the Carlisle Fortnightly Club, which often met at Pratt’s house on campus. After Pratt was dismissed and later replaced with Moses Friedman, Mrs. Friedman attended the Carlisle Fortnightly Club meetings along with a number of Carlisle teachers.\textsuperscript{156}

White women teachers at Carlisle were both motivated by and benefitted from the notoriety that the Carlisle Indian school offered them. Genevieve Bell described Carlisle

\textsuperscript{154} Letter to the Honorable Miss Alice M. Robertson from R. H. Pratt,” dated 9 November 1920. Series II: Correspondence, Alice M. Robertson Collection, McFarlin Library Digital Collections, The University of Tulsa, accessed 18 October 2013, \url{http://www.lib.utulsa.edu/digital/robertson/Series_II/transcriptions/AR2_04_13_682.asp}

\textsuperscript{155} Women’s suffrage was occasionally a topic in the student newspaper, \textit{The Indian Helper} as it was useful to demonstrate to Indian students that they were not the only group without the franchise. For example, in \textit{The Indian Helper}, dated 17 February 1899 it read: “The band went to Harrisburg last evening to blow themselves and help blow the women suffragists into public recognition as beings more important than THINGS. Only women, Indians as Indians, and paupers are deprived of voting.”

\textsuperscript{156} “Minutes of the Carlisle Fortnightly Club, 1893-1894; 1904-1905,” Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle Pennsylvania.
Indian school as having “an unprecedented public profile” throughout its existence, but particularly under the leadership of Richard Henry Pratt. Student representatives, teachers and staff appeared at “the Centennial celebrations in Philadelphia in 1882, the Chicago’s World Fair in 1892 to 1993, the Columbian Parade in New York City in 1892, and the Cotton States Industrial Exposition in Atlanta in 1895.” The Carlisle Indian School band was featured at every presidential inauguration while Pratt was superintendent, as well as other high-profile public events. Pratt also sold images of the Carlisle Indian School “for public consumption – including before/after photographs of students, fictionalized accounts of student lives and slide shows of the school, classrooms and students.” Carlisle’s propagandistic newspapers sent Pratt’s philosophies of Indian education as well as information about students’ and teachers’ lives throughout the nation and abroad. While preventing parents from visiting their children at the school, Pratt also regularly arranged tours of the school for high-ranking federal officials, policymakers and philanthropists, “especially those seated on the Indian Appropriations Committee.” Carlisle was acquiring a “certain kind of cultural capital in Indian country” as well. Parents of Indian students “competed to get students into the school,” viewing a student’s attendance there as a marker of prestige.

As a result, teaching at the Carlisle Indian School offered a higher status than teaching in public schools at the time and women used the school’s renown to further their own career ambitions. Carlisle teachers were sought after to speak at teacher’s institutes, Lake Mohonk conferences and other gatherings of Indian reformers. They also contributed their expertise to scholarly journals, periodicals and newspapers of the period.

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158 Ibid., 67.
159 Ibid.
in order to inform educational experts, peers and the general public about their ground-breaking work. During Pratt’s tenure, Carlisle was regarded as the model federal Indian school and Carlisle teachers were seen as having a degree of expertise that other federal Indian schoolteachers did not have. In this period, they offered their insights into everything from teaching English to the teaching of Sloyd.\(^{160}\)

Riding the coattails of Carlisle’s prominence were a number of teachers who, aspiring to be authors, used their work at the school to try to advance their literary careers.\(^{161}\) One of these teachers was Elaine Goodale who, from the time she was a girl, wanted to be an author and co-wrote a book of poetry with her sister that was eventually published. Reform-minded, Goodale achieved prominence in the 1880s and 90s as an outspoken Indian advocate. She taught Sioux students at Hampton Institute, and after visiting Dakota territory to better understand their home environment, became a teacher at the Indian Day School at White River on the Lower Brule. She sent letters and other reports to Eastern papers about her experiences, later writing that she turned out more propaganda than literature during this time. Goodale eventually became the Supervisor of Indian Education in the two Dakotas for the BIA. In 1890 she was living at the Pine Ridge Agency when she eventually fell in love with Dr. Charles Eastman (Santee Sioux). After only six weeks together, their relationship was tested when the two of them faced the horrific and traumatic aftermath of the Wounded Knee massacre. In the days following, as the two cared for the wounded, counted the hundreds dead and attempted to

\(^{160}\) For example, Anne H. Stewart, “Work in the Carlisle Indian School,” *The Elementary School Teacher* 5, no. 9 (May 1905): 571-573.

\(^{161}\) While the accomplished, American modernist poet Marianne Moore worked at the Carlisle Indian School after Pratt’s tenure and many newspaper articles mention the fact that she taught famed athlete Jim Thorpe, Moore herself did not appear to use her work at Carlisle to advance her literary career. Neither did she use her experiences at Carlisle in any tangible way in her poetry.
offer solace to the community, their relationship deepened. After their marriage, they moved to Carlisle to take up the positions of teacher and physician for a short time. Later, Goodale Eastman returned to her writing, assisting her husband write the stories of his childhood through which he received much recognition and was sought after for lectures, including traveling to London to speak to interested audiences. After they separated she felt that she had devoted too much of her writing effort to either his books or their co-authored works, and eventually produced four books, including *Sister to the Sioux* and *Pratt: Red Man’s Moses*, a biography of Richard Henry Pratt, for which she is best known.

### Shifts in Indian Policy and the Adoption of Racist Rhetoric

In the early twentieth century, as more women were breaking through barriers to become the first doctors and lawyers in the nation, increasing numbers of women were drawn to work in the federal Indian school system. While white women embraced their roles and performed their responsibilities as agents of the state, a number of women rose to positions of prominence in the Indian Service. Estelle Reel, for example, was a schoolteacher before she became the Superintendent of Indian Schools in 1898. Positioning herself as an advocate for teachers, she established teaching institutes and worked to upgrade the quality of teaching and teacher training throughout the Indian Service. She successfully petitioned the National Education Association to have Indian educators included as an official subgroup at their national meetings.

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Reel also accomplished an overhaul of the Indian School curriculum, creating the *Course of Study for Indian Schools*, which emphasized the “dignity of labor” for a more “practical” approach to Indian education. In the wake of diminished optimism and decreased funding for federal off-reservation Indian schools, expectations for Native students were also scaled back. Reel advocated that American Indian children be educated only enough to assume manual labor positions. Her conception of a practical education for white students, however, was different. Reel believed that a practical education for white children should prepare them to enter professional careers such as the law.\(^{164}\)

As Estelle Reel rose to power at the same time she offered a new course of study that lowered expectations for American Indian students, women teachers throughout the Indian Service came to understand that increasingly their authority should be derived, less from their benevolent Christian desire to uplift Indian students to positions of equality with whites but more from their ability to shift blame to Indian communities for their lack of progress.

During Richard Henry Pratt’s tenure, Carlisle teachers like Carrie Semple and E. L. Fisher wrote of their belief that American Indian children were capable of achieving equally to whites. Semple wrote that “the faculties of the child-nature develop in the same order, and without radical differences, whether in the Indian or the white race.”\(^{165}\) Fisher believed in higher education for those Indian students who desired it. Regarding a female student she wrote, “(o)n one is an excellent musician. She has had many lessons on the piano, and we feel that she should still go on. Then we have boys that we should like


\(^{165}\) C. M. Semple, “How It Is Done at Carlisle,” *IAPI OAYE* 11 no. 3 (1882): 23
to help.” She continued, “I would like to make a strong plea for something to be done by which these brighter ones should have a higher education. We feel that white boys and girls need some help to get on their feet, and Indians need it quite as much.”

After Richard Henry Pratt was fired in 1904, some Carlisle teachers capitalized on women’s newfound power in the Indian Service and the concomitant shift in federal Indian education policy, and attempted to advance their own career ambitions by articulating progressively more racist views on Indian education. For example, Jesse Cook wrote a number of articles and theses advancing her views on Indian education that she disseminated throughout the Indian Service and to wider audiences in order to elevate her status in the Indian Service. While at Carlisle and Chilocco, Jesse Cook worked with multiple Indian School publications. She wrote a number of theses, including one she titled, “A Reservation Day School,” which she sent to the Asst. Commissioner of Indian Affairs and who, later in a personal letter, commended her on it. In 1900, Cook had an article published in The Outlook, a New York based magazine. “The Representative Indian,” described a number of American Indian individuals who, in Cook’s opinion, represented the desired outcome of federal Indian education. Included among this group were the following people: Zitkala-sa or Gertrude Simmons Bonin (Yankton Dakota), Francis La Flesche (Omaha), Charles Alexander Eastman (Santee Dakota), Carlos

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167 Richard Henry Pratt was fired from his position as Superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School because of a speech he gave denouncing the Indian Bureau and asserting that the reservation system hindered the educational and social progress of American Indians. In the years prior to the speech, Pratt increasingly came into conflict with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and it became apparent that his philosophy of Indian education and his views on reservation policy were out of step with early twentieth century federal Indian policymakers. His speech, combined with previous conflicts over such issues as civil service reform led to his forced retirement. Moses Friedman, an administrator, who had never been in the military, succeeded Pratt and signaled a new direction for the administration of federal Indian schools. For more on this topic see Genevieve Bell’s dissertation, “Telling Stories Out of School.”
168 Jesse Cook, “Letter from Commissioner of Indian Affairs, F.H. Abbot, dated 6 April 1912, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
Montezuma (Yavapai), and Dennison Wheelock (Oneida). All of these individuals were either educated at or were associated with the Carlisle Indian School, and Cook implied that it was her (and other white women teachers’) influence that was crucial in their elevation to redeeming members of their race. Cook wrote that she believed these individuals should and would help to uplift members of their own race. She wrote, “(t)here is but one hope for Indians as a whole, and that is to live with the people whose ways they must adopt … Indians must by actual contact and actual competition attain to a higher form of civilization.” She continued, “the representative Indians are a proof of this.”

Lillie Ruth Shaffner who was a missionary to China before arriving to Carlisle in the 1890s, worked with Pratt’s wife, Anna on behalf of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, representing China and American Indians at the World’s and National Convention of that organization. Later, she and Anna Pratt traveled to Iceland, among other countries, organizing branches of the WCTU. After marrying, Ruth Shaffner Etnier drew on her prior experiences of working with American Indian children at Carlisle to uplift Puerto Rican children caught up in the United State’s wave of expansionism in the late nineteenth century. An outcome of the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States, along with the Philippines and Guam, under the Treaty of Paris. United States military forces arrived in Puerto Rico in 1898 seeking to ‘civilize’ Puerto Rican savages, imposing American cultural norms, including American educational systems.

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170 Quoted in Katanski, Learning to Write “Indian,” 38.
171 The Indian Helper, 7 April 1899.
172 Ibid.
According to Schaffner Etnier, adult Porto Ricans (sic) and Indians were alike in that “not a great deal can be expected of this generation” but “it is in the large population of children that our hope lies.” Similar to the Native children made orphans as a result of wars with the U.S. government and the substitution of white mother teachers for Native childrens’ families, Schaffner Etnier said, “of these many are orphans, who have no natural protectors.” Citing the need for uplift among Puerto Ricans, she found similarities between them and American Indians in their perceived immoral marriage practices, “the marriage tie is not held sacred among the Indians. Neither is it among the Porto Ricans. Until the American occupation the priests alone were vested with the right to solemnize marriage, and as they charged exorbitantly very few of the poorer people have been legally married.” Calling Puerto Rican schools “wretched” she argued on behalf of the use of American educational models to uplift Puerto Rican children, including the removal of Puerto Rican teachers in favor of American teachers. She said, “the children, however, love their American teachers, and seem anxious to be admitted to the schools taught by them. I refused 375 applications over and above the 350 who were admitted as pupils into the Ponce American school.”

In the early twentieth century, Carlisle teacher Shaffner Etnier turned her benevolent attentions to the education of Indian girls. In her article, “Training Indian Girls,” Shaffner Etnier proposed a shift in focus for the education of Indian girls. She wrote, “the central unit of society is the home. The central unit of the home, the wife and mother.” She continued, “(w)hatever, therefore, pertains to the training and development of the future womanhood of any race touches the national life at its very heart’s core.” In

recognizing that in order to improve society, one must elevate womanhood in its earliest
development, she warned that it is imperative to do so carefully. For “in our feverish
anxiety to graft the newer life” white women teachers could potentially “cut the tender
shoot too recklessly and overdraw the vital sap of natural life.” Comparing an Indian
girl’s traditional family organization and her gender roles and relationships as a “disease”
she advised other white women teachers that while the old “theory was to poison the
germs,” in her experience, it was wiser “to build up wasted tissues.” She continued,
“today … the system is carefully nourished, the appetite for food is stimulated and
natural sleep induced.” Eventually “general health (is) re-established with the result that
the miserable microbes are smothered to death for the lack of feeding.” She advised white
women teachers that when “a Dakota girl of ten or a dozen years is taken from her home
for the first time and placed in school in the East” and she “is appalled by the strange
ways,” and “even the commonest civilities of life are reversed and in bewilderment she
probably sets at naught the most rigid rules of the school,” instead of being harsh, “a
surer road to success is to develop a natural adaptation to the need, and the undesirable
will unconsciously pass away.” Shaffner Etnier continued, “to train our Indian girls for
civilized, economical, industrious and happy homemakers is the most necessary of all
things in our power to do for them.” Illustrating that the focus of training for Indian girls
should not be placed on encouraging and supporting girls to become doctors, lawyers or
politicians, as Shaffner Etnier’s white peers were, she wrote, “(t)he Indian girl as teacher,
seamstress, nurse or what-not in public life, will of herself never be the most important
redeeming element of the Indian race.” Instead, “(t)his high office will be filled by the
dutiful young wives and mothers of the future generations.” In fact, Shaffner Etnier wrote
that too much education is harmful for Indian girls, “(w)here the girl is too educated and trained there can be but little reasonable excuse for failure.”

Shaffner Etnier exalted the Christian nature of the home writing, “the trinity of heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has its counterpart in this material world in the home circle where dwell the father, mother and little child.” Referring to the blind ignorance of the Indian race, she asserted that in Indian homes, “reverence for the marriage relation is one of those lacking elements of proper environment” and that “to know God, to recognize and obey his laws, are basic necessities to the right development of all character.” Ending the article on a complimentary note, Shaffner Etnier asserted that Indian girls are “more readily adapted” to a change in their home environment “than even those of our own race of like social standing.” Concluding her article, she advised white women teachers, “surround Indian girls with conditions requiring the regular performance of a round of duties and they will equal their paler sisters every time.”

Although the word was not in use in the early twentieth century, Shafner Etnier who attended suffrage meetings with Mrs. Pratt, was a feminist. According to historian Margaret Jacobs, “maternalism can be considered a type of feminism, concerned as it was with mobilizing women to address the disadvantages of other women and gain greater political authority.” In White Mother to a Dark Race, Jacobs outlines the four characteristics of maternalism: elevation of the role of motherhood as a woman’s most sacred responsibility, the use of one’s own experiences or socialization as mothers to justify involvement in social reform efforts, maternal behavior towards other women and

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174 Ruth Shafner Etnier, “The Training of Indian Girls,” The Indian’s Friend, a monthly publication of The Women’s National Indian Association 13, no. 7 (March 1901).

175 Margaret Jacobs, White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 89.
children who white women believe are in need of uplift, and espousing the elevation of
the domesticity and motherhood while refusing to participate in these roles themselves.\textsuperscript{176}

According to Cahill, in the federal Indian Service white women employees, who
by virtue of their race, naturally embodied proper gender roles, delivered maternalist
educational programs focused on the role of mothers and children and sought to
transform Indian households into “respectable units modeled on white, middle class
nuclear families.”\textsuperscript{177} Federal Indian school teachers argued that by focusing on
indigenous homes and focusing on the uplifting gender roles and relationships that
structured the home, women Indian school teachers could solve the Indian problem.

Shaffner Etnier’s article is an example of how maternalist policy was enacted by
teachers at Carlisle. Women teachers exalted the white, Christian, middle class home as
the most important social institution in society. They taught that it was there where future
generations learn proper Christian values. Totally dismissing the deep and intimate
connections young Native girls had with their mothers, Shaffner Etnier and others
pathologized the Indian home likening it to disease – something that must be eradicated –
for fear it might spread. In its place she proposed nurturing a healthy, pure and morally
clean family environment with the replacement of the sacred trinity of the Protestant
Christian nuclear family and Protestant gender roles.

At times Native teachers also took up white women’s rhetoric when they exalted
the white, Christian, middle-class home as the cradle of citizenship and civilization and
advocated that Indian girls and young women model their homes after whites. Elizabeth
Bender (Chippewa) who was educated at Hampton Institute and taught at Carlisle in the

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{177} Cahill, \textit{Federal Fathers and Mothers}, 262.
early twentieth century wrote an article titled, “Training Indian Girls for Efficient Homemakers,” which appeared in Carlisle’s newspaper, The Red Man. In this article, Bender, who later would become the wife of Henry Roe Cloud, wrote that the answer to the Indian problem was not “lamenting over past abuses” or “demanding certain rights.” Like Shaffner Etnier, Bender asserted that girls could solve the Indian problem through their leadership as homemakers and homekeepers. She railed against “unkempt homes which are places for filth and disease” existing on the “thousands and thousands of acres of Indian lands, rich in undeveloped resources . . . lying idle.” Referencing uneducated mothers she wrote “as no people advance any faster than their women and the home is conceded to be the core of the Indian problem, my plea is that these Indian girls … receive a fair chance.”

Unlike many white women teachers who delivered similar maternalist rhetoric however, Bender also used the article to critique federal Indian education for both boys and girls. She argued, “it lacks in the fact that it does not teach our girls and boys the real value of labor” nor do schools teach Indian children “how much it means to make a living for themselves.” She continued, specifically addressing vocational training for girls and boys. She wrote that nearly all of the large Indian schools had trade schools where boys were taught a variety of trades but it was Indian girls who did the “menial drudgery of the school” day after day. Bender asserted, in addition to other trades, that girls be educated in Home Economics and Domestic Science. She praised the installation at Carlisle of a model home cottage where girls learned how to cook over a common stove and to take care of kerosene lamps as well as canning and pickling among other domestic skills.

Bender’s article is an example of the way Native teachers negotiated two (and sometime more) different cultural traditions while they were employed at federal Indian schools. Bender embraced maternalist rhetoric and the religious ideologies that underlay it, but only to a point. She did not denigrate American Indian women. She neither associated them with sin nor their cultural traditions with disease or pathology. Rather, Bender placed blame on the federal Indian schools and their failure to adequately prepare Indian girls for self-sufficient jobs or for spiritual service to others.

At Carlisle, Indian girls spent a month in home cottages and because Bender was a teacher at Carlisle at the time that she wrote the article, she may have instructed girls there. She asserted that girls must be good homemakers as well as soul savers. Writing that she believed Christians and Indians sought the same God, she said, “then teach my people more about the Great Spirit, so that they too shall be morally strong.” Bender concluded by advocating that in her view the education of both boys and girls should not only develop the capacities of the individual but should “fit one for social service. It should create the good citizen.”

Frances Campbell Sparhawk was also particularly focused on the assimilation of American Indian girls. Sparhawk, however, was not a teacher at Carlisle. She was employed there in 1885 as a substitute editor for Marianna Burgess for a short time and then became a clerk in 1888. She is included in this analysis because it seems that while she was employed as a clerk, she studied Carlisle’s teachers for a book of fiction she intended to write. A Chronicle of Conquest was published in 1890. At the turn of the century Sparhawk had established herself as a writer and was a “well-known writer of

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179 Ibid.
180 ARCIA, 1889. Sparhawk earned $600 per annum while she was clerk.
romances, children’s literature, and rhetorical works about Native Americans;” her work was reviewed in the *New York Times*, *The Dial* and *The Atlantic Monthly*.\(^{182}\) Though she also engaged in Indian reform work later, “her drive to be known as a writer was, in the end, stronger than any other motivation in her life.”\(^{183}\)

In *A Chronicle of Conquest*, Sparhawk’s experiences at Carlisle are channeled through the protagonist of her book, eighteen-year old Polly Blatchley.\(^{184}\) The book opens as Polly returns home from three grueling years at Vassar in need of a rest. Though her father and family’s doctor (Sparhawk’s actual father was a family doctor) advocate rest for the young woman, Polly announces that she would like to rest by spending the winter with a female friend, Lance, a teacher at the Carlisle Indian School. For Sparhawk, apparently reform work is restorative, not depleting. One of the recurring themes in the book is Polly’s increasing independence from men and her quest to forge an independent identity for herself and this initial scene in which she stands firm against both her father’s and her family doctor’s wishes is the first expression of Polly’s burgeoning feminism and self actualization. *A Chronicle of Conquest* was written to awaken young middle-class white women to the cause of Indian education and to encourage them to become Indian schoolteachers themselves.\(^{185}\)

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\(^{182}\) Jessica Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race: Writing and Resisting the Discourse of the Carlisle Indian School” (PhD diss., George Washington University, 2005), 110-111. According to Matthews, Sparhawk wrote in the following genres: melodramatic novels, gothic fiction, historical romances, childrens’ books and textbooks. She was most successful with her series for young girls.

\(^{183}\) Ibid., 189.

\(^{184}\) Sparhawk wrote an earlier book with a younger Polly Blatchley as the main character. This next installment was part of a series that followed Polly’s maturation.

\(^{185}\) Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race.”
Before Polly departs for Carlisle, she encounters acquaintances who express skepticism and concern about her desire to visit Carlisle. At one point, a man who is a potential suitor of hers questions her choice. She responds, “we meet and talk and give money, and we work to get measures through Congress, and work for the home-building on the reservations; and yet, sometimes, it doesn’t seem as if we made enough out of it.” She explains her rationale, “(i)t seems to me we could do better if we understood what kind of creatures we were working for.” Leaving him behind, she boards the train to Carlisle and unable to quell her own doubts about the choice she has made wonders, “what would be the difference which must exist between (Indians) and the Anglo-Saxons whom by courtesy we call Americans?” Polly’s doubts reveal the other recurring theme of the book, her attempt to understand American Indians. Through her observations of the white women teachers at Carlisle, Polly seeks to discover what characteristics set Indians apart from her and other whites, what their status should be in American society and what role white women should play in their status elevation.

Jessica Ruggieri Matthews analyzed Sparhawk’s novels in her dissertation on the ways Carlisle staff wrote and American Indian students resisted the discourses of the Carlisle Indian School. In her analysis, Matthews describes *A Chronicle of Conquest* as part utopian novel and part Christian social novel. She describes Polly as “the visitor figure of classic literary utopia.” Throughout the time she is at Carlisle, Polly tours the school guided by the other white women teachers and discovers an environment where all

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186 Like Polly Blatchley, in nearly all of the books written by former Indian schoolteachers, there is a scene in which well-meaning whites (usually men) warn the young female teacher about interacting with Indians.
188 Ibid.,16.
189 Ibid.,133.
the teachers love their work because all the students are eager to assimilate and are compliant and passive. Likewise, the American Indian childrens’ experiences are utopian: the boys learn trades that they are excited about and find enriching, the girls learn how to cook good food and embrace domesticity; they play games and have fun, attend parties and dances, eat well, and are so very grateful for all the opportunities that are given to them at Carlisle.

Matthews also characterizes *Chronicle* as a Christian social novel in that the book “imagine(s) how perfect the real world would be if everyone embraced the ethics of the author.”\(^{190}\) The values Polly communicates to the reader are a belief in the malleability of Indians, that the character and lifestyles of Indian boys and girls could be perfected through interaction with whites and “in the transformative power of exceptional women, an idea that was the hallmark of the reform organizations to which Sparhawk belonged.”\(^{191}\)

From the time of her arrival to her departure (she arrives the same month as Sparhawk did and stayed the same amount of time), Polly’s activities and observations form the structure of the book. She participates in some aspects of the school, interacting and living with the teachers on campus, hosting a reception for students, and supervising a student debate. She participates in the social activities of the teachers and discovers a closeness and camaraderie among the white women teachers. She also observes other aspects of the school, including watching Pratt interact with students, however, no mention is made of Polly entering a classroom or shop room to observe any kind of academic or vocational instruction. Instead, Polly is chiefly concerned with American

\(^{190}\) Ibid., 131.

\(^{191}\) Ibid.
Indian students’ social development. For example, Polly expresses excitement to observe the annual Christmas party because “it was here that she would see what progress the children had made in social life, which she knew was the test of civilization.”

Of interest during her stay at Carlisle is whether or not Indians were capable of acquiring the social skills of whites. For example, at the Christmas party while Polly is observing an interaction between a boy and a girl, she witnesses an orange drop off the girl’s plate. Polly decides to make the boy’s response to the fallen orange a test of civilization and watches in anticipation to see how the boy will react. “There was not a generation between (this boy) and the men who made women the toilers and burden-bearers of their tribes,” she thought. She knew that among Indian men, even “the least civility toward (women) would be not only unthought of, but derogatory.” She wondered, “What would this young man do?”

At various times, Sparhawk changes the narrative point of view from first person to third person in *A Chronicle of Conquest*. For example, after Polly witnesses the young boy pick up the orange and return it to the girl, the narrative point of view is changed and instead of narrating herself, Polly is being observed by a Carlisle white woman teacher, Clio. “Clio looked at the glowing face, at the moist, shining eyes” and Polly’s sensitive trembling lips and, somewhat taken aback by Polly’s emotional reaction to the Indian boy displaying proper social etiquette, says to Polly, “you take it as if it were a part of your own life.” Clio then explains to Polly, “it means that we are never to despair of human nature.” At the comment, Polly is then described as having “her eyes opened wide.”

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193 Ibid., 20.
194 Ibid., 21.
By shifting the narrative point of view, Sparhawk attempts to convey to the reader the extent to which Polly is moved by the Indian boy’s behavior and her growing understanding (taught to her by a seasoned white woman Carlisle teacher) that American Indians indeed are malleable and can be made to behave in accordance to white social norms. This device allows Sparhawk to chart Polly’s development as both an independent woman and as an Indian reformer. Throughout the book, Sparhawk positions the other characters including Pratt, Carlisle’s white women teachers, Polly’s potential suitor, and her father as witnesses to Polly’s growing understanding about the capabilities of and roles for American Indians in American society as well as of her own identity development as she observes how Carlisle functions and what her eventual role should be in Indian reform.

While for Polly an important test of Carlisle Indian students’ progress in social life was boys’ treatment of girls, in *A Chronicle of Conquest*, Polly also carefully observes the way Indian students treat Pratt, white women teachers and Polly herself. Polly is especially attentive to the ways in which Carlisle Indian students are deferential to whites. For example, in a letter to her mother describing some of her first impressions on her arrival to the school she wrote, “it’s so pleasant …to have the Indian boys lift their caps to you. …it’s like being in a world where everybody belongs to good society.” She continued, “many of them and of the girls have a pleasant smile and word of greeting…they call me by name, and I am always so sorry not to be able to call them back again; but, you see, there are so many of them.”

She tells her mother, “settling the Indian question might help to settle the servant-girl question.” When she sees Indian girls, who she knows read and recite essays, waiting on tables and when they do so “are

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195 Ibid., 19-20.
so quiet, so dignified, and some of them so deft,” it makes her feel as if she were back in
the mountains “waited upon by teachers and college students, as we were one summer.”
She continues, “I think it’s nice; it makes me feel quite a big bug.”

Throughout *A Chronicle of Conquest*, American Indian girls and the ways in
which they can be made to serve white women’s desires hold a singular and peculiar
fascination for Polly. Sparhawk devotes an entire chapter to “how the girls came to
Carlisle” and the role of a white women teacher, Miss Sarah Mather, in their “capture.” In
this chapter, Polly recounts that “the girls were dear bought; it was hard work to get hold
of them” and “it took a great deal of financiering to bring it about.”

According to Polly, Pratt believed there would be “no civilization without the girls.” In explaining Pratt’s
view, Polly pointed to the degraded state of American Indian women, arguing that if only
boys were educated, girls “would mock at the innovations of civilization, and demand the
gaudy decorations, the insolence and bravado, of the old.” Indeed, in another part of
the book, Polly’s characterization of an American Indian girl is telling. As the white
women teachers discuss a particular female student, Polly regarded her and remarked,
“there stood the sinner, presumably the worst of all – an Indian girl.”

Polly describes Sarah Mather’s trip to the Sioux reservation to secure girls for the
Carlisle school, characterizing Mather as selfless and determined. In Sparhawk’s version,
Mather told a young Sioux girl, “I’m going to take you back with me” and then “seizing
upon the daughter of [the] chief [and] putting an arm about her,” Mather drew the girl
towards her despite “all the filth of her savagery.” However, Mather “was so filled with

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196 Ibid., 17.
197 Ibid., 66.
198 Ibid., 67.
199 Ibid., 65.
the thought of the child’s future that all the possibilities of cleanliness and goodness
rushed upon her as if they were reality, and sacrifice lost itself in love.” Throughout A
Chronicle of Conquest, Sparhawk created white heroines who managed to shift
benevolent evangelical Christian ideals of sacrificial love away from husbands and
children to American Indian mothers and children, thereby justifying their not marrying
and devoting themselves completely to reform work.

Mather’s self-sacrificing love also allowed her to share the pipe of peace with
“foul” and “squalid men.” Despite being “disgusted” by the men, “she looked at the girls,
the little ones and the half-grown women, who stood huddled together watching for their
fate to be decided,” and smoked the pipe to ensure the girls’ inclusion on the trip to
Carlisle.

In Sparhawk’s telling, Miss Mather was singularly responsible for convincing the
Sioux chiefs to allow Pratt and Mather to take the girls for Carlisle. She wrote that while
the chiefs were slowly deliberating, Mather went into a teepee and made lemonade. The
Indians were “delighted with their treat” and “after they drank, they talked faster and
more to the purpose” and that very afternoon “they came to a decision, under the
influence of the most innocent fire-water that the white man – or woman – had ever
offered to the red.”

Polly is impressed that at Carlisle the Indian girls “are taught everything.” While
Polly never mentions their academic training, she says, “(t)he girls do the work in the
pupil’s dining-room and kitchen, in the laundry, in the girls’ quarters; and different sets
are detailed to new work every month, so that they may learn everything.” Referring to

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200 Ibid., 68.
201 Ibid., 69.
the white women teachers, Polly also mentions that the girls “take care of the ladies’ rooms” as well. Polly’s good friend, Lance, even has “some of them (who) take care of her, too.” Apparently, Polly’s friend “has a way of measuring them, and if they fit she doesn’t bother either herself or them. She says that if they know you don’t have to teach them, all that is necessary is to let them practice.”

If Sparhawk’s observations are accurate (and in her introduction of the book, she wrote, “(t)he work, and the Indians whose stories are given, are as real as the Carlisle School itself”) then the fact that, as part of their Carlisle education, American Indian girls were regularly detailed to clean the rooms of their white women teachers and served as personal assistants for them is remarkable. While research on the vocational education of American Indian students in federal boarding schools has demonstrated that American Indian girls sewing, cleaning, and cooking functioned merely to maintain the school and not to develop their skills in these areas, there is no mention in the literature of American Indian girls’ labor serving the personal needs of individual staff or faculty members. Polly is clearly impressed at what her friend, Lance, has accomplished with her personal American Indian girl assistant. Under the guise of education, Lance chose students based upon their ability to learn how to best serve her own personal needs; when Lance decided that a student “fit” her, the student’s vocational work was subsequently characterized as “practice.” Sparhawk also mentions that Captain Pratt had an “orderly” who was the son

\[\text{Ibid., 18.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., 9.}\]
of a chief, although no mention is made of his cleaning Pratt’s house or attending to his person, though it is probable that Carlisle students did perform these duties.\textsuperscript{205}

Not surprisingly, in Polly’s estimation the outing system is an important facet of a Carlisle education. The outing system was devised by Pratt and involved placing Carlisle students in the homes of white families where students worked for the host family in exchange for room and board (and sometimes a small wage), attended public school and participated in community life. Carlisle students were often placed with Quaker farmers (Pratt’s teacher, Annie Ely had strong ties to the Quaker community in Bucks County, PA) where boys would learn agricultural skills and girls would learn domestic chores in the household.

In her introduction, Sparhawk comments on it: “the system … of putting young Indians for a shorter or longer time into the households of white people is a happy one.” She writes that she hopes her book will provide “true pictures … of this pleasant relationship” and will prepare Americans (whites) to “extend to Indians …all American opportunities, and so, a real citizenship.\textsuperscript{206} The outing experience Sparhawk chooses for Polly to convey to the reader is that of a young American Indian girl, Nettie Atsye.

Sparhawk devotes a chapter to “Nettie’s experience” and it opens as Mrs. Brimmer, the mistress of the house and Hannah, a woman who works for Brimmer, are complimenting Nettie on her capacity to follow their directions. Sparhawk tells us that although she doesn’t always understand every word that the women say, Nettie smiles because she knows when she is being praised. After being in the house for three weeks, Nettie is happy. Hannah cooks well “and never forgot that girls liked nice things.”

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid., 9.
Hannah, however, has one criticism of “the little handmaiden.” When she is waiting on a table, “a little more English wouldn’t be bad for her.” Indeed, Mrs. Brimmer was told that the two things she needed “in case she took an Indian girl” were English and patience.\footnote{Ibid., 80.}

Sparhawk tells the reader that during Nettie’s first week in the home she did not understand a direction Hannah had given her and embarrassed, she “made up her mind that she was required to do something too hard” and decided that she wouldn’t do it and “disappeared.” Later after they searched the entire farm, they found her in her room, where she had been crying. While Hannah suggested she be made to go without dinner to punish “them Indian ways,” Mrs. Brimmer explained, “she is in my charge, to teach in every way.” Mrs. Brimmer guessed that Nettie did not understand Hannah’s English and approached Nettie and asked her, if I had behaved like you and let my temper get the best of me, “would it make it nice and pleasant in the house?” Nettie agreed it would not. In Sparhawk’s telling, the conversation between the two changed Nettie’s expression and Mrs. Brimmer felt she had won the battle between the two. Although Nettie “never said that she was sorry for her willfulness,” because she tended the poultry well that night and afterwards became kinder in her treatment of her granddaughter, Mrs. Brimmer knew that Nettie “remembered her lesson” in obedience. A month after living with the Brimmers, Nettie wrote a letter to Pratt. In the letter she tells Pratt that she is having fun and likes to work on the farm. In fact, she says, “I like white people. When I go home, I come back, when I grow up I don’t stay Indian.”\footnote{Ibid., 81-86.}

A few chapters later, Sparhawk returns to Nettie. Nettie is once again on an outing, this time in the home of a different patron, Mr. and Mrs. Linley. Nettie is
preparing to leave the Linley’s home to return to Carlisle. She reflects on all the experiences Carlisle has afforded her: the five years spent in “congenial companionship in her school life” and “pleasant friends in the homes to which she had gone” (though no mention is made of her academic education). Nettie has recently fallen in love, however, and she is conflicted: the boy she loves is at Carlisle but she is “sorry to leave these people (the Linleys) who had been so kind to her, and this place that she loved.”

Mrs. Linley, however, will not part with Nettie easily. She tells her husband, “I “can’t let Nettie go, she suits me so well. We understand each other perfectly; I am used to her, and I don’t want to have anybody else, and I don’t intend to.” She continues, “I’m going to keep her.”

Mrs. Linley then instructs her husband to hire Nettie’s boyfriend as his dairyman. When her husband demurs, Mrs. Linley rails at him, “How consummately masculine! Poor fellow! How hard it must be to be so extremely – uninspired! To be a man!” She explains that they will have a wedding on the farm “and then there will be four happy people in the house instead of two.”

Apparently, Mrs. Linley has found the solution to all of their problems. Because Nettie so loves white people and particularly the Linleys and their farm but she also loves her boyfriend, Mrs. Linley will hire Nettie and her soon-to-be-husband into perpetuity so that Mrs. Linley will always have Nettie to serve her in the way she has become accustomed.

In A Chronicle of Conquest, Sparhawk imbues white women with exceptionalism, and in her formulations they wield potent, transformative (almost magical) power. In Sparhawk’s imagination, Carlisle’s white woman teachers have the power: to reveal to Polly her own desires to become an Indian reformer, even though she, herself, has not

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209 Ibid., 104.
210 Ibid., 105.
even realized them yet; to convince powerful Sioux chiefs to part with their beloved daughters; to tailor an Indian girl’s behavior to suit one’s own personal needs; to eradicate an Indian girl’s angry disposition and teach her how to serve others in a more pleasant manner; and to make an Indian girl despise her own cultural heritage and make her want to become white.

Throughout the book, Polly only observes the transformative power of other white women over American Indian girls. Although she does not yet fully possess this transformative power herself, Sparhawk hints that Polly will eventually achieve it. For example, at the Christmas party, the youngest American Indian girls are drawn to Polly, “for the children always came about her.”\(^ {211}\) At another point in the novel, a young Indian man (who wanted to pursue a career in the field) listened to Polly talk about architecture and “said little, but sat attentive, with glistening eyes.”\(^ {212}\)

At the end of the novel, Polly eventually achieves transformative power – the power to change public opinion. In so doing, Sparhawk accomplishes independence for Polly, both from her potential suitor and her father. When she informs her father that she isn’t ready to marry, she tells him, “God does not demand me to decide now. Why should you?” Sparhawk writes that during the interaction Polly’s eyes met her father’s not “as a daughter but as a human being ” who “asserts the right to liberty.”\(^ {213}\)

Despite her positive experiences there, Polly does not decide to become a Carlisle Indian schoolteacher. Instead, an older, wealthy, white woman “who is like a mother to her” divines Polly’s vocation for her. Once again Sparhawk switches the narrative point of view and Polly’s mother/friend, Mrs. Ascott observes the effect that the Carlisle

\(^ {211}\) Ibid., 20.
\(^ {212}\) Ibid., 45.
\(^ {213}\) Ibid., 112.
experience has had on Polly. Mrs. Ascott observed “how Polly improved; how the fitting of her theories into facts had stimulated her to new perceptions and given her wider resources in argument and illustration.” Impressed with a changed Polly, the wealthy older woman tells her that she will amass “a hundred influential people here in my parlors, if you’ll give them a talk, Polly.”214 Although at first unsure of herself, while Polly relates the work of the Carlisle school to the mass of influential people Mrs. Ascott has assembled, Polly comes into her own, embracing a newfound confidence and assurance as an Indian reformer who effects change through public speaking. Sparhawk’s chronicle of Polly’s growing independence from men also reflects the broader social debates at the time over women’s rights.

Frances Campbell Sparhawk, unlike her protagonist, Polly, did not use public speaking as a means to effect Indian reform. After publishing A Chronicle of Conquest in 1890, Sparhawk used her experiences to try to broaden her influence in the Women’s National Indian Association (WNIA). An active member of the WNIA, she was appointed the Chairman of the Committee on Indian Libraries and Industries. Sparhawk’s committee was charged with raising funds for reading materials to supply the libraries of federal Indian schools, as well as to returned students and trying to find former students work. According to Pratt’s correspondence, Carlisle was a frequent recipient of books donated as a result of Sparhawk’s work.215

With the support of the WNIA, Sparhawk was also instrumental in creating the Indian Industries League, which worked to “open individual opportunities of work to individual Indians, and to build up self-supporting industries in Indian communities.” She

214 Ibid., 110.
215 Ruggieri Matthews, “Killing a Culture to Save a Race.”
explained, “in many communities the native Indian industries are especially adapted to this purpose.” In her words, the league fostered these and other industries ultimately “to replace the desultory work of the Indians by the regularity of the white man’s occupation” so that “habits of industry may be attained.”

Encouraging Native women to take up wage labor, Sparhawk believed that white women had a pivotal role to play in rescuing American Indian women from their degraded lives and teaching them and modeling for them civilized gender roles and the habits of civilization and citizenship.

Throughout *A Chronicle of Conquest*, Sparhawk restricts Native women to domestic work, either in the homes of white women or in preparation for homes of their own. At the time Sparhawk was researching Carlisle teachers for her book, a number of Native women had been designated “pupil teachers” and were preparing to become federal Indian schoolteachers themselves. These women also substituted for white teachers at Carlisle, in 1885, during the year Sparhawk was substitute editor. Despite this, in her novels Sparhawk never permitted Native women into her circle of exceptional women who were free of domestic chores and who could spend their time teaching at federal Indian schools, organizing reform movements or writing sentimental novels.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has examined Carlisle Indian schoolteachers, including some of their basic characteristics, motivations for and benefits derived from teaching at the Carlisle Indian School. Despite the growth in scholarship on the federal Indian boarding school system

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217 Ironically the Indian Industries League only a decade after its founding abandoned its original aim and refocused to support and encourage Native women’s arts and crafts. For more information, see Carter Jones Meyer, *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2001).
over the past thirty years, relatively little is known about the women teachers who were the contact zones in schools. Indeed, Carlisle Indian schoolteachers were contact zones because it was they who spent the most time and had the most interaction with students. They also interpreted federal policies on the ground in the classrooms and on campus, yet there is a dearth of information about them in the literature.

During Richard Henry Pratt’s tenure, teachers were hired based upon his personal preferences. He most often hired older, single women from the Northeast. Some were widowed with children, while others had dependents. While some taught in public schools, most had previously taught at mission schools. Having “a spirit of Christ in the heart” was an important factor in his choices. Ideologies of evangelical Christian benevolence permeated almost every role and responsibility of women in the nineteenth century, and so the earliest teachers often framed their desire to teach at Carlisle within an ideology of Christian service.

Given the fact that in the late nineteenth century, while women had moral authority and exercised their influence primarily through benevolence organizations, without the right to vote or serve in the military, they had few opportunities to either exercise political authority or demonstrate their loyalty to their nation. When Richard Henry Pratt opened the first federal Indian school, white women teachers had an unprecedented opportunity to fulfill their duties as benevolent women and American citizens in service to both God and their country.

Carlisle Indian School teachers worked amidst an environment in which there had always been competing discourses regarding American Indian intellectual and cultural capacity among Indian reformers. Some shared with Pratt the philosophy that American
Indians were inherently equal but needed to be rid of their degrading cultural norms and beliefs. Others held more evolutionary views and believed that American Indians were a separate race and therefore had fundamental differences from whites and would never be equal regardless of how much education they received. Despite their personal opinions and beliefs about the intellectual capacity of American Indians, at Carlisle because of Pratt’s domineering personality, teachers either agreed with Pratt or were silent about dissenting views.

There was a great deal of camaraderie among Carlisle teachers and most of the teachers hired by Pratt remained for decades, serving longer than at any other school. When Pratt left Carlisle in 1904, there was a great deal of turnover in the faculty as many women either transferred to other schools when he was fired or quit the service altogether.

Federal Indian educational policies changed in the beginning of the twentieth century, shifting to an emphasis on more practical education for American Indians. At the same time as expectations for Indians were lowered, more and more women rose to levels of prominence in the Indian service, including Estelle Reel’s appointment to the position of Superintendent of Indian Schools. Carlisle’s women teachers, witnessing the feminization of the Indian service, attempted to exert their own influence to further their own careers. Some used their experiences at Carlisle to achieve outside the Indian service. Women like Kate Bowersox and Harriet Seabrook defied expectations for women and became respectively one of the first Deans of Women in the country and a medical doctor, who became the first women to sit on the state board. Other Carlisle teachers rose to levels of prominence inside the Indian service, like Fannie Peter who
became a lawyer and used the knowledge she gained from working with Indian students
to aid the government in land disputes involving Indian inheritance rights. Other Carlisle
teachers used the notoriety of the school to advance their literary careers and sought to
expand the impact of their voice. Elaine Goodale Eastman and Frances Sparhawk wanted
to be authors from the time they were girls and used their Carlisle experiences as material
in their books.

Carlisle teachers used their Indian school experiences to advance Indian reform
and their role in it. Women like Jesse Cook, Ruth Shaffner Etnier and Frances Sparhawk
wrote specifically for other white women to encourage them to become Indian teachers,
believing that they were uniquely qualified to help American Indian women become
better wives and mothers and to help uplift their families out of savagery and into
civilization.
CHAPTER FOUR TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 4.1:
CARLISLE’S WOMEN TEACHERS, BY REGION, 1889-1892

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ARCIA, 1889-1892
FIGURE 4.1: CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL’S “PIONEER TEACHERS,” 1888
(SEATED ON GROUND: MISS CRANE. SEATED L-R: MISS IRWIN, UNIDENTIFIED, JEANETTE L. SENSENEY, MISS HICH, DR. SEABROOK, MISS MATHER, MISS CUTTER, MISS DITTES, MISS BURGESS. STANDING L-R: MARY HYDE, MISS FISHER, UNIDENTIFIED, MISS BOOTH, MISS BENDER, MISS ELY.)

Photo by John N. Choate. Used with permission from CCHS.
CHAPTER FIVE

TACTICAL INTIMACIES: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ‘MOTHER-TEACHERS’ AND AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

Introduction

When Richard Henry Pratt permitted Sarah Mather to come with him to the Sioux reservation to secure children for Carlisle, he did so understanding the symbolism that the white woman teacher communicated. Mather’s status as a teacher conveyed the hope to Native parents that their children would be taught the English language, so they would be equipped to better protect their people from boundless white avarice. Mather’s gender offered the hope to parents that she, as a woman, would be naturally protective, nurturing and maternal toward their children, particularly to the girls Pratt sought to take with him to make the school’s gender composition balanced. Later, when he staffed the Carlisle Indian School, Pratt continued to rely on the soft power of white women teachers to accomplish the assimilative goals of the federal government.

In the mid 1800s, it was Horace Mann and Catherine Beecher who advocated women as superior teachers on account of their sex. Reformers such as Horace Mann argued that women, as a sex, were more suitable for the role of schoolteacher because they were naturally more moral, nurturing and maternal. Mann, eager to locate a pool of teachers for the expanding common school system that would be his legacy, wrote that a woman’s “natural sympathy, sagacity [and] maternal instincts preeminently qualify her for this sphere of noble usefulness.”²¹⁸ He further argued that women were better teachers than their male counterparts because teaching was “as much a requirement of nature” as

²¹⁸ Horace Mann, Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Education Together with the Sixth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1840), 28.
being the mother of children. By arguing that teaching allowed women to enact their natural calling as mothers outside their home teaching America’s children in preparation for their own motherhood, Mann and others made it socially acceptable for women to expand their sphere of influence from the home into the classroom. While Mann conflated the roles of mother and teacher in order to make it socially acceptable for women to leave the home and staff his common schools, Pratt conflated the roles of mother and teacher to win the trust of American Indian parents to take Native children for Carlisle and later, to staff his school.

As the federal government began to build a system of schooling for American Indian children, it was soon realized that mother-teachers were the perfect weapon to deploy in a kinder, gentler war with American Indian tribes.

“The time for fighting the Indian tribes is passed…let us have no more Indian ‘wars.’ We do not believe in a standing army, but it should be an army of Christian school-teachers. That is the army that is going to win the victory. We are going to conquer barbarism, but we are going to do it by getting at the barbarians one by one. We are going to do it by that conquest of the individual man, woman, and child which leads to the truest civilization. We are going to conquer the Indians by a standing army of school-teachers, armed with ideas, winning victories by industrial training and by the gospel of love and the gospel of work.”

By relocating Native children far away from their families and homes in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the federal government ensured compliance from American Indian leaders out west. In essence, Carlisle students became hostages for their parent’s good behavior. Separation from their parents served another function for the federal government. Federal policymakers sought to weaken the familial relationships between Native children and

their families and communities and “replace them with a new loyalty and affiliation to institutional authorities.”

During their stay at Carlisle, in the absence of their biological parents, Carlisle was to be their home, Pratt was to become a “school father” for the American Indian children, and white women schoolteachers and matrons, their mothers. However, white paternalistic/maternalistic policy often backfired and students’ loyalty to families was increased as a result of their separation. For example, Henry Kendall (Pueblo) said

“Generally the idea is among the whites that when we are taken away from our people we shall lose respect for them, that we feel above them, that we do not care for them. But I, for my part, say that, since I have been separated from my parents, I respect them more and I love them more.”

In her book, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, Margaret Jacobs offers a comparative analysis of the state-sanctioned removal of indigenous children in North America and Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jacobs highlights the gendered nature of the policies and the actions of white women in their positions as agents of their respective states. Framing her theoretical analysis within anthropologist Ann Stoler’s concept of the intimacies of empire, Jacobs contends that white women used their power to disrupt indigenous familial relationships and cultural traditions by denigrating American Indian cultures, particularly their gender roles and familial relationships and responsibilities. Jacobs argues that through these positions of power, white women increased their influence in the public sphere during an historical period.

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222 Former students who wrote to Pratt often addressed him as “school father.” See, for example, letters to Pratt in the student files of Nellie Robertson and Rosa Bourassa.

223 *The Indian Helper*, 24 January 1890.
when gender roles were in flux and white women had little political power. She writes, “(a)s in other colonial contexts, intimate spaces became small theaters of colonialism where colonial scripts were produced and performed.”

When indigenous children were removed from their family and community and relocated to Carlisle, the federal government disrupted the normal, intimate social and cultural relationships between caregiver and child. Pratt insisted that Carlisle students remain at the school for long periods of time to diminish the negative effects of reservation life and tribalism on young minds. During Pratt’s tenure, five years was the required enrollment; later after turn-of-the-century reforms, three years became the standard. However, many students spent a much longer period of time at Carlisle. Sioux student Nellie Robertson, for example, arrived in 1882 at Carlisle at the age of 11 and spent the next 12 years there. Pratt also ignored pleadings by desperate parents to allow them to see their children. He denied parents’ requests to permit their children to come home during the summers, for special events, even for the deaths of family members. The effects of this separation policy on children varied, but according to historian Brenda Child, “the most common malady experienced by children in boarding schools was homesickness.” Child reminds us that many children were not developmentally mature enough to withstand the harsh boarding school policies, coupled with the separation from family, many children being as young as six and seven when they were admitted.

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224 Ibid.
225 Student folder, Nellie Robertson, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5248, Box 134.
227 Ibid.
Most children responded to these policies by forming strong and enduring relationships with peers. Some indigenous children, in addition to these peer relationships, turned to white, and later Native teachers for affection, care, and for responses to their social and psychological needs. While some white women teachers truly cared for the Native children under their care, other women used their maternalism and the relationships they forged with children to more effectively assimilate Indian children according to the desires of the federal government. Superintendent of Indian Schools Estelle Reel encouraged white women teachers to use their maternal instincts and nurturing abilities to become “mother-teachers” who, while teaching Native children to abandon their cultural traditions, languages and familial relationships should “strive to secure before all other things the happiness of the (Indian) children.”

“Mother-teachers,” however, could never replace Native mothers. As a result, Native students grew up without parental role models and did not learn parenting skills in federal Indian boarding schools.

In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which some Carlisle mother-teachers used the relationships they forged with Native students to more effectively carry out the assimilative policies of the federal government. Corrupting words like “love” and “friendship” as well as the emotions behind them, some white women teachers used their relationships with students to attempt to control them. Teachers facilitated the outing placements of Native students in their own family homes and in the homes of friends in order to extend their surveillance of them during their summers away from Carlisle.

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228 Ibid; Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, Education Beyond the Mesas: Hopi Students at Sherman Institute, 1902-1929 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010).
230 Sakiestewa Gilbert, Education Beyond the Mesas.
Teachers also used correspondence with former students to extend their state authority beyond the grounds of Carlisle’s campus into the intimate spaces of former students’ lives, as far away as the Arctic Circle. While most Carlisle teachers used their relationships with students to more effectively carry out federal assimilative policies, a small number of Carlisle’s white women teachers crafted sincere and affectionate relationships with Native students and as a result, advocated for them within a male dominated bureaucracy.

Tactical Intimacies

At Carlisle, the kind of love and affection that was offered to Native students was often a perverted distortion of the real relationships that characterize the bonds between a caregiver and a child. In a chilling illustration of the kind of love and friendship that some Carlisle employees offered their American Indian students, The Indian Helper printed a piece titled, “The Indian and How We Must Kill Him.” The article described an imagined conversation between Superintendent Richard Henry Pratt and former Carlisle teacher, Marianna Burgess, and what they conceived the mission of Carlisle to be.

“’Shall we kill him at all?’
‘Yes,’ shouts the Man-on-the-Bandstand.
‘But is not such treatment of this mis-guided, mis-understood, mis-interpreted, much abused creature rather severe, not to say cruel?’
‘No,’ exclaimed the old gentleman, whose friendship and love for the Indian race cannot be gainsaid. ‘He must lose his life to save it. Then the sooner he is killed the better.’”

Burgess probably wrote this piece, given that, at the time, she was the editor of The Red Man and The Indian Helper newspapers and usually wrote such propaganda. In this article, Burgess characterized the relationship between Pratt and the American Indian
children whose families were being held hostage in the west as “friendship” and his feelings toward them as “love.” Burgess asserted that it was because Pratt loved Native children that he, with the backing of the federal government, removed them from their families and brought them to Carlisle. She wrote that it was because he loved them that he, and his faculty of white women schoolteachers, would kill the Indian inside them. “‘We are not exactly making corpses of [their] bodies, but we are killing out the old superstitious notions and ideas that keep such people down,’” she wrote. “‘Carlisle is doing more to kill Indians than all the fighting them with bullets has ever done. Carlisle is killing them that they may LIVE.”

The ease with which this Carlisle teacher wrote of Indian children’s corpses and killing Indians is astounding, particularly when one considers that this article was written and printed in the spring of 1892, during a period of time at Carlisle when there was a large cluster of deaths of Indian children. Between 1885 and 1895, groups of Apache children formerly designated as prisoners of war arrived at Carlisle. Forced to live in prison camps, these children had lived in difficult conditions and were malnourished and poorly clothed when they came to Carlisle. As a result, many of them died soon after they arrived.

In her remarkable dissertation titled, “Telling Stories Out of School,” Genevieve Bell researched student records at the National Archives, obituaries in the school newspapers, and statistics submitted from Carlisle in the Annual Report to the Office of Indian Commissioners to understand the prevalence and character of death at Carlisle. She found that there were many inconsistencies in the counting and reporting of students’

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231 The Indian Helper, 8 April 1892, 1.
deaths. She suspects that the deaths of students occurring in the summers were not reported. Also, she notes that when students were close to dying, Carlisle often sent them away so that they could die at home and the school would not have to include their deaths in their official figures. Bell believes that many remain uncounted.

Some tribes were more vulnerable than others. Children coming from tribes that had the smallest representation at Carlisle often experienced the highest death rates. For example, although Apache children were only 3% of the total student body, 20% of all those who died at the school were Apache. Conversely, the Iroquois were 14% of the total student body but comprised only 6% of those who died at the school. Deaths at Carlisle declined after the first two decades due to improved conditions at the school and the fact that officials more carefully documented the health of students before they arrived and often turned away unhealthy students. Over the span of Pratt’s twenty-five year tenure, while he graduated only 158 students and a full 181 student deaths were reported to have occurred, one is left to wonder what Carlisle was better at, educating Indian children or killing them?

While some white teachers characterized the killing of indigenous traditions and customs, and by extension the killing of people who still clung to those indigenous cultural traditions, as an act of love, others equated the term “love” with control. Carlisle teacher, Alice Robertson was born in 1854 at the Tullahassee Mission in the Creek Nation in Indian Territory. Her parents, William Robertson and Ann Eliza Worcester, were missionaries to the Creeks and translated the Bible and other literary works into the

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233 Ibid.
Creek language. Many of Robertson’s relatives were involved in missionary work with American Indians, most notably her maternal grandfather. Reverend Samuel Worcester was a long-time missionary to the Cherokees serving during the time when the removal of the Cherokees was being considered. Worcester’s opposition to the actions of the state of Georgia as they took Cherokee lands and dismantled the Cherokee Nation’s government as well as to the inaction of the federal government led to the 1832 Supreme Court case, *Samuel A. Worcester vs. The State of Georgia*. Although the court found that Georgia laws could have no effect in Cherokee Territory and Cherokee leaders hoped that the ruling answered Chief Justice John Marshall’s 1831 finding that Cherokees were to be a “domestic dependent nation,” it did not impede President Andrew Jackson’s forced removal of the Cherokees and other Southeastern tribes. Worcester accompanied the Cherokees on their forced removal known as the Trail of Tears.235

Robertson’s family had a profound impact on her future career. Educated by her parents and then later at Elmira College in New York, her first position was as a clerk in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C. She later returned to Indian Territory and taught at the Tullahassee Mission School. From 1880-1882 Robertson became a federal Indian school teacher at the Carlisle Indian School. A death in the family caused her to move back to Indian Territory in 1882 where she again taught at the Tullahassee Mission School and eventually opened the Nuyaka Mission, which reported to the Creek Tribal Council and was administered by the Presybterian church. Later she ran a Presbyterian boarding school for American Indian girls, which eventually became Henry Kendall College and later the University of Tulsa. The BIA appointed Robertson as the

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first government supervisor of the Creek Indian Schools from 1900-1905. In 1905 President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Robertson to be the postmaster of Muskogee, Oklahoma. The first female postmaster of a Class A post office, Robertson served in that capacity until 1913. Afterwards, in addition to running a farm and a popular restaurant in Muskogee, at the age of 66, Robertson successfully ran for a seat in the House of Representatives in 1920, becoming the second woman ever elected to Congress.236

In 1889, Alice Robertson was asked to speak at the Lake Mohonk Conference about her wealth of experiences. She was regarded as a model Indian schoolteacher and was, at the time of her speech, managing a faculty of white women school teachers in a boarding school for Indian girls. In the speech, as she attempted to contrast two different types of Indian school teachers, she also illustrated the kind of “love” an Indian school teacher should have for the children in her school. In the following excerpt she related a conversation she had when she encountered a woman who was new to the Indian School Service:

“I began speaking encouragingly to her, and said: ‘The first thing you must do is to love them: they will soon understand you if you do, and will be easily controlled.’ ‘What! love Indian children!’ She was sure that was impossible. She was only going into the work as her only means of obtaining a livelihood. She said she knew nothing of the work, and that her only object in going was to secure the salary. Of course she was unfitted for the position…”237

Robertson’s encounter with the fledgling Indian school employee demonstrates that with regard to American Indian children at least, the term “love” had a particular and peculiar meaning for some white women Indian schoolteachers. For Robertson, “love” towards

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Indian children was defined as a calculated use of care and affection to achieve a particular goal: control. Importantly, Robertson’s speech at Lake Mohonk also shows how she encouraged and mentored other Indian schoolteachers to use their intimate relationships with their Native students tactically, to achieve control over their behavior.

In her speech at Lake Mohonk, after characterizing this novice teacher as unfit because she saw no reason to love Indian children, Robertson compared her with the teachers in an unnamed, more superior school, presumably the one in which she worked. She continued, “this school is on the home plan, the girls living in cottage homes, under the care of ‘house mothers,’ who train them in all the womanly arts that help to make the home.” She described a group of Indian chiefs who visited the cottages at one time and were impressed by what they saw, assuming it was the teacher’s quarters because there were “table-cloths, napkins, etc. and abundant well-cooked food served by the Indian pupils.” Robertson said, “(i)n the parlor one of the pupils, who had helped prepare and serve the dinner, sat down to the piano and played and sang for them.” According to Robertson, one of the older men said, “we see that you love the Indian children and treat them as if they were your own children. We want teachers among us who do not come just for the money that the government pays them.”

Robertson used this second example to illustrate that a good teacher wasn’t motivated by a paycheck but was a loving and affectionate ‘house mother’ whose goal it was to train, in this case Indian girls, how to become proper women. Her speech provides a window on the kind of control mother-teachers sought to exercise over their students. Robertson offered conditional love to Native children. She gave affection and love to her students, but only if they behaved the way she wanted them to. In this case, as long as her

238 Ibid.
students adopted the outward signs of assimilation, as long as they dressed, spoke and acted according to white Protestant norms, performed the proper gender roles, and labored in prescribed ways, then, and only then, would they receive her approval, nurturance, warmth and affection.

Native Student Labor in the Homes of Teacher’s Families and Friends

The words “love” and “friendship,” when directed at American Indian children had particular meanings for white women teachers. Some white women teachers used these words and the sentiments behind them to forge exploitative relationships with Native students in order to uphold the oath of office they took as agents of the federal government. Teachers attempted to use their relationships with students to control them and to teach them the only way American Indians would survive in modern America was to assimilate. At Carlisle, some white women teachers attempted to control Native students by facilitating the placement of students in their own homes or in the homes of family and friends through outing assignments.

The outing system was a unique feature of a Carlisle Indian School education. Instituted by Pratt, the outing system placed Indian children in the homes of white families, usually during the summer months. On outings, students would work for the white families they were placed with, in exchange for room and board and a small wage. By placing them with white families, Carlisle students would learn about white social institutions and be permitted to participate in them, to an extent, including attending public school with the children of patrons’ families, attend church, etc.
To be accepted as an outing patron for Carlisle, prospective families had to agree to a list of conditions. Patrons had to promise to send Carlisle students to school and church and to treat the Indian children under their care as a member of their family. Pratt explicitly stated that he did not want Carlisle students treated like servants. In addition, he hired staff to regularly supervise outings and to pay unexpected visits to patrons’ homes to ensure that children were treated well.239

Historian David Wallace Adams calls the outing program “a central ingredient of the Carlisle program.”240 According to Adams the outing program had three manifestations. In the most basic outing, students were sent out during the summer months only to live and work with a farm family. The second type of outing involved students being placed with a family for one to two years, working, living and going to school with the white children of the family. To Pratt, this was the most ideal outing situation as it involved a more in-depth experience for the student and provided them with the public education that Pratt believed all Indians would eventually take advantage of. The third outing situation developed in the 1890’s when Pratt became convinced that students needed to learn skills other than farming and he placed students in industrial and urban settings. This last type of outing was Pratt’s least favorite because in these situations he believed that Indian students were discriminated against and would fall prey to the degeneracy of the city.

Analyzing the numbers and kinds of placements in the outing system at Carlisle, Adams found that despite Pratt’s inclinations, the least frequent type of placement for Carlisle students was the second type where students stayed with a family for more than

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240 Ibid., 157.
one year and attended public school with white children. The most frequent outing situation was when students were placed on farms for the summer months. After Pratt’s tenure at Carlisle ended in 1904, the number of industrial and urban outings grew.

Adams details the scrutiny and careful attention that Pratt devoted to the outing program at Carlisle. Pratt was very careful in his choice of patrons for the program. Patrons were required to undergo a selection process and had to answer questions about their family life and the character of the household before receiving a student. They were also required to produce a person of reference to whom Pratt sent a separate letter to ensure the qualifications and suitability of the patron.241

Perhaps, white women teachers and Pratt believed that a good way to teach American Indian students proper vocational and gender roles was to have them work in the homes of the family members and friends of Carlisle’s teachers. Federal Indian schoolteachers posted at western schools close to reservations often invaded students’ homes and intimate spaces to teach them and their families white Protestant middle-class gender roles, parenting, and domesticity within the larger lessons of citizenship and civilization.242 Carlisle teachers, however, far from the homes of their students and any large population concentration of American Indians, were forced to teach home study theoretically, inside their classrooms. Outings in teachers’ family homes or in the homes of friends allowed for students to practice their proper vocational and gender roles under direct supervision by their teachers.

241 Ibid.
242 For more on this topic, see: Jane E. Simonsen, Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860-1919 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
Barbara Landis, Carlisle Indian School biographer for the Cumberland County
Historical Society, discovered that white teacher Katherine J. Wiest, who taught at
Carlisle for two years beginning in 1893, had American Indian girls working in her home
during “outings” almost constantly, for sixteen years, from 1902-1918. (See Table 5.1).
Wiest eventually married William H. McCrae and settled in Newville, Pennsylvania. The
student newspaper characterized Mrs. McCrae as having “been one of its (the outing
system’s) best patron for years.”

Former Carlisle teacher, Dr. Alice Seabrook who taught in the 1880s and 90s, also
arranged to have a number of Carlisle students work on her father’s farm during the
summers. Bessie West (Creek) was among those students who tended to household duties
at Seabrook’s farm during her outing. After completing her course of study at Carlisle,
West married and had a family. She, herself, taught for the Indian Service at a mission
school for a brief period and then became a domestic worker in a private home.

Seabrook also facilitated outings for a family friend, Ida Zimmerman, whose farm
was located close to Seabrook’s. Among the students who worked at this farm were
Belinda Archiquette (Oneida), Mark Evarts (Pawnee), and Maggie Old Eagle (Sioux).
Maggie Old Eagle was 15 at the time of one of her outings in 1889. She worked at the
Zimmerman farm at least one other time, in 1894. A reference to the outing work of
Maggie Old Eagle was found in an issue of the student newspaper, *The Indian Helper* in
November 1890. It read:

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243 *The Carlisle Arrow and Red Man*, 8 March 1918.
244 Margaret Seabrook Kepner, niece of Alice Seabrook, wrote a letter to the Cumberland County
Historical Society, 2 December 1974, informing them of her aunt’s work at the school, her subsequent
career and the outings on the farms of the Seabrook and Zimmerman families. Accompanying the letter
were three pair of beaded buckskin mocassins, and other items believed to be gifts to Seabrook from
students.
“we do not need to patronize the Chinaman anymore, was what the M.O.T.B. (Man on the Bandstand) heard a young gentleman say, when he saw the pile of shining, snowy shirts, washed, starched, and ironed by our Maggie Old Eagle, in her country home.”

While it is difficult to ascertain how many of Carlisle’s mother-teachers helped to direct their students’ labor to their families and friends back home, a surprising number of the families of white teachers benefitted from Native outing student labor. Research suggests that some of these teachers included: Florence M. Carter, Elizabeth Forster, Mary Campbell, E. L. Fisher, Mary Hyde (matron), Lavinia Bender, M.E.B. Phillips, Kate Irvine, Ella and Bessie Patterson, Anna Luckenbach, Jennie Cochran, and Margaret Roberts.

It is likely that other employees at Carlisle were involved with placing American Indian children in the homes of their families to work. Richard Henry Pratt’s daughter benefitted from outing labor, for example. Alice Tsinna Sheffield (Pueblo) had at least four outings at Marion Pratt Stevick’s home in Carlisle. It is important to note that not just any Native student would have been invited to live and work in the family homes of white women teachers and, for example, Pratt’s daughter, Marion. Most likely, the

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245 *The Indian Helper*, 14 November 1890.
246 Researching the extent of Native students’ outings at the homes of family and friends of Carlisle’s teachers is very difficult. Until now, no comprehensive list of Carlisle’s teachers had been compiled. In order to research this topic, I worked with Barbara Landis who has access to the database Genevieve Bell created which includes the outing assignments of individual students, names of patrons, the location of their homes and the length of time spent on outings. Barbara and I then cross-referenced teachers’ surnames with student outing assignments.
247 On a research trip to the Cumberland County Historical Society, Barbara Landis told me about a presentation she gave on outing patron and former teacher, Katherine J. Wiest. After that, with the generous help of Barbara Landis and the Bell database, we were able to match up the teachers’ surnames to the patrons that Native students were placed with. The construction of many teachers’ geneologies, courtesy of Ancestry.com, helped me to confirm the residences of white teacher’s families.
248 From the Bell database, see “Alice Tsinna Sheffield was on a fourth outing with Mrs. G. Stevick in Carlisle.” Richard Henry Pratt’s daughter, Marion married Guy Stevick and lived in Carlisle.
students who would have been invited were trustworthy, hardworking, compliant individuals, who had maintained friendly relationships with the staff and faculty.

It is not surprising, in hindsight, that white women teachers helped to facilitate student outings in their family homes and in the homes of friends. Annie Ely, a Pennsylvania native, former Carlisle teacher and long-time outing agent, helped Pratt originally establish patrons for the outing system. In 1880, Ely facilitated an introduction between Pratt, a group of Native boys and Quaker farmers at the old Wrightstown Friends Meeting House in Bucks County to convince the Quaker farmers to take the Indian boys into their homes through the outing system. Ely’s large Quaker family lived in Bucks County and presumably Pratt chose Ely because of her network of connections there. Not surprisingly, research using the Bell database reveals that over 34 outings occurred in families whose last name was Ely, living in Bucks County, PA.

While little is known about students’ outing experiences in the homes of Carlisle’s teachers, one interpretation of the practice could be that white women teachers wanted to protect the children in their care and sought to place them in situations that they believed were safe and most conducive to their learning to become American citizens. In general, many Carlisle students spoke positively about their outing experiences. According to Adams, both the majority of Indian students and patrons regarded the Carlisle outing experience as a positive one. Patrons wrote letters to Pratt complimenting the work ethic, character and manners of the Indian students that lived with them. Likewise students, who were required to write monthly, indicated they were satisfied with their outing situations. While some students commented on the good food, others wrote that they were pleased to be part of a loving family again. There were some
complaints from students, especially if that student believed s/he was being taken advantage of. One student wrote Pratt and detailed to him the various names he was called by the head of the household and the fact that he knew he deserved better than the treatment of this man.  

Facilitating the outing of a favorite student in a teacher’s home then could have been an act of true affection on the part of the teacher who empathized with the student and understood how painful separation from one’s parents could be. Inviting a student into one’s most intimate space was an act of trust and after a summer of working and living together, probably created strong bonds between teacher and student.

An extreme form of this was the adoption of Native students by white women teachers and other employees. Two Lipan Apache children, brother and sister, were captured in Mexico in 1877 by the 4th U.S. Calvary under General MacKenzie and were later sent to Carlisle. They arrived in 1880. The boy was very young and although he stayed at Carlisle for three years, was eventually adopted by former Carlisle teacher, Sarah Mather. Sarah Mather named him Jack Mather and took him to live with her and Rebecca Perit in St. Augustine, Florida. Mather sent Jack back to Carlisle in 1888 because he was sick. Young Jack died of consumption that same year and is buried in the Carlisle cemetery.

Jack’s sister, Kesetta Roosevelt, was 16 when she arrived at Carlisle. One of the longest enrolled students there, Roosevelt was sent on a series of outings that commenced almost immediately after her arrival. While on an outing assignment in Baltimore, she got pregnant. Pratt sent her to a home for fallen women, where she gave birth to a baby boy. Soon after the birth of her son, Roosevelt died from consumption. The boy was brought

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249 Adams, Education for Extinction.
back to Carlisle, named Richard Kesetta, and was adopted by Mary Sharp, the mother of an employee at Carlisle.²⁵⁰

Another interpretation of the practice of placing Native students in the homes of the families and friends of Carlisle teachers is that they provided a source of cheap labor for teachers’ families. As federal Indian schools were built in the west, the U.S. government included the outing system as part of the citizenship and civilization curriculum at every school. Despite the presence of it at every school, there has been little scholarly consideration of the outing system at federal Indian boarding schools. One of the few works to specifically address the outing system is Robert Trennert’s, “From Carlisle to Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of the Indian Outing System, 1878-1930.”²⁵¹ In this article, Trennert traces the history of the federal Indian boarding school’s outing system, its development at the model school - the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and compares how outing systems changed as they were implemented in Indian schools in the west, particularly at the Phoenix Indian School.

According to Trennert soon after the outing program was implemented at Phoenix, it became obvious to school officials that the girls were being worked too hard, were receiving no academic training, and were not supervised well, if at all. The outing system at Phoenix came under close scrutiny when accounts of child abuse and the “moral delinquency” of girls began to surface. Eventually government officials discovered that Indian children were being placed directly into white homes from the

²⁵⁰ For more on these two children see: Jacqueline Fear-Segal, “Kesetta: Memory and Recovery,” in White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2007), 255-282.

reservation and were receiving no education at all. In fact, it was soon surmised that the Phoenix Indian school was basically operating as an employment agency to the city of Phoenix.

Trennert concludes that a comparison of the two systems reveals that the primary reason why the outcomes of the outing programs differed so much was due to Pratt’s administration of the system and to changing racial attitudes. For example, at Carlisle, Pratt’s belief that Indians were equal to whites if only they were rid of their culture, his unwavering commitment to assimilation as the solution to the Indian problem, his relationship with like-minded white families, his access to resources which allowed him to better fund the outing program and to hire people to supervise outings, and the paternal attitude of Easterners to Indians created the conditions where the outing system was “an apprentice device to incorporate Indian children into American society.”

At Phoenix, largely because superintendents never believed that Indians were equal to whites, combined with the western public’s bias toward Indians, created the conditions where the school’s outing program soon was transformed into an employment agency. By the 1930’s, the Phoenix Indian school operated like a big business and was an important aspect of the Phoenix economy.

Adams concurs and notes that at schools such as Haskell, Carson, Albuquerque, Genoa and Phoenix, the outing system was often exploitative. He contends that at some schools the outing system deteriorated so much that it resembled an employment service more than an apprentice program. The most egregious example was the practice of sending out work gangs numbering 50 -100 students to work on farms and ranches.

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252 Ibid., 277.
253 Ibid.
Genoa, Chilocco and Albuquerque routinely sent boys to work on Colorado beet fields. These types of outings looked nothing like what Pratt had intended. Laboring from sunrise to sunset, these boys slept in camps or tents and probably had very few, if any, interactions with the civilizing influences of a white family. Adams concludes that these western outing experiences taught Indian students a very important lesson; they taught them about “the marginal terms upon which they would be incorporated into frontier society -- as common laborers and domestic servants.”

Alice Littlefield advances this thesis in her scholarship on the Mt. Pleasant Indian School in Michigan in “Indian Education and the World of Work in Michigan, 1893-1933.” Using oral interviews and secondary sources, Littlefield examines the experiences of students in the outing system at the school and believes federal boarding schools played an important role in directing American Indians into the wage labor force and helped to produce an indigenous working class.

Annie Buck’s (Eskimo) letter to Nellie Robertson Denny (Sioux) supports the thesis that even at Carlisle, vocational education, including outing programs, directed the vast majority of Native students into working class jobs. In her letter, Denny must have inquired about what work Buck was doing to support herself. Buck answered, “I have been working in the private families since I left school and I am getting tired of it now. Housework is hard work and there is only a little money at the end of the month” and “no

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254 Ibid., 163.
256 At the time of the letter, Nellie Robertson Denny was the clerk at Carlisle and was responsible, among other things, for keeping track of what former students were doing, if they had gone “back to the blanket” or were self-supporting.
success coming in the future.”\textsuperscript{257} Frances Sparhawk’s observation of Carlisle girls cleaning their female teachers’ rooms “for practice” also lends credence to this interpretation.

In \textit{White Man’s Club}, Jacqueline Fear-Segal writes about the ways Pratt, faculty and staff tried to control students’ behavior through constant monitoring. She analyzes the physical layout of the campus and asserts that its design was conducive to supervising students’ activities. She also examines the school’s newspapers and concludes that it was a tool of surveillance. This research has demonstrated that, regardless of white teacher’s motivations, by placing American Indian students in their own homes to labor for them and their families, teachers used their positive relationships with students to create a mechanism to monitor their behavior off campus.

Teacher’s Correspondence as a Tool of Surveillance

White teachers constantly monitored Carlisle students both on and off campus. While having Native students live and work in their homes gave white teachers access to student’s lives when they were away from campus on outings, white teachers used correspondence as a way to supervise former students after they left the Carlisle Indian School altogether.

Fannie Irene Peter graduated from high school in Olney, IL in 1886. She passed the Civil Service Exam for teachers in 1893 and taught at the Siletz Agency in Oregon before she arrived at the Carlisle Indian School in 1896. She taught at Carlisle from 1896

\textsuperscript{257} Annebuck, Letter to Nellie Denny, 15 August 1916, Student file of Annebuck Buck, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder, 2174, Box 44, National Archives, Washington D.C.
to 1904 and also worked as a clerk during the summers. 258 This was unusual, in that most of the other Carlisle teachers took vacation during the summer or attended teacher’s institutes. Peter likely worked during the summers because she and her other sisters, all of whom were single, not only supported themselves but also their widowed mother.

In 1901, while Peter was a teacher, Dr. Sheldon Jackson, General Agent for Education in Alaska, brought a group of twenty-five Alaskan children to Carlisle. They were orphans and ranged in development from very small children to older teenagers. Included in this group were Annebuck, Tumasock, Coodlilook, Nakootkin, Tutikoff, Oonaleana, Kokililook, Esantuck and Lablok. 259

Fannie Peter developed close relationships with many of the Eskimo children in this group, as well as other Native students, in part, because of the way she engaged her students in active learning assignments both inside and outside the classroom. During this period, as Indian lands continued to be allotted and made available to white settlement under the provisions of the Dawes Act, Carlisle teachers taught Native students that farming was the preferred occupation for boys and being a farmer’s wife was the ideal role for girls. While teaching her class about how best to use products from their future farms and gardens, she included a lesson on pumpkins, involving her students in growing them and demonstrating the foods that could be made from the fruit. She concluded this lesson with the baking of pumpkin pie, which the students “devoured” after the lesson. 260

258 Fannie I. Peter, Service Record Card, Personnel Folder, National Personnel Records Center, St Louis National Archives.
259 ARCLA 1891.
260 The Indian Helper, 13 November 1896. Of course, the irony of this lesson is apparent. Pumpkins, a form of squash, were native to the Americas and cultivated by indigenous Americans long before the arrival of Europeans.
On another fall day, Miss Peter chaperoned an impromptu apple party on the Carlisle campus. On a previous night, a great storm blew a considerable number of apples off many trees on to the grounds of the school. Miss Peter directed the children to gather as many apples as they could and join in the dining room for a celebration. As reported in *The Indian Helper*, the Carlisle student newspaper, students could be seen “wending their way toward the school laden with aprons full, bags full, dress sleeves full, skirts full, baskets full, mouths full and stomachs full.”

Fannie Peter was beloved by some of her students and she maintained a correspondence with them after they were no longer students. In the case of the Eskimo pupils, she kept up correspondence with some of them after she, herself, was no longer a teacher. One such student was Annebuck, who was a twelve-year old girl when Dr. Sheldon Jackson brought her and the other Alaskan children to Carlisle in 1897. An orphan, previously she lived at a mission school run by T. L. Brevig, a pastor at Port Clarence, Alaska. Annebuck attended Carlisle for a total of nine years. She spent most of her time in Carlisle from 1897-1900 but in 1900 she began to go on outings, living with a series of white families, working for them in exchange for room, board and a small wage as well as attending public school in their communities. Between the years 1900-1906, Annebuck was sent to live with nine different outing patrons in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Two of her outings were spent in the homes of former Carlisle teachers. She spent a total of 32 months away from school on these outings. She later attended

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261 *The Indian Helper*, 9 October 1896.
262 Student file of Annebuck Buck, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder, 2174, Box 44, National Archives, Washington D.C. In her letters, Annebuck used various spellings of her name including Annebuck, Anneebuck, Aneva Buck, Anerva Buck and Anna Buck. Her first letter is signed Annebuck and I have chosen to refer to this name throughout to avoid confusion.
263 Ibid.
Chemawa Indian School in Oregon. After school she returned to Alaska and made a living as a domestic worker in a white family.

Miss Peter was one of Annebuck’s and Tumasock’s favorite teachers. In an early letter, Tumasock’s adoration was apparent. She wrote, “I am going to write to you sometime because I love you so much and [you are a] best friend too and kind to me and Anneebuck.” Tumasock was a very young and small Eskimo girl who had been orphaned. Perhaps Peter was a favorite teacher because she and her mother gave gifts to students. While Annebuck was still a student, Miss Peter’s mother, Mrs. Mary Peter sent Annebuck and Tumasock gifts from time to time while they were her daughter’s students at Carlisle. In July of 1899, Fannie’s mother sent Annebuck, who was then 14, and Tumasock “very fine calico” and ribbons from which to make dresses for themselves. In her letter of thanks, Annebuck tells Miss Peter’s mother that “no one gave me such … things” and that she “was very thankful.” She tells her that she is “so glad I am going to have a pretty dress” and that she “just love(s)” it. She tells Peter’s mother that she plans to get a second dress from the cousin of another teacher, Miss Newcomer “because I written to her.”

In 1908, in another letter to Miss Peter, who was no longer a teacher in the Indian Service, Annebuck, then 23, thanked her for the “nice purse” she sent her. Miss Peter sent books to the son of another former male student, Ooleana, as well.

Anthropologists have demonstrated that gift giving is almost never completely altruistic. Rather, gift giving is a mechanism used by an individual or group to create a stronger social bond between themselves and the recipient/s of the gift. Between friends

264 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, dated 9 July 1899, Fannie I. Peter file, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA. Hereafter CCHS.
265 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, 3 January 1908, Peter file, CCHS.
266 Ooleana, Letter to Miss Peter, undated, Peter file, CCHS.
or persons of roughly equal status, the giving of a gift creates a social ‘debt’ that must be
‘paid’ by the recipient of the gift in order for the relationship to continue. Once the
exchange of gifts is established, a stronger social bond is achieved between the
individuals.\textsuperscript{267} Given that between teacher and student, power differences are unequal, it
is customary for the student to repay a teacher with a gift as a way to express gratitude for
the teacher’s imparting of knowledge or patience with the student or in some cases, to
secure favoritism from the teacher. In the colonial context, however, where hegemonic
differences are particularly acute, it is interesting that both Miss Peter’s and Miss
Newcomer’s family members gave gifts to Annebuck and Tumasock. By giving
Annebuck and Tumasock gifts, what did these Carlisle teachers expect in return?

Most likely, especially in light of Sarah Mather’s use of “trinkets” to bribe Sioux
children to go to Carlisle, Miss Peter and other teachers gave gifts to their students
because, in exchange, they sought an avenue of control over some aspect of Native
children’s lives. Indeed, the particular kinds of gifts these federal Indian schoolteachers
gave to their students implied an attempt at control. Miss Peter didn’t send Ooleana’s son
toys or treats. Instead she sent him books to encourage his acquisition of English. By
giving girls the kinds of dresses that they themselves wore, mother-teachers were
attempting to teach Annebuck and Tumasock proper gender roles, including what
civilized women should wear. The letters that former students wrote in response to Miss
Peter, however, are the best evidence of the kind of control Fannie Peter tried to exercise,
albeit from a distance, over her former students.

\textsuperscript{267} In the classic, \textit{The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies} (London:
Routledge, 1922), Marcel Mauss explains his theory of gift giving. He argues that gifts are never free and
that they are embedded in reciprocal exchanges that create mutual interdependence between individuals and
groups.
Fanny I. Peter maintained correspondence with her former Alaskan students between the years 1898-1917. It can be inferred from student’s response letters that Peter inquired about her former student’s reading and writing habits and if they were actively working on improving their English language skills. In her reply to such questions, Annebuck wrote, “I could read every word in your letter all right and understood it quite well.” Such questions prompted another former student, Ooleana to reply that he took only a few books with him after leaving Carlisle and that an acquaintance of his received newspapers that he read on occasion. He informed Miss Peter that his son Frank was learning to speak English and implied that his son was acquiring it more rapidly than he did. He also mentioned that another former Eskimo student of Peter’s, Coodlalook, came back to Point Barrow and that “she forgot (how to) speak Eskimo.” He added that Coodlalook is “going (to) teach school this winter.”

At Carlisle, students were often punished by teachers for using their traditional languages. English was touted as the language of civilization and federal policymakers demanded that all instruction be conducted in English. Indeed, during this time period English was one of the most important indexes of civilization. So the fact that Coodlalook forgot how to speak Eskimo would have signified her educational progress to Peter. Perhaps, Ooleana’s motivation for telling Peter about Coodlalook was to demonstrate to her that, while he himself was not working on his English language skills as much as she might like him to, a fellow Eskimo had acquired English so completely that not only had she lost her ability to speak her original language, but she was also poised to teach Eskimo children the English language, without being bilingual. In a later

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268 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, 9 March 1908, Peter file, CCHS.
269 Ooleana, Letter to Miss Peter, 25 October 1907, Peter file, CCHS.
270 Adams, Education for Extinction.
letter, Ooleana reported, “I try learn speak English all time.” While aspects of Peter’s letters to Ooleana indicate that she cared about him and his welfare, his responses illustrate that she also used her letters to him to monitor his loss of culture and to try to advise him and influence his behavior towards her (and the government’s) goal for him – to become assimilated and Americanized.

Peter’s letters sought personal information from her former students. She inquired not only about their jobs but also their work habits and what their short and long term plans were. At the turn of the century, as the federal government’s system of Indian schools expanded, greater efforts were made to systematize and bureaucratize the schools. Superintendent of Indian Schools, Estelle Reel offered the “Course of Study for Indian Schools” to standardize the curriculum and give teachers a revised vision of the scope of their work. Reel advocated that teachers focus more on “practical knowledge” and to emphasize “the dignity and nobility of labor” in their teaching.

At Carlisle, white mother-teachers taught their students that they had to learn an industrial skill in order to be self-sufficient. The industries taught at Carlisle were highly gendered with boys being taught farming, blacksmithing and carpentry while the majority of girls learned only domestic skills – sewing, housecleaning, cooking and, for some girls, teaching and nursing. In a response letter to Carlisle teacher Miss Clara Snoddy, who taught at the school from 1915 - 1918, Cherokee student Adams Driver wrote, “On the farm I am doing such work as plowing, cultivating, milking, harrowing and other odd

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271 Ooleana, Letter to Miss Peter, 20 January 1909, Peter file, CCHS.
jobs. I like to do them all, and besides we are getting $35.00 a month.”273 In 1908, Annebuck found a teaching job in Deering, Alaska, twenty-five miles south of the Arctic Circle. She wrote that she had the “cutest and brightest little pupils” who were “smart and obedient.” She and her students, who she thought were “cuter than white children,” went on “dog team and reindeer team rides and horseback rides” together. Despite having “nice times” when she was teaching, Annebuck was not paid very well. She reported, “my salary was $45.00 per month last year. I did not save much money from my wages.”274 Ooleana also shared the exact dollar amounts he was earning as well as accounts of the various ways he was trying to earn money and his frustration at finding work that paid a decent wage.275 That Driver, Annebuck and Ooleana would share the exact dollar amounts they were earning is not surprising. Carlisle teachers and administrators were privy to extremely personal information about Native students. In fact, under Superintendent Moses Friedman, Carlisle sent out questionnaires to former students in order to compile information about them. These questions inquired into the wages former students were earning, how much they were saving, and detailed questions regarding the amounts and types of property they owned.276

Miss Peter inquired into both Annebuck’s and Chippewa student, Peter Commander’s, plans for future work. For Carlisle teachers, self-sufficiency and developing a work ethic were some of the most important outcomes.277 In student’s response letters to Miss Peter and Miss Snoddy the topic of work is frequently addressed.

274 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, 9 March, 1908, Peter file, CCHS.
275 Ooleana, Letter to Miss Peter, 5 October 1907, Peter file, CCHS.
276 Questionnaires such as these were often present in students’ folders.
277 Reel, Course of Study.
and students depict themselves as always working, enjoying their work and having plans for improving their work prospects. For example, Commander told Miss Peter, “I was thinking about going out for a couple of months during vacation but I do not know what I am going to do yet as you have asked me if I had any calculations made up or not.”

Even Tumasock, the very little Eskimo girl, wrote to Peter, “I am glad to work tomorrow morning.”

Response letters to Peter indicate that she was interested in her former student’s intimate lives, who their friends were, and what kinds of people they were associating with, including significant others. She also expressed concern whether or not her former students were living morally upstanding, Christian lives and warned them about the potential dangers if they did not. Peter expressed worry over the outing placement of Chippewa student, Louis Curtis, particularly because his outing patron lived in a city and he was to be working with other American Indian men who were unknown to her. He replied, “I am old enough to know right from wrong.” He continued, “I shall endeavor to follow the good advise (sic) that was laid before me….The family in whose service I am, so far as I can judge is one that you would highly approve of and my fellow servants do not seem to be schooled in town life as you depict.”

Annebuck reassured Miss Peter that she knew she shouldn’t “mix with bad men.” She continued, “I am glad that you advised me and I like to do that which is right and respectful. Yes, I know [a] few girls that have troubles and it has always been my desire not to be like them. I would feel lost if I go wrong.”

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278 Peter Commander, Letter to Miss Peter, 7 May 1900, Peter file, CCHS.
279 Tumasock, Letter to Miss Peter, 20 August 1899, Peter file, CCHS.
280 Mr. Louis Curtis, Letter to Miss Peter, 4 November 1898, Peter file, CCHS.
281 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, 9 March 1908, Peter file, CCHS.
Whether it was solicited or not, Annebuck, who was 23 at the time, felt compelled to confide the following in her former teacher: “I must be honest and so must tell you that the one I like is in Alaska.” But then, again to reassure her former teacher that she was not being frivolous with her emotions, she wrote, “nearly all girls have the ones they like. I never bother my self about men unless I like them very much. Miss Peter, I’m just talking privately and I hope you will not think that I am silly.” Annebuck went on and for the first time referred to Peter, not as a former teacher, but as a friend. She wrote, “We are too good friends and argue with each other (I don’t like too ‘ugly faced’ man).”

When former students did make mistakes or act in ways that they believed their former teachers would disapprove of, they confessed their mistakes to them and, given that they saw them as authority figures and morality police, asked them for forgiveness. In describing something she had done when she was living with outing patron and former Carlisle teacher, Mrs. McCrea, Annebuck wrote, “I had made lots mistakes at Carlisle while I was there, but I made more sad mistakes that summer just before I left. I suppose they told you about them.” Fannie Peter kept two apology letters from male students of hers. One of them, who signed only his initials, wrote to Miss Peter, “I am sorry and feel ashamed for what I did, and at the same time, begging you to forgive me, and forget the past.” Among her papers, Clara Snoddy also kept an apology letter from a male student.

Peter’s inquiries into her student’s private lives did not always resonate well with them. In her last letter, Annebuck who was 32 years old at the time wrote,

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282 Ibid.
283 Ibid.
284 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, 12 January, 1895, Peter file, CCHS.
285 Letter to Miss Snoddy, Undated, Snoddy Papers.
“you asked me if I am under the ‘Riverside outing.’ No, Miss Peter, I have not been under the government or under any school since July 1911. Coodlalook and I have been out for ourselves since we left schools. We like to be free from any bosses since we are strong enough to work for our living. We have been happier and more contented than if somebody had been over us.”

There is also some evidence that Native students may have used the friendships they built with mother-teachers for their own purposes and desires. In response to Peter’s inquiry into Peter Commander’s plans for summer work, he wrote,

“I have no calculation made because my word is not accepted and you said that you would help me by putting in a word for me if you do it will help me very much…you seem to be willing to help me…I wish you would stay by me till I am able to return the help back. If I only had your learning it would (mean the) world for me.”

In this letter, Commander asked Peter to intercede on his behalf, although it was not clear from the context of the letter in what capacity her help was needed. Likewise, Annebuck, throughout the time she was a student at Chemawa, hinted to Peter that she wanted her help to return to Alaska. Annebuck didn’t like the climate in Oregon, writing that she was lonely there and that the weather always made her feel uncomfortable. She wrote almost poetically about Alaska and when her only brother died, she wanted to return there, and follow most of the other members of the original group that were taken to Carlisle by Sheldon Jackson. She wrote, “I hope I can go soon . . . I want to be home with my sister” and “I would go any day if I had the chance.”

Finally, Aleut student Nikifer Shousick wrote to Peter about the negative treatment he received while on an outing in Churchvel, Pennsylvania. Among his
complaints was that he was made to stay somewhere unpleasant all night, which caused him to be afraid. He asked Peter to speak to Capt. Pratt on his behalf so that he could withdraw money from his account, as he had not yet received any wages from his outing employer. He told her that he needed 10 dollars so that he could come back to school.289

Many of Peter’s former students expressed feelings of loneliness and alienation and shared their sadness about being apart from and losing friends and family. After Carlisle, Annebuck attended Chemawa Indian School in Oregon. She confided in Peter that she was “kind of lonesome” there and wished she could go back to Carlisle.290 In another letter she wrote about missing her family and expressed a strong desire “to go home sometimes (to) see (my) sisters and my brothers.”291 Although he didn’t fully explain his reasons for the comment, Ooleana expressed feelings of loneliness and alienation from some of the people living around him in Alaska. He wrote, “I like to go back to america again. I like live (around) white people. I did not like this people anymore.”292 Both of these former students also shared with Peter their losses of family and personal tragedies that befell other Carlisle students they knew. These expressions are examples of the loneliness, isolation and dislocation that defined many American Indian students’ experiences both during and after they left school. Like OOLEANA, many students who spent their formative years away from their families felt alienated from their Native communities upon their return. Their absences created “social vacuums” in which both children and adults were robbed of cultural and pedagogical experiences that

289 Nikifer Shoushick, Letter to Miss Peter, 13 April 1903, Peter file, CCHS.
290 Annebuck, Letter to Miss Peter, 3 January 1908, Peter file, CCHS.
291 Annebuck, Letter to Mrs. Mary Peter, 9 July 1899, Peter file, CCHS.
292 Ooleana, Letter to Miss Peter, 20 January 1909, Peter file, CCHS.
otherwise would have integrated children within the community.\textsuperscript{293} For Ooleana and many others, returning home after being educated at distant boarding schools was very difficult.

Despite the fact that Native students shared deeply held feelings with Fannie Peter, it doesn’t appear that she reciprocated with any of her own intimate feelings, even when her former students had grown to adulthood and she, theoretically, might have identified with some of their experiences. While we do not know how much personal information Miss Peter shared in her letters to her former students, there is almost nothing in the collection of student’s response letters to indicate that she had shared anything personal with them, except in the very last letter that Annebuck answered. Peter must have shared with Annebuck the fact that she was unwell because Annebuck responded, “I am sorry to hear that you have hurt yourself and is not able to be like a well person.” Other than this one small personal admission, there is nothing in the collection of former student’s response letters to indicate that Fannie Peter shared anything substantive or even trivial about her own life, no mention of her work, her personal life, etc.

If Fannie Peter had remained a teacher her entire career, this might not have been surprising. But Peter had quite a remarkable career for a woman during this time period. After teaching at Carlisle, at the age of 34, she entered the Washington College of Law at American University in Washington D.C., eventually earning a law degree. She passed the bar and worked as an attorney for the office of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C. until she retired in 1933. Among her responsibilities in the Sales Section of the Land Division of the Indian Office were examining and considering cases “involving sales and

\textsuperscript{293} Fear-Segal, \textit{White Man’s Club}, 63.
purchases of Indian lands and preparing such cases for action by the Department.” She also granted lands for religious societies and missions and later in her career, helped to “make clear the Secretary’s authority to approve or disapprove decrees of State Courts in adoption proceedings involving Indian children.” Fannie Peter was promoted at least once within the office of Indian Affairs and was touted because of “the rapidity, accuracy, and apparent ease with which she can unravel the most complicated ‘family tree’ in (Omaha and Winnebago) heirship matters is astonishing.”

The fact that Peter left her Indian School teaching career in 1904 means that she wrote most of her letters to her former students after she was no longer a teacher. Given her attempts to monitor, influence and control her students through her letters, this suggests that Fannie Peter believed that the federal authority she held while she was a teacher, in fact, transcended that position and indeed had no boundaries of either time or place.

With a mother to support, Fannie Peter might have struggled financially as a student to get through law school. As a lawyer she undoubtedly met with difficulties, as both law school and the office of Indian affairs were dominated by men. In her personal life, she most certainly struggled with life’s hardships and the loss of friends and family. Yet, she never reached out to her adult former students who wrote of having experienced similar events. In the case of Annebuck, who wrote the most response letters to her, there is no evidence that Peter encouraged her to pursue any other type of employment other than domestic work or teaching, despite the fact that she herself had attained a level of success and achievement that was remarkable for the time period.

294 Fannie I. Peter, NPRC file.
In fact, Anneebuck, in a 1916 letter to Nellie Robertson Denny who was then the chief clerk at Carlisle as well as a former Carlisle student herself, wrote about how difficult it was to make a living as a domestic worker. She spoke of regret at having been trained only in domestic duties at Carlisle and wrote, “I have been working in the private families since I left school and I am getting tired of it now. Housework is hard work and there is only a little money at the end of the month” and “no success coming in the future.” She continued that she wished she had taken a different course so that she “could make my living more comfortably and easily.”

Carlisle’s mother-teachers exploited their relationships with Indian children and used intimacy and expressions of love and friendship to further the colonial aims of the state. While young children were brought to Carlisle and forced to endure often, long periods of separation from their families in exchange for their people’s good behavior out west, they often turned to mother-teachers for their psychological and emotional needs. Tumasock, the very small Eskimo girl who wrote to her teacher, Peter, “I love you so much” and told her that she was a “best friend” and was “kind to me and Anneebuck” was one of those children. How was Tumasock’s love, friendship and trust reciprocated?

In 1901, three years after she arrived at the school and while she was still described as a “little girl,” Tumasock died of consumption at Carlisle. The way her death was characterized was illustrative of the perversion of intimacy by employees at Carlisle. Her death “though sad was beautiful” because “she was so resigned.” While she “was conscious almost to the last” she “was very little trouble, and was so good and patient.”

295 Anneebuck, Letter to Mrs. Denny, 15 August 1916, Peter file, CCHS.
Mother-Teacher’s Advocacy

There were a few mother-teachers at Carlisle whose relationships with Indian students were genuine and who tried to provide for their psychological and social needs while they were separated from their families and caregivers. Some Native students remembered having sincere, affectionate relationships with particular Carlisle teachers. For example, Emma Newashe (Sac & Fox) recalled that English teacher, Miss Foster “seemed to have a special favor for me” and called her one of the “predominating figures in my life.” Newashe said “her sweet disposition and clear conception of our hearts stand out as crystals.” She wrote, “I could absorbe (sic) almost anything from this teacher just because it was just that little bit of interest she showed she had of me.”

Emma Abbot Cutter, a “pioneer teacher” was well-loved by her Carlisle students and felt that she was like a mother to many American Indian children during her twenty-five year career. Cutter saw Carlisle as a home both for herself, for fellow employees and for students. Near the end of her life, Cutter who had maintained a correspondence with Pratt, Mrs. Pratt and their daughter, Nana Pratt, wrote the latter recalling her warm memories of Carlisle and the students she taught there. She wrote that when snow fell,

“(t)he students made sleds and used them every spare minute…Gen Pratt had an artificial hill made near the guard house, which sent the sleds a long way across campus. One thing that made work seem easy, was the fact that lots of pleasure went along with it. I have many pleasant memories of the happy times we had at the Superintendent’s home, in the chapel, in the gymnasium, and in the great out-of-doors of that beautiful valley.”

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297 Student file of Emma Newashe, Record Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5531, Box 140.
298 Emma Cutter, Letter to Nana Pratt, undated, Richard Henry Pratt Papers.
Reflecting on her years as a federal Indian schoolteacher, Cutter believed her strengths lay in “character building and motherly care.” Students loved Cutter and evidence suggests that she forged and maintained affectionate relationships with many of her students. Cutter was remembered for lending money to students when they needed it, maintaining the flowerbed at the base of the walnut tree on the Carlisle campus, and for always remembering students when she encountered them later in her career as a clerk in the Indian Office. She was so admired in fact, that at least one student, Kish Hawkins, named his daughter, Emma, after her.

Affectionate relationships between students and their white women teachers sometimes led those teachers to reflect critically on their work with Native children, to advocate for them and to condemn federal Indian policies and the role they played in carrying out those policies. For example, Verna Whistler (Dunagan) who taught music at Carlisle in the early twentieth century, had close relationships with Native students. In fact, she dated a fellow employee who was Indian, much to the disapproval of the other white faculty and staff. In an oral history conducted in 1976 she told an interviewer that although she knew students were forbidden to speak their traditional languages and that she was supposed to report them for speaking these languages, she “never squealed on them.” She said,

“I just couldn’t do it. Because you know, it got to be so they’s (sic) get, well, they’d get remorse; I mean, they’d feel so badly because they couldn’t speak their language and there’s where I think they made a mistake at the school. Now you see, their language is just – gone.”

299 The Arrow, 16 September 1910.
300 The Indian Helper, 12 May 1899; Teacher, Bessie Barclay also had a daughter of a student named after her.
301 I expected to find more examples of advocacy in my research on white women Carlisle teachers. In fact, I found very little evidence of advocacy in the personnel files of the teachers I examined.
302 Verna (Dunagan) Whistler, Oral History collected September 1976, Cumberland County Historical Society, 34.
Although she was teaching at the Carson Indian School when the incidents occurred, former Carlisle teacher Margaret Sweeney resisted her principal’s attempt to place third grade students into her fourth grade classroom. Sweeney told her principal that she didn’t believe that the third grade students were ready for more advanced work. When she suggested that the students be placed with a teacher who might be more appropriate to their level of preparation, Principal Sheward chastised her: “I am principal. I am promoting pupils, not the teacher and if you do not like it GET OUT.” One week later, the principal brought even more students to her classroom, only one of whom Sweeney believed was prepared academically. When Sweeney again tried to persuade him to place the students elsewhere, Shward reprimanded her in front of her students: “They will stay in this room and if you do not like it you can get out.” Lacking the books and supplies for these additional pupils, Sweeney reported the situation to the Superintendent, who, she believed, agreed with her position. Satisfied that the matter was closed, Sweeney left for a planned vacation. When she returned, she was shocked to discover that both men had conspired against her and planned to “put charges in against me.”

That year she received a formal disciplinary letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs who, short of firing her, criticized her because “you like to argue” and cautioned her that she needed to “get along” with her male superiors, warning her that she

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303 Letter to E. B. Meritt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 28 January 1928, Margaret M. Sweeney, Personnel Folder, National Personnel Records Center, National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, Mo.
should be “glad of the opportunity” to improve her conduct given that there was no shortage of teachers to replace her.\textsuperscript{304}

Former Carlisle teacher Estelle Aubrey Brown who, earlier in her career described her feelings of elation when she took the oath of office, at the end of her career, condemned federal Indian policies and her work to enforce them. Brown was a teacher at Crow Creek Industrial Boarding School in South Dakota, Seneca Indian Training Boarding School in Oklahoma and at Carlisle. After Carlisle she became a matron at Fort Yuma in Arizona and then a clerk, first at the Leupp School near the Arizona/California border and then at the Fort Hall Agency in Idaho.

Brown wrote, \textit{Stubborn Fool}, a narrative of her experiences as an Indian school teacher, matron and clerk. At the end of the book, as she recalled a career spent in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, she wrote an indictment of the federal Indian school system and the part she played in it. “I charged the Bureau with betrayal of the trust reposed in it by the American people, a people dedicated to human equality . . . to social and religious freedom.” She continued, “these rights, which we claim for ourselves, we owe to all minority groups within our borders. The Bureau denied the Indians these rights.” Reflecting on the lack of training she was given for her work she wrote, “I charged the Bureau with crass ignorance… They dealt with a primitive people, yet they saw no need to employ anthropologists and ethnologists to help these people to adjust themselves to the alien civilization which had submerged them.” She wrote, “the Bureau had been

\textsuperscript{304} For more on the male dominated Bureau of Indian Affairs and the ways white women teachers negotiated this patriarchal bureaucracy see Patricia A. Carter, “‘Completely Discouraged’: Women Teachers’ Resistance in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, 1900-1910,” \textit{Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies} 15, no. 3 (1995): 53-86.
entrusted with the education of thousands of Indian children, but it employed no skilled educators.”

Brown wrote about her memories of the difficult working conditions of the laundry room at the Pima Agency school where twenty twelve-year old girls worked.

“In a temperature of around 120 degrees, these girls ironed clothing four hours daily six days a week…I knew these girls were consistently over worked, knew they were always hungry…We all knew it; most of us resented it, were powerless or too cowardly to try to do anything about it…We were torn between the stark necessity to earn a living and our resentment at the shameful conditions under which we earned it.”

Brown was also witness to federal policies in the early twentieth century that directed officials to locate extremely young Navajo children and take them from their homes to be schooled at distant locations. “I charged the Bureau with wholesale kidnapping. Its inept and largely ineffectual system of Indian education was based on kidnapping, the separation for long periods of young children from their parents.”

Regarding the poor nutritional environment that many schools offered she wrote, “I charged the Bureau with being accessory to the death of many Indian children. For years the bureau had posed as a humane agency of succor, of training for citizenship.” She asserted, “I held these commissioners responsible for every undernourished and overworked boy and girl I watched sicken in their schools.” She also accused federal schools of continuously underfeeding children and as such, at the Pima school, she refused to lead the prayer that was said before each meal.

In her paper, “‘Completely Discouraged’: Women Teachers’ Resistance in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools, 1900-1910,” Patricia A. Carter writes that many

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306 Quoted in Carter, “‘Completely Discouraged,’” 73.
307 Brown, *Stubborn Fool.*
federal Indian school teachers felt helpless, guilty and were fearful of reprisals from their superiors in a male dominated bureaucracy and as a result felt powerless to speak out about their observations and experiences. In her final assessment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Brown wrote

“in my indictment of the Indian Service, I included myself. I entered the service believing implicitly in the Bureau’s wise and honorable aims. Disillusionment came slowly. I was one of a poorly educated, untrained group of people. I learned that dissent meant loss of a means of livelihood… I saw sick, hungry, and overworked children. And I did nothing. I was cowardly and acquiescent.”

Conclusion

Despite the fact that they were chosen ostensibly for their nurturing, maternal qualities, Carlisle’s mother-teachers were also agents of the state and enacted federal policies that placed vulnerable Native children in situations that many teachers exploited. While a few teachers undoubtedly had sincere relationships with American Indian children and tried to provide for their psychological and social needs while they were separated from their families and caregivers, many teachers used their relationships to more effectively carry out their duties as agents of the state. The desired outcome for many of Carlisle’s white mother-teachers was the quick and total assimilation and Americanization of American Indian children. Their goal was to erase any traces of Indianism, including Native languages, and to inculcate in American Indian children Protestant Christian values, gender norms and vocational roles.

This paper has demonstrated that many of Carlisle’s mother-teachers created and maintained relationships with former students in order to more effectively supervise, monitor and control them. White teacher’s close relationships with Native students

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308 Ibid.
facilitated those students being placed in the homes of teachers to work. While white
teachers may have cared about the students working and living in their homes, they
nonetheless, benefitted from cheap student labor. These outing arrangements also allowed
white women teachers to extend their surveillance of students to sites off campus.
Carlisle teachers also used correspondence as a monitoring tool. Fannie I. Peter
developed close relationships with Native children while they were students at Carlisle,
maintained them through correspondence, and used them to attempt to monitor and
influence former students towards assimilation. Letter writing was an effective method of
surveillance for teachers because it could be deployed to any location. Peter’s
correspondence with her students also occurred after they were no longer Carlisle
students and after she, herself was no longer a teacher in the Indian Service. Fannie I.
Peter’s relationships with her students and the way she attempted to manipulate those
relationships to more effectively carry out federal policies of assimilation demonstrates
that for many of Carlisle’s mother-teachers, once they had sworn an oath to kill the
Indian because they loved her, they considered it their duty to carry it out for the rest of
their lives.
TABLE 5.1:

AMERICAN INDIAN GIRLS’ OUTING ASSIGNMENTS IN THE HOME OF KATHERINE MCCRAE (WIEST), 1902-1918

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winter</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Elsie Skanandore</td>
<td>Elsie Skanandore</td>
<td>Maud Simpson</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1903</td>
<td>Maud Simpson</td>
<td>Maud Simpson</td>
<td>Maud Simpson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Minnie Rice</td>
<td>Minnie Rice</td>
<td>Emma Kickapoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Lucinda LeRoy</td>
<td>Elkany Wolf</td>
<td>Elkany Wolf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Elknay Wolf, Emma Hill</td>
<td>Elknay Wolf, Emma Hill</td>
<td>Elknay Wolf, Annie Buck</td>
<td>Salina Two Guns, Dorcas Earle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Dorcas Earle</td>
<td>Dorcas Earle, Lulu O’ Hara</td>
<td>Lulu O’ Hara</td>
<td>Dorcas Earle</td>
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<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Salina Two Guns</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Susie Hemlock, Nancy John</td>
<td>Susie Hemlock</td>
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<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Susie Hemlock, Mary Marcotte</td>
<td>Mary Marcotte</td>
<td>Mary Marcotte</td>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Susie Hemlock</td>
<td>Susie Hemlock</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Mabel Burnette</td>
<td>Mabel Burnette</td>
<td>Clara Sundown</td>
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<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Clara Sundown</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Clara Sundown</td>
<td>Clara Sundown</td>
<td>Clara Sundown</td>
<td>Jessie Daisy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jessie Daisy</td>
<td>Jessie Daisy</td>
<td>Clara Sundown</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
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<td>1916</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
<td>Lizzie Red Owl</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
<td>Lucinda Nolan</td>
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</table>

This table and the outing information about Katherine McCrae (Wiest) are courtesy of Barbara Landis, CCHS, and are printed here with her permission.
CHAPTER SIX

“WHEN THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF LIVING SOULS OF MY OWN BLOOD IN NEED OF A HELPING HAND, THERE IS WHERE I SHALL WORK”: THE WORK AND LIFE EXPERIENCES OF NATIVE TEACHERS AT THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL

Introduction

In the late nineteenth century as the first group of educated Native women emerged from federal educational institutions designed to assimilate them into American society, they faced employment barriers structured primarily by gender and race which narrowly defined middle-class women’s work. While women of color, poor women and immigrant women had always worked outside the home in order to support their families, middle class white women were constrained by an ideology that sought to limit their activity in the public sphere.\(^{309}\) In the mid-nineteenth century, as America became more industrialized and the household, traditionally a site of production, became a private sphere of consumption, the middle-class home became associated with femininity and the public sphere, masculinity. Concomitant with these economic changes, an ideology of domesticity or a “cult of true womanhood” arose that provided social regulations for white women’s behavior and their sphere of action. Women were expected to demonstrate piety, purity, and submissiveness, to refrain from public action and restrict themselves to the home, exercising their moral influence over their husbands and children.\(^{310}\) Domesticity, however, also provided a rationale for white, middle-class women’s entrance into selective areas in the labor market, including teaching as well as

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\(^{309}\) Despite little research on the topic, there is a long history of Native women and men participating, selectively, in the American labor market. See Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

nursing, missionary and reform work.\footnote{Barbara Leslie Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981); Lori D. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Kate Rousmaniere, Kari Delhi, and Ning de Coninck-Smith, ed., Discipline, Moral Regulation, and Schooling: A Social History (New York: Routledge, 1997).} As men were drawn to full-time wage labor opportunities and away from part-time teaching positions, as common schools began to proliferate in most regions of the country and as women came to be seen as being naturally suited to the work, the numbers of female teachers exploded. By the 1880s, women teachers predominated in both public and private schools.\footnote{Jo Anne Preston, “Domestic Ideology, School Reformers, and Female Teachers: Schoolteaching Becomes Women’s Work in Nineteenth-Century New England,” The New England Quarterly 66, no. 4 (1993): 531-551.}

As educated American Indian women assessed their future employment choices, many of them chose teaching. But because of their race, Native teachers, even those trained at the same normal schools as white women, found that common schools were not an available option for them. Despite Superintendent Richard Henry Pratt’s rationale for locating the Carlisle Indian School in the east where there was less prejudice against Indians and they would be given more opportunities to compete equally with whites, few Native teachers were employed alongside white teachers in common schools. Future teacher Cynthia Webster (Oneida) addressed this inequity that Indian girls were “sent out only among the schools of their own race” in her 1896 commencement speech, titled “Indian Girls as Teachers.” She blamed Indian girls’ inability to teach in white schools on the lack of higher educational opportunities available to Indian teachers. “We all know that the education of the Indian girls, who have taken the course of teaching is far below that of their white sisters and brothers who are engaged in the same field.” Criticizing the government’s educational policies, which emphasized vocational training, she asserted,
“the purpose of the government is to give all the Indian youth of school age, who can be reached a proper training.” She continued, “(t)here is an urgent need among them for a class of leaders of thought such as lawyers, physicians, preachers, teachers, editors and progressive, trained workers, who know how to work and have the inclination.”

While most American Indian teachers were prevented from securing employment in white public schools, there were some important exceptions. One is Isabella Cornelius (Oneida) who taught white children for three years in the public schools of Connecticut. Graduating from Carlisle in 1892, Cornelius attended the State Normal School of New Britain, CT, earning her teaching degree in June 1896. Most likely, Pratt raised funds for Cornelius to attend the normal school, as he did with other advanced students. It is known that the Interior Department expressly denied funding her education at the white school on the grounds that it was better “to use Government funds in giving a large number of Indians an elementary education which will fit them for self-helpful labor than to give a few university training.”

In October 1896, a letter written by Cornelius to her friend Lizzie was published in one of the school’s newspapers. In it she described her work among the white children of Cromwell, CT. She described the town as “pleasant” and the people “kind and very

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314 According to Barbara Landis, the Wisconsin Oneidas had generally more schooling than other groups when they arrived at Carlisle and had higher graduation rates. More Oneida students trained in the professions than other groups. For example, Isabella’s sister, Nancy Cornelius graduated with honors from the Hartford Training School for Nurses and became the first American Indian nurse to work in a white hospital. Landis also notes that most Oneidas carried the Carlisle philosophy back to Wisconsin with them after they left. See Barbara Landis, “Oneidas at Carlisle Indian School, 1884-1918,” in *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860-1920*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester III (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 48-55.
315 *The Indian Helper*, 3 July 1896, 4; In this letter she wrote to a Carlisle friend that she was “proud of her sheep skin and red skin too.” The reference to her sheep skin is highly ambiguous and could be interpreted in multiple ways. Perhaps she felt she had to act “white” so that some of her peers would accept her. Or perhaps she used sheep skin straightforwardly to refer to her diploma which was called a sheepskin in the nineteenth century, as most of them were printed on sheep skin.
316 *The World*, Thursday, 22 June 1893.
sociable” which she said “is true of all New England states.” She felt “fortunate” to have secured the position, for it was the grade she desired to teach. At the Cromwell public school, Cornelius taught twenty white children ranging from ages 8 to 13, and her “highest class” was in “Fractions.” Regarding the behavior of the white children, she said, “(t)hey are nice children, too, but need to learn a great deal in manners, etc.”

Cornelius earned more than the primary teacher who taught in the same building. She reported, “(m)y salary is thirty six dollars per month” but “(t)he teacher downstairs gets twenty-five. The primary teachers do not get as much.” She also mentioned that she found the workload tolerable because “I do not have to work as hard as when I was in the practice school at South Manchester.”

Cornelius recalled that her white normal school friends assumed after graduation she would go back to her people to teach but she explained that she wanted to remain in the east until she felt “stronger in experience.” Perhaps Isabella saw her work in the Connecticut public schools as a training ground for her future work as a teacher in the Oneida schools. Isabella eventually returned to Wisconsin around 1900 to help her sister, care for their blind mother. The last reference to her in the Carlisle student newspapers notes that in 1914 she was married to Joshua Denny and was a housekeeper.

The vast majority of Native teachers were forced to look to the federal government and the Indian School Service that they themselves were educated in, for employment. By accepting teaching positions in the federal Indian school system,

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318 *The Carlisle Arrow*, 20 February 1914, 3.
319 For American Indian students who attended Carlisle and later became employees, their employment information was usually housed in their Carlisle student folders. Elizabeth Bender, however, did have a personnel file because she graduated from Hampton Institute and started her service at Carlisle after 1908 when personnel files began being compiled.
Native American women immersed themselves within “the administrative arm of a conquering state.” Their work presented obvious contradictions and areas for conflict and must have created varying degrees of ambivalence for them as they were expected to teach from a curriculum that was designed to eradicate their Native cultures. Indeed, some former American Indian students have been accused of fully absorbing the lessons of assimilation and as teachers, “took up the white woman’s burden,” and foisted these same lessons back on to American Indian children.

This chapter will examine the work and life experiences of Native teachers who taught at Carlisle and will argue that these teachers neither fully absorbed nor completely rejected the lessons of assimilation they learned at government schools but rather accommodated some lessons from the curriculum and others, more politically minded, resisted important aspects. Likewise, as teachers, Native women were selective in their choice to teach certain aspects of the curriculum that had resonated in their own lives and careful to avoid other aspects that didn’t accord with their values. As advocates and reformers, Native teachers drew from their experiences, both as students and as

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employees in the federal Indian school system and used their agency to use, or in some cases, circumvent the school system on behalf of tribal communities.

Scholarly research on the history of Native teachers is scant. A review of the literature results in one article on the topic and but three book length autobiographies on early twentieth century teachers including Polingaysi Qoyawayma’s, *No Turning Back: A Hopi Woman’s Struggle to Live in Two Worlds*, Esther Burnett Horne and Sally McBeth’s, *Essie’s Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher* and Ruth Muskrat Bronson’s, *Indians are People Too*. While the literature on federal Indian schools is substantial, few works examine the presence of Native teachers in classrooms, their impact on and relationships with students and how their work in federal schools influenced their choices later in their lives, particularly pertaining to their advocacy work and political organizing. The absence of scholarly attention on American Indian teachers in federal Indian boarding schools is surprising given the number of Native employees who worked in the Indian School Service.

American Indian teachers are also missing from histories of teaching. For example, while *Women’s True Profession: Voices From the History of Teaching* is an

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323 Any historical study on the topic should take into account the fact that prior to Euro-American attempts to formally school Native people, indigenous societies in North America had their own systems of education and their own teachers. For example, a young woman’s teachers were manifold and would likely include her mother, older female siblings, extended family members as well as particular members of her community, i.e., her clan relatives. Teaching a child to properly follow their culture’s norms was an important endeavor in indigenous societies and reflected on the efforts of that person’s family as well as the entire community. For more on indigenous education see James Rodger Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); For scholarly research on contemporary American Indian teachers, see the recent book by Terry Huffman, *American Indian Educators in Reservation Schools* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2013).

examination of predominantly white women’s teaching experiences, a variety of contexts are explored including the work of teachers on behalf of missionary organizations and women who taught in schools on the frontier. Both an immigrant’s experience is offered as are African American teachers who taught in the South. One chapter is dedicated to the work of Frances O. Grant, an African American teacher who taught at an African American boarding school, the Bordentown Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth.\textsuperscript{325} The experience of an American Indian teacher at, for example, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, set alongside Grant’s would have served for an interesting comparison and might have generated new lines of inquiry.

Within the Indian school system, Native teachers could choose from work in large off-reservation boarding schools, reservation boarding schools or day schools located on reservations. While there were many similarities in these teaching experiences, there were also important differences and of course, each woman approached their work in their own individual way. For the women under consideration for this study, some began their work in the Indian School Service at Carlisle and moved on to other opportunities, while others started elsewhere and then finished their work at Carlisle. Regardless, the Carlisle Indian School was a touch point for American Indian teachers. During the time it served as the flagship institution for educating American Indians, Native teachers used their association with it to help them achieve their goals of advocacy and reform. Even during the time when Carlisle suffered from scandal and mismanagement, Native teachers were drawn to it. In a 1914 letter, Elizabeth Bender (Chippewa), wrote that Superintendent of Carlisle Oscar Lipps, had a “tremendous task of trying to build up

Carlisle and make it a school that people will have faith in” and that “if I in any way can help my people by being a teacher at Carlisle, I for one, will not be guilty of ‘laying down on the job,’ to use a western expression.”

Normal Training at Carlisle

The first Native American teachers at the Carlisle Indian School received their normal training there and practiced teaching as “pupil teachers.” In 1886, Superintendent Pratt expanded the vocational choices for women when he started a normal program at Carlisle. Later, nursing was added as an additional option for women. Pratt may have added these vocational alternatives because Hampton offered normal classes, or because, by the late nineteenth century, teaching and nursing were legitimate options for white women. Pratt also may have instituted the normal program at Carlisle because students like Jemima Wheelock (Oneida), Rosa Bourassa (Chippewa) and Nellie Robertson (Sioux) inspired him to do so. These three young women arrived at Carlisle in the 1880s already fluent in English with years of western schooling experience behind them. They were advanced students who outwardly accepted important aspects of the citizenship and civilization curriculum and perhaps he created the normal department so students like these had advanced opportunities. As part of their normal training, these pupil teachers substituted for white teachers when needed. Later, after they completed their normal training at Carlisle, Pratt encouraged these and other women who wanted advanced educational opportunities, to attend white normal schools around Pennsylvania. For example, Nellie Robertson graduated from Bloomsburg Normal and, like other Native

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326Elizabeth Bender, Letter to Mrs. Roe, 3 January 1914, Carlos Montezuma Papers, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA (hereafter CCHS).
teachers, eventually taught at Carlisle. While a handful of Native American men became pupil teachers, most of the teachers that the Carlisle normal program produced were women.

In many ways creating a normal department at Carlisle was antithetical to Richard Henry Pratt’s own educational philosophy for Indians. After all he said:

> Considerable pressure has been placed upon me, at different times by officials and others interested to give this school the character of an Indian college or institution for the higher education of Indian youth. These propositions I have always opposed, believing such a course to be antagonistic to the best interests of the Indians and the Government. What the Indians need is not Indian schools but an entrance into the affairs of the nation and the opportunity to utilize the public and other schools already established where race is not a qualification.\(^{327}\)

In 1886 he added a normal course to the academic curriculum and the year after, elaborated upon it. The first normal students were: Jemima Wheelock, Julia Bent, Jennie DuBray, Rosa Bourassa, Nellie Robertson, and Lydia Flint. Each of these young women was assigned to a section to observe and assist the regular teacher. Members of the first normal class took recitations and received daily pedagogical instruction from the female principal. In order to support the normal class, Pratt opened a kindergarten for the younger children in the late spring of 1886 and he considered it successful as the girls in the normal class helped the kindergarten students with their classroom work and took part with them in the instruction. In his Annual Report for that year, he recommended to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that kindergartens be opened in other Indian schools because it was an efficient way to aid language study as well “as a method of giving confidence” to the older girls.\(^{328}\)


\(^{328}\) Ibid.
The normal department soon became “an important factor in the school” and a post-graduate course was offered the second year. Pratt reorganized the normal department with the help of Miss Hunt, the principal teacher, and the first and second grades, which comprised 50 of the smallest children, were taught by the pupil teachers under the supervision of the teacher in charge. In addition to their practice work, normal students also received special normal instruction. Pratt said, the normal program “is intended that pupils of proper degree of advancement who show aptitude shall be taken as practice teachers, selected as much as possible from different agencies.”

After completion of the normal program at Carlisle, Pratt arranged for the young women who wanted to become teachers to go on outings near particular normal schools and colleges with which he had a relationship. Pratt sent Native women to Bloomsburg Literary and Normal School, West Chester State Normal School, Shippensburg Normal School, and the Metzger Institute, a private women’s college in Carlisle. The women under consideration attended these state supported institutions during what Christine Ogren called the “heyday of the state normal schools,” the forty-year period when these schools “offered a unique educational environment for a distinct student body.” Included within this unique student body were, for the first time, middle class women from different ethnic and racial groups as well as older students. These women were part of a the first “visible majority” at state normal schools and as such, began to develop their own cultures on campus apart from men.

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329 Ibid.
330 These schools became Bloomsburg University, West Chester University and Shippensburg University, which exist today. Metzger is no longer in existence.
332 Ibid., 65.
Bloomsburg Literary and Normal School was both a training school for teachers and a college preparatory school. The teacher-training program offered a two-year curriculum and the college preparatory, a four-year program. Bloomsburg outlined the objectives of the normal department for the two-year teacher-training program as follows:

“This department aims to give not only a thorough knowledge of the principles that underlie and govern all correct teaching, but also skill in the practical application of them. During both years of this course daily instruction is given either in the science or the art of teaching. The juniors study first, School Economy and afterwards have lectures and discussions on methods of teaching. The seniors besides studying the philosophy of instruction, or Methods, teach half the school year in the Model School, under the supervision of the Professor of the Professional Department and the Principal of the Model School and under the inspection of committees of observation of their own members.”

While most of the pupil teachers completed their programs at these Pennsylvania state normals, Nellie and Rosa went on to attend Metzger Institute for at least two more years for advanced education. Metzger Institute was incorporated in 1881 “for the purpose of opening a non-denominational Christian college for women” in the town of Carlisle, PA. At the time, Carlisle’s only other institution for advanced education was Dickinson College, whose enrollment was almost entirely men, with one or two exceptions. Nellie and Rosa studied beside young white women learning the “useful and ornamental branches of education” and taking courses in subjects such as English, mathematics, Latin, geography, Bible study, French, German, philosophy, rhetoric, the sciences, art, and music. Metzger was one of the few colleges for women that also offered

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334 Collection Register, Metzger Institute, Carlisle, PA, Archives and Special Collections, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA, http://chronicles.dickinson.edu/findingaids/Metzger%20Institute.pdf.
an athletic program for young women. Metzger Institute students could choose between three courses of study: the Classical Course, the English Course, or the College Preparatory Course. Metzger Institute became Metzger College in 1894 and expanded its offerings, providing women with two more choices of study, the Modern Language Course and the Special Course, which allowed women to take classes without pursuing a degree. Later, because of funding problems, the school was absorbed by Dickinson College and, along with many other institutions at the turn of the century, began to accommodate the growing numbers of women who wanted access to equal educational opportunities. Later Alice Denomie (Ojibwe), a pupil teacher in the 1900s, became a student at Dickinson College in 1907 and graduated from Carlisle in 1908.

It is clear from references to pupil teachers in The Indian Helper that this group of women held an ambiguous position at Carlisle, at least in the early years. Their interactions with the white teachers who were supervising them seemed positive. In fact, pupil teachers spent a good deal of social time with their white teachers. References to this are peppered throughout The Indian Helper. Occasionally pupil teachers accompanied white teachers to conventions and teacher’s institutes. At other times the pupil teachers would go on “pleasure trips” or out “to take tea” with their white teachers. Pupil teachers were frequently invited into the Teacher’s Club to dine with the teachers. The pupil teachers were a benefit to the school, especially when white teachers had to be away from campus and substitutes were needed. They regularly

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335 Ibid.
336 Ibid.
338 *The Carlisle Arrow*, “Local Miscellany” Friday 25 January 1907.
339 *The Indian Helper*, 1 May 1891.
substituted for white teachers when they were ill or on vacation or when the white teachers were attending conferences, teaching institutes, and/or meetings.\textsuperscript{340} Yet, they were also supervised more critically and held to an even higher standard than their female peers. An admonishment to them, printed for the entire school to read went as follows: “The pupil teachers were receiving a lesson in drawing from dictation when the Man on the Band Stand’s clerk happened in the Normal room, Tuesday night.” It continued, (i)f they don’t watch out, the little ones whom they are to teach the same lesson will beat them at following directions with one telling.”\textsuperscript{341}

The Presence of Native Teachers at Carlisle

Despite a great deal of effort on his part to support the normal school training and advanced education of the most successful American Indian students, Richard Henry Pratt actually employed very few Native teachers during his tenure at Carlisle (Table 6.1). Although he created a normal program which offered students the opportunity to practice teaching in the classrooms at Carlisle as pupil teachers, although he secured funding for students to attend normal schools when the government refused to fund their education, although he arranged for outing situations near students’ normal schools so that they had room and board, Pratt only employed two Carlisle students for a significant period of time.\textsuperscript{342} Rosa Bourassa (Chippewa) remained the longest, teaching at Carlisle a

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{340} The Indian Helper, 28 October 1887.
\item \textsuperscript{341} The Indian Helper, 23 February 1891.
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total of fourteen years. Nellie Robertson (Sioux) taught for four years, but because of a persistent illness, became a clerk and then managed the outing system. Robertson had the distinction of being at Carlisle almost continuously from her initial arrival as a student in 1880 to 1918 when the school was closed by the federal government. Among the teachers who were trained elsewhere and taught at Carlisle later in their careers, Angel De Cora taught 12 years, arriving in 1906 and Gertrude Simmons, a.k.a. Zitkala-Sa and Elizabeth Bender each taught for no more than two years.

In fact from the years 1890 to 1904, when Pratt was forced to retire, the number of American Indian teachers actually declined at Carlisle, despite an increase of Native teachers in the Indian School Service overall. According to Cathleen Cahill’s recent comprehensive study of the Indian Service, “(a)s the school service developed during the 1880s, Indians in the service began to substantially increase in number as well as in (a) variety of positions.” According to the commissioner of Indian affairs, “in 1888… Indian employees constituted 15 percent of the School Service. By 1895 that proportion had risen to 23 percent and by 1899 to a peak of 45 percent.”

Native teachers held an ambiguous status while employed at Carlisle, at least in the early years. As student teachers in contemporary school settings, American Indian teachers were considered neither wholly a teacher nor completely a student. For example, though Rosa Bourassa’s student record card indicated she graduated, received her diploma and had been discharged in 1890, and was counted on the official employee

343 Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5242, Box 133, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington D.C. (hereafter NARA).
344 Angel DeCora’s employment dates found in Linda M. Waggoner, Fire Light: The Life of Angel De Cora, Winnebago Artist (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), Gertrude Bonin, a.k.a. Zitkala-Sa’s dates of employment found in ARCIA, 1898, 633-634; Employee Record Card, Elizabeth Bender, Personnel File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO (hereafter NPRC).
345 Cahill, Federal Fathers and Mothers, 106.
roster that same year, from 1890-1892, in fact, Bourassa attended Metzger College in Carlisle and continued to be sent by the Carlisle Indian School to work on outings, including during the summers of 1890 and 1891 when she resided with the wealthy Belt family, whose head was the business manager of one of the country’s largest whip manufacturers.\textsuperscript{346}

Further complicating their status, Bourassa, along with all of the other Native women who were trained at Carlisle and then joined the ranks of Carlisle’s teachers, earned much less than their white counterparts.\textsuperscript{347} Bourassa and 14 other teachers earned only $60 per annum from 1890-1892, approximately one tenth of the salary of most of the white teachers at the time.\textsuperscript{348} In 1892, only three American Indian teachers remained. Despite her years of experience, Rosa Bourassa was listed only as an assistant teacher that year and earned $540 per annum. Seven years after she became a teacher at Carlisle, Bourassa finally earned a salary equivalent to most white teachers, $600 per annum.\textsuperscript{349}

From the government’s perspective, the rationale for paying American Indian female teachers such a low salary was that working in the Indian School Service was an extension of their education. According to Superintendent of Indian Schools, William Hailmann,

“the educational responsibility of the schools toward the Indians does not end with the graduation of the latter, and that within limits, his introduction into a corps of responsible workers is as serious a duty of the school as his industrial and literary training as a pupil.”\textsuperscript{350}

\textsuperscript{346} Salaries for each employee are listed in the ARCIA 1890-92; Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5242, Box 133, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington D.C. (hereafter NARA).
\textsuperscript{347} See Appendix for a list of American Indian Teachers at Carlisle from 1890-1904.
\textsuperscript{348} ARCIA, 1890-92.
\textsuperscript{349} ARCIA, 1897.
Policy makers believed that in addition, Indian employment in the school service taught employees the “virtues of productive labor within the free market” and prevented educated Indians from regressing back into savagery. Of course, “their employment also benefited the federal government because the Indian Office often paid Native employees less than white employees for the same work.”351

While Rosa Bourassa and Nellie Robertson decided to stay at off-reservation boarding schools like Carlisle, other Native teachers chose to teach at reservation boarding schools or day schools. Jemima Wheelock, like many of the Oneida teachers, chose to become a “teacher among her people” and returned home to Wisconsin to teach first at the Green Bay Agency School and then at the Oneida Boarding School.352 This choice allowed Wheelock to contribute to her Oneida community but also allowed her to remain close to her family. As Cathleen Cahill notes,

> “living on a reduced land base where their previous economies had been destroyed or greatly diminished, Indians knew that federal employment was often the only wage-labor option that allowed them to earn money while remaining in their communities. This meant, however, that their labor contributed to the continuation of the federal government’s colonial agenda in their communities.”353

> “Teaching among my own people” held a different meaning for other teachers, including Elizabeth Bender who considered her own people all American Indians.354

Clearly, Bender’s identity as an American Indian encompassed, not only her Chippewa

351 Cahill, Federal Fathers and Mothers, 106.
352 The Indian Helper, 25 September 1891; ARClA, 1892, 874; Hauptman and McLester III, Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment.
353 Cahill, Federal Fathers and Mothers, 120.
ancestry, but also a pan-Indianism, an unintended outcome of schools like Hampton and Carlisle.\footnote{Despite Pratt’s attempts to de-culturalize American Indian students by forbidding them to speak their languages, housing children from unfamiliar tribes together and refusing to let them to home, one of the unintended outcomes of federal off-reservation boarding schools was that Native students began, through a shared language and shared experiences via the federal government, to craft an American Indian identity. This pan-Indianism eventually led to the first all Native American political interest groups as discussed later in this chapter.}

**Native Women Teachers at Carlisle: Taking Up the White Woman’s Burden?**

For historians, the most obvious contradiction in the work of American Indian teachers was the fact that by teaching in the Indian School Service, Native teachers were complicit with the federal government’s agenda to eradicate American Indian cultures and, at least to some extent, cooperated with federal aims and goals. In *White Mother to a Dark Race*, historian Margaret D. Jacobs contends that Native boarding school students who later became teachers in federal schools were “converts” and in their work American Indian women “took up the white woman’s burden.”\footnote{Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 306.}

This chapter will argue that Native American federal Indian schoolteachers did not, however, simply soak up the lessons they were taught in federal schools. Nor did they simply use the classroom to fully recapitulate their Carlisle educations on to future generations of Native students. Rather these future teachers accepted those values, ethics and beliefs that fit with who they were when they arrived at places like Carlisle and contested other aspects of what they were taught. When Native teachers entered classrooms full of American Indian students they did not teach them that their cultures were backward and primitive and that they must completely abandon their histories, customs, and traditions to survive in a modern America. Instead, Native teachers taught
and modeled for their students how to integrate the most desirable aspects of both their traditional cultures and Euro-American norms and values in order to remain an Indian and an American.

There is a tendency among historians who examine federal Indian boarding schools to ignore the educational and cultural histories of American Indian students prior to their arrival at federal boarding schools. By not taking into account students’ prior educational and cultural experiences, scholars abandon any hope of developing an emic perspective on students’ perceptions of their educations at boarding schools. An exception, however, is Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert’s book, *Education Beyond the Mesas*, which explores the lives of Hopi students and their leaders at Sherman Institute, a federal Indian boarding school located in Riverside, CA from 1902-1929. In his introduction, Sakiestewa Gilbert explains that the Hopi arrived in present-day northern Arizona as a result of a series of migrations through “three underworlds” into this life, known as the “fourth way of life.” According to Sakiestewa Gilbert, a Hopi way of understanding the boarding school experience is by seeing it as another wave of Hopi migration. As with all Hopi migration and movement from one time and space to another, the Hopi sought “to learn ways to be useful” along the journey. The Hopi believed that the new knowledge they gained at schools such as Sherman Institute, where many of the Hopi tribe were schooled, should be brought back to the mesas and shared with the members of different clans to, ultimately, strengthen Hopi society as a whole. The Hopi people, however, did not respond to forced schooling in a uniform way. As with members of any human society, different perspectives on the value of Euro-American schooling existed among the different clans. While many mothers, fathers, tribal leaders and community members

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357 Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education Beyond the Mesas*, xxi.
resisted their children being taken away from them, other families encouraged schooling to better prepare the next generation to live in the modern world or to become mediators between their people and American society.\textsuperscript{358}

The Hopi believed that while on their migrations they would share their perspectives, values, beliefs and traditions with all those they encountered, including at places like Sherman Institute and the Carlisle Indian School. Thus, when Hopi students entered schools designed to completely assimilate them, they were convinced that they would teach others just as much about Hopi culture as they would learn new and, potentially, learn useful information to take back with them to Arizona.

In analyzing the Hopi’s schooling at Sherman Institute by beginning with Hopi ways of knowing, Sakiestewa Gilbert then, is able to ask and answer more complex questions about the Hopi’s experiences at federal schools. For example, what new information did the Hopi find useful at places like Sherman and Carlisle? In what ways did the Hopi impart their cultural values and traditions at federal boarding schools? How did the Hopi use the information they learned when they returned back to the mesas? Historians of federal Indian boarding schools often note that American Indian students responded in a variety of different ways to their forced schooling. By making the effort to attempt to understand the prior experiences of Native Americans who attended these schools by using, for example, ethno-historical sources, oral histories or interviews with contemporary American Indian people, scholars may begin to account for the variability in reactions to forced federal schooling.

Teaching at Carlisle was not a contradiction for many of the Native American women who worked there and at other federal Indian boarding schools, despite other

\textsuperscript{358}Ibid.
scholars’ claims. Raised by immigrant fathers and Native mothers, many of these women learned at an early age how to embrace their bi-cultural heritages. As young girls, most of the first American Indian teachers saw value in aspects of western education and had already attended schools either on or near their reservations prior to arriving at federal schools as students. Many sought more advanced educational opportunity for themselves while at Carlisle and after graduation, rather than return to their reservations, decided for different reasons to pursue teaching.

Future Carlisle teacher Nellie Robertson was the granddaughter of an educated Scottish immigrant, Andrew Robertson, who graduated from Durham College, in Dumfries, Scotland, and Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Jane Anderson, a.k.a. Anpachiyayewin or “Daybreak Woman” who, as a girl was sent by her white relatives to Lower Canada to become formally educated and eventually became a schoolteacher in Coldwater, Canada.359 Andrew was the head farmer for the government at the Yellow Medicine Agency and later became the superintendent of Indian schools on the reservation from 1854-1858.360 The couple had a son, Angus Robertson who was appointed government farmer for the Mde-wa-kan-ton bands of Dakota and was head farmer for Little Crow’s band of Sioux at Kaposia. Angus Robertson, Nellie Robertson’s father, was educated at the agency school at Kaposia.361 In 1859 after Andrew died suddenly of a heart attack, Jane, with the help of Angus, was appointed the superintendent of Indian schools.362

360 Ibid.
362 ARobia, 1859, 96.
Nellie Robertson’s familial educational history is an important consideration when placing her experiences at Carlisle in historical context. Nellie’s grandparents were highly educated relative to their peers and ensured their son, Angus received schooling at Miss J. S. Williamson’s school at the Kaposia agency school where his father farmed. At the school Angus read the Bible in both English and Dakota and studied from Morse’s School Geography and Smith’s Arithmetic.\(^3\) It is likely that his daughters Ellie, Nellie, Anna and son Wilder were enrolled at one of the schools of which he was superintendent prior to their attendance at federal Indian boarding schools.\(^4\)

Rosa Bourassa, the daughter of Julia, a missionary educated, full-blooded Chippewa and Benjamin F. Bourassa, of French and Chippewa ancestry, arrived at Carlisle in August of 1889 from her home in Michigan.\(^5\) Her student record card indicates she was in school 108 months before attending Carlisle, entering at the 9\(^{th}\) grade, the level at which, for most other students, indicated completion of the program at Carlisle.

In the decade before she was born, Indian communities in Michigan witnessed a dramatic shift in the administration and delivery of education to their children as the federal government wrested control of schooling from the missionary boards that had for decades, previously dominated. According to historian Bruce Rubenstein, during this period in Michigan, Indian day schools were well supported and were equipped with well-qualified and highly paid teachers. Because the Bourassas were a “mixed blood” family, they were among the first category of persons to be approached regarding the

\(^3\)ARCIA, 1850, 177.
\(^5\)Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5242, Box 133, NARA.
schooling of their children. More familiar with white educational norms, it was thought the children of “mixed-blood” families would be more receptive to schooling.\(^{366}\)

Rosa Bourassa’s “mixed-blood” father influenced her to seek more education at Carlisle. She likely received a relatively good education in Michigan and credited her laborer father, Benjamin, for her desire to seek even more education and to work hard to succeed. Reflecting on his influence, she said:

“I had a father who knew the value of an education. It was his ambition to have his children become educated. In the summertime I had to work hard in order that I might go to school in the winter. I am glad to day that I learned to work hard when I was young. If we learn to work hard when we are young, there is no reason why we should not make a success in life, because success comes by hard work.”\(^{367}\)

Although Elizabeth Georgian Bender attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, VA and became a teacher at Carlisle in the 1910s, the circumstances regarding her arrival to Hampton as well as recollections of her father’s influence on her desire to become more educated are included because they are similar to the experiences of the other Native women under consideration.\(^{368}\)

Elizabeth Bender’s desire to seek more educational opportunity at Hampton caused strife between her German immigrant father and Chippewa mother. Born in 1887 on the White Earth Indian Reservation, Elizabeth was the daughter of Anishinaabe Mary Razor (Razier) and Albertus Bliss Bender, a German settler.\(^{369}\) Albertus Bender was one of the early white homesteaders in Minnesota, leaving Massachusetts at a young age

\(^{366}\) Bruce Rubenstein, “To Destroy a Culture: Indian Education in Michigan, 1855-1900,” *Michigan History* 60, no. 2 (Summer 1976): 137-160.

\(^{367}\) “Mrs. LaFlesche Relates Her Experiences,” *Carlisle Sentinel*, 1914, Rosa Bourassa Student Folder, NARA.

\(^{368}\) Elizabeth Bender, PF, NPRC.

because of the poor treatment he received by his adoptive parents, an aunt and uncle. As an adult, Bender traveled to northern Minnesota to join other men who were working in a logging camp and it is there where he learned the Chippewa language and met Mary.

According to Thomas Swift, the biographer of famed baseball player Charles Bender, Elizabeth’s brother, Albertus Bender supported his family through logging, hunting and fishing, “but was somewhat of an itinerant” and “not likely a stable presence” in the family. Elizabeth’s mother, Mary, whose Chippewa name was Pay shaw de o quay, was a traditional healer and midwife to both Native and white women and one who understood “the herbs and roots well.” Together the couple had eleven children; Elizabeth was the sixth among her seven brothers and three sisters. After their fifth child, Anna, was born, the couple moved to the White Earth Reservation where Albertus built a log home for the family, a granary and farm on the 160 acres that comprised Mary’s allotment.

At White Earth, Elizabeth was born into a complicated social environment where the ethnic differences among the population – immigrants, descendants of fur traders, and Native people – were becoming increasingly more delineated. Terms like “half bloods” and “full bloods” were used more regularly and became “politicized as disagreement over

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371 The Anishinaabe are the traditional name of the largest Indian group in Minnesota and what they call themselves. This name means, “the original people.” Ojibwe or Ojibway was the name that Euro-Americans used for the Anishinaabe. While in Canada, the Anishinaabe refer to themselves as Ojibwe, in the U.S., tribal members prefer Chippewa. Thus, I will use Chippewa throughout. For more on this topic, go to the website of the White Earth Nation, http://www.whiteearth.com/history/.
372 Swift, Chief Bender’s Burden, 16.
374 Paulette Fairbanks Molin, “Training the Hand, the Head, and the Heart: Indian Education at Hampton Institute,” Minnesota History 51, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 82-98.
the inequitable distribution of resources escalated.”

Intermarriages also affected patrilineal descent; while the Bender children were still considered tribal members, marriages like the Benders extinguished Mary’s children’s claims to clan membership.

Unlike other reservations, on the White Earth reservation, in the late nineteenth century, schooling was a choice for families. Schooling choices reinforced social divisions at White Earth, as those who had experienced schooling themselves, some immigrants and descendants of fur traders, saw white schooling as an opportunity for their children to improve their economic and social position, while more conservative families chose not to send their children to schools and instead, retained their labor and other contributions for the economic production for the household.

Nine-year old Elizabeth was first sent to school at the Catholic Sisters School in St. Joseph (about 150 miles away) and in White Earth. At the age of eleven she was sent to Pipestone boarding school, a government school that, like most federal schools, offered vocational training and an academic preparation to approximately the equivalent of a ninth grade education. The superintendent at Pipestone, recognizing Elizabeth’s skills and abilities, suggested she enroll at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia for more educational training.

Albertus and Mary differed in their opinions regarding Elizabeth’s attendance at Hampton. While her sister Anna was actually the first Chippewa to graduate from Hampton, Mary wanted Elizabeth to remain on the reservation. Recalling her parent’s

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375 Melissa L. Meyer, “Signatures and Thumbprints: Ethnicity among the White Earth Anishinaabeg, 1889-1920,” Social Science History 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1990): 305-345, 308. She notes that the usage of these terms relied more on lifestyle choices than blood quantum.
376 Tetzloff, “Elizabeth Bender Cloud.”
378 Molin, “Training the Hand, the Head, and the Heart.”
attitudes regarding enrolling at Hampton she said, “My Mother is mostly all Indian, and she thought we were smart enough after going to school (at Pipestone) three years, therefore she did not want us (to) go to school anymore.” She remarked, “It was with some difficulty before we could persuade our dear mother to let us go.” Her father, however “was very willing to have us go back to school again.”

For Nellie Robertson, Rosa Bourassa, Elizabeth Bender and other American Indian teachers, seeking more advanced educational opportunities at places like Carlisle and Hampton and later, becoming teachers in the very federal Indian boarding schools that trained them, was not a contradiction. Rather, it was yet another phase in the complex process of assimilation that their families and communities had been undergoing for many years. Their immigrant fathers’ promotion of western education and their own desire to become more educated at western schools was also reflective of class politics at work on Indian reservations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Sakiestewa Gilbert documents among the Hopi, there were factions who had differing perspectives on western education. “Accommodators” were more open to western schooling because they saw potential benefits in strategically working with whites, believing it might “suit their agendas on reservations.” “Resisters” rejected outside influences altogether. While Sakiestewa Gilbert notes that elements of accommodation and resistance have always been critical aspects of Hopi culture, it is likely that many Native American cultures encompassed within their societies groups of people who were more open to outside influences and other groups who were more conservative in their acceptance of new ideas. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however,

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379 Ibid, 96.
380 Sakiestewa Gilbert, Education Beyond the Mesas, xxiii.
divisions over schooling were exacerbated by land-hungry whites, eager to fuel conflicts within Indian communities to weaken the tribe as a whole.

Contributing to the factionalism around schooling was the reality of poverty and disease on Indian reservations in this time period, which affected these intercultural families disproportionately. In the marriages between immigrant men and American Indian women, often women died relatively earlier than their husbands. For example, the mothers of future Carlisle teachers Rosa Bourassa, Nellie Robertson and Minnie Yandell all died while their daughters were young.\(^{381}\) Perhaps single fathers sent daughters to boarding schools because they felt without a female role model their daughters’ futures would be compromised and kept sons home for their labor contributions to the household. Perhaps single white fathers understood that, without blood ties to tribal resources, their children might not have a future on the reservation. Although we do not know the particular reasons why the other future teachers were sent to eastern boarding schools, we do know that they were born into Indian communities that were undergoing unprecedented social upheaval. Some were without their Native mother’s guidance or support. Others came from situations in which their mother’s culture was under attack and their white father’s influences predominated, including his social values regarding schooling and the belief that more education led to greater class mobility. Regardless, most of the American Indian teachers who attended school at Carlisle and later taught there indicated that, when it came to education, their father’s influence prevailed.

Conflicts in the Work of American Indian Teachers at Carlisle

\(^{381}\)Minnie Yandell, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5284, Box 135, NARA.
Native American teachers who taught at Carlisle and at other federal Indian boarding schools that they were educated in faced many conflicts in their work, including clashes with white teachers and with white superintendents and administrators. One of the most frustrating conflicts, in the eyes of many American Indian teachers, was the fact that even as graduates of Carlisle – as “civilized” and educated Indians – they were still subject to the scrutiny that they endured as students.

Boarding school scholars have examined the ways schools scrutinized and monitored the activities of Native students including, but not limited to, their correspondence with family, their spoken language, their dress and standards of cleanliness, menstrual periods and their use of physical space. As employees, Native American teachers continued to be scrutinized despite having graduated and attained a professional status. For example, American Indian teachers were required to complete a separate application from white teachers, one which was much more intrusive. The application for prospective Indian teachers inquired what degree of Indian blood an applicant had and what property in land she was allotted and where it was located. Suspicious of the Indian applicant’s character, a question asked whether or not the applicant had ever used drugs and included the habitual use of tobacco (a substance used by some tribes in religious worship) within the same category of highly addictive and destructive drugs as morphine and opium. The application also communicated to prospective teachers the kinds of skills and abilities they should have acquired and what they were expected to teach. For example, on Elizabeth Bender’s employment application, Question 17 inquired whether or not the applicant understood:

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“butter making, care of milk, canning, drying, pickling, and preserving fruits, curing meats, and preparing household delicacies and necessities as usually understood by thrifty, intelligent housewives, in farming communities?”

Question 18 asked the Native applicant, if she could “patiently and carefully instruct young Indian girls in all the sewing, darning, mending, etc., usual in large families in our best white homes.” These questions were not posed on prospective white teacher’s applications.

After years of federal schooling, Native women discovered, upon filling out an application for appointment in the Indian School Service that despite the fact they had earned the status of graduate, they were still subject to federal scrutiny and suspicion. The federal government communicated to Indian applicants that they were assumed drug addicts or abusers. Further, the application communicated the low expectations the federal government had both for the skills and abilities Native teachers had acquired as well as the lessons they were expected to teach young women. American Indian teachers were expected to instruct young Native American girls to aspire to the level of civilization reached by white women. This is incredibly ironic given the fact that at least some of these Native teachers came from matrilineal cultural traditions, where women’s social power was greater than that of contemporary white women.

Another example of the lack of privacy Native teachers had to contend with at Carlisle and at other schools in the Indian School Service is exemplified by an incident in Rosa Bourassa’s career. In 1899 Rosa transferred from Carlisle to the Phoenix Indian School. Soon after she arrived she sent a letter to her good friend Nellie Robertson who was working at Carlisle at the time, along with a short note to Capt. Pratt. The longer

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383 Indian Application for Employment,” Elizabeth Bender, PF, NPRC
384 Rosa Bourassa, Student File, NARA.
letter was meant only for Robertson’s eyes, as in it Bourassa brought her friend up to date on the lives of some of their old friends from Carlisle as well as her personal reactions to the new environment she found herself in.\[385\]

With characteristic sensitivity, Pratt (or possibly former white teacher and later editor of the newspaper, Marianna Burgess) intercepted the letter to Robertson and printed much of the contents in the school newspaper for all to read. This act is illustrative of the fact that despite their professional status as employees, Pratt still regarded former students as his school children and they were therefore subject to the same kinds of inspection they endured when they resided on campus. Chastising her in the paper, the author of the article wrote, “Miss Bourassa is so extremely modest that she speaks not of herself or her work at the great Phoenix school, Arizona.” Calling the note to Capt. Pratt “an extremely business” one in which Bourassa remarked to him that she was ‘anxious to help the good work along,’ the author of the newspaper article accused Bourassa of “forgetting that the best way to help it along would be to let our readers know what she, a member of the second class to graduate, is doing.”\[386\]

In addition to low pay, Native teachers at Carlisle also had to contend with the same lack of privacy they experienced as students, even in their personal correspondence. Federal officials “made no secret of the fact that they routinely screened both incoming and outgoing mail” of students, and as American Indian teachers spent more time in the Indian School Service, they began to realize that, despite being employees, they were neither regarded as equals nor as professionals.\[387\] After Pratt’s departure, Bourassa was asked to respond to a request by Superintendent Moses Friedman to inform him of her

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\[385\] *The Indian Helper*, 31 March 1899.
\[386\] Ibid.
“progress.” Friedman was interested in the lives of former students and created a form titled, “Record of Graduates and Returned Students” that he sent to former students. Former students were asked how much salary they earned, if they owned a home, how many rooms the home contained, the property they owned, how much money they had in the bank and if they had done anything for the betterment of their people. While some Carlisle teachers like Anna Goyitney were very forthcoming and shared a great deal of private information, Bourassa left all of those questions blank.388

In another letter indicative of how Bourassa felt about the lack of privacy afforded to her by her white colleagues, she wrote to Carlisle employee Mr. Miller to renew her subscription to the school newspapers and to inform him of her change of address. In the letter she also shares some of her feelings about the work she is engaged in as well as some news about a married couple Miller is acquainted with. At the end of the letter, however, she writes, “Now this is a personal letter and you must not publish personal letters in any of your publications. Remember!”389

Native American teachers also had to contend with differential hiring and racism in the Indian School Service. Elizabeth Bender was appointed to the Cut Bank Boarding School on the Blackfeet Agency in 1908.390 After two years of teaching there and receiving nothing but glowing evaluations, Edgar A. Allen, the Special Indian Agent, on his general inspection of the school wrote that Elizabeth’s “school room work is of a very high order.” He characterized her as “energetic, sympathetic and skillful.” Repeating what Principal Thomas Myers told him, he wrote that Elizabeth was “unusually

388. “Records of Graduates and Returned Students,” Anna Goyitney, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5424, Box 137, NARA; “Records of Graduates and Returned Students,” Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, NARA.
389. Letter to Mr. Miller from Rosa Bourassa, 21 September 1910, Student folder.
390. Letter of Appointment, Elizabeth Bender, PF, NPRC.
adaptable” and could “fill acceptably the Cook’s, Matron’s or Laundress’s place” and was “always the first to offer her services in a time of need.” Yet despite her “unusual” adaptability, Elizabeth was denied the position of matron when she applied for it. In a letter to Blackfeet Indian School Superintendent Arthur McFatridge from Commissioner of Indian Affairs C.F. Hauke, the latter denied Elizabeth’s request for appointment because:

“Being fully acquainted with the nature of the duties connected with the matronship in an Indian School, I do not feel that it would be in the interest of good administration to approve . . . Miss Bender as matron in the Blackfeet School, she being but 23 years of age. While her record as teacher at the Blackfeet School, which covered a period of not quite two years, was unusual for one of her years, the duties of matron being so entirely different from those of teacher, I consider it inadvisable to appoint her as head matron. Positions of this character require the services of a woman of mature years and preferably one who has been married and experienced in the rearing of children.”

Perhaps Bender was denied the position only because of her age and her lack of motherhood experience and not because she was a member of the Indian race. But as Cathleen Cahill has demonstrated, the federal government usually appointed white women to the position of matron in Indian Schools because of what the position of matron symbolized in Indian schools. Matrons symbolized the kind of mother white federal officials deemed most appropriate for young Indian girls whose own mothers were frequently cast as deficient. Clearly, federal officials believed white mothers were superior to Native American mothers and matrons served as a substitute.

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391Report of Edgar A. Allen, Special Indian Agency Blackfeet Agency, 1908, Elizabeth Bender PF, NPRC.
392Letter from Arthur McFatridge to Commissioner Hauke, 11 August 1911, Elizabeth Bender, PF, NPRC.
393Ibid.
394Cahill, Federal Fathers and Mothers.
While Elizabeth did not contest the denial of her request and continued receiving excellent evaluations throughout her teaching career, conflicts between Native and white employees were common. While Rosa Bourassa had good working relationships with her colleagues at Carlisle, as she moved throughout the country in the Indian School Service and held different positions in different schools, she experienced a number of difficulties. In a letter to Capt. Pratt she confided to him that too often “she let white people push her around.”395 Later in her career, Rosa became the manager of the outing system at Carlisle. While this managerial experience certainly advanced her skill set, when she worked at Fort Mason in San Francisco in 1921, she was employed only as a typist. She felt isolated and discriminated against at Fort Mason, working as she did only with whites. In another letter to Capt. Pratt she told him she felt forced to “take a back seat when I am alone among white people as I am at Ft. Mason.”396

The relationships between American Indian teachers and their white women counterparts were often strained and even hostile. In a letter between two white former Carlisle teachers, Pearl Monroe and Clara Snoddy, Monroe (at another school at the time) informs Snoddy that, “our new teacher came this past week, white, thank the lord …” In her letter Monroe implies that there is a rivalry between the white teachers and the American Indian teachers at her school and fears that the Native employees will convince the new teacher to side with them and their way of doing things. She writes, “time will tell” and then goes on to remark, “Clara Adelaide Snoddy, I here by state that I have positively no use for part bloods.” They always have “a chip on their shoulder and getting

395Quoted in Joan T. Mark, A Stranger in Her Native Land: Alice Fletcher and the American Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 308.
it jarred off, if they can’t be the whole cheese they won’t play and to me are a general nuisance.” She confesses that if “some Indian advocate in high ranks” reads her letter that she knows her days are numbered. But, she says, “there are lots of others that think exactly as I do.” Monroe’s assertions that American Indian teachers have “a chip on their shoulder” and that they try to be “the whole cheese” are interesting and convey what the working conditions for Native American teachers must have been like. In a school environment where the curriculum was designed to erase their traditional cultures, and where administrators regarded them as merely “pupil teachers,” Native teachers also had to contend with white colleagues who believed they should be constantly deferred to and who would not support Indian teachers who attempted to advance themselves in any way.

White teachers also criticized the normal training and teaching abilities of Native American teachers, implying that they had to take up the slack for Indian teachers. For example, former Carlisle teacher Margaret Sweeney complained, in a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, about the lack of readiness her students showed while she was teaching at the Stewart Indian School in Nevada. She wrote, that they “had the previous year a Haskell (Indian School) graduate for teacher, and were way below standard.”

Additional evidence of the enmity between American Indian and white teachers is found in the stinging critique by Gertrude Simmons, a.k.a Zitkala-sa, who was a teacher at Carlisle in 1900. In An Indian Teacher Among Indians, Simmons describes white teachers as having “a larger missionary creed than I had suspected.” She wrote that “[i]t

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397 Letter from Miss Monroe to Clara Snoddy, 5 March 1916, Clarice A. Snoddy Papers, Collection 123, Box 1, Kansas Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.
398 Letter to Asst. Commissioner Meritt from Margaret Sweeney, 9 March 1927, Margaret Sweeney, PF, NPRC.
was one which included self-preservation quite as much as Indian education.” Remarking on the suspect characters and habits of some teachers she said,

(w)hen I saw an opium-eater holding a position as teacher of Indians, I did not understand what good was expected, until a Christian in power replied that this pumpkin-colored creature had a feeble mother to support.\(^{399}\)

Recognizing the powerlessness of all federal Indian school teachers within such a large bureaucracy, she remarked, “(e)ven the few rare ones who have worked nobly for my race were powerless to choose workmen like themselves.”\(^{400}\)

As the first wave of students finished their Carlisle educations and were turned out to earn a living, many found employment in federal Indian schools. They joined a growing Native American workforce within the Indian School Service. According to Cahill, in 1888, 15% of all Indian School Service personnel were American Indians. That percentage rose to 23% by 1895 and 45% by 1899.\(^{401}\) During Pratt’s tenure, when there were few Native teachers and the women who did secure positions were successful former students, relations between American Indian and white teachers seemed harmonious. But, in the years following Pratt’s dismissal, as more and more Native Americans joined the service, conflicts ensued. Constantly monitored and supervised, they navigated an ambiguous status as former students. As they tried to rise in the ranks of Indian School personnel, American Indian teachers were often thwarted by perceptions that they were unprepared or unskilled. Finally, as evidenced by the correspondence of some white teachers during this period, Native American teachers and white teachers often had different perspectives about the education of American Indian children and


\(^{400}\)Ibid, 96.

\(^{401}\)Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, 106.
these exacerbated the differences between them. White teachers also felt a sense of ownership over Carlisle and were comfortable with the status quo – Native Americans in subordinate positions as students and themselves as authority figures over them. As the number of Native teachers increased, and the differences between the perspectives of the two groups widened, few were able to accept American Indian teachers as equals.

Motivations for and Benefits From Teaching

American Indian women who chose to teach in the Indian School Service persisted because the benefits of the position outweighed the detractions. Those benefits varied for each person but included being able to use their knowledge of the school system to advocate for American Indian children and their families, to help shape the contours of the assimilative education Native American children received, as well as being connected to a network of friends and political allies. Other benefits teachers derived from being in the Indian School Service included a relatively good salary, independence, the opportunity to try different types of work and to travel to different parts of the United States, interacting with a great diversity of Native people and the ability to combine work and family life.

First Teaching Experiences

Regardless of the kind of schools they taught at, these teachers, like all new teachers, remembered their first experiences in the classroom and drew lessons from them. Among Indian School Service teachers, however, certain themes predominate. For example, Elizabeth Bender’s recollection touches on themes of uncertainty in her new role,
surprise at the adaptability she was expected to have, admiration of a culture previously unknown to her, respect for Indian families, difficulty with the different levels of student preparedness in her classroom and frustration with restless children.

Elizabeth Bender (Chippewa) graduated from Hampton Institute in 1907, took a non-competitive teacher’s examination, which was instituted to encourage Native teachers to join the Service, and in the fall of 1908 traveled to Montana to the Cut Bank Boarding School on the Blackfeet Indian reservation. The following is her recollection of her journey to the school and her first day of teaching, “among my own people.” She writes, (i)t was with a feeling of uncertainty that I got off at the little station, Browning, that cold, raw, October night and made my way into a dark and dingy depot.” She reported that in the depot was an Indian family, including a sickly baby. The mother was “trying to soothe its fretfulness.” Bender learned afterwards that the family intended to take a “midnight train” to “get medical aid for the sick infant which the government doctor could not adequately give.” While this is her first interaction with a family from the Blackfeet, throughout her descriptions of her teaching experience at the Cut Bank School, Bender expresses respect and admiration for the parents of the children she teaches.

On her first day at the school, Bender found that she had “boys and girls ranging from five to fifteen years old in the primary room.” The children varied in their English literacy abilities. “Some could speak English and some had no command of the language whatever.” At first, she found the children unwilling to speak up. “I asked the children the lesson of the previous day and not one volunteered to tell.” She continued, (a)fter a long silence one little girl had courage enough to inform me that they hadn't had any
school although they had entered the first of September.” When “the mild Chinook winds begin to blow,” Bender discovered that the children got ‘Wanderlust” and that there were many “days as she goes to her schoolroom only girls are to be seen, as the boys have decided to round up their ponies, or those who had not the courage to go home are off drowning ground squirrels.” She wrote, “(t)hese are trying days for the teacher.”

Importantly, Bender never blames Indian parents for their children’s restless behavior. Unlike white teachers, Bender never criminalizes Blackfeet parents. While she castigates Blackfeet students for being “truant,” she never casts Blackfeet parents as deficient in any way. Bender wrote that on occasional Saturdays Blackfeet parents were permitted to visit their children. “Children were dressed in clean dresses and hair was tidily combed for the occasion.” Remarking on the contrasts between parents and children she measured the children “against the parents who came wearing their gayly colored blankets and shawls, moccasins on their feet, and fathers often with their hair in long braids.” Despite having painted their faces “in vivid colors of red or yellow,” she remarked, “these same parents were willing to send their children to school and were anxious to have them get the things they themselves had not the opportunity to get.”

In Bender’s eyes, Blackfeet parents were supportive of their children’s schooling.

In *Essie’s Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher*, Esther Burnett Horne describes her early life as the daughter of mixed-blood parents, her schooling at Haskell Indian School and her career as a teacher at the Eufaula Boarding School, beginning in 1929. While she did not teach at Carlisle, her memories of some of the

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403Horne, *Essie’s Story*. 
challenges she confronted at Eufaula are worth consideration, as Carlisle teachers likely experienced them as well. Horne recalled the difficulties she faced as an inexperienced teacher confronting the differing levels of preparedness for Euro-American schooling her students brought to the classroom. To further complicate her situation, Horne, who was Shoshone could not speak Creek, the language of her students. She wrote that “(t)here was a mixture of bright and motivated learners, as well as reluctant participants.” She continued, “[s]ome of the students were overage . . . having begun school late. A few students came to our school with a limited knowledge of English. These girls required more attention…”

Horne’s normal school training at Haskell Institute did not prepare her for this reality and she devised her own methods to accommodate her students.

I had to be creative in discovering a solution to help these . . . students out. I initiated the practice of peer tutoring: children helping children. Those who were bilingual . . . came to the aid of those who spoke no English at all. They translated the children’s needs to me and encouraged them to become more proficient in the English language. This cooperative educational effort was a success, and my horizons were broadened in this first teaching experience.  

Through her willingness to learn from the very students she was expected to teach, Horne discovered that using cooperative teaching methods fit the needs and learning styles of her students. Enhancing the white normal school training she received, Horne created pedagogical approaches that many present-day Native teachers of American Indian students use.  

404 Horne, Essie’s Story, 56.  
405 Ibid.  
Another theme that emerges from the memories over a career of teaching in Indian schools is the new teacher’s surprise upon learning that they are expected to fulfill many roles in addition to teacher. Elizabeth Bender described how a teacher “is called upon to do many things besides actual academic work.” At Blackfeet, Elizabeth was asked to assume the duties of matron for one month, and at an especially difficult time, when the children initially came back to school from a summer spent in “camp life,” as “they were not very clean.” She goes on,

“(t)hen there were homesick children to cheer; the arranging of details in laundry, sewing room, kitchen, dining room, and dormitories; the getting of sleepyheads out of bed every morning; keeping a watchful eye on those who tried to evade work; taking care of sick and children, doctoring trachomatous eyes; and many other duties.”

Once she was asked to substitute for the school cook for three weeks. While she remarked “one would hardly expect that accomplishment in a teacher,” reflecting on the manual labor aspect of her education at Hampton Institute, she said, “Hampton does expect it of her graduates.” Indicative of the warmth she felt for her students, her memory of her stint as cook was not the work it entailed but the fact that her pupils liked her cooking and said, ‘Miss Bender sure can cook good beans.”

Former Carlisle teacher, Jemima Wheelock’s work at the Oneida Boarding School also required her to find within herself more adaptability and flexibility than she thought she initially had. Graduating alongside Rosa Bourassa, Nellie Robertson and Julia Bent in 1890, Wheelock taught at Carlisle only for one year before returning home to teach in the Oneida Boarding School. In a letter to Capt. Pratt she relates:

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I am working hard and I can only laugh when I think of how many times I’ve got to make fire through the coming winter. The school-house was in a bad condition when I came, and I especially dreaded to pull the wood out of the snow for there was no woodshed; but I will tell you how I managed to build a wood-shed, and to get other things I needed, I called on a Judge at Green Bay. I went to all three banks of Green Bay and I collected enough money to build a woodshed and without any trouble, and now I have a nice woodshed and a storm house built. I bought two new doors and had all the windows fixed. The woodshed will hold about ten cords of wood and now I can laugh again, because I will not have to dig the snow for my wood. I had three carpenters to work for me. I feel as though I was the mother of my four children. Christmas is coming soon and I would like to give something to every one of my scholars, but there is nothing to give.”

While her reason for sending this letter to Pratt might have only been to inform him and the readership of the paper of the unexpected work her new position required, the last line of her letter indicates an additional motive. Wheelock knew such a letter to Pratt would be published in *The Red Man* and aware of the philanthropic network that was connected to Carlisle, she engaged in a kind of work many of the Native teachers eventually became involved in – reform and advocacy work.

As American Indian teachers became more seasoned in their work in federal Indian boarding schools, they were motivated, at least in part, by a desire to serve their race and began to model for students different ways to combine their traditional cultures with the demands of the dominant culture. They understood implicitly that the ability to identify with the race of their teacher would make the otherwise oppressive institutional environment of the federal boarding school a more nurturing and meaningful learning experience for Native children.

Throughout her career at Carlisle and in the Indian School Service, Rosa Bourassa always communicated pride in her Native ancestry, devoted her considerable energies to

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408 *The Indian Helper*, 26 December 1890.
American Indian education and advocacy for Native American people and believed that ultimately all people should be judged by their actions rather than by “who they are.” Regardless of the nation to which someone belongs or their religious denomination, Bourassa asserted that a person’s character, their “tender feeling towards others” and their contribution to people in need was how they should be regarded. It is clear that at this point in her career, Bourassa was motivated by a desire to contribute to her people through teaching. Like Elizabeth Bender, Bourassa’s identity encompassed not only her Chippewa heritage but a pan-Indian one as well.

Bourassa was also motivated to “do good” through her work. She had a desire to replicate the influences that beloved teachers had on her and to instill in her students the values transmitted by her parents. Her mixed-blood father taught her a work ethic that held that success was achieved through hard work. She certainly internalized this message and in many of her statements and letters, hard work is a continual theme. Bourassa often made distinctions, however, between Indians, like herself, who worked hard and aspired to a “good” life, and those who did not. For example, in describing the good that Capt. Pratt had done for students and their parents in creating Carlisle, she said that if the parents of Carlisle students had “had the chance that we have, would not be the Indians that they are now.”

Bourassa distinguished herself as a model educator. In the summer of 1898, she was selected to chair the teacher’s department at the Indian School Service Institute held in Colorado Springs. After her work for the Institute, an article about her appeared in *The Indian’s Friend*, the publication of the Women’s National Indian Association. The

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410 Ibid.
411 *The Indian Helper*, Friday, 29 July 1898.
article described Bourassa as “a bright intellectual looking Indian girl from the Chippewa tribe of northern Michigan” who “in English so correct and periods so well rounded as to put to the blush to many of the preceding speakers, spoke in a quiet, modest manner of her history and the future of her race.” According to the article, Bourassa “told how she had been brought up among the Chippewa tribe, a people that for over two generations have possessed farms.” She described to the interviewer, “how she had been sent to school by her parents just as regularly as the white children and after she had completed the public school course, had taken the training at Carlisle.” The article described Bourassa as maintaining pride in her culture and noted that teaching had afforded her the ability to be independent and self-sufficient. It also praised her for her ability to support herself when she returned to school to pursue advanced coursework: “for many years she had earned her living, her clothes and the books necessary to continue her studies.\footnote{The Indian’s Friend, 12, 1899, 10.}

Bourassa also believed that hard work and success brought with it particular privileges.\footnote{Ibid.} While she does not delineate those privileges, it is clear that while she was a teacher at Carlisle, she enjoyed the independence that her albeit low teacher’s salary provided as well as the opportunities for recreation and social interaction among her colleagues that her position allowed. Throughout the time she was a teacher there, the student newspapers made references to her activities outside the classroom, when for example, she and a favorite white colleague, Kate Bowersox, spoke to their “sisters” about their normal work at Carlisle at a Y.M.C.A. convention, as well as when “Misses Lord, Wiest, Bourassa and Dixon accompanied by a body-guard of five boys went to the
mountains” on a Saturday and reported “having a good time.”414 Bourassa was also frequently mentioned in association with her “wheel,” or bicycle. In 1896, it was reported in *The Indian Helper* that, “Miss Bourassa has a new wheel in exchange for her old one.”415 In June of that same year she and a male colleague, a Mr. Snyder, took a twenty-two mile wheel trip to Wellsville to visit her former outing patron and to tour the whip factory he was proprietor of.416 In October, a party of thirty, including Bourassa, the Pratts, some white teachers, some male Native and white staff members, along with a male professor from Dickinson went on a wheel trip to the mountains at Doubling Gap.417 References to her in these years indicate that she traveled back and forth to Michigan in the summers “to visit her father’s home” but that when she was away from Carlisle, she missed her friends and her work. In the June 24, 1892 issue of *The Indian Helper*, she reported that she was “well but says the place (Michigan) is quite dull and that she sometimes longs for her Carlisle associates and occupation.”418

Rosa Bourassa taught at Carlisle for fourteen years. Although it is not clear why, she left Carlisle in 1897 and transferred to the Fort Hall School in Idaho, leaving behind the only other Native teachers, Nellie Robertson and Mary Bailey (Pueblo) who threw a party for her before she returned to her home in Michigan in advance of the transfer.419

By the time Bourassa’s first transfer occurred, many of the former earliest American Indian teachers had taught at three or four different schools, occasionally seeking out more training for themselves. Between graduating in 1894 and 1897, Minnie

414 *The Indian Helper*, 8 November 1895; *The Indian Helper* 5 May 1893.
415 *The Indian Helper*, 24 April 1896.
416 *The Indian Helper*, 5 June 1896.
417 *The Indian Helper*, 9 October 1896.
418 *The Indian Helper*, 24 June 1892.
419 *The Indian Helper*, 5 May 1897.
Yandell (Bannock) took a review class at Vashon College, taught at Mount Pleasant in Michigan, Fort Hall and Fort Lapwai schools in Idaho and at Round Valley in California. Mary Bailey (Pueblo) began teaching at the Fort Lapwai school in 1890 and returned to Carlisle to teach from 1896 – 1900. Luzena Choteau (Wyandotte) graduated in 1893, attended normal school in Valparaiso, Indiana, finished a stenographic course at Bryant and Stratton Business College in Chicago and worked as a clerk in Chicago and as a stenographer for large mercantile houses, eventually taking a position at the Treasury Department in Washington D.C.

Other women chose different occupations after teacher training and a brief period of student teaching. Estaine Depeltquestangue (Kickapoo) graduated from West Chester Normal in 1896 but changed her professional goals and decided to train at Lakeside Hospital to become one of Carlisle’s first nurses. After graduation she became head of a ward at Lakeside and then took up private nursing. Depeltquestangue was also involved in creating a surgical supply store in Ohio along with two other nurses who she was acquainted with. As she confided in her letter to the Superintendent of Carlisle at the time, however, her name was not publicly associated with the business as it sounded “too foreign.” This provides an indication of the ways in which Depeltquestangue negotiated the structural barriers in the private employment sector, another topic under researched by scholars. Perhaps nursing was an acceptable profession because it was related to women’s “natural” abilities to nurture and heal the sick. But business, even in the early twentieth century, was still a man’s job.

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420 Minnie Yandell, Service Record Card, PF, NPRC.
421 Mary Bailey, Service Record Card, PF, NPRC.
422 Luzena Choteau, Service Record Card, PF, NPRC.
423 Estaine Depeltestangue, Service Record Card, PF, NPRC.
The Indian School Service was unique in that Native American teachers could use the system to travel to different parts of the country by transferring schools. Transferring provided an Indian teacher with the adventure of experiencing different environments and meeting different people but also allowed teachers to observe the various conditions American Indian children faced in their home communities. If able to demonstrate competency, Native teachers could also change positions, trying out new forms of work. Rosa Bourassa, for example, was able to observe first hand the conditions of Native people in Idaho, Montana, Arizona, Kansas, South Dakota and Oklahoma in various positions as a teacher, matron, clerk and stenographer.

Maintaining Marriage and Family at Carlisle and other Federal Indian Schools

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, “the word ‘school teacher’ came to connote a single woman.”424 Two images of the schoolteacher dominated the cultural landscape during this time period. The first was the spinster who either could not find a husband, or more reflective of her deviance, chose not to marry and the second was the young woman who taught until she married and then traded work for the mature responsibilities of wife and mother. In fact, the earliest proponents of women teachers, like Catherine Beecher, justified women’s entrance into teaching, in part, because teaching children prepared women for marriage and motherhood.425

One of the benefits of teaching at Carlisle was the fact that it was possible for women teachers who chose to do so to both work and maintain a marriage and family, despite the fact that many teachers in public schools remained unmarried. Indeed,

425Ibid.
statistics on the percentage of teachers who were married indicate that although “between 1890 and 1920, the percentage of married women in the labor force increased steadily … teachers constituted the smallest percentage of married women in all female occupations, (eventually) representing only 17% nationwide in 1930.”\textsuperscript{426}

Nellie Robertson (Sioux) married a fellow student and the two raised their son while also working at the Carlisle Indian School. Robertson has the distinction of having a presence at Carlisle for all but three years of its existence – a tenure that exceeds Richard Henry Pratt. Robertson arrived at Carlisle in 1880 at the age of 9 and left Carlisle only to return home for three years, for an outing and to attend normal school, though her name was still on the rolls when she was at West Chester Normal. She was employed as a teacher at Carlisle for four years, resigned her position because of “health reasons” and worked as the assistant clerk and later the clerk for a period of eight years. Taking over Annie Ely’s position as outing agent in 1904, Robertson held that position until the federal government closed the Carlisle Indian School in 1918.\textsuperscript{427}

In 1907, Robertson married former Carlisle graduate Wallace Denny, an Oneida from Wisconsin. Denny was an employee for many years, first as the athletic trainer for the Carlisle football team and then as the disciplinarian.\textsuperscript{428} The Dennys had a child in 1912 – a boy they named Robertson Denny. Robertson Denny soon became a darling of the teachers. Music teacher, Verna Dunagan remembered little Robertson fondly. Dunagan came to the school in 1913 and became good friends with the Denny family. She walked by their apartment on the campus three times a day and usually once a day

\textsuperscript{427}Nellie Robertson, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5248, Box 134, NARA.
\textsuperscript{428}“A Carlisle Wedding,” The Indian’s Friend, 18 (1907): 7.
would stop by to see Robertson, who was looked after by a nurse Nellie hired so that she could continue working. Dunagan recalled that young Robertson had a Pennsylvania Dutch accent, inherited from his father who spent a good deal of his youth on outings among Dutch German families in rural Pennsylvania. In an oral history interview, conducted in 1976 on Verna’s experiences as a teacher at the Carlisle Indian School, she spoke at length about the Denny family, particularly about Robertson. One of her most cherished memories about him was the fact that everyday when she would leave the Denny apartment after visiting with Robertson, he would say, “Wait! I’m going to give you a “Scotch kiss.” Then according to Verna, he would “take hold of each ear and rub noses. Cute as he could be!”

While white married couples were often hired at Indian schools to teach Native children the roles and responsibilities of man and wife, “a project of intimate colonialism,” the Indian School Service also hired particular Native American couples to work and be role models. In fact, an indication that the Indian School Service encouraged teachers to maintain a family while being employed, is the fact that on the Indian application for employment, there are questions that inquire whether or not the applicant is married or single, the number and ages of her children and what members of her family will be with her at the school. Some students, like Nellie and Wallace, met and despite different tribal affiliations, fell in love, married and later took positions together in schools. Others met as employees and decided to marry. According to Cahill, these women and men “often shared occupational concerns, social lives, and similar education levels and class expectations” in addition to having “shared ideas about their work,

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430 Cahill, Federal Fathers and Mothers, 83
mutual dislike of their superiors, or simply the time they spent in each other’s company.”

Jennie DuBray (Sioux), who graduated from Carlisle in 1890 and taught at Carlisle from 1890 - 1892, met Clarence Three Stars (Sioux) while they were both students. Three Stars worked with Luther Standing Bear at the Wanamaker’s Department store in Philadelphia but “ran away” to run his own day school, the Pine Ridge Indian School. Jennie joined him and became a teacher there. Both Sioux, they had a strong desire to work with Sioux children and provide them with an education that blended both Western and Sioux traditions while instilling pride in students’ cultural heritage.

Jemima Wheelock, who taught at Carlisle only one year and then returned to Wisconsin to teach Oneida children at the Oneida Boarding School, met fellow Oneida Peter Cornelius, at Carlisle while they were students. Married in 1893, the two had a baby in 1897, which they named McKinley. While Wheelock successfully maintained her marriage and family during the time she taught at the Oneida Boarding School, her role as wife and mother was brought to an unexpected end when first, her husband died in 1897 and then McKinley died only months later.

While Anna Goyitney (Pueblo) was a student at Carlisle she married a white art teacher, Fred Canfield and together eventually ran a federal day school. Goyitney graduated Carlisle in 1901, attended Bloomsburg Normal School in Pennsylvania from 1901-1904 and a summer school at a Chataqua in the summer of 1905. Goyitney taught

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431 Ibid, 151.  
433 Ibid.  
434 The Indian Helper, 10 February 1893, 2.  
435 Hauptman, The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment.
at Carlisle a total of three years from 1904 - 1907. According to the school newspaper, Goyitney had a reputation at Carlisle as an effective teacher. At the end of January 1907, a group of Hopi students arrived at Carlisle and were delivered to Anna Goyitney for instruction. In June 1907, The Indian Helper commented on their rapid progress in learning English as it said they had “no knowledge of the English tongue.” Furthermore, it reported that these “apt learners,” “on Arbor Day, sang, at the Hopi tree, …’My Country tis of Thee’ and the Carlisle School Song in perfect English and excellent melody.” According to Goyitney, in addition to receiving an education at Carlisle, “(i)t was at Carlisle that I got a good husband.” Together the two maintained their marriage, had a family and worked together at a federal day school, the Zuni Day School in New Mexico.

Throughout history, for women in most workplaces “work and family life are oppositional, positioned at opposite ends of the same continuum that frames a woman’s contribution to the workforce in relationship to the family.” At the Carlisle Indian School and other federal Indian schools, however, Nellie Robertson, Jennie DuBray, Jemima Wheelock, Anna Goyitney and other American Indian teachers successfully worked and sustained marriages and families in the Indian School Service. Despite a supportive environment, some Native American teachers found that they had difficulty combining work with marriage.

In 1900, while Rosa Bourassa was teaching at the Phoenix Indian School, she met and married a fellow employee, James A. Brown (Wyandotte). The announcement of the

436 The Indian’s Friend 19 (June 1907): 109.
437 Anna Goyitney, “Statement of Returned Students,” Student Folder, NARA.
marriage in *The Indian Helper* also advertised both sarcasm and surprise. It read, “Mrs. James A. Brown, who has been teaching at the Phoenix, Arizona, school, is expected, but we had expected her as Miss Rosa Bourassa.” The announcement continued, “(t)his will be a great surprise to many. It appears that our friend and co-worker (who) taught in one of our school rooms” . . . “has been engaged for sometime, and that he is a Wyandotte, whose home is Indian Territory.” Bourassa’s marriage to James A. Brown and her subsequent move to Indian Territory in 1900 to take up the role of housewife initiated a period of time in her life that must have been emotionally tumultuous. Married to Brown for no more than four years, the two eventually divorced.440

After her divorce, Bourassa returned to her career and once again, joined the Indian School Service but only for a brief time. Soon thereafter she took a job at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair, assisting William J. McGee, the Director of Anthropology for the fair and the president of the American Anthropological Association.441 Perhaps her work with leading figures in anthropology at the World’s Fair facilitated her introduction to Omaha anthropologist, Francis La Flesche, by then a person of some renown.442

Francis La Flesche was the first son of Joseph La Flesche, or Iron Eye, who was chief of the Omaha at that time. Joseph sent all of his children to eastern schools to get an education so that they might contribute to the welfare of the Omaha people. Francis attended college and law school in Washington D.C., was one of the first Native people to hold a position in the Indian Office and eventually became an anthropologist. His

439 *The Indian Helper*, 2 March 1900, 4.
sisters, Susette and Rosalie, became Indian rights activists and Susette became the first western educated American Indian female doctor and treated the Omaha for years.\textsuperscript{443}

It is unclear how long their courtship lasted, but the family and professional associates of La Flesche were surprised when he brought his new wife, Bourassa, almost twenty years his junior, to meet them.\textsuperscript{444} Bourassa again resigned from the Indian School Service and moved to Washington D.C., listing her occupation as housewife. The marriage lasted only two years. Characterized by one historian as a middle-aged fling, it was apparently “doomed from the start,” largely because, unbeknownst to Bourassa, La Flesche had already committed himself to another woman, Alice Fletcher.\textsuperscript{445}

Eventually Rosa petitioned for divorce in 1908, an action that “attracted considerable attention” in Washington D.C.\textsuperscript{446} Feeling scorned and mistreated, she hired a lawyer, publicly accused La Flesche of abandoning her and sought financial support from him.\textsuperscript{447} Claiming that she could not find work and that he was well off due to his government salary, stocks, and income from western properties, she demanded a monthly allowance. Privately she threatened to involve Alice Fletcher in the court proceedings if he did not agree to her pay her.\textsuperscript{448}

The case was decided for Bourassa and she was granted a monthly allowance that amounted to a quarter of La Flesche’s salary. She continued to collect alimony from him for a period of over twenty years “after a childless marriage that had lasted for less than

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{443}Norma Kidd Green, \textit{Iron Eye’s Family: The Children of Joseph La Flesche} (Lincoln, Nebraska: Johnsen Publishing Company, 1969).
\item \textsuperscript{444}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{445}See Joan Mark, \textit{A Stranger in Her Native Land: Alice Fletcher and the American Indians} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 307.
\item \textsuperscript{446}“Sues for Maintenance,” \textit{The Washington Post}, 21 January 1908, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{447}“Indian Wife Asks Support,” \textit{The Washington Post}, 18 June 18, 1907, 13.
\item \textsuperscript{448}Mark, \textit{A Stranger in Her Native Land}.
\end{itemize}
eight months.” When the judge decided in her favor, Bourassa closed what must have been a frustrating period in her life. After two marriages and two attempts to reconcile the work that she was devoted to with the role of housewife and the demands of marriage, she returned to the Indian School Service. Retaining the name La Flesche, she secured a job in 1909 as an assistant clerk and stenographer, first in Oklahoma at the Chilocco Indian School, and later at the Crow Agency in Montana.

Native Teacher’s Advocacy

“I enjoy my work and I know I shall enjoy it more when we get all the things we need”:

Jemima Wheelock

While Jemima Wheelock was a teacher at the Oneida Boarding School, she often wrote to Superintendent Pratt to inform him about the work she was doing. As a former student at Carlisle and now a teacher in the Indian School Service, she understood how the system worked. She knew for example, that letters she wrote, even personal notes to friends at other schools, were subject to scrutiny. She also was well aware of the philanthropic network that was connected to Carlisle. Thus when she wrote to Supt. Pratt and included in her letters pleas for financial assistance for her school and on behalf of her students, she could predict that her letter would be published in The Red Man, which was widely read by philanthropists interested in the Indian cause.

In an 1890 letter to Pratt she wrote, “Christmas is coming soon and I would like to give something to every one of my scholars, but there is nothing to give.” Pratt had her letter published in The Red Man and at the end of her plea for Christmas gifts, “the

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449 Ibid., 307.
450 Rosa Bourassa, Student File, NARA.
451 The Red Man, 26 December 1890.
newspaper praised Wheelock for being ‘courageous and energetic’ and added its own appeal to send boots, shows and warm clothing to the school.”

The Lancaster, Pennsylvania Women’s Indian Association responded to Wheelock’s plea for assistance and packed a valuable barrel of new and partly worn clothing for men and boys, to be sent to Miss Jemima Wheelock’s Indian School, Oneida Wisconsin. It contained 17 pairs of shoes besides coats trousers, vests, shirts stockings, etc. Estimated value not less than $25,” which today would be worth approximately $625.

In another letter to Superintendent Pratt, Jemima describes the difficult conditions at her school and the lack of very basic supplies needed for instruction.

I teach the South school located at Green Bay Agency in Wis. I have on the roll forty names. Average attendance during last quarter fourteen. I hope to do better this quarter. I had hard work during the month of September because the children were all new and some of them were bashful enough to cry when I spoke to them, and also because we did not have any slate pencils, ink, paper or pens, but had a few old books. No ink, no paper, no pens, but now we have new books, slate pencils, erasers, copy-books, pen and pen-holders, but no ink yet. We have only one singing book which I brought from Carlisle school. I enjoy my work and I know I shall enjoy it more when we get all the things we need.

In these pleas for assistance, Jemima Wheelock demonstrated important skills she had acquired, both as a student and as an employee in federal Indian schools. She used her relationship with Superintendent Pratt and her understanding of the lack of privacy he afforded Native students and employees to advertise the conditions her students faced. She also communicated the needs of her students in ways that spoke to philanthropic

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453 *The Indian’s Friend* 3, no. 7 (March 1891).
454 *The Indian Helper*, 14, November 1890.
whites and caused them to raise funds on her behalf. Throughout, her advocacy for her students is seen, not as self-serving or threatening, but as benevolent, as she positions herself squarely within late nineteenth and early twentieth century gender roles for white women.

“To be of help to the Indian race and their cause”: Elizabeth Bender

On the first day of her employment as a teacher, when she encountered an American Indian family waiting for a train in the middle of the night to take them to a more experienced doctor who might help heal their sick child, Elizabeth Bender was faced with the fact that on the Blackfeet reservation, Native children suffered from serious illnesses and other health problems. The poor health and deplorable conditions that many Native children and families had to contend with weighed on Elizabeth and motivated her, after three years of working as a teacher at Blackfeet, to take nursing courses at Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia in 1911. In a letter of resignation to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, she explained that she wished to resign “to take up nursing for a year. This I did as I felt the need of such experience in order to be of better service to my people.”⁴⁵⁵

After getting nursing training, Bender requested reinstatement in the Indian School Service at Blackfeet, giving her reason as “to be of help to the Indian race and their cause.”⁴⁵⁶ The same year Bender was taking nursing courses to make herself better equipped to help her people, the pan-Indian association, The Society for American Indians was developed. Progressive Indians, many of whom had graduated from the

⁴⁵⁵ Elizabeth Bender, “Letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” 28 July 1911, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
⁴⁵⁶ Elizabeth Bender, “Request for Reinstatement Form,” 27 August 1910, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
Carlisle Indian School in the late nineteenth century, formed the organization. Created to address persistent problems in Indian communities, particularly regarding issues of health, education, civil rights and local government, the preamble declared:

...that the time has come when the American Indian race should contribute, in a more united way, its influence and exertion with the rest of the citizens of the United States in all lines of progress and reform, for the welfare of the Indian race in particular, and humanity in general.\(^{457}\)

Elizabeth Bender became a member of the Society for American Indians and used her membership in the organization to advocate on behalf of Indian students and particular Native families. She was also one of the few Native Americans to belong to the Society for American Indians and the Congress of American Indians, another pan-Indian reform organization. While she was a teacher at Blackfeet, Bender wrote a letter to Arthur C. Parker, the first secretary of the Society for American Indians, asking him to help her remove a white teacher who was exercising “an injurious influence on the school, the morals of the children and their general attention to disciplin (sic) and right living.” Bender accused the teacher of using…

...every effort to bring this school into a state of revolt and implant the seeds of discontent both with the children and what employees who will associate with her. She takes frequent delight in speaking before the children of other employees in an ill and disparaging manner, especially of the teachers, the principal and matron as she sees that these are the ones who hold the children in check, she wishes to break the influence.\(^{458}\)

Bender went on to write that although there are some “who are working for the good and the uplift of this school” including the white principal and matron (who were also

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husband and wife) and at least one other Native employee, their good work “is undone by her evil influence.” She implored Parker to exert his influence to get this white teacher transferred to another school or to have her dropped from the service. She closed the letter by telling Parker that she realizes the efforts he has made but that “it is to such as you that we must turn in matters of this nature to help us in the uplift and purifying of the Indian Service.”

Rather than write to her superiors in the Indian School Service to alert them to this white teacher’s “injurious influence” over the children and the school, it is telling that Bender chose instead to write to Parker and the Society of American Indians. She must have reasoned that the Society would act more quickly and forcefully than would the weighty bureaucracy that constituted the Indian School Service.

In another letter to the SAI, Bender advocated on behalf of members of her own tribal community. In an undated letter to the SAI, Bender wrote that the Giard’s, a family that she had been acquainted with since her father came to the reservation, needed assistance. She wrote that Albert and Margaret Giard settled on a certain piece of land in approximately the year 1885 and were eventually “put on the roll and allotted this piece of land.” But at some point, Margaret, who had become a widow, was taken off the roll and told to allow her nephews to hold it for her until she could definitively prove her rights to it. When she was put back on the rolls, however her allotments could not be obtained. Bender wrote, “She has lived here for twenty-seven years…(and) I consider this an injustice … Mrs. Giard is a widow and should this be allowed she will be turned out of a home that has been improved by years of hard labor.” She asked the SAI to intervene in the situation and to help Mrs. Giard get the land that was rightfully hers. She ended her

\[459\] Ibid.
letter to the SAI by writing, “(a)s a member of the Society I believe in doing good for any worthy Indian family and if the Society can in some way help them it will be for the good of the race.”  

Bender continued to teach at Blackfeet for five years. During this time she used her nursing training to administer healthcare to those children who suffered from trachoma and to address other preventable illnesses. She also visited the Carlisle Indian School at least twice and spoke at a meeting of the Y.M.C.A. on her teaching experiences. Rosa Bourassa also attended the meeting. The Carlisle Arrow reported that her talk was “interesting and inspiring.”

Bender was transferred to Fort Belknap in 1914. At Fort Belknap, an example of how Bender advocated on behalf of her students in the classroom, is evidenced by her choice of teaching subjects. Always concerned with the health of Indian children, Bender chose to teach a lesson on the subject of how to avoid the spoiling of milk. On May 28, 1914, she taught a 4th grade lesson on the subject: Milk, a food or poison? Questions that she posed to students after instruction were: “How can milk become infected with germs? How do fleas collect and carry germs? How can we keep milk pure? Name some of the things necessary in order to get clean milk? What effect does heating have on milk?”

Elizabeth requested a transfer to Carlisle in 1914. Second Commissioner of Indian Affairs, C. F. Hauke responded to her request, indicating that she should not make a change because “it would be very detrimental to the work there to make another change

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461 Elizabeth Bender, Personnel File, NPRC.
462 Carlisle Arrow, 12 September 1913.
463 Elizabeth Bender, Record Card, Personnel File, NPRC.
464 Elizabeth Bender, “Report on Supervision of Individual Instructors,” 28 May 1914, Personnel File, NPRC.
so soon.” He advised her to continue working (at Fort Belknap) for another year and if at the end of the year, she still wanted to transfer it would be passed along to the appropriate person. Bender resigned her teaching position in October 1914, giving her reason as a desire to move east in order to take a post-graduate course.465

In a penned letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Cato Sells, Bender wrote that she wished to apply for the position of teacher at Carlisle. “I have just put in two months of real hard study here at Hampton and have received a great deal in the way of ‘Teaching Methods,’ and have studied very carefully the organization of the academic work. Now I feel ready to enter the service again and give the best I have to the race and to uplift in every way I can because I have had so many more opportunities.”466

The two years Elizabeth Bender taught at Carlisle she was rated as an excellent teacher and she is referenced often in the school newspapers, occasionally in association with her brother and former Carlisle student Charles Bender, a.k.a. Chief Bender, pitcher for the Philadelphia Athletics, but more often for her work with students. For example, she invited female students to dine with her at the Teachers Club, she was active in the Y.M.C.A., and she organized a campfire association among the girls.467 In March 1915 she was moved to write a poem titled, “The Club Cat” about a pregnant cat found near the location of the Teacher’s Club. The poem described how after the cat gave birth to four kittens some of the children took over the care of the animals, which Bender found endearing.468

466 Elizabeth Bender, “Letter to Cato Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” 26 December 1914, Personnel Folder, NPRC.
467 *Carlisle Arrow*, 26 March 1915; *Carlisle Arrow*, 16 April 1915.
468 *Carlisle Arrow*, 26 March 1915.
Increasingly recognized as a leader and an expert in her field, Bender was asked to speak at Indian Citizenship Day at Hampton Institute in February 1915. In her speech, she asked the Indian students to equip themselves with some rudimentary medical knowledge, as she had done years before, so that they might help fight the diseases of tuberculosis and trachoma that plague Indian homes. She said:

Trachoma is a disease that without medical attention gradually impairs the sight until total blindness results. The Government specialists found about three years ago that 60,000 out of the 300,000 Indian population had trachoma. Think of it! Nearly 30 percent of all Indian children in danger of complete blindness! We talk about demanding our rights, but unless we are willing to assume responsibilities we cannot presume to make such a demand. I feel strongly these problems that confront our people, but they are problems we can all help to remedy, whether our vocation in life is that of a teacher, carpenter, nurse, or blacksmith.469

Bender met Henry Roe Cloud in 1914 at her first attendance of a meeting of the SAI. Henry Roe Cloud was one of the group’s founders. They had mutual interests - both were devout Christians and had a strong desire to help American Indian people. By this time, Bender had developed a dim view of federal Indian education. In a personal letter she wrote, “the school system in our government schools is deplorably lacking and often-times it does not ever come up to the requisites of a grammar school education.”470 Eventually the two fell in love and two years later in June 1916 got married. Roe Cloud, a full-blooded Winnebago, was taken forcibly as a child by an Indian police officer and delivered to a non-reservation boarding school in Genoa, Nebraska. He eventually converted to Christianity and later attended the Santee Mission School, a

469 Carlisle Arrow, 12 February 1915.
school that “did not completely exclude aspects of Native American culture.”  

He earned a divinity degree and later graduated from Yale University in 1910. 

Roe Cloud had a dream of developing a school, run by Native people, that prepared Indian children for advanced study, as opposed to the vocational education Indian children received at federal schools. Bender became his partner in this endeavor. Together “they founded and ran an interdenominational Christian college preparatory high school for Native young men, the American Indian Institute, until the early 1930’s.” As Roe Cloud traveled to raise funds to support the school, Bender ran the school in his absence. When Roe Cloud decided to leave the American Indian Institute for other work, he asked the school’s board to consider Bender for the position of superintendent. They denied his request because they felt a man would be better suited to the work, despite Bender’s long career as a teacher and advocate for Indian children.

Eventually the couple moved to Oregon so that Roe Cloud could take up work at the Umatilla Reservation. As his notoriety waned, Bender’s became greater. In Oregon, she “became active in women’s groups … (and) eventually became chairman of the Indian Welfare Committee.” She also established the Oregon Trails Women’s Club, an all-Indian reform group. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt appointed Bender to serve on the National Child Welfare Committee. A mother of four daughters, who each became accomplished women in their own right, Bender was the first Native woman to be named American Mother of the Year in 1950. Finally, throughout the 1950s she was involved in

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472 Ibid.
474 Ibid.
slowing and eventually stopping the federal government’s attempts to terminate the “unique political and legal status of the Indian tribes.” She called upon Indians “to be individually responsible partners in democracy in order to solve some of the problems confronting Indians as a group. ‘We are American Indians but, even more, we are Americans.’”

“When there are thousands of living souls of my own blood in need of a helping hand, there is where I shall work”: Rosa Bourassa

After teaching at the Phoenix Indian School, Rosa Bourassa became involved with the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition better known as the St. Louis World Fair. While many people competed for a position on the staff, Bourassa was hired on the basis of her “efficiency,” the “newspaper’s admiration of her beauty,” and a strong recommendation by her former supervisor at Phoenix. Bourassa assisted Samuel McCowan, who was then superintendent of Chilocco Indian School and William J. McGee, the Director of Anthropology for the fair and the current president of the American Anthropological Association.

The goal of the federal government at the Fair was to demonstrate to the public how the government was working to solve the “Indian problem” and to demonstrate Indian progress and economic self-sufficiency as a result of government programs. The government funded the building of a model Indian school and Indian students were recruited to stage schoolroom work. At the same time, the Anthropology Department,

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476 Nancy J. Parezo and Don D. Fowler, Anthropology Goes to the Fair: The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); The Indian Helper, 1 September 1903.
headed by McGee was tasked with contrasting the progressive Indians with Indians engaged in traditional lifeways. “The contrast was intended to be ever-present and overwhelming as the public wandered through the building comparing the old and new.”

Unlike in years past, Richard Henry Pratt was not consulted on any aspect of the Indian exhibits, signaling a larger power shift in federal Indian educational policy.

In fact, later in 1904, Pratt would be removed from his position at Carlisle. Pratt’s removal came as federal policymakers began to rethink the nature of assimilation and the role non-reservation boarding schools played in that process. Pratt’s beliefs that Indians had to lose their cultural heritages to become Americans and citizens, that Indians were capable of achieving equality with whites and that Indians should “mingle” with whites (including intermarriage) to learn civilization were no longer shared by the majority of reformers. Instead, federal educational policy shifted to an emphasis on more vocational education and inclusion of Indian cultures and history, as developed by Estelle Reel, the Supervisor of Indian Education.

While a great deal of money was spent on funding “living exhibits” of American Indians engaged in traditional activities, Rosa Bourassa was involved in the other context in which Native people were displayed, as educated Indians. In conjunction with the 1904 World’s Fair, association meetings and professional conferences were held that were of interest to educators and anthropologists including a National Education Association conference which included over fifteen thousand educators and sessions on Indian education. A Congress of Indian Educators was also convened which included “the first national convention of educated Indian men and women ever held in the United

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478 Bell, “Telling Stories Out of School.”
States.” Bourassa helped McCowan assemble the most well-known educated American Indians “to give inspirational speeches” and it was reported that at the opening ceremonies, McGee “spoke of the lessons that whites may learn from the Indians.”

After her work at the St. Louis World’s Fair, Bourassa rejoined the Indian Service and explored new types of work in the positions of matron, asst. clerk and clerk at Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma and the Crow Agency School in Montana. After over ten years of working in federal Indian schools, interacting with some of the most prominent people in Indian education and in the burgeoning field of anthropology, and working to convene and interacting with the nation’s most highly educated Indians at the St. Louis World’s Fair, Bourassa joined many of her fellow Carlisle graduates in 1911 in a new endeavor.

The first national American Indian rights organization, The Society of American Indians was established in 1911 through the efforts of Dr. Charles A. Eastman (Dakota), Dr. Carols Montezuma (Yavapai-Apache), Thomas L. Sloan (Omaha), the Hon. Charles E. Dagenett (Peoria), Laura Cornelius (Oneida), and Henry Standing Bear (Sioux) as well as the white sociologist F.A. McKenzie. Among the Native teachers under consideration in this chapter, Nellie Robertson Denny, Rosa Bourassa La Flesche and Esther Miller Dagenett were attendees of the first conference and many others became members.

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480 Ibid.
481 Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5242, Box 133, NARA.
482 Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity*.
Bourassa worked without pay for the SAI and was elected to their fifteen member advisory board. Bourassa’s voluntary work for the Society caused one newspaper to call her “the Indian Joan of Arc.”\textsuperscript{484} She worked as corresponding secretary, planned the first convention of the SAI in Columbus, Ohio and was given recognition for her work in one of the SAI’s first publications:

With her characteristic devotion, she left a highly paid Government position to come to us in Washington. Yet our records show that her months of service were never rewarded by payment. Few know that she paid the office expenses and then refused to submit a bill. Who can measure her heart ache in seeing debts pile up and our pay no attention to appeals? Once before, as our first acting secretary, she had done the same. Her sacrifice more than once has given us strength. Yet when has she asked for praise or even appreciation? Your editor wishes to say that the quiet labors of one woman, Mrs. Rosa B. La Flesche, for the Society of American Indians must forever stamp her one of the most heroic Indian women who ever lived. A race that can produce such a woman can well be proud and justly may it appeal that the race be saved to bring to the world others who will render mankind like service.\textsuperscript{485}

At some point, Bourassa believed that she could do more good for Native people by returning to the Indian School Service. In a letter to Charles Parker, the secretary of the SAI, she wrote, “for several years past my innermost desire has been to be of service to the living, and when there are thousands of living souls of my own blood in need of a helping hand, there is where I shall work. If I can influence one red brother or sister to live a good life, I feel that I have not labored in vain.”\textsuperscript{486}

Bourassa took the position of manager of the outing system at Carlisle in 1912. When she returned to Carlisle she came to a school unlike what she experienced as a

\textsuperscript{484}“Indian Joan of Arc Arrives to Plan Convention,” \textit{The Ohio Dispatch}, 28 May 1911.
\textsuperscript{485}Clippings from publications of Society for American Indians, Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5242, Box 133, NARA
\textsuperscript{486}Rosa B. LaFlesche, Letter to Mr. Parker,” 30 June 1912, The Papers of Carlos Montezuma Papers, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
student. After Pratt was fired, William Mercer became acting Superintendent. While Mercer had extensive experience in Indian affairs, it was under his leadership that the academic curriculum suffered the most. He also shifted emphasis to athletics and the professionalization of Carlisle’s football program. During this transitional time there was a great deal of turnover by faculty and staff members. However, this was also the time period that Angel DeCora Dietz joined the faculty and Carlisle created a Native Arts program. In 1908 bureaucrat Moses Friedman became Superintendent at Carlisle and his administration ushered in a series of high profile scandals. In 1913, a petition containing 276 signatures of Carlisle students was delivered to Washington D.C., calling for an investigation of the conditions at Carlisle. “At issue were the role of athletics, the use of corporal punishment and the suitability of Moses Friedman as Carlisle’s Superintendent.”

A Congressional inquiry was conducted and faculty, staff, students and some members of the Carlisle community testified.

Both Rosa Bourassa and Nellie Robertson testified. In her testimony to Congressional members, Bourassa testified that their students were not getting enough to eat, that there was a rampant lack of respect among students toward Friedman and that she was personally aware of missing student funds. In addition she testified that both she and Nellie were concerned that Friedman was more concerned about increasing the numbers of students on outings rather than caring about the quality of homes students were being sent to. She told the committee:

“I know there were times last summer when Mr. Friedman said to me, ‘Put them out; put them out.’ He kept on pushing me to put them out. And

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487 Genevieve Bell, “Telling Stories Out of School,” 93.
there were cases where pupils that I would not have in my own house that we had to send out in order to make the numbers that he wanted.”

During her testimony she explained the original purpose of the outing system as developed by Capt. Pratt, related the benefits she derived from her outing experiences and admitted that Friedman was “not fatherly” and “does not seem to care anything for the children.”

By the time Moses Friedman was fired from his position and was indicted by a federal Grand Jury on charges of embezzlement and financial malfeasance in 1914, Bourassa had transferred to Rosebud Agency, South Dakota to take up work as the Indian land agent.

Bourassa devoted more than twenty years of her life to working in federal Indian schools and seeing first hand the conditions of Native people in Idaho, Montana, Arizona, Kansas, South Dakota and Oklahoma, Although Captain Pratt originally hired her and the other Native teachers because he believed she would join the effort to eradicate Native cultures and convince Indian children to reject their communities in favor of mingling with whites, Bourassa devoted her career to modeling how an educated Indian could maintain her culture and advocating on behalf of her people while working within the system.

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489 Ibid.

490 In her dissertation, Genevieve Bell speculates that Friedman was a scapegoat for the Jim Thorpe medal controversy that occurred after the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. Thorpe played professional minor league baseball in 1909 before his ascendency as a Carlisle football hero made him a national figure. Although never disqualified by the Swedish Olympic committee, he was stripped of his medals through the actions of American officials. Bell notes that a cache of letters was discovered at the Cumberland County Historical Society which adds credence to her speculation that both Friedman and Thorpe’s coach Glenn “Pop” Warner knew about Thorpe’s professional status and that sports was really at the heart of Friedman’s removal; Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder.
Conclusion

When Richard Henry Pratt hired the first Native teachers he expected them to teach from a curriculum that was designed to eradicate their cultures. Rather than taking up the white woman’s burden, however, Native teachers, used places like Carlisle to accomplish their own goals. For Rosa Bourassa, Elizabeth Bender, Jemima Wheelock and other Native teachers, while they accommodated some aspects of federal Indian educational policy by working within the system, they also resisted others. Many Native teachers maintained pride in their cultural heritages and, despite shifts in educational policy, always believed that American Indians were capable of achieving equally to whites. Teachers like Elizabeth Bender and Rosa Bourassa felt fortunate for their opportunities and experiences and sought to help Indian children gain access to greater opportunities. As advocates and reformers, Native teachers drew from their experiences, both as students and as employees in the federal Indian school system and used their agency to use, or in some cases, circumvent the school system on behalf of tribal communities.

Native teachers also took advantage of the benefits that working in the Indian School System provided. Bourassa was always eager to embrace new opportunities and to devote her considerable energies on behalf of her people and the Indian School System facilitated that. She, and other Native teachers travelled all over the nation and witnessed first hand the conditions that Indian children faced. Native teachers enjoyed the independence a middle-class lifestyle afforded and their work opened up opportunities for them to be recognized as experts in the Indian educational field. Finally, working in the Indian School System facilitated the creation and maintenance of relationships with
other individuals. The political alliances created as a result of being students in federal Indian boarding schools and then employees of the federal government resulted in the first pan-Indian rights organization and ushered in other pan-Indian movements later in the century. Many of the Native teachers under consideration in this paper were involved in that movement as well as others.\footnote{Luzena Choteau, for example, was involved in the formation of the National Indian Republican Association with Carlos Montezuma.}
CHAPTER SIX TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 6.1: GRADUATING CLASS OF 1890

(STANDING, SECOND TO THE RIGHT: JEMIMA WHEELOCK, SEATED L-R: ROSA BOURASSA, NELLIE ROBERTSON, JULIA BENT)

Photo by John N. Choate. Used by permission from CCHS.
FIGURE 6.2: NELLIE ROBERTSON (SISSETON SIOUX)

Photo by John N. Choate. Used with permission from CCHS.
FIGURE 6.3: ROSA BOURASSA (CHIPPEWA) AND
LYDIA FLINT (SHAWNEE)

Photo by John N. Choate. Used with permission from CCHS.
FIGURE 6.4: MARY BAILEY SEONIA (PUEBLO)

Photographer Unknown. Used with permission from CCHS.
### TABLE 6.1:

**AVERAGE RACIAL COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYEES PER YEAR FOR THE CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL, 1890 - 1904**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years^</th>
<th>1890 - 1892</th>
<th>1893 - 1894</th>
<th>1895 - 1897</th>
<th>1898 - 1900</th>
<th>1901 – 1904</th>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Race of employee was categorized for each employee between 1895 and 1904. After 1905, Superintendents of schools only reported the aggregate racial composition of all school employees.

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492Statistics compiled from ARCIA, 1887 – 1905.
CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine how white and American Indian women reproduced, accommodated and resisted federal Indian school policies as schoolteachers at the Carlisle Indian School between 1875-1933. An examination of teacher’s personnel files, teacher’s correspondence and other archival data, has revealed that few white women teachers at Carlisle resisted federal policies to advocate for the young Native children under their care. More white teachers passively accommodated policies to assimilate children at Carlisle. Dispirited by the male dominated Bureau of Indian Affairs, they accepted their paychecks and bid their time until retirement. Many of Carlisle’s white teachers embraced their newfound power and authority over Native American children and reproduced federal policies designed to eradicate Native cultures in their role as schoolteachers.

Carlisle’s pioneer teachers conceived that their work to save American Indian children from their primitive cultures was in service to God. By introducing them to America, teachers were confident that they were rescuing Native children. Many of the pioneer teachers seamlessly transitioned to federal schools, having taught at mission schools near reservations or having grown up in the work, with parents as missionaries. Carlisle teachers were also motivated by economic needs. Some worked at the school to support themselves in an effort to delay or avoid marriage. Teachers also had dependent family members to support. A few of the earliest teachers came to Carlisle having previously taught in public schools and found, at least in the early years, that Carlisle
paid more. Most of the early white women teachers were middle aged, from the Northeast and were single.

White women teachers believed that American Indians had no choice but to assimilate into modern America. They integrated an important scientific framework into each of their lessons to explain to the Indian child why assimilation was necessary. They argued that each race evolved at different rates along a continuum from savagery to barbarism to civilization. White teachers promised that if American Indian children would trade their indigenous religions for Christianity, Native languages for English and tribalism and communal ownership of property for capitalism and individualism that they would progress to the pinnacle of racial evolutionary development – civilization.

For white women teachers, introducing the Indian to America meant teaching Native children the fundamentals of civilization and citizenship. Teaching the English language was paramount in preparation for citizenship. After rudimentary English skills were acquired, Carlisle teachers taught more advanced subjects like American history, civics and geography. In these lessons, they emphasized the inferiority of American Indian cultures, constantly comparing them to Euro-American Protestant culture and urging transformation. White teachers were convinced that their social institutions were exceptional and that the virtuosity of the American people required their eventual settlement of Indian land and removal of Native Americans to reservations. America’s technological progress and expanding influence in the world were offered as proof of Manifest Destiny. White women taught Native children that acceptance of Manifest Destiny and their inferior position in social evolutionary frameworks, as well as a desire for progress towards civilization was required for American citizenship.
Although many of the pioneer teachers asserted that Native students were equal to white children in intellectual capacity, lessons that taught that Native cultures were inherently inferior belied that conviction. American Indian children were also required to take a half-day industrial curriculum. Carlisle’s gendered vocational training did not prepare Native children to enter modern American society on equal terms with whites. Boys were taught industrial skills to prepare them for work as carpenters, wagonmakers, tailors, shoemakers, and printers. Farming was given particular emphasis. Girls were taught only domestic skills to prepare them for lives inside households as wives, mothers and domestic workers. Although Carlisle’s industrial training prepared boys for the lowest socioeconomic strata of society, girl’s training positioned them for the lowest strata in both socioeconomic and Protestant marriage/family systems.

In addition to serving God and country, white women were motivated to teach at Carlisle by a desire to garner greater social and professional status for themselves and gain more public influence. They believed that working at the flagship federal Indian school gave them an unprecedented level of expertise. They considered themselves authorities on the teaching of civilization and citizenship to American Indians. Teachers used their work at Carlisle as an avenue to greater opportunities. Former Carlisle teachers include a Congresswoman (the second ever to be elected), one of the first Deans of Women, a medical doctor, lawyer and a number of influential authors. Carlisle teachers also used their work to attempt to advance within the Bureau of Indian Affairs. After the turn of the century, opportunities for women’s advancement within the Bureau of Indian Affairs expanded as the BIA developed a more feminized work environment and increasing numbers of women were drawn to federal Indian work.
White women also benefitted personally from their work as teachers at Carlisle. They profited from cheap Native student labor when students were assigned to their family’s farm or home to work in exchange for wages. Ostensibly sent out on outing assignments to absorb civilization in the context of a real family, white teachers used their close relationships with students to monitor them when they were away from Carlisle.

As Frances Sparhawk’s novel, *A Chronicle of Conquest* demonstrates, white teachers also used Native girls and young women as domestic workers at Carlisle, rationalizing their work as “practice” for the vocational training they received there. Young Native women cleaned teacher’s rooms and served their personal needs and desires.

An analysis of Native teacher’s student files, personnel files and other archival data has revealed that Native women teachers both accommodated and resisted federal Indian educational policies. Many of the early American Indian women teachers at Carlisle grew up in bi-cultural/bi-racial families with Native mothers and immigrant fathers. They learned early in their lives how to integrate their traditional Native cultures with American norms, values and beliefs. Their immigrant fathers encouraged them to pursue schooling. Sent to western schools close to their reservations, these women came to value their schooling and often, urged on by their fathers, sought advanced schooling at federal institutions. When they arrived at off reservation boarding schools like Carlisle, these young Native women could speak English and had acquired basic academic and vocational skills. Some had been converted, at least outwardly, to Christianity.
The women who eventually became the first Native federal Indian schoolteachers excelled academically as students at Carlisle. They also enjoyed the many extracurricular activities the school offered, including literary societies, debate clubs and social organizations. Extracurricular activities, particularly for girls, reinforced the civilization and citizenship curriculum.

The Native women who chose to become federal teachers received their first normal training at Carlisle. Once they completed this training, most attended the same normal schools white women attended. Superintendent Pratt raised funds to send the young women to these schools and while they attended, arranged for them to live in white homes on outing assignments. More historical research is needed on the experiences of American Indian women at colleges and universities during this time period.

While the earliest Native teachers emerged from normal schools with comparable training and credentials to white women teachers, the majority did not find teaching jobs in public schools. Contrary to Pratt’s conviction that there was less race prejudice in the east, Native teachers only found work inside the federal Indian school system. Pratt hired very few Native women to teach at Carlisle. Only two women taught for long periods at Carlisle. Native teachers trained at Carlisle did, however, find work at other federal schools.

American Indian teachers earned less than their white counterparts and it took considerably longer for them to reach parity with whites. Native “pupil teachers” earned $60 per annum compared to $540, the salary of a white assistant teacher. It took seven years of full-time work for one Native teacher to be paid $600 – a salary equal to what white women earned after one year. Native teachers were also carefully monitored, much
as they had been when they were students. While to some extent, white teachers were also closely watched, as they were supposed to act as role models for Native children, American Indian teachers were scrutinized. Their personal correspondence was routinely opened, read, and if it proved useful to teach the Carlisle community a lesson on social evolutionary progress (or the lack thereof), was reprinted in the student newspaper.

Native teachers filled out a unique application for employment in federal Indian boarding schools. Indian employment applications were highly intrusive. They inquired about an applicant’s drug use and personal habits of cleanliness. Indian employment applications also inquired about Native teacher’s property ownership, particularly how much and what types of property an applicant owned.

The earliest Native teachers had cordial, even affectionate relationships with white teachers. There are numerous references in the Carlisle student newspapers to American Indian teachers being included in social gatherings and recreational trips. Later, however, when higher numbers of Native American teachers worked at off reservation boarding schools, white teachers expressed feelings of resentment towards them. White teachers asserted that Native teachers held contrary perspectives about the education of American Indian children and that they were too ambitious. While some Native teachers returned to their tribal communities to teach at reservation schools, others transferred throughout the Indian school system. American Indian teachers faced racism and discrimination at other federal schools.

Working at Carlisle required Native women to simultaneously teach students that they needed to learn aspects of the civilization and citizenship curriculum but they need not unlearn their cultural traditions nor break ties to family and community. Each
individual teacher integrated aspects of their Native cultures with white Protestant American culture differently, depending on her values and past experiences. Elizabeth Bender, whose Christianity was important to her, accommodated this aspect of the Carlisle curriculum but at the same time refused to cast Indian people as inferior to whites. Rosa Bourassa believed that American Indian people needed to be uplifted, yet blamed whites for impeding the progress of Native Americans. Bourassa asserted that if American Indian people were left alone, they would create solutions to their problems within their own communities and would eventually uplift from within. Future research should explore Native teacher’s agency in federal Indian schools, analyzing the ways teachers advocated for students and their communities both within the system and outside the system.

Teacher quality shifted markedly in the early twentieth century. As funding for Indian education declined in the early 1900s and salaries for federal Indian schoolteachers dipped, highly qualified white teachers were drawn to public schools and less educated white women flocked to teach at federal Indian schools. After Pratt’s departure, Friedman and his successors discontinued sending young American Indian women to Pennsylvania state normals for teacher training. During Pratt’s tenure, wealthy philanthropists funded young Native women’s advanced education at white normal schools. Without access to those philanthropic networks and knowing the government would not fund their continued education, Friedman was forced to abandon the practice. After 1904, Carlisle students who desired to become teachers were limited to the teacher training offered there and at larger off reservation Indian schools.
The federal government closed the Carlisle Indian School in 1918. Throughout its existence, more than 10,000 American Indian children attended the school, but only 158 graduated. The Native women under consideration for this study were among the small minority of students who graduated. As a group their legacy is rooted in their agency within the oppressive confines of the federal Indian school system. Native women refused to allow only white mother-teachers to raise future generations of American Indian people. While, to a degree, they accepted the idea that Native people had to assimilate, they became federal Indian schoolteachers to define the contours of that process for Native children. They also modeled for Native children how to retain important aspects of their cultural identities and how to use their relationships with one another to benefit Native Americans as a whole. By working together and forming alliances that resulted in organizations such as the Society of American Indians, Native women teachers became educational and political leaders and charted a new course for the future of their people.

Native teachers created alliances with one another that were not merely political. Despite the fact that federal Indian educational policies were created to disrupt and destroy relationships, American Indian students created strong and lasting bonds that they used to sustain themselves and to help them cope with life’s difficulties. One of the strongest testaments to the unintended outcomes of federal Indian boarding schools is the relationships students created in schools and at least, for future teachers Nellie Robertson and Rosa Bourassa, their ability to maintain them as employees.

Nellie Robertson and Rosa Bourassa provide a powerful example of the deep bonds Native teachers created with one another and relied on after their careers in federal
schools came to an end. Nellie and Rosa met as students at Carlisle. Both had similar backgrounds and experiences though Nellie was Sioux and Rosa, Chippewa. Their mothers were both Native and married men whose families had recently immigrated from Europe. Both had fathers who encouraged them to seek Western education to improve themselves, both attended Western schools before arriving to Carlisle and both were literate when they arrived. While at Carlisle they shared many of the same interests and were involved in some of the same extracurricular activities. Both joined the normal department, attended Metzger College, initially became teachers at Carlisle and spent the bulk of their adult lives working in Indian Schools. The two were described as “like sisters.”

When Rosa transferred to other schools to work with Indian children in various parts of the country and to explore other positions, they maintained their friendship through letters and Rosa’s frequent visits to Carlisle. On these visits they attended football games and spent time catching up. Nellie’s entire adult life was spent at Carlisle. When the school closed in 1918, she and her husband Wallace Denny boxed what would become the school’s archive. Having maintained all of the student folders for more than a decade, she sent them among 150 boxes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1918.

After 1924, Nellie and Wallace and their son Bob (Robertson) moved to Palo Alto, California where Wallace had taken a job as Glenn “Pop” Warner’s athletic

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493 Verna (Dunagan) Whistler, Oral History collected September 1976, Cumberland County Historical Society.
494 Rosa Bourassa, Student Folder, Records Group 75, File 1327, Folder 5242, Box 133, NARA.
495 Genevieve Bell, “Telling Stories Out of School.”
assistant. At some point, during Wallace’s tenure at Stanford, Rosa bought property in Palo Alto and moved to the same block that the Denny’s lived on in order to help Nellie raise Bob, as Wallace travelled so much. Nellie was also quite ill. Although they didn’t know it at the time, Nellie was dying of cancer. Rosa devoted all of her time and energy to taking care of her dying friend and young Bob.

Near the end of Nellie’s life, she called to Rosa and Wallace and told them, “Now, I know I’m not going to live very long. In due time, a year or so after I’m gone, I want you two to marry, cause Wallace needs somebody, and Bob needs somebody.” According to Nellie’s wishes, after her death, Rosa Bourassa La Flesche became Rosa B. Denny and for Nellie, devoted the end of her life to ensuring that both Bob and Wallace had “somebody.”

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497 Verna (Dunagan) Whistler, Oral History collected September 1976, Cumberland County Historical Society.
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APPENDIX A

NAMES OF WHITE TEACHERS USED FOR THIS STUDY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Teachers</th>
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<td>Anna C. Hamilton*</td>
<td>Mariette Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emma Hetrick</td>
<td>Katherine Tranbarger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lydia Hunt</td>
<td>Mary Yarnall</td>
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<td>Mary Hyde*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kate Irvine*</td>
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*Indicates that these teachers did not have a personnel folder at the National Personnel Records Center.
APPENDIX B

NAMES OF NATIVE TEACHERS USED FOR THIS STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native Teachers</th>
<th>Personnel Information Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosa Bourassa (Chippewa)^</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Dagenett (Miami)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nellie Robertson (Sioux)^</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecelia Wheelock (Oneida)*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jemima Wheelock (Oneida)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Bailey (Pueblo)^</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Bender (Ojibwe)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ida Swallow (Sioux)^</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Goyitney (Pueblo)^</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Bent (Cheyenne)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennie DuBray (Sioux)</td>
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<td>Lydia Flint (Shawnee)</td>
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<td>Minnie Perreine (Piegan Blackfeet)</td>
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<td>Luzena Choteau (Wyandote)^</td>
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<td>Ida Powlas (Oneida)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnie Yandell (Bannock)^</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zitkala-sa, aka Gertrude Simmons (Yankton Dakota)</td>
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^Indicates that student folders were used for personnel information.
*Indicates that these teachers had personnel files at the National Personnel Records Center.
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
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</table>

Prior to 1887, only the total number of employees, inclusive of teachers, was reported for federal schools in the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Between 1887 and 1893 employees’ names, positions, service dates and salaries were reported. Between 1884 and 1905, sex and race were added to the information found in the reports by federal schools. After 1905, employee names were no longer listed and aggregate statistics on the race and sex of all employees at a school were listed.

^While sex and race of teachers was not listed between the years 1887 – 1893, the author of this study has gained a familiarity with the teachers to know the race and sex of most teachers listed.

*In 1900 both Nellie Robertson and Esther Dagenett are listed as white though the author knows both are Native.