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False Promises: Race, Power, and the Chimera of Indian Assimilation,
1879-1934

by

Sarah A. Whitt

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Spring 2020

Abstract

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Sarah A. Whitt

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Designated Emphasis in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Professor Shari Huhndorf, Co-chair

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False Promises: Race, Power, and the Chimera of Indian Assimilation, 1879-1934, analyzes the punishment of adult Indian women and men at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879-1918) and the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians (1902-1934). While previous boarding school scholarship has focused on the experiences of children, my work finds that as a result of an overlooked policy change, adults eighteen years of age and older, rather than youth, were Carlisle's demographic majority between 1912-1918. Through an analysis of gendered forms of Indigenous punishment at Carlisle and Canton, this work exposes sites of Indian-white conflict, such as labor and sexuality, that were as integral to the American project of nation-building as was the indoctrination of Indian children in off-reservation boarding schools. By considering two settler institutions alongside one another, I demonstrate punitive connections between those ostensibly distinct facilities, and show how the practice of confining adult Indian people at Carlisle and Canton inaugurated and concretized networks of white racial power in this era.

In bringing together the fields of Native American history, American studies, and race, gender, and medicine in the Progressive era, my work traces overlapping institutional histories of Native American confinement, punishment, and resistance, and demonstrates patterns of racial prejudice that have ongoing relevance for Indian people in the twenty-first century. This research builds on extant scholarship in Native American history to demonstrate the key role that American institutions played in furthering the subjugation of Indian communities under U.S. settler-colonialism, deputizing white American civilians as the disciplinary agents of Indian people by virtue of proximity to them. This research expands current interpretations of Carlisle as an institution intended solely for the indoctrination of Indian children. Additionally, this work begins to address the neglected history of Indigenous incarceration and elimination at Canton, and the ways in which emergent eugenicist ideologies were operationalized at both of these American facilities. *False Promises* traces overlapping histories of confinement to reveal how white Americans wielded punishment as a form of racial power held in common over all Indian people, and locates Carlisle and Canton on a historical continuum of policies and practices aimed at the eradication of Indigenous populations.

To my great-grandmother, Ruth Fowler Dodd,
my grandmother, Mary Ellen Leftwich, and
my mother, Donna Louise Akers.

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Introduction

“Indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell”
- Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Decolonizing Methodologies (2001)

“The details accumulate like the ditto ditto in the archives”
- Christina Sharpe
In the Wake (2013)

Research for this project began with the simple desire to know more about the Indian people who ran away from the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Who were they, and where were they headed? What traces remained of their open defiance of institutional order? As the United States’ first off-reservation boarding school dedicated solely to the indoctrination of Indian people, Carlisle generated thousands of documents over its decades-long existence, many of which have been preserved by the National Archives and Records Administration and digitized by Dickinson College in the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. Photographs, enrollment cards, letters of correspondence, disciplinary records, and illustrations reach out across time and space, and help reconstruct a picture of the conditions at the facility. In one such document, an institutional ledger used from 1890-1900, boldface type describes its subject—“DISCHARGED FROM SCHOOL”—and it is here that the research journey for *False Promises* began. Six columns span the breadth of the ledger, and recite the following information: student’s name, the name of their father, their nation, the date of their departure, and the reason for their discharge. The ledger is a classic example of what Michel Foucault describes as the school’s “field of documentation”—a corpus of knowledge that makes possible the teacher’s exercise of power; colonial power, in this case.¹ Yet, this “meticulous archive” also reveals something unintended. As one scans the right-hand side of the page, Indigenous presence becomes palpable as spate after spate of “runaways” make their escape:

CAUSE OF DISCHARGE:
RUNAWAY
“ “
“ “
“ “
“ “
“ “
“ “
“ “
“ “
“ “

The ledger reflects one Carlisle employee’s shorthand for enrollees who fled the institution without permission, codifying each subsequent “runaway” as a ditto mark rather than describing the particulars of each runaway event. The unintended visual bloc of Indigenous solidarity that

¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 186-187.

this method unwittingly creates is arresting—row upon row of fleeing Carlisle enrollees maintain distinctive presence in an archival document that loudly proclaims their absence. In this way, the ledger performs a counter-narrative akin to what Christina Sharpe has observed in reading the metaphor of “the wake” in the context of the Middle Passage and the “afterlives of slavery.” “The details accumulate like the ditto ditto of the archive,” she writes.²

The “ditto ditto” in the archive speaks—and in the Carlisle archive, it speaks loudly. What began as an inquiry into the identities of Carlisle “runaways” resulted in surprising realizations about those runaways that shaped the nature of the questions I ask in this project. For one, those who were enumerated as having fled this institution were on the whole much older than I had anticipated. According to a 1910 report entitled “Runaway Pupils Who Have Money in the Bank” for example, of the ninety-one students named in this document, only sixteen were under the age of eighteen—and all were between the ages of 15 and 24.³ This observation led to further investigation of Carlisle enrollment ledgers, application materials, and quarterly reports; during this research I identified adult Indian women and men eighteen years of age and older as a significant proportion, and from 1912-1918 the majority, of Carlisle’s institutional demographic in all years of its operation (1879-1918). Existing literature about Carlisle often describes and analyzes the experiences of Indian children and youth, and many of these studies refer to those who lived at this institution—voluntarily or not—as students and pupils. The concept of a student, however, has powerful sociocultural connotations that do not fully or accurately, in many cases, capture the demographic makeup of Carlisle. For the Office of Indian Affairs, appropriately “school-aged” pupils were between six and eighteen years of age. But in every year of Carlisle’s existence, enrollees eighteen years of age and older—up to forty-five, in one case— were recorded in institutional ledgers.

Prevailing concepts of childhood and youth—which were in the late nineteenth century being consolidated, thanks in part to child labor laws—are often understood as being antithetical to the condition of adulthood. By the turn of the twentieth century, major cultural shifts were underway that would impact dominant conceptualizations of what it meant to be an “adult.” During the Progressive era, the prevalence of child labor fell dramatically, while attendance in American public schools increased. According to Jordan Stranger-Ross, Christina Collins, and Mark Stern, the majority of Americans in the early part of the twentieth century took longer to transition into adulthood, a state that they define by an individual’s choices in five primary areas: the decision to marry, leave one’s parental household, establish one’s own household, join the labor force, and leave school.⁴ In the first part of the twentieth century, Stranger-Ross et al. note that important shifts were taking place: “Children closed out of the labor market were steered into schools. By 1920 the great majority of young people remained in school into their late teens, a shift that shortened the transition to adulthood by delaying its onset.”⁵ By comparison, with the founding of Carlisle in 1879, American Indian children and youth were forced to attend large off-reservation boarding institutions where they performed grueling manual labor as part of their disciplinary indoctrination into “civilization”—labor that was envisioned as a way to keep the cost of running the institution low. By the turn of the twentieth century, Carlisle’s demographic

² Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 56.

³ “Inspection Report of James McLaughlin for November 1910,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #95269-1-1910-Carlisle-150. National Archives and Records Administration, Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC).

⁴ Jordan Stanger-Ross, Christina Collins, and Mark J. Stern, “Falling Far from the Tree: Transitions to Adulthood and the Social History of Twentieth-Century America,” *Social Science History* 29, no. 4 (2005): 625–48, 625.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 639.

had become much older, although institutional authorities continued to refer to Carlisle enrollees as “boys and girls.” Nonetheless, this new generation of enrollees had achieved many of the milestones for which Carlisle claimed to be preparing its “students,” and which Stranger-Ross et al. also define as being central to one’s arrival at adult maturity in Western societies.

Similarly, U.S. officials in other sectors often refused to recognize adult Indian women and men as adults, and those dominant cultural assumptions about American Indian people continue to inflect twenty-first-century understandings of the historical past. The records colonial agents left behind often overwhelm Indigenous perspectives in the archive, and paint a picture of a dependent, “savage” people in need of “civilization.” Letters exchanged between Carlisle authorities and other U.S. officials similarly reflect a paternalistic logic; Indian people, less advanced than their white counterparts, were also more childlike. In their classic text, *To Remain an Indian*, Mvskoke scholar K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa McCarty argue that for Americans in this era, the concept of Indigenous adulthood had potentially threatening legal and social implications. To grant Indian people social status as “self-governing adults” would challenge Chief Justice John Marshall’s 1832 ruling in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* that Indian communities were not sovereign nations, but domestic dependent nations comprised of federal wards.⁶ Similarly, the authors explain, “Clearly Native nations composed of self-determining adults exercising dual or multiple citizenships have been perceived as much more threatening than groups defined as wards, marked by the mental, moral, and legal deficiencies linked to the status of children.” They continue, “Children belong in school, and the premise of school as the paramount Americanizing institution depends on the perception of ‘different’ peoples as immature.”⁷

Drawing on Lomawaima and McCarty’s observation that the concept of Indigenous adulthood threatened to destabilize the Indian Office’s educational agenda, I make the conscious decision to refer to older Carlisle enrollees as adults. Referring to older Indigenous Carlisle enrollees as adults critiques entwined sociopolitical processes of American Indian racialization and infantilization, and contributes a new way of understanding Indigenous experience at Carlisle. American Indian communities had their own ways of reckoning with the responsibilities required of individuals at various stages of physical, intellectual, and spiritual development, unique to each Indigenous cosmology. But in the context of an institution that sought to transform Indian people into Americans, the women and men who enrolled at Carlisle were subjected to dominant ideas about what it meant to be an American versus what it meant to be an Indian, and whether or not Indian people were capable of attaining self-sufficiency. In many ways, Indian people were defined in opposition to their white counterparts by virtue of their Indianness, and in many ways Carlisle officials maintained Indian enrollees—regardless of age—as a socially and economically dependent class. For adults who had already achieved culturally-specific ideals of self-sufficiency (and who, in some cases, had already married), subjection to a sub-standard curriculum and rules intended for children would have been humiliating, infuriating, and infantilizing—a clever way for Carlisle officials to reiterate their cultural and racial power over those enrolled at this institution. In order to critique this phenomenon, a process I refer to as *making children out of men* (discussed in chapter two), I stress the political and ideological importance of describing older Indian enrollees as adults. For many Carlisle Indian women and men, this designation would have aligned with their own

⁶ K. Tsianina Lomawaima, and T. L. McCarty, *“To Remain an Indian”: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 45-46.

⁷ Ibid.

understandings of the roles they were meant to play within their communities, and their identities back home as wage earners, care takers, cultural stewards, husbands, wives, siblings, knowledge bearers, and protectors.



False Promises interrogates processes of adult American Indian confinement, punishment, and resistance—and the outcomes of these processes for white Americans—at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (1879-1918) and the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians in Canton, South Dakota (1902-1934). Reading across the grain of diverse historical materials including social reform discourse, Office of Indian Affairs reports, and legal proceedings, this research moves past the seemingly straightforward observation that Carlisle and Canton in some ways did and did not resemble a school and asylum, to a different set of questions: What was the relationship between institutions of Indigenous confinement, reform, and labor in this era? How did American discourses about race, gender and sexuality, nation, and illness seize upon Indian people in these settings? How did these discourses circulate at the turn of the twentieth century, and what material consequences did they have for Indian people seeking new forms of self-sufficiency in this era? The answers to these questions point to under-examined sites of racial conflict, and illuminate previously unexplored connections between boarding facilities and other settler institutions—state reformatories, local jails, and hospitals, to name a few—through which Indian people moved and to which they were often disappeared. The answers also, I contend, point to a cross-institutional network of Indigenous subordination and white racial empowerment.

As a Choctaw scholar, I have a particular investment in the Indigenous paradigm of historiography described by historians Susan Miller (Seminole) and James Riding In (Pawnee), in which Indigenous experiences under ever-evolving forms of colonial domination have informed the nature of historical inquiry done by and for Indigenous people, and the sources and methods used to arrive at knowledge of the past.⁸ Indigenous histories, experiences, and perspectives continue to be marginalized both within academia and mainstream U.S. culture; for this reason, I read across the grain of historical documents to privilege the voices, perspectives, and presence of Indigenous people whenever possible.⁹ I engage two primary archives in this study. The Waidner-Spahr Library at Dickinson College in Carlisle, PA, recently digitized a large database of National Archives and Record Administration (NARA) documents pertaining to Carlisle, and this resource, the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center, is central to my second and third chapters, “The New Order of Things” and “Hoe Handle Medicine.” The NARA and Dickinson archives contain thousands of materials, including: letters of correspondence, institutional ledgers, disciplinary files, student information, OIA reports, photographs, newspaper articles, and student publications. In my work, I focus on disciplinary reports and records contained in individual “student” files in order to study the colonial discourses, practices, and

⁸ As Susan Miller and James Riding In discuss in *Native Historians Write Back*, the Indigenous paradigm of historiography emerged from Indigenous peoples’ experiences, and the need for a historical framework that centers Indigenous people and their ancestral forms of knowledge. The Indigenous paradigm of historiography takes the following as foundational concepts: Indigenousness, colonization, decolonization, and sovereignty. For more information, see: Susan A. Miller and James Riding In, *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History* (Lubbock, Tex: Texas Tech University Press, 2011).

⁹ For more information on the impact colonizing knowledges have had on Indigenous peoples, see Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s seminal text *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999).

policies that seized upon adult Indian men and women as difficult, different, or deviant. While Indigenous voices are present in these materials, non-Indigenous perspectives are often overwhelming. Nonetheless, these records illuminate new sites of conflict as the needs, behaviors, and desires of adult enrollees collided with administrative aims. Additionally, I examine papers held at the National Archives and Records Administration and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma headquarters in Durant, OK, regarding the administration of the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians (1902-1934). These materials document the whereabouts of patients, administrative correspondence, the responsibilities of asylum staff, OIA mandates, and daily routines, which inform chapters four and five, “A Fit Subject,” and “Care and Maintenance,” respectively. Canton records, in contrast to those kept in the Carlisle archive, overwhelmingly obscure Indigenous voices and perspectives. Occasionally, however, letters of correspondence and other records created by Indigenous inmates have been preserved, and where possible, I privilege these materials and reproduce them, often in full.

Through each of these sources, Indigenous people are revealed to be powerful historical agents who navigated complex forms of racial discrimination, and sought out surprising avenues of survival, resistance, and self-fashioning at the turn of the twentieth century. I employ a Gender and Sexuality Studies analytic to attend to dimensions of Indigenous experience under patriarchal, colonial forms of domination. I treat the punitive patterns, policies, and practices of federal officials and other agents of colonial authority as mechanisms of Indigenous racialization, which also secured status-whiteness as normative and maintained race-based power disparities in the U.S. Finally, I employ archival research, an Indigenous paradigm of historiography, and speech-act theory to craft a new story about the relationship between Carlisle and Canton, and the Indigenous and American historical actors who lived in this era and traversed these institutional spaces. Archives of this kind are fraught with fissures, elisions, and gaps in historical perspective; this is the very nature of the documents authored by and created for those who exercised power over Indigenous people in the era in question. Language not only describes reality; it also organizes bodies in time and space, and situates them within matrices of racial, gendered, classed, and affective lines of affinity, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot, J.L. Austin, Joseph Roach, and others have observed. Nonetheless, silences, rhetorical slips, inconsistencies, and administrative marginalia may be recuperated as critical traces of Indigenous presence and sources of knowledge about their experiences.

Chapter one, “Good Discipline,” traces the conditions that made possible one Chippewa man’s expulsion from Carlisle and threatened confinement in a psychiatric institution. Records about John B. and other adult Indian women and men register themes that pervade federal correspondence about Indian people, and demonstrate surprising connections between disparate historical agents and the settler institutions—psychiatric, educational, medical, or otherwise—over which they presided.¹⁰ White Americans and social reformers who lived during the Progressive era were often confident in the power of the institution to successfully mold its subjects. But in the context of American Indian reform after 1900, archival materials reflect another belief: Indian people could never be transformed, they could only be punished. Records relating to the punishment of adult Indian people at Carlisle and Canton reflect the pessimism of the Indian Office that ruled the day, and document the ways in which white Americans and U.S.

¹⁰ Throughout this manuscript, I identify Indigenous subjects according to their first names and last initials only, unless they are a relative of mine or have been identified in published material elsewhere. I do this in order to protect the identity of those written about in the colonial archive, while drawing on their experiences as illuminative of colonial power relations in this era.

officials devised new forms of punishment in response to the perceived failures of institutionalized adult Indian women and men. Identifying this phenomenon as a strategy of white supremacy broadens current understandings of the consequences of American Indian institutionalization in this era.

Chapter two, “The New Order of Things,” examines records relating to adults enrolled at Carlisle who were punished between 1900-1918. I analyze Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) policy, Indian School Service curricula, and Carlisle administrative correspondence to explore how adults were punished for a wide range of infractions, and how formal and informal disciplinary structures—gossip, rumor, carceral facilities, withholding of privileges, and removal from Carlisle, sometimes to other institutions—were used in the management of Indian women and men in differing capacities. This chapter is animated by the following questions: What were the disciplinary structures at Carlisle, and how did women and men differently navigate punishment? What informal structures of discipline existed, and how did they relate to institutionalized punishment that adults received? Finally, what does the emphasis on punishment reveal about Carlisle’s aims after 1900, and how does this alter our understandings of the institution? I attend especially to OIA circulars, institutional ledgers, and letters of correspondence that describe three important transformations at Carlisle: Superintendent Moses Friedman’s official stance of accepting only “mature” Indian people after 1908; 1913 OIA mandates which dictated that American public schools would oversee the education of Indian children near their home communities; and the increased enrollment of adults in an institution that incrementally dismantled its academic curriculum. In examining the experiences of adults immersed in an environment originally intended for children, this chapter makes the central claim that for many adults, Carlisle was not a school at all; it was a place where labor was performed continuously, and where punishment was routine.

Chapter three, “Hoe Handle Medicine,” takes up the concept of medicinal labor to analyze how ideas about Indigenous health, labor, morality, and progress were linked at Carlisle and beyond. In 1886, an article entitled “Hoe Handle Medicine” appeared in *The Indian Helper*, Carlisle’s official institutional publication (and a propagandistic tool). But in the context of an institution that admitted over 78% of its total population to the infirmary in 1912, it is clear that the medicine to which this article referred was, perhaps, purely metaphorical.¹¹ Records relating to Indian men and women who were enrolled in the training “partnerships” at the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, Michigan, and General Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, two institutional components of Carlisle’s Outing system, reveal the power of this metaphor. Through discourse analysis, this chapter makes the claim that as white Americans defined the condition of being Indian as a social pathology, this belief rationalized the outsized forms of punishment administered to adult Indian people in various institutional contexts. This chapter also documents how disciplinary power over Indian people was transferred from one institutional context to another, and in so doing centers the management of Indigenous sexuality and sexual health. Disciplinary documents reveal that sexuality was a contested and feared site of Indigenous agency, and these records show that Carlisle officials and other institutional authorities routinely punished Indian women and men they deemed to be “promiscuous” or sexually deviant. Despite the relatively high incidence of Carlisle enrollees receiving punishment for having intimate relationships, contracting sexually transmitted infections, and even becoming pregnant, extant literature has overlooked sexuality as a prominent source of conflict at the institution. “Hoe

¹¹ Jean A Keller, *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute, 1902-1922* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002).

Handle Medicine” begins to address this oversight by analyzing disciplinary documents that register disputes over Indigenous sexuality, which adds to literature about the zone of the “intimate”—in addition to Indigenous health and labor—as a modern site of colonial control.

Chapter four, “A Fit Subject,” turns to the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, in operation from 1902-1934. Like Carlisle, Canton was built expressly for the management and administration of Indian people, and like Pratt, Canton Superintendent and psychiatrist Harry H. Hummer strategically isolated his Indian “wards”: he prevented contact between Indian people and their families, as he believed this would slow a “patient’s” recovery.¹² From 1908 to 1934, Superintendent Hummer admitted dozens of Indian men and women for indefinite terms in order to treat their purported ailments, and many inmates were sent at the behest of legal guardians, school administrators, inconvenienced relatives, and reservation superintendents. But records also reflect that many Indigenous women and men were incarcerated at Canton for being “troublesome”; threatening in their unwillingness, or inability, to conform to the American standards of racial, gendered, and classed conduct they were meant to be learning. What were the reasons for which Indian men and women were committed to Canton? Why were so many school administrators, reservation superintendents, and governmental officials responsible for the commitment of Indian people, and what does this demonstrate about settler colonialism in this era? In answering these questions, I analyze U.S. court files, sworn affidavits, OIA documents, and individual “patient” files. This chapter examines previously unexplored connections between disparate sites of Indian confinement, the white Americans who presided over them, and the social attitudes that legitimated the long-term incarceration of Indigenous people on the basis of “insanity.” This chapter demonstrates that white Americans and U.S. officials used Canton as a space of eugenicist confinement and locates this facility on a continuum of federal policies aimed at the eradication of Indigenous populations.

Chapter five takes up a phrase, “Care and Maintenance,” that looms large in Canton materials as an opening to analyze the impact of Indigenous confinement to this facility. In so doing, this chapter analyzes three entwined thematic areas: the *eugenicist* rationale behind many commitments; *interpersonal relationships* halted, transformed, or cultivated within the institution; and the ways in which commitment to the facility facilitated Indigenous *land dispossession*. Among other things, I find that Harry Hummer, as Canton’s superintendent, facilitated the theft of Indigenous land on a small-scale, case-by-case basis. This chapter demonstrates how federal facilities like Canton can and should be added to the variegated structure of settler-colonialism that Australian historian Patrick Wolfe has described. As “Care and Maintenance” illustrates, the American settler society used Canton to mitigate against potential threats to their colonial might—threats created by the unfinished business of Indigenous elimination in the United States.

In centering punishment as integral to American institutions created, ostensibly, for the benefit of Indian people, *False Promises* analyzes how the punitive patterns exhibited at Carlisle and Canton challenge both institutions’ claims of Indigenous “uplift.” Instead, as the following chapters demonstrate, this institutional emphasis on Indigenous punishment suggests that Carlisle, Canton, and other facilities furthered colonial processes of Indigenous subordination and white American empowerment. In numerous instances, the only commonality shared by the disparate historical actors policing Indian people *was their whiteness*. This fact broadens current understandings of how white racial privilege and hierarchies of power worked in the U.S. in this

¹² Diane Putney, “The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934,” *South Dakota History* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 1–30.

era, by documenting decisions made at the local level about who possessed the authority to act as the disciplinary agents of Indian people, and how this process of white deputization often went unchallenged by federal officials. Moreover, *False Promises* demonstrates the value of a comparative framework by showing how these punitive patterns pervaded institutions used to discipline, “civilize,” or “cure” Indian people. This fact suggests that these ostensibly distinct institutions functioned in support of a widespread network of white supremacist power, rather than existing separately as isolated entities. This approach enables us to interrogate the historical record in new ways, which reveals ideological consistencies across institutions; similarities in rhetorical and philosophical justifications for the incarceration of Indian people; and the overarching ethos of anti-Indianness at the heart of institutions that claimed to help Indigenous people and their communities. To that end, *False Promises* centers the double entendre of racialized discourse embedded in the coded rhetoric of white supremacy, which expands current understandings of American Indian experiences under pernicious forms of settler colonialism at the turn of the twentieth century.

Chapter One: “Good Discipline”

On April 21, 1914, a 23-year-old Chippewa man named John B. stood before a jury of his peers, accused of practicing “criminal intercourse” with Hazel M., a white woman. But this theatre of punishment was not a court of law. John was enrolled at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, and Superintendent Oscar H. Lipps, rather than a judge, would hand down a verdict of “guilty” that afternoon. According to a transcription of John’s trial, he faced the following “charges”: he associated with “women of low and immoral character” in the town of Carlisle without permission; he regularly “practic[ed] fornication” with Hazel; and he continuously disregarded “school rules, and [the] advise and counsel of the school authorities.”¹ John pled guilty on all counts, and was sentenced “to be reprimanded before the squadron.” Two months later, he was expelled.² But as additional documents suggest, John’s real trouble had perhaps only just begun. As a letter sent from Lipps to Superintendent of the Red Cliff Agency John Dady reflects, shortly after John’s “conviction,” Hazel was found dead on the outskirts of town. Lipps explained that because the coroner “pronounced it a case of murder,” he had incarcerated John in the institutional guardhouse so that John could “escape being mentioned in connection with that case.”³ But having evaded a charge of murder in the county courts, John was summoned to Williamsport, Pennsylvania “to appear as a witness in cases against several negroes from whom he and other boys of similar reputation had secured liquor.” “His every action here,” Lipps wrote in a letter to John’s mother, “seems to have been directed toward the very worst acts he could possibly become connected with.”⁴ Like many other Indian men enrolled at Carlisle at the turn of the twentieth century, John’s every action seemed to meet with punishment.

Carlisle has long been regarded as the first residential school intended solely for the indoctrination for Indian children, but as records about John B. reflect, children were not the only Indian people who populated this federal facility. In many years, Carlisle records illustrate that Indian children and youth were the demographic minority. In 1912, at the instruction of outgoing Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert G. Valentine, the Indian Office implemented a policy that required all Indian schools to submit quarterly student reports at the close of each term. Included in those reports was information about each Indian student’s name, age, nation, prior school attendance, and vocation—statistics that made it easier to track the whereabouts and number of Indian children attending school continuously. In addition to furnishing the Indian Office with information that would grant U.S. officials additional power over Indian communities, these reports reveal surprising information about Carlisle’s demographic makeup in the years preceding its closure. Quarterly reports from 1912-1918 reflect that adult Indian women and men eighteen years of age and older—rather than children—comprised the institution’s demographic majority.⁵ This fact is seemingly at odds with what we know about Carlisle’s objectives: to “civilize” Indian children by destroying their forms of kinship, criminalizing their languages and knowledges, and replacing their lifeways with American

¹ “John B—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 89, folder 4051. National Archives and Record Administration,

² *Ibid.*, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵ According to the quarterly reports for years 1912-1918, all adult students (women and men) 18 and older constituted the following percentage of Carlisle’s population: 56 percent in 1912; 58 percent in 1913; 57 percent in 1914; 56 percent in 1915; 57 percent in 1916; 50 percent in 1917; 55 percent in 1918. See: Carlisle Quarterly School Reports, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, RG 75, Series 745, NARA, CISDRC.

values through a militaristic educational regimen. In this way, it was hoped that younger generations of Indian children would be divested of their “Indianness,” and that they would carry Carlisle teachings back home with them to their communities, where older adults would be influenced as well. Reformers believed that forcibly indoctrinating Indian youth into Western and Christian epistemologies would effect a form of cultural genocide, as younger generations learned to regard Indigenous lifeways with contempt. Carlisle has long been described as a “school” in which the work of “civilization” was carried out, whether in the classroom, at the dining room table, or on the football field.⁶ But the presence of large numbers of adult Indian women and men at Carlisle calls into question the institution’s stated objectives, and opens up new lines of inquiry about this institutional environment. For many adults, Carlisle was not a “school” at all—it was a place where labor was performed continuously, and a facility in which adult Indian women and men—like John—were punished for enacting the independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency that Carlisle claimed to be “teaching” Indian students in this era.

In October 1879, Pratt admitted 144 Indian people, including seventeen prisoners of war held initially at Fort Marion, to the disused military barracks that became the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. For the next thirty-nine years, thousands of Indian people would traverse the institution’s grounds: estimates range from 8,500 to over 10,000, although less than ten percent of those enrolled at Carlisle would graduate with diploma in hand.⁷ Archival documents reflect that it was not unusual for enrollment to reach 900 in any given year, although not all of those enumerated in Carlisle ledgers lived continuously at the institution.⁸ Over the course of Carlisle’s operation, the original disused barracks would be renovated, expanded, and improved, and buildings were constantly being added as enrollment number increased. Jacqueline Fear-Segal notes that the layout of Carlisle’s grounds reflects important information about the aims of the institution. She argues that Pratt’s decisions about the location, size, positioning, and type of buildings that would form the basis of Carlisle’s architectural environment formed a “visual grammar” that imparted subtle and overt messages to Carlisle enrollees. Pratt’s superintendent house, for example, was sited across from the brick dining hall that blocked living quarters and the inner quadrangle from outside view. “The dining hall both physically and visually served Pratt’s double agenda,” Fear-Segal writes. “It completed the enclosure of the campus, thus

⁶ At Carlisle, many enrollees—especially younger boys and girls, but also women and men—were immersed in an environment intended to radically transform their bodies, minds, spirits, and psyches. The curriculum included inculcating students within a Western worldview that valued adherence to timed meals, interpersonal competitiveness, and obedience to institutional authorities, such as teachers. The work of “civilizing” Indian people was thus a relentless, multi-pronged assault on Indigenous cultures and ways of being. Existing literature has documented the impacts and legacies of these environments. See especially: Bryan McKinley Jones Brayboy, K. Tsianina Lomawaima, and Teresa McCarty. *Journal of American Indian Education, Special Issue: Native American Boarding School Stories*, 57, no. 1 (Spring 2018); Brenda J. Child and Brian Klopotek. *Indian Subjects: Hemispheric Perspectives on the History of Indigenous Education*, (SAR Press, 2014); Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose. *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations*. (University of Nebraska Press, 2016); Laurence J. Kirmayer, Joseph P. Gone, and Joshua Moses, “Rethinking Historical Trauma,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, no. 3 (June 1, 2014): 299–319.

⁷ According to Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose, only 758 of over 10,000 Carlisle enrollees ever graduated, meaning that the institution’s graduation rate was approximately 7 percent (2). For more information, see: Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose. *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations*. (University of Nebraska Press, 2016).

⁸ My research has also found that institutional authorities padded these ledgers by enumerating enrollees twice or more.

intensifying both the confinement of students and the possibility for surveillance.”⁹ Other buildings served similar purposes. Enrollees lived at the northern end of the institution’s grounds, furthest away from the entrance, closer to the disciplinarian’s house, the hospital, and trade shops purposed for labor. At the opposite end of Carlisle’s campus, administrative buildings, teachers’ quarters, the printing office, the school house and auditorium were clustered together, reflecting a racial division of space, as well as of power. Other buildings included a doctor’s office, a three-room guardhouse, a gymnasium, and a centrally-located bandstand. A seven-foot-high fence encircled this layout, reminding Indian enrollees of their confinement and unending surveillance until 1918, when the institution closed.

Canton was another first: the first and only federal facility intended for the care of “insane” Indian people. But despite this stated objective, Indian people were committed to this facility for little more than perceived behavioral infractions—and boarding school officials were among those responsible for these wrongful confinements. Canton’s layout was not nearly as sophisticated as Carlisle’s, reflecting differences in Hummer’s and Pratt’s objectives, as well as disparities in federal monetary support. Unlike Carlisle’s landscape of racial segregation, Canton employees and the Indian people who were confined there lived together in the same four-ward building from 1902-1934. Diane Putney notes that in Canton’s early years, Superintendent Oscar Gifford and physician John F. Turner lived in the main building as well. Water was brought in from an adjacent well, although it was too hard to use for adequate bathing; radiators provided warmth in the harsh South Dakota winters, and one investigative report revealed that asylum employees chained at least one Indian person to radiators as a method of restraint and punishment. Putney notes that with the addition of a hospital building in 1916, Canton’s physical capacity was increased to eighty-five; sixteen years later, ninety-two Indian people were confined to the facility. Those confined to Canton, in addition to asylum staff, were fed on an inadequate diet of bland foods consisting mostly of gruel, pork, boiled potatoes, milk, and bread. Archival documents reflect that Indian women and men complained bitterly of digestive difficulties brought on by these unwholesome foodstuffs, a complaint sometimes shared by Indian people at boarding schools, as well. “Between 1901 and 1909,” Putney writes, “the asylum acquired cow and horse barns, a corn crib, a laundry, and houses for poultry, swine, coal, wagon, tools, pump, and gasoline. Two steel gates were constructed at the entrance to the grounds, and the words “Hiawatha Asylum” were placed upon the arch of the gates.”¹⁰ One architectural feature shared with Carlisle was the seven-foot steel fence that enclosed the well-manicured lawn upon which the asylum’s granite structure sat.

As an Indian man who lived and worked at Carlisle in the early years of the twentieth century, John would have been subjected to behavioral criteria designed to assess the “progress” he was making towards becoming “self-sufficient”—a phrase that was often used by Carlisle authorities euphemistically, as a way to describe Indian peoples’ apparent assimilation of American social, economic, gendered, or behavioral norms. His association with Hazel, a white prostitute who lived on the outskirts of the town of Carlisle, would have made him a person of interest to law enforcement. As letters contained in John’s file reflect, his perceived infractions while enrolled at Carlisle would follow him all the way back home. A letter sent from Dady to Lipps shows that John would face heightened scrutiny back on the reservation. He wrote, “I

⁹ Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation*. (University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 201.

¹⁰ Diane Putney, “The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934,” *South Dakota History* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 1–30, 4.

regret very much that John caused you so much trouble. I shall ask the Policeman to keep watch of him and if he continues his illicit practices we will have him sent to a reform school. I have consulted our agency physician with the view of ascertaining if he thinks the boy is mentally deficient, and on return of his written report, I will, if thought necessary, send him away for examination by a specialist.”¹¹ As these documents demonstrate, a host of officials ranging from the Indian Agent to a psychiatric specialist were authorized to poke, prod, study, surveil, and punish John as a result of his initial misbehavior. Records about John register themes that pervade federal correspondence about Indian people in this era, and demonstrate surprising connections between disparate historical agents and the ostensibly distinct settler institutions—psychiatric, educational, medical, or otherwise—over which they presided.

This chapter traces the conditions that made possible John’s expulsion from Carlisle and threatened confinement at a psychiatric facility, like Canton; his case exemplifies the relationship between the school and the asylum as interchangeable spaces of Indigenous confinement and punishment. As social reform discourse from the era reflects, the U.S. government’s project of Indian “assimilation”—as well as the definition of this concept—evolved over the late nineteenth century before taking on additional connotations in the early years of the twentieth. In the early years of Pratt’s educational experiment, reformers and politicians believed that in a few short years, Indian communities would be completely absorbed into American society, as Indian people accepted Western ways of being and left their own traditions behind. In later years, as it became evident that Indian people would not easily give up their ancestral practices, political optimism about the ability of Indian people to be transformed into Americans quickly waned. At the turn of the twentieth century, Indian “assimilation” came to mean compelling Indian people to accept their proper role in the social hierarchy of white America as second-class citizens who performed menial labor on the periphery of American society. These shifts were not merely ideological, although they were also that; changing definitions of Indian assimilation at the level of discourse presaged and reflected transformations in Carlisle’s demographic makeup, as adult Indian people sought entrance to the institution with increasing frequency.¹² Drawing on extant scholarship in the field of American Indian boarding school histories, this chapter describes material differences in the experiences of children and adults at Carlisle. Next, I discuss developments in American Indian health and medicine and how American definitions of physical, mental, and behavioral normalcy impacted Indigenous communities. By 1898 Congress had approved appropriations for the construction of Canton, the nation’s first psychiatric facility intended solely for American Indian people. But while this move was unprecedented in the United States’ history of dealings with Indigenous nations, the concept of race-based institutions for the “insane” was an old one, dating back, at least, to the Reconstruction Era and the establishment of Freedmen’s Hospitals in the American South. Deteriorating health conditions in American Indian communities provided U.S. officials with ample opportunity to posit Indigenous lifeways rather than federal negligence as the cause of Indigenous suffering. In turn, these discourses enabled Carlisle officials and other white Americans to conflate behavioral and

¹¹ “John B—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 89, folder 4051. National Archives and Record Administration, Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC),19.

¹² Adults who were eighteen years of age and older made their own application to Carlisle, and did so for a wide variety of reasons. Archival documents reflect that although Indian women and men enrolled at Carlisle of their own volition, external social pressures including lack of available jobs on the reservation and inadequate educational resources compelled them to seek out opportunities at Carlisle.

social markers of Indigeneity with illness and pathology, rendering Indian people vulnerable to long-term confinement and isolation in facilities like Canton.

Shifting the focus from Indian children and youth to Indian adults opens up new lines of inquiry about the role that American institutions played in this era. Analyzing Carlisle, Canton, and other settler institutions in relation to one another as part of the same system—rather than as distinct entities—similarly yields new questions about the nature of those facilities, the mechanisms of power wielded inside of them, and the social attitudes that enabled contradictory objectives to exist simultaneously in the same public discourses about Indian “uplift.” While reformatory institutions such as American schools and psychiatric asylums were confident in the power of the facility to successfully mold the minds and bodies of its subjects, records relating to adult Indian people at Carlisle and Canton reflect another kind of institutional ethos entirely. Settler institutions did more than seize upon Indian people as deviant, irreconcilable subjects in this era; they also deputized white American citizens, U.S. officials, and institutional authorities as the disciplinary agents and racial superordinates of Indian people under their jurisdiction or in their immediate vicinity. As white Americans came to view Indianness as a condition that could never be overcome, “assimilation” meant teaching Indian people to accept their role in the social hierarchy of white America. In this context, Indian people could never be transformed, only punished—and exercising the ability to punish was a form of racial power, making discipline “good,” it seems, only for the white Americans who often administered it.

“A man like other men”: Race, Education, and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the U.S. government reformulated its approach to the “Indian question.” By the 1870s, the buffalo herds were nearly gone, intentionally destroyed by U.S. army troops, civilians, and hide hunters at the behest of General William T. Sherman. Sherman rightly perceived that with the loss of the buffalo, Plains Indians’ economies would be decimated, and “hostile” tribes could be forced onto the reservations where President Ulysses S. Grant’s “Peace Policy” could be put into full effect. With the implementation of this policy in 1869, Congress established the Board of Indian Commissioners in order to streamline the administration of Indian affairs, reservations proliferated in number, and Grant imbued Indian agents—mostly Quakers and Protestants—with increasing bureaucratic importance. The reservation system was envisioned as a way in which to compel Indian communities to accept “civilization,” and by 1871, the Indian Appropriations Act dissolved Indigenous nations’ political sovereignty through the cessation of treaty-making.¹³ Through these legal and administrative changes, Grant sought to compel Indian people to accept “civilization,” but this official policy of so-called “peace” was as paradoxical as it was short-lived.

By the late 1870s, many Americans had become disillusioned by an approach to Indian affairs that pandered to Protestant sensibilities but readily gave way to violence against Indigenous populations. In 1878, Grant concluded his second presidential term in disgrace, leaving a legacy of political corruption, incompetence, and inconsistency in his wake. His successor, Rutherford B. Hayes, would now assume the mantle of addressing the ongoing “Indian Problem,” made worse by Grant’s refusal to halt U.S. military aggression along the frontier. Like Grant, Hayes looked to the Secretary of War to ensure that “hostiles” be kept to

¹³ Douglas Firth Anderson, “More Conscience Than Force”: U.S. Indian Inspector William Vandever, Grant’s Peace Policy, and Protestant Whiteness.” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9, no. 2 (2010): 167–96.

their reservations, but unlike his predecessor, Hayes advocated stronger emphasis on “humane and civilizing agencies” in the administration of Indian affairs.¹⁴ The imposition of the reservation system alone had not achieved the intended effect of Indigenous “pacification,” and overt military warfare against Indian communities was a costly undertaking; education, it seemed, could be a more efficacious policy. Seeking to fill his cabinet with like-minded officials, Hayes appointed Carl Schurz as Secretary of the Interior—a German refugee who had gained national prominence as a Union general in the Civil War, and a man who vowed to help rid the Indian Service of the corruption that plagued reform efforts during Grant’s administration.

Schurz’s commitment to a more humanitarian approach to the “Indian Problem” under Hayes did not exclude the possible use of lethal force, however. As he stated during a 1881 speech at the annual Lake Mohonk Conference, a gathering of powerful reformers and politicians, “The circumstances surrounding them place before the Indian this stern alternative: extermination or civilization.”¹⁵ Schurz argued in the same lecture that while it cost more than one million dollars to kill an Indian in warfare, an Indian child could be put through school for a small fraction of this amount.¹⁶ “Assimilation” via education was thus not only a more economical way to solve the “Indian Problem,” it was also regarded as more benevolent; a policy through which Americans could band together in collective duty to help Indian people to “civilization.” But Schurz wondered, as did many of his political contemporaries, whether Indian people could be successfully “civilized,” and if so, how this might be accomplished once and for all. The concept of inculcating Indian people into Western epistemologies was not new; missionaries—especially in the east—had long promoted Christian doctrine and administered this type of education to “praying Indians,” but many politicians felt that the churches had failed to completely “civilize” Indian people. With Indigenous communities largely subordinated to U.S. authority, however, a new era was dawning, and one man’s vision in particular stood out as a promising new paradigm of Indian education that Schurz could back with enthusiasm.

Unlike many social theorists of his time, Captain Richard Henry Pratt, an experienced military man, rejected the idea that non-white races suffered inborn qualities of degeneracy: “The Indian,” Pratt argued, “is a man like other men.”¹⁷ As he saw it, the “Indian problem” was environmental rather than biological—a notion he derived from his “frontier years” as officer of the Tenth Cavalry.¹⁸ Pratt believed that with persistence and patience, Indian people could be assimilated; they could be compelled to accept Western ways of being and live as Americans, leaving behind Indian identities. As he admonished an audience of missionaries and reformers in 1892, “We make our greatest mistake in feeding our civilization to the Indians instead of feeding the Indians to our civilization.”¹⁹ By extricating Indian youth from their “barbaric” environments, Pratt believed that the civilizing process could devour all traces of “Indianness”; with his oversight, school authorities could destroy Indian children’s tribal identification and

¹⁴ Rutherford B. Hayes, December 2, 1878, Second Annual Message, The American Presidency Project, Accessed February 1, 2019, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/second-annual-message-12>.

¹⁵ Francis Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian,” 1880-1900*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 14.

¹⁶ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 20.

¹⁷ Richard Henry Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Its Origin, Purposes, Progress and the Difficulties Surmounted*. (Carlisle, Pa., 1908), 42.

¹⁸ Richard Henry Pratt and Robert M. Utley, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*, 1st Landmark ed (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), xix.

¹⁹ Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians*, 268.

substitute it with loyalty to the American nation.²⁰ In 1879 Pratt received congressional approval to test this theory, and transformed disused military barracks into the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which would become the most infamous training facility for Indian youth. Pratt was adamant that Indian people, though “uncivilized,” were not irredeemably so; in the span of a few years, grueling labor, strict discipline, and instruction in morality would effect a complete transformation—cultural, physical, spiritual, and intellectual—in Indian children.

Turning “Prisoners into Pupils”: Richard Henry Pratt and the “Florida Boys”

As Jacqueline Fear-Segal and others have noted, the first Indian “pupils” enrolled at Carlisle were not children at all, but were prisoners of war—a fact that demonstrates how Pratt’s military background profoundly shaped the nature and rhythm of the institution he would oversee for nearly twenty-five years. Pratt’s “educational experiment” at Carlisle, as it has come to be known, thus had a military forerunner: a social experiment conducted in St. Augustine, Florida, which earned him the confidence of the Interior Department and Secretary Schurz’ support. In 1875, at the conclusion of the Red River War, Pratt was tasked with the oversight of seventy-two prisoners—warriors of the Comanche, Kiowa, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Caddo nations—as he led them in chains from Fort Sill, Indian Territory, to Fort Marion. Fear-Segal writes, “At Fort Marion, adult Indian prisoners, not children, walked to class past mounted cannon and piles of old cannon balls. Their jailer, Captain Richard Henry Pratt, had made himself their self-appointed teacher. By turning prisoners into pupils, Pratt was determined to demonstrate to white Americans that savage fighters could readily be tamed and civilized.”²¹

Pratt’s Indian prisoners captured the attention of the American public, and visitors traveled from all over the U.S. to view the Indian men in their fortress. In prison, the men were taught to speak English, their hair was shorn, and they were provided paper and pencils, which many would use to draw their forced trek from Fort Sill to the old Spanish fort at St. Augustine.²² In this way, Fear-Segal explains, Pratt turned “prisoners into pupils”—a phrase that powerfully illustrates the punitive and transformative abilities of Pratt’s “classroom.” Historians K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Mvskoke) and Jeffrey Ostler have analyzed Pratt’s complex attitudes towards Indian people and the “violence implicit in the institutional structure of Carlisle,” but they also comment on something a bit more unexpected: despite the fact that Pratt is remembered as one of the vilest figures in American Indian history, he was well liked by many Indian people, who often professed their loyalty to him.²³ In fact, Pratt’s persuasive abilities were so powerful that he was able to convince twenty-two of his former prisoners—after the War Department ordered their release—to accompany him to the Hampton Agricultural School in Virginia, to continue their schooling in the nation’s first Indian educational program administered alongside freedmen.²⁴ A year later, fifteen of the original Fort Marion men would follow Pratt through the gates of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School to become the first “students.” Thus, while boarding school historians note that the first Carlisle enrollees were prisoners of war, the

²⁰ Ibid., 269.

²¹ Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation*. (University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 1.

²² Ibid., 9.

²³ K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Jeffrey Ostler, “Reconsidering Richard Henry Pratt: Cultural Genocide and Native Liberation in an Era of Racial Oppression.” *Journal of American Indian Education*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2018, pp. 79–100, 81.

²⁴ Ibid.

continued presence of adults has gone largely unremarked. Drawing on Fear-Segal's observation that Pratt's policies turned prisoners into pupils, I observe a related but distinct phenomenon—*making children out of men*—a punitive process of Indigenous infantilization which was as crucial to the subordination of Indigenous communities as was the indoctrination of Indigenous children in previous eras.

The Early Years: Indigenous Child Removal and Boarding School Experiences

Extant studies about Carlisle and other American Indian boarding schools often analyze and describe the experiences of children. Scholars note that with Carlisle's founding, reservation agents were authorized to forcibly steal Indian children from their communities and transport them thousands of miles away. These experiences are often discussed as large-scale, traumatic experiences of isolation, cultural loss, homesickness, and indoctrination into Western religion, mores, and epistemologies. As Robert M. Utley notes, for example, in the introduction to Pratt's *Battlefield and Classroom*, "During [Pratt's] twenty-four-year tenure the school educated, in all, 4,903 Indian boys and girls from seventy-seven tribes."²⁵ Similarly, in his monograph about the Rapid City Indian School in Rapid City, South Dakota, Scott Riney observes the following of Pratt's objectives: "After students arrived, school staff cut their hair short and took away their old clothing and replaced it with uniforms. Pratt organized boys and girls alike into platoons and companies, with student officers, who marched them about campus like so many soldiers." Riney continues, "[Pratt] forbade the use of Indian languages. Children learned Christianity, the English language, and trades such as tinsmithing or printing... Unfortunately, Pratt's school often kill the Indian *and* the man—or child."²⁶ Writing about students at the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, Myriam Vučković remarks "The boarding school experience cannot be understood simply in terms of acculturation and resistance. It was not an 'either or' phenomenon but needs to be understood in terms of the students' conflictual identities composed of both subordinate and dominant values and practices." She continues,

The responses of individual students depended on a variety of factors such as the length of their stays at school, their ages at the time of entrance, and, especially, their family backgrounds. It made a great difference whether the children attended the school voluntarily with the support of their parents or whether they were forced to attend... Children of boarding school alumni had the greatest advantage, knowing already from their parents what to expect and usually benefitting from stronger family support.²⁷

These brief excerpts reflect the trauma that Indian communities experienced as their children, as Indigenous people, were subjected to the criminalization of their stories, languages, and cosmologies. Yet, adult Indian women and men were also present in these environments, and their experiences depart in significant ways from those of children. Focusing on adults broadens current understandings of Indigenous experiences at Carlisle and other boarding institutions by

²⁵ Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (Yale University Press, 1964), xxi.

²⁶ Scott Riney, *The Rapid City Indian School, 1898-1933* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 8.

²⁷ Myriam Vučković, *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students between Two Worlds, 1884-1928*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 3.

analyzing differences and commonalities in archival records relating to older individuals who were not forced to attend, nor the parents of schoolchildren, but who sought entrance themselves on a voluntary basis—however coerced it may have been. Other scholars have noted the presence of adults at off-reservation boarding schools, and so the fact of adult presence has been established.²⁸ However, these discussions frequently qualify the presence of adults as anomalous, or characterize adult experiences as bearing insignificant differences from those of their younger counterparts. For example, as Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose write in the introduction to their recent anthology,

Starting in the early twentieth century, Carlisle’s curriculum began to reflect the changed mood in Washington, with the emphasis now on teaching skills to make Indians self-sufficient and able to live on reservations and at the lower levels of society, rather than to be assimilated as equals into the American mainstream. By then Carlisle students were mostly older, and the majority had already received some schooling before arrival. However, the huge distances that they all still needed to travel to reach Carlisle, the continuation of Carlisle’s outing program during the summers, and the uninterrupted assault on Native cultures *meant that the fundamental experience of a Carlisle education remained unchanged* (emphasis mine).²⁹

By comparison, I find that the presence of large numbers of adult women and men dramatically altered the social landscape at Carlisle, as well as power relations at the institution and beyond. As the following chapter explores in greater detail, Carlisle officials devised new means of punishing adults who were easily able to resist “school” rules and the institutional authorities who enforced them, including enlisting white civilians to help surveil and police “runaway” men. Similarly, records relating to the punishment of adults show that many Indian women and men labored continuously under the “Outing” system to the exclusion of academic instruction of any kind, and illuminate how those enumerated as being enrolled at the institution included individuals sent by Carlisle officials to reside elsewhere—reform institutions and state hospitals, for example—as punishment for perceived misbehavior. In other instances, U.S. courts of law used Carlisle as a pseudo-carceral facility, meaning that Carlisle authorities were called upon to play simultaneous disciplinary roles: institutional official, jailor, judge, and even parole officer, as was the case with Superintendent Oscar Lipps, discussed in greater depth in chapter three. As these brief examples demonstrate, Carlisle served many purposes for adults. In centering records relating to the punishment of Indian women and men, I document how their experiences point to under-examined sites of conflict in settler institutions in this era, which change current understandings of the impact these institutions had upon American Indian communities at the turn of the twentieth century.

The “Iron Routine” of Boarding School: Resistance, Adaptation, and Transformation

²⁸ In particular, see: Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Hopi Runners: Crossing the Terrain between Indian and American* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018); Myriam Vučković, *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students between Two Worlds, 1884-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008); Kevin Whalen, *Native Students at Work: American Indian Labor and Sherman Institute’s Outing Program, 1900-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

²⁹ Jacqueline Fear-Segal, and Susan D. Rose, *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations* (University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 24-25.

Relentlessly her pencil black-marked our daily records if we were not present to respond to our names, and no chum of ours had done it successfully for us. No matter if a dull headache or the painful cough of slow consumption had delayed the absentee, there was only time enough to mark the tardiness. It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day's buzzing; and it was inbred in me to suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day's harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute.

Zitkála Šá, 1921
"Iron Routine"

Existing literature about American Indian boarding schools is a rich and heterogeneous body of scholarship that analyzes numerous aspects of residential facilities. Important work in this field has often described the homesickness, isolation, and identity and cultural loss that Indian children endured, using archival research and oral histories to reconstruct Indigenous experiences. In her seminal work *Boarding School Seasons*, for example, Brenda Child (Ojibwe) analyzes letters of correspondence from family members and others who attended the Carlisle and Flandreau boarding institutions, and she often focuses on the experiences of Ojibwe people, including some of her relatives. This work takes a thematic approach to Indigenous experiences, and includes chapters on homesickness, illness and death, labor, and transportation from the reservation to the boarding school on the train. In what has become a classic and oft-cited analysis of the techniques that students used to refuse total obedience to institutional authorities, Child's chapter "Runaway Boys, Resistant Girls" depicts courageous acts of individual and collective resistance.

In one account of "full-scale rebellion," in 1919, the year after Carlisle closed, students at Haskell orchestrated a black-out during an assembly in the auditorium. When the principal went outside to see what the problem was, he found the boys lined up on the road. "While the principal tried to gain control of the situation," Child writes, "the Haskell students broke loose, smashing light fixtures, looting the food supply, and ringing the school bell." She continues,

Several boys still standing on the road were said to have yelled, 'Are you with us?' to a group of girls who had not yet joined in the rebellion. Another boy reportedly shouted, 'Let's string him up!' as the principal struggled to restore order. After a full evening of commotion and considerable damage to the school, the student rebellion ended. After the episode, nine Haskell students were expelled for insubordination and damage to property.³⁰

Child's retelling of the Haskell rebellion demonstrates how students found creative ways to assert control over the "iron routine" of their environments and protest the treatment they received. The expulsion that the Haskell students received in repayment for their insubordination would have been steep punishment, and Carlisle records reflect that expulsion was a part of that facility's institutional landscape, as well. But Carlisle records also document how adults had different tools of resistance available to them that created widespread conflict between

³⁰ Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 94.

institutional authorities and older enrollees, and these records demonstrate differences between the punitive techniques institutional officials used to control this older population. For example, archival documents demonstrate how Carlisle authorities punished perceived instances of adult misbehavior with confinement in the guardhouse and other external facilities, including the local jail and, less frequently, reform institutions. Similarly, as I document in chapters two and three, reservation Superintendents often protested the return of adult Carlisle enrollees, which made Indian women and men more susceptible to incarceration in facilities far away from home. Among other things, these practices demonstrate how Carlisle authorities devised new punitive techniques to control the adult population—techniques designed to undercut the strength of Indigenous communities and Indigenous peoples’ authority over their own lives. Records relating to the punishment of adults at Carlisle also demonstrate how this older population was subjected to multiple removals that impacted their communities back home, which is an area of inquiry that deserves further investigation.

Other historians analyze the consequences of social isolation and cultural loss in boarding school facilities and measure communal and individual responses to these phenomena. Vučković, for instance, recounts how Haskell students secretly convened at night to trade stories in their native languages, which school authorities forbade. As they did so, they reinforced memories of home and identification with their own tribal communities, while learning about other traditions—a practice that can be situated within the same social lineage of the pan-Indian movement that would flourish in urban areas in the 1960s.³¹ Relatedly, Lomawaima and Teresa McCarty document how U.S. officials selectively retained or allowed the expression of some Indigenous traditions in institutional curricula because these tribal knowledges did not pose a significant threat to the integrity of the federal educational agenda. Utilizing the “safety zone theory,” Lomawaima and McCarty analyze shifts in the way that expressions of Indigenous sovereignty have been perceived over time, and argue that the apparent “swing” of the political pendulum as it relates to Indian education can more accurately be understood as the federal government’s conscientious effort to “distinguish safe from dangerous Indigenous beliefs and practices.”³² The concept of the “safety zone” may also account for the enrollment of large numbers of adults at Carlisle, who were able to perform grueling manual labor more quickly and efficiently than their younger counterparts, potentially offsetting the social disruption this age group could have caused the institution.³³ Similarly, the steep and frequently outsized punishment Carlisle officials meted out to adults who breached expectations of unquestioning obedience can be explained, in part, in terms of the threat these perceived misbehaviors posed to institutional order.

³¹ Myriam Vučković, *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students between Two Worlds, 1884-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

³² K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, *“To Remain an Indian”: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 6.

³³ Lomawaima and McCarty propose the concept of the “safety zone” as a model that better accounts for shifts in federal Indian policy. They write, “The periodicity of the pendulum is regularly evoked in summaries of Indian policy: The pendulum swings from allotment to reform, from New Deal tolerance to Cold War xenophobia, from tribal termination to Indigenous self-determination. . . . As an explanatory alternative to the pendulum, we propose a theoretical model of the safety zone that traces the ‘swings’ of Indian policy—including educational policy—to an ongoing struggle over cultural difference and its perceived threat, or benefit, to a sense of shared American identity. The federal government has not simply vacillated between encouraging or suppressing Native languages and cultures but has in a coherent way—using salient criteria such as gender, childhood, ‘aesthetic’ versus economic life—attempted to distinguish safe from dangerous Indigenous beliefs and practices,” 6.

Individualism and Athletics: Revisiting the Football Field and the “Prison-School”

Scholars of American Indian studies and the history of boarding institutions have also shown how U.S. officials sought to inculcate Indigenous youth into Western values, Protestant ideologies, and the acquisitive individualism that defines American capitalism. Joel Pfister, for example, has shown how Carlisle’s history of targeting Indian people as subjects for this process of individuation offers a decades-long case study of how Indianness has been central to early modern articulations of American belonging. He explains, “White reformers and educators of Natives were explicit about the social goals ‘individuality’ was expected to help achieve. Assimilationist reformers used the category of individuality to reencode relations of dependence, such as routinized daily work, not just as desirable but as relations signifying independence.” He continues, “They were interested in deploying the ostensible appeal of possessive and sentimental ‘individuality’ as an incentive—to produce worker-individuals who would labor even if they did not like it or felt that they were being exploited.”³⁴ In chapter three, I draw on similar observations about this process of “individualization” at Carlisle, but demonstrate how adult Indian women and men—unlike their younger counterparts—were *punished* for demonstrating the individualism they were meant to be learning, accepting, and enacting. In a related sociocultural phenomenon, I also demonstrate how Carlisle’s policies, practices, and ideologies rendered the condition of being Indian a social pathology, and show how employment relations, lack of access to health care, and other aspects of unevenly distributed power reinforced Indian peoples’ status as the subordinates in the racial hierarchy of white America. Taken together, these processes demonstrate that the institutional environment of the boarding school enabled white Americans to assume the role of disciplining adult enrollees as their natural right, and to administer punishment as a mechanism of social control.

Athleticism was also integral to American Indian experiences in boarding institutions, and as Matt Gilbert (Hopi), Phil Deloria (Dakota), Sarah Fields, John Bloom, and others have demonstrated, competitive sports offered many Indigenous men a way to challenge stereotypes about Indian people and express pride in their identities.³⁵ Deloria, for example, analyzes how sports were integral to American and Indigenous modernity at the turn of the twentieth century, and describes how his grandfather, Vine Deloria, Sr., used participation in athletics as a football player at St. Stephen’s College (later Bard) to “open doors,” create community, and to defy expectations about Indian peoples’ place in a rapidly changing America.³⁶ In 1922, Deloria Sr. voluntarily enrolled St. Stephens on a scholarship, and a few years later he had graduated. Although he had always dreamt of becoming a professional football player and eventually a coach, Deloria explains, instead he became a deacon, and obtained his degree from the General Theological Seminar. His grandfather’s story is an “unexpected” one, as Deloria points out; one that exemplifies the creative ways that Indian people crafted lives for themselves in the early twentieth century, using the resources and opportunities available to them in ingenious ways.

For other Indigenous athletes, competitive sports offered an escape—as was the case with the Hopi runner, Lewis Tewanima. Tewanima is best known as the famed long-distance runner

³⁴ Joel Pfister, *Individuality Incorporated: Indians and the Multicultural Modern* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 12-13.

³⁵ John Bloom, “‘Show What An Indian Can Do’: Sports, Memory, and Ethnic Identity at Federal Indian Boarding Schools.” *Journal of American Indian Education*, 35, no. 3, (1996), pp. 33–48; Sarah K. Fields, “Representations of Sport in the ‘Indian School Journal’, 1906-1913.” *Journal of Sport History*, 35, no. 2, (2008), pp. 241–59.

³⁶ Philip Joseph Deloria, “Athletics,” *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 2004.

who represented the United States in the 1908 Olympics held in London, but as Gilbert illustrates in his award-winning history of the cultural and spiritual significance of running in the Hopi way of life, Tewanima's rise to national fame was accidental. In the span of a few short years, Tewanima would go from being a "prisoner of war" to bestowing honor upon a nation that begrudgingly granted him and other Indigenous people second-class status. At the turn of the twentieth century, as the U.S. government began sending Hopi children off en masse to large residential schools, the Hopi people mounted a fierce resistance to this assault on their community. Gilbert explains that in the Hopi community there were competing responses to the government's forced child removal: "Two factions emerged whom federal officials and Christian missionaries referred to as 'hostiles' and 'friendlies,' based on their association with the federal government. While all Hopis at this time valued education, many did not want the US government to impose its Western or American education on the people, especially at the expense of traditional Hopi teachings."³⁷ Tewanima was in this latter group, and after the government transported almost seventy Hopi people to the Sherman Institute as punishment for refusing to comply with government orders, Tewanima and 115 other "hostiles" were sent to Fort Defiance. Shortly thereafter, eleven Hopi men would arrive at Carlisle, to serve out their sentences.³⁸

Gilbert's analysis centers the significance of American sport for the Hopi men and the ways in which running offered them a way to connect culturally and spiritually with their community, from afar. But in addition to the surprising story of one man's transformation from prisoner of war to Olympian, Gilbert's retelling of the Hopi men's protection of Hopi youth, and their own incarceration at Carlisle as punishment, reflects broader patterns of Indigenous incarceration and institutionalization at the turn of the twentieth century. Tewanima's experiences—as warrior, prisoner, and Olympian—form a part of the broader history of Indigenous institutionalization in this era, while offering a compelling example of the many ways in which adult experiences in boarding institutions like Carlisle differed dramatically from those of children and youth. The Hopi men's presence at Carlisle also reflect how the institution was utilized by the federal government quite literally as a "prison-school," as David Wallace Adams has characterized Pratt's initial experiment at Fort Marion.³⁹

Boarding School Curricula and the Consequences of Shifting Federal Objectives

At the turn of the twentieth century, adults who had surpassed the age of eighteen could not legally—or practicably—be forcibly enrolled at boarding facilities for educational purposes, but many were compelled to seek entrance in order to learn a trade, gain academic training they had not previously obtained, or secure work that was otherwise unavailable on the reservation. In 1879, Pratt established the "Outing system," a manual-labor training program, and in the early years of "Outing," younger students participated during the summer months only. In later years, however, the Outing system expanded and was modified significantly by successive superintendents, and adults increasingly sought enrollment at Carlisle in order to secure work. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, enrollment ledgers began to reflect that

³⁷ Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Hopi Runners: Crossing the Terrain Between Indian and America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2018), 62.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 63-65.

³⁹ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 43.

adults who labored under the Outing system did so continuously to the exclusion of academic work entirely—unsurprising, given the ages of the women and men who sought enrollment at the institution, the lack of opportunities to earn a living on the reservation, and the fact that most had received prior schooling before entering Carlisle. But in other cases, archival records show that some adults believed that they could secure advanced academic training by enrolling at the institution.

In 1913, for instance, a Sioux woman named Iona R. wrote to outgoing Carlisle Superintendent Moses Friedman to request enrollment in the business course of study. She began, “I have decided to enroll as a pupil & take up the business dept. of Carlisle...It is said that a pupil of 21 yrs. was given special consideration as to their enrollment which is my case. I was up to the Agency & I was informed that a wire would be sent you regarding my enrollment. No doubt you had the wire by now and I hope that you will make arrangements for my transportation.”⁴⁰ According to the application for enrollment, which Iona completed herself, she had attended no less than four separate Indian schools and had even graduated from Flandreau in 1911, two years before she sought entrance to Carlisle. As her letter to Friedman reflects, however, she wanted to enroll at Carlisle in order to receive further academic instruction. Her request suggests, perhaps, that she looked upon the course offerings at Carlisle as a post-secondary educational option, as did others who sought entrance to the institution well into their twenties.⁴¹ Her letter also reflects an awareness of federal guidelines; in 1913, the “Rules for the Indian School Service” stipulated that Indian “pupils” over the age of twenty-one who had not had “adequate” opportunities for industrial training would be considered for enrollment at federally-funded off-reservation institutions, but that approval from the Commissioner was required.⁴² In Iona’s case, however, she neither sought industrial training, nor was she truly twenty-one; as the federal census from 1910 reflects, Iona was twenty-three years old when she sought enrollment at Carlisle, meaning that she reduced her age in order to make her case stronger.⁴³ Iona’s strategy worked: she was admitted to Carlisle that October, and her file reflects that she took up work in the business department. One year later, however, in September 1914, she was expelled for cursing at the Matron.

Iona’s experiences were qualitatively distinct from those of Indian children and youth. Iona was highly educated; she could read and write, and voluntarily sought enrollment to Carlisle only to be expelled for reacting to poor treatment at the hands of white authority figures. As a point of comparison, consider Adams’ classic description of early federal objectives in off-reservation boarding schools:

Once students began to understand English, teachers pressed ahead with other areas of the curriculum. The course of study outlined by Commissioner Morgan in 1890 emphasized the following branches of knowledge: arithmetic, geography, nature study, physiology, and United States history. Taught in the proper manner, these subjects would accomplish two things. First, they would introduce Indians

⁴⁰ “Iona R—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 97, folder 4268, NARA, CISDRC.

⁴¹ Especially after 1900, Carlisle was regarded as a college; in reality, it offered only an elementary education to Indian people that was substandard to that which white Americans received in public schools.

⁴² United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Rules for the Indian School Service* (Department of the Interior, United States Indian Service, 1913), 4.

⁴³ “Iona R—. in the 1910 United States Federal Census,” Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910 (NARA microfilm publication T624, 1,178 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Ancestry.com.

to the knowledge of civilization. Second, the curriculum would prepare Indians for citizenship.⁴⁴

In 1901, newly-appointed Superintendent of Indian Schools Estelle Reel, a Republican from Wyoming, revised this curriculum—but the central tenets and critical assumptions about Indian people remained, and in some aspects were intensified: Indian people had failed to assimilate, and in exchange for achieving economic self-sufficiency through labor, American citizenship would be their reward. Historians of this era have pointed out that with the implementation of Reel’s 1901 curriculum, the federal emphasis on vocational training also intensified. But many of the studies that acknowledge this shift from a curriculum that promoted letters over labor interpret the consequences of this transition as negligible. For example, Adams states, “Although vocational training marked a definite shift in emphasis, it would be wrong to assume that these changes significantly altered the aims of Indian schooling. The simple truth is that industrial training had always constituted a large segment of the school program.” He continues, “It was not Francis Leupp but Thomas Jefferson Morgan who approvingly observed in 1892 that ‘the whole underlying thought of the industrial school...is that intelligent, systematic labor by both men and women lies at the basis of civilization, and that if Indians are ever to be lifted on a higher plane it must be through the training of boys and girls alike to the performance of whatever manual labor may be essential for their welfare.’”⁴⁵ Francis E. Leupp served as Commissioner of Indian Affairs from 1904-1909, almost twenty years after the conclusion of Commissioner Morgan’s appointment, and as Adams suggests above, the two men shared similar philosophies when it came to Indian people and their education in “civilization” and incorporated these views accordingly.

However, centering adults as the focal point of analysis reveals different consequences of shifting federal objectives. As I discuss in greater detail in the following chapter, in 1908 Carlisle Superintendent Moses Friedman articulated a new policy of admitting only those individuals who were fourteen years of age and older, who stated an express desire to learn a trade. In subsequent years, this policy was implemented inconsistently. This resulted in an increasingly older institutional demographic populated by adults who sought entrance to Carlisle for a wide variety of reasons, whose experiences throw open new lines of inquiry into the economic, social, intellectual, or romantic role, among others, that Carlisle played in their lives. Like Iona, these women and men navigated circumstances that were in many ways dissimilar from the realities negotiated by previous generations of Carlisle enrollees. By the 1910s, many adults who enrolled at Carlisle were already familiar with the accouterments of Western “civilization”—they were often fluent in English, most had previous schooling, and some had even graduated, as was the case with Iona. But most importantly, after the passage of the Burke Act in 1906, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to remove lands from trust status, many adults who enrolled at Carlisle were already land-owning persons viewed as citizens to a limited degree.⁴⁶ In

⁴⁴ Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 143.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 316.

⁴⁶ After 1917, American citizenship was granted to anyone who was twenty-one years of age and older and had graduated from an Indian school. As many adults had already done so, they had already “achieved” a limited form of American citizenship, predicated upon the concept of “competency,” by the time they reached Carlisle. Historian Katherine Ellinghaus describes the relationship between land, citizenship, and competency: “Competency implied equality—it gave individuals a form of citizenship allowing them to be treated as white persons under the law and giving them the right to sell, lease, or mortgage their land. For those in charge of dictating Indian policy and solving the “Indian problem,” competency was an application of the principles of assimilation that underlay the Dawes Act”

other words, as these adults had already received citizenship, they had thus already achieved “civilization”—the very thing Carlisle authorities claimed to uniquely bestow upon Indian people by training them to become self-sufficient manual laborers.

“Under the Outing”: Indigenous Proletarianization and White American Deputization

In *Native Americans and Wage Labor*, historians Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack argue that manual labor training in boarding institutions was a means of proletarianization, a conclusion that other scholars have also reached.⁴⁷ More recently, Kevin Whalen has documented how Indian people used labor programs at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California, and domestic training programs in the Los Angeles area to *strengthen* their identities as Indian people and forge stronger communal bonds.⁴⁸ At Carlisle, laboring “out” similarly provided Indian people opportunities to seize upon the relative freedom and mobility afforded them by their placement in rural outing districts or bustling urban city centers, such as Detroit. As the Indian Office applauded Pratt’s success with Carlisle’s Outing system, it began encouraging other institutions to develop similar programs, and in subsequent years large schools like Phoenix, Haskell, and Genoa began placing Indian people “out” as bell-hops, beet harvesters, domestic servants, orange pickers, and railroad hands.⁴⁹ As American historian Robert Trennert remarks on the original objectives of “Outing,” “Pratt looked on the outing experience as the ultimate in individualism.” In later years, U.S. authorities continued to look upon the “Outing” favorably as a mechanism by which Indian people could be individuated and instilled with an appreciation for, and understanding of, economic self-sufficiency. Trennert also notes that by the late nineteenth century, Pratt had implemented a policy of unannounced “home visits,” conducted by Carlisle employees, to ensure that the student was “happily situated.”⁵⁰ This practice was continued after the turn of the twentieth century, but as adults overtook children as the demographic majority, field inspections became increasingly punitive.

Winnie R. (Cherokee), for example, was eighteen years old when she “went under the outing” and was placed in the home of Watson Stoner in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania. According to a letter sent from Mrs. Stoner to Superintendent Lipps, Winnie was a thief, and on June 7, 1918, the day before Winnie was dismissed from employment, Mrs. Stoner wrote Lipps to complain. According to Mrs. Stoner’s list of charges against her former employee, Winnie had stolen a gold chain and pearl necklace. But while she did not witness the theft directly and had no way of knowing that it was Winnie who had taken her jewelry, Mrs. Stoner offered descriptions of two crimes that Winnie had allegedly perpetrated, as proof of her recalcitrance. In one example, Winnie had hidden money (her own earnings) in a wooden box that Mrs. Stoner

(47). See: Katherine Ellinghaus, *Blood Will Tell: Native Americans and Assimilation Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017).

⁴⁷ Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

⁴⁸ Kevin Whalen, *Native Students at Work* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

⁴⁹ See: William J. Bauer, *We Were All like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California’s Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Cambridge University Press, 1989); Robert A. Trennert, “From Carlisle to Phoenix: The Rise and Fall of the Indian Outing System, 1878-1930,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 52, no. 3, (1983), pp. 267–91; Kevin Whalen, *Native Students at Work: American Indian Labor and Sherman Institute’s Outing Program, 1900-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

⁵⁰ Trennert, “From Carlisle to Phoenix,” 273.

had subsequently discovered, and had also eaten out of six jars of strawberry preserve without washing the spoon (“Do you suppose we could enjoy it?”).⁵¹ The day after Lipps received this letter, Winnie was sent away from the Stoner household—but this is not where her punishment ended. Instead, as a letter dated July 3rd reflects, the Outing Manager was on the case: “I have your letter relative to Winnie R— and have had a talk with Mrs. Ewing [Girls’ Matron] about her. We have not, either of us, said anything to Winnie, but Mrs. Ewing says that she will tell the other matrons to be on the watch and see if they can recover the necklace if Winnie has it.”⁵² Eight days later, Winnie was expelled. There is no indication in her file that the necklaces were discovered, and even if they were, there is no way to know whether Winnie stole them from Mrs. Stoner. These and similar events document the ways in which Carlisle authorities and Outing patrons worked together to police and surveil Indian people in the name of benevolence and “uplift.” Records relating to the punishment of adults, like Winnie, demonstrate how laboring under conditions of anti-Indianness and white suspicion did little to improve the lives of Indian people. Instead, these documents reflect how the Outing system appears to have authorized the transfer of punitive power from one settler context to another, as Outing patrons—white citizens, like Mrs. Stoner—were designated as disciplinarian by proxy. This deputization frequently resulted in the intensification of oversight that Indian people would have received inside of Carlisle’s grounds, and chapters two and three document this phenomenon more fully.

The “Intimate” as a Site of Colonial Control: Domesticity, Relationships, and Sexuality

Despite scholarship that treats other aspects of Indian students’ relationships, sex, pregnancy, and sexuality have received less attention in existing literature about Carlisle. Domestic training and the reorganization of Indigenous domestic space were integral aspects of U.S. efforts to obtain control over Indian communities in this era, as boarding school historians have shown. As a result, many off-reservation boarding institutions built model homes, or cottages, in which Indian students could practice “civilized” living, which in some cases would also serve as entertainment for visitors. Domestic instruction thus formed an essential component of the curriculum, and students were encouraged to learn by displaying an understanding of white, middle-class domestic norms through their own comportment. To this end, for example, at the Hampton Institute in Virginia, monogamous, heterosexual couples were assigned to live in the school’s model homes. Similarly, in 1915 the Haskell Institute built a cottage that enabled female students to immerse themselves in a middle-class lifestyle, which was an experience that would come in handy as Indian women accepted positions as domestic servants and maids. Replete with electric lights, a screened-in back porch, a dining room, and running water, Haskell’s three-story Domestic Science Cottage offered the women temporary relief from the cramped quarters of the girls’ dormitory.⁵³ At the same time, as Vučković points out, the ten-week stay in the cottage would be as close as many would come to enjoying the comforts of a middle-class lifestyle for themselves.⁵⁴ Lomawaima also notes that some Chilocco girls and women remembered their domestic science training fondly, and “welcomed the practice

⁵¹ “Winnie R—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 129, folder 5120, NARA, CISDRC.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Vučković, *Voices from Haskell*, 119.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

cottages' six-week fantasy of family home life, a respite from institutional dormitories."⁵⁵ As one Potawatomi woman named "Irene," who entered Chilocco in 1929 at age 15 recalled of the cottages, "'To me it was a wonderful way to teach you. I learned so much out of that...I've always known about nutrition because of what I was taught at Chilocco.'"⁵⁶

At Carlisle, all enrollees were segregated on the basis of gender, and as Fear-Segal has observed, space was also allocated asymmetrically along racial axes, reflecting broader inscriptions of social and institutional power. In 1915 a new guardhouse was constructed by older male enrollees in a location proximal to the "Large Boys' Quarters," which is one example of the way that Carlisle's landscape reflected dominant convictions about Indigenous men's inherent criminality. Similarly, girls and boys, women and men, employees and enrollees, and white Americans and Indian people were assigned their appropriate location in what Fear-Segal describes as Carlisle's "landscape of race and erasure."⁵⁷ In support of this assignment of certain bodies to particular spaces, there were no model homes at Carlisle, which would have provided enrollees of the opposite sex a sanctioned opportunity to interact with one another. But there was plenty of talk about the importance of personal morality—and these anxious discourses demonstrate how sexual reproduction was a critical site of colonial conflict in settler institutions.

Michel Foucault's "repressive hypothesis" offers a helpful framework for understanding how U.S. officials regarded the sexuality of Indian people (like children or those with disabilities) as atypical or perverse. Foucault's discussion also enables us to understand how Carlisle assisted in the public regulation of Indigenous reproduction as a part of its "civilizing" campaign. In official discourse Carlisle authorities rarely acknowledged the presence of adults—much less the existence of adult sexual desire—and as Foucault might suggest, this silence was an important one. Writing of the role of the schoolhouse in the regulation of children's sexuality in the eighteenth century, Foucault remarks, "On the whole, one can have the impression that sex was hardly spoken of at all in these institutions. But one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation."⁵⁸ He continues, "All who held a measure of authority were placed in a state of perpetual alert... The space for classes, the shape of the tables, the planning of the recreation lessons, the distribution of the dormitories... the rules for monitoring the bedtime and sleep periods—all referred, in the most prolix manner, to the sexuality of children."⁵⁹ Similarly, Carlisle officials subjected adult Indian women and men to infantilizing rules and regulations designed not only to keep them apart from one another but also to humiliate and infantilize, and as disciplinary documents reflect, adults who were discovered to be sexually active or even pregnant were punished severely, reinforcing the notion that sexual relationships between Indigenous people were abnormal, unwelcome, and wrong.

Carlisle women and men engaged in sex with one another, and pregnancies also occurred. Frequently, Carlisle officials punished Indian women who became pregnant by expelling them, sending them back home to the reservation. In other cases, adults who engaged in sex with other enrollees or with individuals unaffiliated with Carlisle were expelled or incarcerated in external facilities, such as reform institutions. Officially, Carlisle authorities defended these practices by

⁵⁵ K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 89.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man's Club*.

⁵⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 27.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.

suggesting that the eradication of “incorrigibles” protected the morality of the institution, but in reality, these punitive measures were a display of white might and institutional power over Indian people. These practices reveal how the regulation, suppression, or control of Indigenous sexuality formed a central site of colonial conflict and bureaucratic interest. To that end, Carlisle adults were infantilized and evidence of sexuality punished, which criminalized the existence of sexual desire. Similarly, as I examine in chapter four, reservation agents and other U.S. officials incarcerated Indigenous women at the Canton Asylum in order to control their sexual behavior or prevent the birth of Indigenous children. Though extreme, these practices were aligned with social reform rhetoric that defined Indigenous communities and lifeways in opposition to those of white Americans; the incarceration of Indian people on eugenicist grounds was the natural outcome to federal Indian policies aimed at the eradication of “Indianness” itself.

“But a demented Indian is rare”: Race, Insanity, and the Canton Asylum

The Canton Asylum was the first federal facility designed solely for the psychiatric care of Indigenous people in the United States, but over the course of its existence the facility did more to harm Indian communities than it did to help them. The idea for the institution came from Peter Couchman, U.S. Indian Agent at the Cheyenne River Agency, who wrote in a letter to South Dakota Senator Richard Pettigrew of the need for a separate facility to hold the “demented Indians” that he kept incarcerated in the reservation guardhouse. Thus, much like Carlisle, Canton also had a carceral rationale behind its founding, and was increasingly used this way by reservation agents who sought new methods of controlling the Indian people under their jurisdiction. Over 400 Indian people were sent to this facility from 1902-1934 at the behest of a wide variety of historical actors—U.S. officials, reservation agents, disgruntled relatives, unscrupulous white American citizens, and boarding school superintendents, among others. Those who initiated the commitment of Indian people often rationalized confinement as the only way to protect Indian communities, by seeking “treatment” for ostensibly insane Indian people. But as archival records reflect, once at Canton, Indian people did not receive psychiatric care, and many of those confined to the facility died as a result of medical crises caused by their confinement.

This era was particularly lethal for Indigenous communities who suffered from high rates of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, trachoma, measles, influenza, pneumonia, and whooping cough, among other illnesses. By the late nineteenth century, germ theories of disease had been established by Western medical practitioners such as Robert Koch, who developed the tuberculin serum, and Emil von Behring, who discovered a diphtheria antitoxin. Despite these advancements Western diseases posed serious dangers for American Indian communities whose traditional forms of medicine were discouraged and banned by U.S. officials, and who had few opportunities to access Western medical care. In large boarding facilities conditions were also severe, as hundreds of malnourished Indian people lived closely together in spaces that often lacked adequate sanitation and waste removal, and access to clean linens, including bed sheets and hand towels. As historian Clifford Trafzer has noted, the Indian Service did not have a Medical Supervisor before Commissioner Leupp’s 1909 appointment of Dr. Joseph A. Murphy, which meant that in addition to the criminalization of traditional spiritual practices, forced child

removal, and other forms of social oppression, Indian people who lived in this era also endured the extreme trauma of widespread, pernicious medical neglect due to federal indifference.⁶⁰

Given these realities, Canton's founding in 1902 signaled the emergence of another weapon in the American arsenal of Indigenous subordination. Federal officials were aware of the pervasive suffering on reservations, and thus the new facility could have offered generalized medical treatment to the dozens of Indian communities living in South Dakota. But instead, Congress authorized its designation as a psychiatric facility, which formally defined Indian "insanity" as a social problem—despite the fact that U.S. officials had no reason to believe that Indian people experienced psychiatric disorders to an extent great enough to merit a facility of this kind. As a newspaper article likely published in 1905, entitled "Care of Territory Insane," suggested,

Commissioner Wright has renewed the contract with St. Vincent's hospital in St. Louis for the care of the territory's insane for another year. At present there are 85 cases from Indian territory... This does not include Indians. The government has a contract with an asylum at Canton, S.D., where [sic] the Indians are sent when they become insane. But a demented Indian is rare. The government has had this contract for three years and there are only ten Indians in the asylum. All insane persons not of Indian blood are sent to St. Vincent's.⁶¹

According to this reporter, incidences of psychiatric illness were few and far between in Indian communities. But others who had a vested interest in confirming high rates of "insanity" among Indigenous populations spun contradictory stories. In chapter four, I discuss in greater detail how the enumeration of "insane" Indian people lent legitimacy to Canton's existence; before the institution's founding, in 1897 Pettigrew sent surveys to reservation agents in order to determine the number of "insane" on Indian reservations, and in 1914, and again, in 1921, Hummer would use a similar approach to rationalize Canton's expansion. Pettigrew and Hummer's surveys yielded unimpressive results: according to Indian agents' responses to Pettigrew's questionnaires, for instance, there were only 59 cases of "insanity" on 21 Indian reservations. That small number would have logically refuted Pettigrew's insistence that there was a need for an insane asylum dedicated to the treatment of Indian people, but his persistence paid off, and the facility was built.

The very existence of the Canton facility offered reservation agents and boarding school superintendents a way to effectively deter behavior that challenged their authority. As a short anecdote in an 1895 edition of Carlisle's *Indian Helper* reported, for example,

All who have been here for any length of time have observed a pleasant young white man driving the flour team which frequently delivers to the school loads of flour. In the past few weeks another young man has taken his place. Upon inquiry it was found out that the first mentioned is in the insane asylum. 'Crazy? What

⁶⁰ Clifford E. Trafzer, *Fighting Invisible Enemies: Health and Medical Transitions among Southern California Indians*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).

⁶¹ "Helen M—. File," RG 75 Box 1, Records of Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, Case Files of Insane Indians, 1905-8, Canton Asylum, NARA-FW.

was the cause?’ was asked. ‘Tobacco,’ was the serious reply of his physician. ‘No other reason under the sun,’ he continued. ‘A victim of nicotine.’⁶²

As gleaned from the above, Carlisle authorities found the concept of insanity to be of some utility; merely suggesting a correlation between insanity and unwanted behaviors, like the use of tobacco, could lessen the frequency of these activities. Consider the following article published in the *Carlisle Arrow* in 1906, a reprint from another publication, *The Pioneer*. This piece, entitled “Insanity Among the Indians,” began: “In my experience of twenty-six years’ residence among the Chippewas of Minnesota I have known only two cases of insanity proper among full-bloods, writes Theodore H. Beaulieu in the St. Paul Dispatch.” The reporter continued,

One of these, a young boy, was insane from birth; the other was a very old woman who became demented over the death of her children three years ago, and is now at the hospital for the insane. I have known of about six or more persons of mixed white and Indian blood who were lunatics. And it seems, from my observation, that the more modernized the Indian becomes, the more liable he becomes to lunacy or imbecility. This reservation now has three members in the Indian insane hospital, one of them is the old women [sic] cited above, another a mixed-blood about 55 years old who has always been weak mentally...the other subject is a young mixed-blood Indian boy about 15 years old, who is not a lunatic in the proper sense of the word but, more properly speaking, an incorrigible being.⁶³

Although the article suggested that insanity was not a common occurrence among “full-bloods,” the narrator went on to explain that incidences of insanity increased along with modernization and had an inverse relationship to blood quantum, or degree of Indian blood, a federal metric used to measure one’s “Indianness” in the eyes of the U.S. government. Carlisle enrollees were subjected to both literal and cultural “whitening” campaigns (as John Choate’s before and after photography famously illustrated) and thus those who read this cautionary tale would have understood that they too might be at risk of confinement at Canton for “incorrigibility.”⁶⁴ As these brief examples demonstrate, U.S. officials and Carlisle authorities used veiled references to

⁶² “Victim of Nicotine,” *The Indian Helper*, 10, no. 47., August 23, 1895, Cumberland County Historical Society, CISDRC, Accessed March 3, 2020, http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/docs-publications/IndianHelper_v10n47.pdf

⁶³ “Insanity Among the Indians,” *The Arrow*, 2, no. 25, February 16, 1906, Cumberland County Historical Society, CISDRC, Accessed March 3, 2020, http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/sites/all/files/docs-publications/Arrow_v02n25.pdf

⁶⁴ John Choate (1848-1902) was an American photographer who famously juxtaposed photographs of Indian people upon their arrival at the Carlisle Indian School and after some time had passed. Choate’s juxtapositioning of these images were meant to illustrate the “success” of Richard Pratt’s civilizational campaign and his ability to transform Indian people. The photographs of Tom Torlino (Navajo) are the most famous of this series. In 1882, Choate photographed Torlino, who was twenty-two, in the clothing and ornamentation he wore upon his arrival to Carlisle. An unsmiling Torlino gazes off into the distance to the left of the camera, wearing medium-sized hoops in his ears, a woven blanket over his left shoulder, a large necklace made of stone and carved bone, with his long hair partially gathered and secured behind his head. In a photograph taken three years later, in 1885, Torlino has endured a literal “whitening” campaign; in this image, Torlino wears a half-smile, closely cropped hair parted to the right, a starched collar, neck-tie, and fitted blazer. His skin also appears to be much lighter than it was in the photograph taken three years earlier. The largest collection of Choate’s photographs are in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. For more information about John Choate, see: Richard Tritt, “John Nicholas Choate: A Cumberland County Photographer.” *Cumberland County History*, 13, no. 2, (Winter 1996): 77-90.

Canton in order to elicit compliance with their orders, and as word quickly spread about the existence of this facility, these threats increasingly became promises.

Wrongful Confinement and Indigenous Dispossession: Land and Resources

Boarding school superintendents were among those responsible for the confinement of Indian people to Canton, and archival records reflect that these commitments were often punitive in nature. In other cases, however, U.S. officials such as reservation agents used Canton as a space of disappearing Indian people who were unwanted or perceived as a burden in some way; documents reflect that women and men who suffered from venereal diseases, alcoholism, emotional upheavals and lack of resources experienced heightened vulnerability to confinement. This fact suggests that reservation agents used the facility as a way to rid themselves of the responsibility of administering medical, social, or economic resources to Indian people in crisis. In some instances, Indian people were also confined to Canton at the behest of relatives. In those cases, records show that confinements occurred because familial relationships broke down, or because relatives felt that their family members could be better cared for in a federal institution.

As a January 1924 letter authored by Frances E. (Pueblo) reflects, some Indian people who were confined for reasons relating to lack of resources were often suspicious of their unjust circumstances. In an attempt to take matters into her own hands, Frances wrote to Commissioner Charles Burke to demand her release: “Yes! Mr. Burke I understand thousand times this hospital, and absolutely necessary for me to get out. If not, I will be next world. You understand, what I mean.” She went on, “Say, Mr. Burke I heard [sic] that my papa can not support us, that why, they sented [sic] us out here. Ha! ha! ha! Crazy devil.”⁶⁵ As Frances’ letter suggests, she had been told that her father’s inability to care for her and her mother, who was deaf and blind, led to their confinement at Canton—where she believed she would die. Yet, additional documents reflect that there was more to the women’s confinement than Frances knew or elected to divulge in her letters to Burke. Like many others confined to this facility, Frances and her mother were caught in a web of corruption, avarice, and bad actors that disappeared the women to Canton in order to further their own ambitions. A letter dated February 25, 1924, sent from A.R. Manby to Commissioner Burke explains: “As stated to you previously Frances has two enemies in this country due to the fact that she saw things that were not proper and spoke of them. For this reason they were anxious to have her taken out of this country—.”⁶⁶ The author of this letter, Arthur Rochford Manby, was an English scam artist who earned his reputation as “the most hated man in Taos” by making claims against Pueblo lands in New Mexico and selling fraudulent deeds to white speculators.⁶⁷ It is unclear why Manby wrote to Commissioner Burke on behalf of Frances and her mother to try and secure their release. He did so repeatedly, but unsuccessfully; both women were transferred at Canton’s closure to St. Elizabeth’s, where Frances died in 1939, and her mother Juanita the following year. By 1929, Manby had also died; his corpse was found in his Taos estate, where, according to one account, his starving dog had

⁶⁵ Frances E. to Commissioner Charles Burke. January 26, 1924. RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 17, folder 8935, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁶ A.R. Manby to Commissioner Burke. February 25, 1924. RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 17, folder 14843, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁷ Jacobo Baca. *Somos Indígena: Ethnic Politics and Land Tenure in New Mexico, 1694-1965*. University of New Mexico, 23 June 2015.

severed his head.⁶⁸ Given Manby's profile and history of criminal dealings, it seems likely that he sought Frances' release for undisclosed reasons having little to do with selflessness. Manby's involvement in Frances' life and that of her mother, as well as his report to Burke that their commitments were retaliatory, is yet another example of the ways in which Canton facilitated the work of settler colonialism by enacting Indigenous confinement and subsequent dispossession. As I discuss in chapter five, Indian people were committed to Canton by a wide variety of historical agents with duplicitous motives. Interrogating the relationships sustained by Indian people confined to Canton with others outside of the facility reveals important commonalities in the circumstances of Indigenous confinement at this, and other, settler institutions.

Entwined Histories: Race-Based Institutionalization and Prejudice

Freedmen's hospitals founded during the Reconstruction era in the post-bellum South established a pattern of race-based institutionalization that some Indian officials would use to their advantage in later years. In the wake of the Civil War, freedmen and women were confronted with the grueling process of emancipation, as they fought to make their way to safety and in the process faced exposure, starvation, dislocation—and disease.⁶⁹ Historian Jim Downs writes,

The collapse of the plantation economy and the breakdown of the enslaved community created broader social transformations that left bondspersons defenseless against sickness. The exigencies of war and emancipation separated black families and triggered an abrupt breakdown of kin networks... This had a practical consequence: family and kin were most likely to provide the nursing care that might give a person their best chance of survival in an age before germ theory.⁷⁰

Compounded with anti-black racism and presumptions about the condition of black bodies that informed the treatment that white medical professionals were willing to administer, these postwar realities resulted in unspeakable suffering for African American communities across the nation. By 1865, the War Department had established the Freedmen's Bureau, which included a Medical Division, in order to address the disastrous consequences of federal unpreparedness. With the establishment of this centralized administrative agency, Downs explains, the government signaled its "[interest] in the health conditions of freed slaves because it wanted to create a healthy labor force," and insanity was included in the Bureau's periodical tabulations of sick freed people in particular regions.⁷¹ As these cases began to mount, however, and as state facilities increasingly denied freedmen and women medical and psychiatric assistance, freedpeople and Bureau physicians lobbied for separate facilities to treat a population whose conditions were—in both reality and perception—distinct from that of white Americans. By 1868, a former Confederate hospital in Petersburg, Virginia, Howard's Grove Hospital, was

⁶⁸ See, for example: James Stephen Peters, *Headless in Taos: The Dark Fated Tale of Arthur Rochford Manby* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2012).

⁶⁹ Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 23.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 148.

designated as the Central State Lunatic Asylum for Colored Insane, and as historian Caroline Norris explains, hospital staff was immediately inundated by patients seeking care: "...it must almost have seemed as if any helpless African American in Virginia might at some point be referred to this Petersburg facility."⁷² Norris continues, "...the pool of potential patients was swollen by diagnoses based on ailments considered to be unique to African Americans, such as 'Negritude,' a problem which, according to the esteemed Dr. Benjamin Rush, was a type of leprosy curable only by becoming white-skinned, and "Drapetomania," a term coined in 1851 by Dr. Samuel Cartwright to describe the symptoms (sullenness, laziness) causing slaves to run away."⁷³ Fifty years later, American Indian people would be committed to Canton on similar bases of medical fiction—a practice that can be situated within a broader history of race relations, white supremacy, and national belonging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, in 1914 a 23-year-old Chippewa man by the name of John B. was expelled from Carlisle and placed under heightened surveillance back home at the Red Cliff Agency in Bayfield, Wisconsin. As Indian agent J. W. Dady expressed in a letter to Carlisle Superintendent Oscar Lipps, Bear would be subjected to intense police oversight and, if necessary, placed under psychiatric evaluation to establish whether he was "mentally deficient." Archival documents suggest that while the circumstances around John's expulsion from Carlisle were unusual, his punishment was not; settler institutions dedicated exclusively to Indigenous populations—including "schools" like Carlisle, and psychiatric facilities, like Canton—served many carceral and punitive functions in this era. Shifting the focus from the experiences of Indian children and youth to Indian women and men who occupied settler institutions at the turn of the twentieth century opens up new lines of inquiry about mobility, gender and sexuality, labor, and resistance in the so-called era of Assimilation—a period bookended, incidentally, by the founding of Carlisle in 1879, and the closure of Canton in 1934. The presence and punishment of adults in facilities like Carlisle and Canton illuminate the many shadow projects of settler institutions in this era.

A substantial number of Carlisle enrollees were adults, rather than children, and from 1912-1918, Indian women and men eighteen years of age and older comprised the demographic majority—an important finding that departs from existing literature about this institution and boarding schools more generally. When Indigenous children are the focus of these studies, questions about ideological indoctrination, nutrition, militarism, and the psychological consequences of boarding school environments are foregrounded as the major lines of inquiry. By comparison, focusing on the experiences of adults changes the characteristics of historical inquiry about the effects of the "school" on the individual. In her monograph about student health at Sherman Institute, for example, historian Jean Keller notes that Sherman authorities did not consider pregnancy to be a possibility among the students. By contrast, *False Promises* finds that sexuality, relationships, pregnancies, and sexual health were significant sources of Indian-white conflict at Carlisle, in addition to other issues over labor, land, and freedom of mobility. This emphasis on adult enrollees broadens current understandings of the ways in which white

⁷² Caroline Norris, "A History of Madness: Four Venerable Virginia Lunatic Asylums," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 125, no. 2 (2017): 138–82, 157.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 158.

racial privilege and hierarchies of power worked in the U.S. in this era, by demonstrating how U.S. authorities deputized white citizens as the disciplinary agents of Indian people. In numerous instances, the only commonality shared by the disparate people policing Indians *was their whiteness*. And as I demonstrate in the following chapter, those who assumed this function as their natural role included railroad employees, town gossips, nosy neighbors, local pastors, and institutional authorities, who worked together to police Indian people and to maintain white hegemony. In the context of settler institutions, Indian people were ill-fitting subjects; they could never be transformed, they could only be punished.

Chapter Two: “The New Order of Things”

In 1905, just a year after Francis E. Leupp assumed the position of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, he declared in his annual report that the non-reservation school system had outlived its usefulness. Unlike Carlisle founder Richard Henry Pratt, Leupp believed that academic instruction was antithetical to the lives Indian students were bound to lead, and that boarding school environments fostered “unwholesome conditions.”¹ During his tenure, Leupp would work to implement a new agenda; as he explained in his annual report, “The foundation of everything must be the development of character. Learning is a secondary consideration.”² He continued, “To my notion, the ordinary Indian boy is better equipped for his life struggle on a frontier ranch...his time could be put to its best use by learning how to repair a broken harness, ...and [by learning] how to do the hundred other bits of handy tinkering which are so necessary to the farmer who lives 30 miles from a town.”³ By 1908, Commissioner Leupp was adamant that Indian people could not, after all, compete with white Americans; he felt instead that government appropriations were better spent on day schools and American public schools, where Indigenous children could be educated closer to home, and be induced to find contentment as “ditchers, miners, railroad hands, or what not.”⁴

The changing Office of Indian Affairs objectives under Commissioner Leupp appeared to signal that the heyday of federal boarding institutions was coming to an end. But while the responsibilities of educating Indian youth were increasingly transferred to day schools, Leupp was loath to shutter all off-reservation institutions at once; instead he would allow their steady deterioration (ARCIA 1906; 1907; 1908). This lack of federal support for off-reservation schools created a new problem for Carlisle Superintendent Moses Friedman, who assumed his position in 1908, the year Leupp declared his intention of allowing federal boarding institutions to slowly decay. Governmental appropriations were delegated to schools like Carlisle based on the number of enrolled pupils: in short, “the more children, the more money.”⁵ The declining enrollment of Indigenous youth at off-reservation institutions thus threatened Carlisle’s demise, and created an enrollment vacuum—one that Friedman would fill with adult Indian women and men, if the school were to remain in existence.⁶

In this chapter, I investigate Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) policy, administrative correspondence, and disciplinary records relating to adult Indian enrollees at Carlisle who received some form of punishment between 1900-1918. Extant literature has described how the U.S. government enacted its early program of Indian “assimilation” in Native American boarding institutions, as school authorities indoctrinated Indian children into American religious, economic, and patriarchal values in order to halt the transmission of Indigenous lifeways to subsequent generations of Indian people. By the turn of the twentieth century, policymakers had largely abandoned the belief that Indian people could be divested of their “Indianness,” but continued to regard the indoctrination of Indian children as key to the “civilization” of their communities. The youthfulness of Indian children made them malleable—“measurably plastic,”

¹ Francis E. Leupp, September 30, 1908, “Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1908” (ARCIA) United States Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., University of Wisconsin History Collection, 16.

² ARCIA, 1906, 3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ ARCIA, 1908, 17.

⁶ Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 203.

according to Leupp—and once removed from the protection of their kin far away to boarding institutions, they could be compelled to regard their ancestral practices with shame and thus accept “civilization” as the only alternative. By contrast, reformers regarded adult Indian people as too “old school” to be indoctrinated into the American way, and too committed to their worldviews to be induced to lead “useful lives.”⁷ As historian David Wallace Adams recounts, a reservation agent to the Lakota believed that it was ““a mere waste of time to attempt to teach the average adult Indian the ways of the white man. He can be tamed, and that is about all.””⁸ But if adult Indian people were uneducable, as many U.S. officials believed, why were so many adults enrolled at Carlisle? Why did so many Indian women and men receive punishment, and what do the punitive experiences of this older demographic reveal about Carlisle’s shifting objectives?

In answering these questions, I center a transformation in Carlisle policy which offers insight into the shifting aims of the institution: Superintendent Moses Friedman’s official stance of accepting only “mature” Indian students after 1908, and the enrollment of adults in an institution that emphasized vocational training, in some cases, entirely at the expense of academic instruction.⁹ After this policy change, Friedman aimed to admit only those who desired to learn an industrial trade, and enrollment ledgers demonstrate that this policy change resulted in an increasingly older institutional demographic. Archival records reveal that women and men eighteen years of age and older made their own application to Carlisle, and that many expressly stated a desire to enroll or re-enroll at the institution in order to learn a trade, or to take specialized courses in the hopes of securing meaningful work. For example, in 1910, Pablo H. (Mescalero Apache) was enrolled at Carlisle for a period of six years, leaving the institution at twenty-one years of age to take a position as Disciplinary at the Greenville California Indian School. By August of 1916, however, Pablo wrote Carlisle Superintendent Oscar H. Lipps that he was suffering racial discrimination and slander at the hands of his colleagues. In a letter dated December 17, 1916, Pablo indicated that he had appealed to Washington unsuccessfully for a transfer from Greenville, and had resolved to resign and work as a miner until he could secure employment in the Indian Service as disciplinary at another Indian School. He explained, “If I do not get another place [in the Indian Service] then I want to go to Haskell and take a Commercial Course for one or two years I am only twenty one years old and feel that I need a lots [sic] of school yet because it is very hard to get along when a fellow does not know very much.” In closing, he sought the Superintendent’s assistance: “Could you help me get into Haskell to take a commercial course?”¹⁰ Although Pablo had attended Carlisle for six consecutive years and had even secured a coveted job with the Indian Service, this correspondence demonstrates how his training at Carlisle left him with few options for gainful employment and desirous of further education.

Pablo’s file also indicates how longstanding beliefs about Indian men as licentious and ungovernable could apply even to those who, like Pablo, both endured and perpetuated the institutionalized discipline and punishment of Indian students. Additional correspondence reveals that Superintendent Lipps had written to Pablo on at least one occasion to reprimand him for seeking out the company of a “young woman,” enrolled in the Outing system at Carlisle,

⁷ Hoxie, 205.

⁸ David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 18.

⁹ “David P—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 104, folder 4445, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Carlisle Indian Industrial School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC).

¹⁰ “Pablo H—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 111, folder 4625, NARA, CISDRC.

“without permission.” In so doing, Lipps reminded Pablo of the ways in which Carlisle authorities could continue to intervene into the lives of former students thousands of miles away, and to administer discipline to men who, like Pablo, embodied the stated objectives of the institution. Disciplinary documents relating to adults at Carlisle reveal a panoply of Indian-white struggles over power, land, labor, sexuality, and mobility; these records also demonstrate how the influx of hundreds of adult women and men into the institution altered power relations between Indian people and Carlisle administrators. As I document in this chapter, Carlisle authorities devised new means of controlling the adults who, due to their age, maturity, and physical stature, were able to selectively disregard school rules and the institutional authorities who enforced them.

Carlisle records detail how U.S. officials used formal and informal structures of punishment—gossip, rumor, school rules, carceral facilities, apprehension by police, withholding of privileges, and removal from Carlisle, sometimes to other institutions—in attempts to control adult enrollees. These materials also illuminate how this older demographic received punishment for a wide range of behavioral infractions, including: leaving Carlisle without administrative “permission”; engaging in sexual relationships; refusing obedience to institutional rules; and attempting to support their families back home by returning to their communities. The nature of these perceived transgressions suggest that many adults received punishment for little more than failing to accept subservience to white authority figures, and demonstrate how anti-Indian prejudice was a deeply ingrained institutional ethos. Given that Carlisle’s stated aims were to individualize Indian people, make them self-sufficient, and prepare them for U.S. citizenship, the experiences of the women and men who were in many cases punished for enacting the very ideals of the era—autonomy, independence, and self-sufficiency—illuminate the many shadow projects of the institution after 1900.

This chapter centers the punishment of adult Indian people at Carlisle as an important phenomenon that expands current understandings of the Indian Office’s “civilizational” campaign. In so doing, this chapter takes up a Foucauldian view of discipline as the “art of the human body” and punishment as inherently political.¹¹ If we accept Foucault’s assertion that punishment is not primarily a repressive social technology, then we can attend to how punitive patterns at Carlisle point to broader conflicts over power, race, land, bodies, and mobility in an era of tremendous conflict between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Within the Carlisle universe, institutional rhetoric claimed to provide Indian people with training in self-sufficiency and eventually citizenship, but the consequence for enacting the very ideals of the era was frequently punishment—which Superintendent Friedman and other Carlisle officials promoted as necessary to the cultivation of character. This “good discipline,” as Carlisle Superintendent John Francis Jr. (1917-1918) referred to it, was buoyed by legislation and popular ideological constructions that defined all Indian people as “wards” of the U.S. government, and white Americans as their rightful guardians.¹² But in a national climate of racial hostility towards non-white communities, the opportunities that Carlisle claimed to bestow upon Indian students through substandard “vocational” training was conditioned by Americans’ insatiable lust for land and enduring fear of Indian people moving freely throughout society. The

¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd Vintage books ed (New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, 1995), 137.

¹² See: Robert A. Williams, *Like a Loaded Weapon: The Rehnquist Court, Indian Rights, and the Legal History of Racism in America*, Indigenous Americas (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), especially Part II, “‘Signs Taken for Wonders’: The Nineteenth-Century Supreme Court and Indian Rights.”

nature of punishment at Carlisle reflect these anxieties; punitive structures enabled white Americans to observe, document, discuss, and even apprehend older enrollees at Carlisle and the surrounding vicinity, and in many cases, Carlisle authorities prevented adults from returning home on the recommendation of the reservation Indian agent. As I document in this chapter, these unofficial policing activities demonstrate how Carlisle authorities and U.S. officials deputized white American citizens as the disciplinary agents of Indian people in their vicinity, which expands our understanding of the role the institution played in the consolidation of white supremacist social, cultural, and economic structures in this era.

These phenomena point to the ways in which Carlisle extended settler-colonial processes of Indigenous subordination by way of enticement to the institution and subsequent immobilization, as land-owning Indian women and men were lured to Carlisle with promises of meaningful vocational training and frequently disallowed from returning back to their kin, communities, and resources.¹³ These punitive patterns expand current understandings of Carlisle as a space intended for the assimilation of young Indian children; instead, they suggest that Carlisle authorities segregated, criminalized, and immobilized adult Indian women and men at least as much as they claimed to educate or “care” for them, using punishment in attempts to gain ascendancy over their land, labor, reproductive capacities, and resources. In centering records relating to the punishment of Indian women and men, this chapter makes the claim that for many adults, Carlisle was not a school at all—it was a place where labor was performed continuously, and where punishment was routine.

The New Order of Things

In 1908, Carlisle Superintendent Moses Friedman wrote Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs C.F. Larrabee to insist that Carlisle was not yet obsolete. Though enrollment numbers were down, he would endeavor to “fill the school with mature young men and women who have come with a real purpose and desire to obtain an education.”¹⁴ As Commissioner Leupp directed, Friedman was to “Get rid of the little children and of all the academic students,”¹⁵ and Friedman set about creating a “new order of things” in which instruction in “practical” trades would receive emphasis like never before. His timing was right: with Estelle Reel’s appointment as Superintendent of the Indian School Service in 1898, a new course of study for Indian schools had already been standardized. Reel’s revised curriculum promoted expanded instruction in all manner of industrial and domestic labor, and this curriculum, circulated to all federal Indian schools after 1901, laid the foundation for Friedman’s intensification of an “educational” regimen that emphasized labor over learning. But because Reel’s views on Indian education were informed by a racial philosophy that asserted the inherent inferiority of Indian people, the training available to women and men at Carlisle was intentionally substandard to that which white Americans could expect to receive, thus offering little hope for returned Indian students who aspired to obtain work outside of the routine management of the allotment farm and household.

¹³ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler-colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8, no. 4, (2006), pp. 387-409.

¹⁴ “Return of Richmond M— and Discontinuance of Enrollment of Pupils from New York State,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #32211-1908-Carlisle-826, NARA, CISDRC, 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

Reel's reconceptualization of Indian education began with envisioning the place Indian people would occupy in American society once leaving boarding institutions. To this end, she advocated training only in "practical" industries, with tools and materials suited to reservation conditions. As she instructed carpentry teachers, "The child when grown up will, more frequently than otherwise, find himself in a position where he has very little with which to work... The instructor should constantly keep in mind that his object and aim is to fit his pupils to meet and overcome the conditions that will most probably surround them when they leave school and enter life in real earnest."¹⁶ But Reel also knew that returned students, indoctrinated in this way, would play a significant role in tethering Indigenous communities to the reservation in the manner desired by American reformers and officials. In detailing the fifth-year curriculum in geography, she thus instructed teachers to make seasonal migration unappealing: "it is better to have fewer dogs and more pigs. It is a good way to help anchor a family to encourage them to raise chickens and pigs, since these can not be induced to lead a nomadic life."¹⁷ For similar reasons, the first lesson that cooking instructors would impart to Indian "girls" would be that "a home is not a home unless it is a permanent abiding place and a house... It must be governed by habits of neatness, promptness, and order. Develop the thought that the child's first lessons in vice or virtue are learned in the home."¹⁸

In her curriculum for Indian students, Reel frequently connected labor and morality as pathways to success in American life. The harness-making course of study advised instructors that the good influence of manual work was readily witnessed by the thousands of Indian pupils who had "taken advantage" of this kind of systematic training, and that teachers had a duty first and foremost to develop the morals of Indian students.¹⁹ Reel likewise felt that the Outing system, devised in 1879 by Pratt and continued by his successors, was beneficial for the cultivation of character. The philosophical foundations on which the Outing system was based were simple: Pratt thought that by placing Indian students in the homes of prosperous, pious white American families to perform domestic and farm work, that "civilization" would be rapidly accomplished—white values, mores, and practices would simply rub off. Reel propagated similar beliefs in her curriculum: as she explained, once placed in the home of a "good white family," the Indian boy's "inherited weaknesses and tendencies are overcome by civilized habits... habits of order, of personal cleanliness and neatness, and of industry and thrift, which displace the old habits of aimless living, unambition, and shiftlessness."²⁰ But in Reel's estimation, training in morality, domestic labor, and farm work alone was insufficient; students would need to leave tradition behind. As she cautioned female students, "[just] because our grandmothers did things in a certain way is no reason why we should do the same." Reel further instructed history teachers to "Compare the Indian life of the past with its present... Tell [students] that their history will be what they make it, and they should feel the responsibility for making it bright... To them will fall the credit of success, and on them will rest the stigma of failure."²¹ For returned Carlisle students, failure would be theirs alone.

Teaching Indian students subservience to white authority figures figured prominently in Reel's educational philosophy, as an extension of what she believed to be Indian peoples' natural

¹⁶ United States Superintendent of Indian Schools, Estelle Reel Meyer, *Course of Study for the Indian Schools of the United States, Industrial and Literary*, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1901), 73.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 144.

inferiority to white Americans. Mvskoke historian K. Tsianina Lomawaima has demonstrated how boarding school authorities attempted to subordinate Indian students to American values by molding their bodies in the image of Victorian domestic ideals, and by situating Indian youth as developmentally delayed as compared to their white counterparts. As Lomawaima recounts, Reel was quoted in a 1901 newspaper article as saying “Allowing for exceptional cases, the Indian child is of lower physical organization than the white child of corresponding age.”²² In the same interview, Reel continued “...the Indian instincts and nerves and muscles and bones are adjusted one to another, and all to the habits of the race for uncounted generations, and his offspring cannot be taught like the children of the white man until they are taught to do like them.”²³ Not only did this race paradigm affirm the racial supremacy of white Americans, it assigned moral superiority to those who undertook to educate Indian people, and in a reflection of this belief, Reel propagated obedience to authority—“those placed over us to help us”—as essential for Indian “progress.”²⁴ But frequently, Carlisle enrollees—young and old, individually and collectively—found ways to refuse authority, which was an ever-present source of administrative anxiety. Reel thus encouraged boarding school authorities to compel student “recognition of value of order; necessity of rules, law, offices; respect for and obedience to officers,” and for Indian people at Carlisle, there was no shortage of school rules to be recognized.²⁵

Subordinating Indian people to American legal and political authority was a chief component of the OIA agenda in this era. U.S. officials regarded Indian communities as lawless; places where Indian children were subjected to the evil influence of tribal custom. Carlisle authorities disseminated similar ideas, and attempted to enforce the OIA’s “Rules for the Indian School Service,” which prohibited elements of “degraded” reservation life—“Social dancing, card playing, gambling, profanity, and smoking or chewing tobacco”—at all Indian schools.²⁶ In this way, school officials sought to prevent students from participating in what were considered by white Americans to be the unclean and uncivilized hallmarks of tribal communities, in an affirmation of dominant racial theories that advanced the notion that more complex environments produced more complex, civilized societies. Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller painted the following picture of the corrupting influences of reservation life: “degraded Indians are allowed to exhibit before the young and susceptible children all the debauchery, diabolism, and savagery of the worst state of the Indian race...”²⁷ Social dances, ceremonies, and communal feasts were of the most deleterious practices, according to Teller, during which gatherings “the warrior recounts his deeds of daring... The audience assents approvingly to his boasts of falsehood, deceit, theft, murder, and rape, and the young listener is informed that this... is the road to fame and renown.”²⁸ And while these sentiments were the product of an earlier generation of bureaucrats influenced by the racial philosophies of their time, they were enduring. In subsequent years, Carlisle officials continued to regard Indian women and men as latently

²² As quoted in K. Tsianina Lomawaima, “Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, 1898-1910: Politics, Curriculum, and Land,” *Journal of American Indian Education* 35, no. 3 (1996): 5–31, 14.

²³ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁴ Reel, 147.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Rules for the Indian School Service*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1892), 18.

²⁷ Francis Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian,” 1880-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 269.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

dangerous; threatening in their frequent refusals to accept total subordination to institutional authority over their labor, sexuality, and whereabouts.



Carlisle's Graduating Class of 1917

Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle Indian School Collection

Few Indian people graduated from Carlisle over the decades of the institution's operation. Jacqueline Fear-Segal estimates that fewer than 7% of those who were enrolled left with a diploma. The author's maternal relative Sarah Fowler (Choctaw) was one of the few who left with diploma in hand. Fowler stands at the top left of the back row, listed as "1" in the key below. Fowler went on to teach at Wheelock Academy, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's boarding school for Choctaw youth, which was in operation from 1832-1955.

Source: Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA, Flat Box 4, no. 11

Making Children Out of Men

In the first part of the twentieth century, Carlisle's policies, practices, and built environment appeared to reflect transformations in pseudoscientific racial theories that postulated "degeneracy" as an inborn, heritable trait. In 1911, plans were underway to have a new guardhouse built on Carlisle grounds. As Superintendent Friedman explained to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert G. Valentine, "I respectfully inform the Office that a new guard house is contemplated... All of the labor will be furnished by the school force... The mill work will be constructed entirely in the school shops, and the concrete work done by the student

apprentices.”²⁹ Ostensibly, the matter of the guardhouse was a pressing issue because of its unsatisfactory and unsanitary conditions. Friedman wrote to John Charles, the Supervisor of Construction, “There has been, as your Office is aware, continual complaint with regard to this guard house,”³⁰ noting that a musty odor had overtaken the old building, built by Hessian prisoners in 1776.³¹ He continued, “. . . shortly after my arrival at Carlisle, I had the old wooden floors, which were unsanitary, replaced with cement floors, [but] the odor still remained. Everything possible was done to keep the old guard house in a sanitary condition. . . . The large rooms only were used and on rare occasions, and only when a definite exigency existed, were the cells used.”³² Infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and trachoma were a serious health threat to the hundreds of Carlisle students who were forced to live closely together in unsanitary conditions, which resulted in an astonishingly high rate of morbidity at the institution and made confinement to small spaces with others potentially lethal.³³

But there were other sources of grief for school administrators unrelated to the filthy cells in which students were imprisoned, sometimes for days—even weeks—on end. As Friedman complained to Charles, “The location of this building is particularly bad, it being not to exceed 55 feet from the school building, quite near the hospital and on the opposite side of the grounds from the boys’ building, making it necessary to conduct and often carry unruly pupils across the entire grounds to this guard house.”³⁴ The new guardhouse, however, was destined for a more desirable location just across from the “large boys quarters” which housed the older male students, and which they, themselves, would build. The renovated facility, sited in this location, would serve a strategic function; as Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs Frederick Abbott acknowledged, the guardhouse was “the only method of controlling incorrigible pupils *who are in many instances grown men* (emphasis mine).”³⁵

Though in the OIA’s own estimation “school aged” pupils were between the ages of six and eighteen, Commissioner Leupp’s vehement disapproval of the off-reservation boarding school system meant that Indian youth were increasingly educated in day schools closer to home.³⁶ This policy change resulted in a dearth of appropriately school-aged children with which to populate Carlisle, but Friedman resolved to transform this challenge into a point of pride. In 1908, he boasted to Leupp that after sending home young students from New York, Carlisle would “have the most mature body of students of any non-reservation school in the country.”³⁷ Thereafter, Friedman’s policy would be to admit only those who explicitly stated the desire to learn a vocation and who were fourteen years of age and older. By December 1912, Friedman had enrolled over 300 Indian men at Carlisle, and adult women and men eighteen and older

²⁹ “November 1910 Inspection of Carlisle Indian School,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #95269-1-1910-Carlisle-150, NARA, CISDRC, 19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ David H. DeJong, “‘Unless They Are Kept Alive’: Federal Indian Schools and Student Health, 1878-1918,” *The American Indian Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (May 10, 2007): 256–82.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁵ “November 10 Inspection,” NARA, 58.

³⁶ Indeed, Leupp’s appointment as Commissioner (1904-1909) had a significant impact on Indian education: as Frederick Hoxie points out, boarding school enrollment declined between 1905-1910 by more than 10 percent, while attendance at day schools in this same period rose by 47 percent.

³⁷ “Return of Richmond M—,” NARA, 15.

totaled fifty-five percent of the student population.³⁸ But what was envisioned as a solution to low enrollment soon became a problem for Friedman and other school officials: Indian men were especially prone to “running away,” disappearing for days and even months on end, as they successfully eluded the authorities tasked with their apprehension and return. A December 3, 1910 report of enrollees who had fled Carlisle up to seventeen months before and who were being dropped from the enrolment ledger reflects gender and age disparities among those who “ran away”: of the ninety-one individuals enumerated on this list, only sixteen were under eighteen years of age, while all were between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four; and but one enrollee—eighteen-year-old Lillian M. (Chippewa)—was a woman.³⁹ The construction of a larger guardhouse proximally sited to the men’s living quarters would thus enable Carlisle administrators to incarcerate “recalcitrant” Indian men for all manner of perceived infractions, and simultaneously serve as a symbolic deterrent to fleeing the institution or breaking institutional rules.⁴⁰

Rules at Carlisle were myriad, prohibitions hostile towards enrollees’ tribal identification, and discipline always administered with the belief that white Americans knew what was best for Indian people. Much of this discipline was in the way of character building, enthusiastically referred to as “good discipline” by Superintendent John Francis, Jr. For older male enrollees, punishment was frequently infantilizing—designed to humiliate and shame, as much as to deter. In 1918, Wallace Denny (Oneida), Carlisle’s Disciplinarian, caught eighteen-year-old Jerome S. (Shawnee) chewing tobacco behind the “large boys’ quarters.” Denny apprehended and beat Jerome, stated that ““there was a n---r in the bush about this tobacco business and he was going to find him,”” and washed his mouth out with soap.⁴¹ Denny then released Jerome, promising further punishment the next day. After this altercation, Jerome made official complaint to Superintendent Francis about Denny’s physical and verbal abuse. In response, Superintendent Francis wrote that this was “good discipline,” softening the blow to Jerome’s character by commenting that he was not “a bad boy but simply one who got into trouble.”⁴² Routinely, Indian women and men were told that their perceived misbehavior reflected poorly on the school and the Indian “race” as a whole, and that their disobedience warranted expedient punishment—good discipline—that would ultimately transform them from “bad” Indian “boys and girls” into “good” Carlisle citizens. That Denny was an Indian man himself, and a former Carlisle student, further reflects the efficacy of this institutional ethos.

Instruction in morality also figured prominently at Carlisle, and enrollees were sex-segregated during both leisure and instructional periods. In 1892, the OIA cautioned “boys and girls” to exhibit social politeness and ease in the company of the opposite sex, but instructed them to behave towards one another “without familiarity.”⁴³ Sex-segregation in this capacity was meant to prevent students from engaging in “immoral” conduct, which school authorities feared would threaten the reputation of the institution. Rudimentary education in sex and sexuality also formed part of students’ curricula, as the 1892 OIA “Rules” directed in coded language: “Pupils

³⁸ Quarterly Student Report (Dec. 13, 1912), RG 75, Series 745, Carlisle Quarterly School Reports, NARA, CISDRC.

³⁹ “November 1910 Inspection,” NARA, 109.

⁴⁰ Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club*.

⁴¹ “Correspondence Regarding Discipline of Jerome S—,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #11122-1918-Carlisle-154, NARA, CISDRC, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

must receive instruction and advice on the subject of personal purity.”⁴⁴ In consideration of Indian pupils newly liberated from their “barbaric” environments, instruction in “purity” was deemed imperative. But by 1913, this verbiage had been updated to reflect the fact that the Indian Service acknowledged that older people—“young men and women”—were present in Indian schools, and disciplinary documents demonstrate that their sexualities were frequently a site of open conflict. For example, a 1915 investigative report reveals that many Indian men who suffered from venereal disease had been expelled to preserve the “moral integrity” of the institution, and some Indian women even became pregnant while “under the Outing.”⁴⁵ These events demonstrate how Carlisle administrators regarded adults’ expressions of sexuality as threatening to an institutional culture of Indian “uplift,” predicated on the presumption of Indian peoples’ “childlike” nature. White Americans regarded Indian people as infantile—“grown up children,” according to Hampton Institute founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong— and Carlisle officials adjudged Indian people to be physically and mentally underdeveloped as compared with their white counterparts, marked as improper sexual subjects by virtue of their “race.”

Gender and science scholar Londa Schiebinger has discussed how Western racism towards non-white peoples has impacted the creation of “scientific” theories about normative gender and sexuality. She describes how, by the mid-eighteenth century, European philosophers and natural historians regarded Native American men’s relative absence of body hair—beards, specifically—as an indication of their questionable masculinity, and as evidence of their lesser status in emergent racial classificatory schemes. For instance, the father of the modern taxonomical system, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus, “taught that ‘God gave men beards for ornaments and to distinguish them from women,’” and for many comparative anatomists of the Enlightenment period, “The presence or absence of a beard... drew a sharp line between men and women, [and] served to differentiate the varieties of men.” “Women, black men... and especially men of the Americas,” Schiebinger explains, were believed to “simply [lack] that masculine ‘badge of honor’—the philosopher’s beard.”⁴⁶ These views led many Western naturalists and philosophers to conclude that Indigenous peoples were simply a lesser kind of human, while others questioned whether they were something else altogether: “Richard McCausland, an army surgeon, reported in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* in 1786: ‘It has been advanced by several travellers and historians that the Indians of America differed from other males of the human species in the want of one very characteristic mark of the sex, to wit, that of a beard.’”⁴⁷ Lacking in the highly coveted secondary sexual characteristic of the beard, Indian men were thought to have possibly belonged to another species entirely, and were considered to be improperly masculine compared to European men, and therefore more effeminate and infantile.

By the late nineteenth century, powerful white men were still trying to locate the cause of what they perceived as Indian men’s racial and sexual deficiency, although the terms of the debate had somewhat changed. Darwin, in *Descent of Man*, argued that “savages” were universally promiscuous, licentious, and valued their women solely as slaves; in other words, their habits suggested “feeble powers of reason” and thus situated them closer to primeval man

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Inspection Report of J.H. Dortch for May 1915,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #31080-1917-Carlisle-150, NARA, CISDRC.

⁴⁶ Londa L. Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 120.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

than Europeans.⁴⁸ For the “Friends of the Indians,” Indian men’s marriage practices and sexualities were a central point of contention. As Secretary of the Interior Teller urged, “The marriage relation is also one requiring the immediate attention of the agents,” while Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan sought to force the nuclear, patriarchal family unit upon Indian people in part by criminalizing plural marriage.⁴⁹ White Americans additionally believed that Indian men were unable to control their animalistic impulses, and frontier settlers’ stories of violent Indian attacks and the capture and rape of white women cemented the violent “savage” trope within the dominant cultural imaginary. American cultural innovators had long grown rich by inculcating a diversifying populace with a particular way of imagining Indians as the lamentable casualties of American “progress”; for decades, spectators flocked nightly to Wild West arenas to witness the famed Indian scout “Buffalo Bill” Cody vanquish “savage” warriors time and again during reenactments of Indian massacres.⁵⁰

White Americans, in other words, were accustomed to popular pastimes in which Indigenous peoples were portrayed as relics of a bygone era—proof that savagery would always succumb to civilization, and that American progress was divinely ordained. But by the turn of the twentieth century, a new trend emerged in educational and scientific communities—one that encouraged Indian school instructors to jettison the assimilationist imperative and embrace the idea that “the Indian [would] always remain an Indian,” regardless of the anxiety this newly imagined scientific fact produced.⁵¹ In 1903, for instance, eugenicist G. Stanley Hall meditated on these shifting racial theories. In a paper entitled “The White Man’s Burden Versus Indigenous Development for the Lower Races,” presented at the forty-second Annual Meeting of the National Education Association of the United States, Hall posited that “every vigorous race, however rude and undeveloped, is, like childhood, worthy of the maximum of reverence and care and study...”⁵² When grown, Hall continued, those “lower races” might “occupy the center of the historic stage, appropriating the best we achieve”—a notion that sutured the supposed immaturity of the Indian “race” to latently violent potential.⁵³ As historian Michael Rogin explains, “The common root of innocence and violence, bliss and rage [were] emotions that were projected onto the children of nature.”⁵⁴ Together, these two beliefs—the inherently violent and juvenile nature of Indian men—were operationalized at Carlisle in ways that criminalized the existence of sexual desire, and evidence of enrollees’ sexualities was quickly eradicated.

Documents relating to George F. (Passamaquoddy) demonstrate how once entering Carlisle, adults were expected to comply with a disciplinary structure that was often humiliating, infantilizing, and punitive. George’s “student file” indicates that he had made his own application to Carlisle in 1912, at the age of nineteen.⁵⁵ In April 1914, he was placed in the Outing system in the home of H.P. Weisel, but by September 21 of that year, his student

⁴⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex, Vol. I* (Project Gutenberg, 2011), 367.

⁴⁹ Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians*, 302.

⁵⁰ Sam Maddra, *Hostiles? The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006); L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933*, 1st ed (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

⁵¹ Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 199.

⁵² G. Stanley Hall, 1903, “The White Man’s Burden Versus Indigenous Development for the Lower Races,” *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the National Education Association of the United States*, 42nd Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, July 6-10, 1903, Published by the Association, Winona, Minnesota, 1053.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 118

information card indicates that he “deserted” from his post. George’s file does not indicate whether he returned to Carlisle of his own accord or whether he was punished for “deserting,” but in July 1916 his student information card indicated that he wanted to go “under the Outing” once more. This time, however, he was made to sign a promissory note. A letter addressed to Carlisle Superintendent Oscar Lipps stated:

Dear Sir:

I want to go under the Outing to work.

I promise to keep all the Rules of the School.

I will observe all the rules of conduct becoming a gentle-man, will select good companions, not loaf about public places nor visit undesirable places and will use my spare time for self-improvement.

If taken sick, I will report immediately to the School.

I will pay my board promptly and send the receipt to the School.

I will send one-fourth of my wages to the School every pay day.

I will not visit the School over Sunday unless given special permission by you.

George F—

Pupil.⁵⁶

This promissory note—an administrative form used for all students seeking “permission” to labor in the Outing program—reveals a panoply of institutional expectations that appear to be curiously misaligned with Carlisle’s stated aims: to prepare Indian people for citizenship and full incorporation into American society, which would be achieved by educating Indian people in self-sufficiency. From this note, we are able to see that in order to comply with school rules, George was compelled to accept authority over his whereabouts, finances, health, selections of companions, and comportment—hardly the autonomy and independence one might expect of a “self-sufficient” man of twenty-three. The stock verbiage also reveals how Carlisle authorities subjected those enrolled in the Outing to rules designed to mitigate *against* expressions of self-reliance, agency, and autonomy, and serves as a powerful demonstration of the ways in which adult men like George—who comprised 38 percent of the institution’s population, according to the quarterly report for June 1916—were disallowed from acting independently of Carlisle authorities. George was expected to comply with an institutional hierarchy that administered intimate aspects of his life and required constant permission from institutional officials, in a reflection of dominant beliefs about Indian inferiority that designated white Americans as the racial and intellectual superiors of all Indian people.

In 1917, adults eighteen and older constituted 50 percent of Carlisle’s population, and in some cases, Carlisle authorities used this fact to their benefit by granting older enrollees relative oversight of younger children and youth. George, for instance, was in charge of the school band, and was tasked with ensuring the good conduct of band members while on outings.⁵⁷ In 1879, Pratt institutionalized the cadet system: a militarized chain-of-command among pupils, whom he organized into companies and ranks, thereby establishing a self-regulating disciplinary structure.⁵⁸ In this way, adults like George—who had reached the rank of Captain—were compelled to accept surveillance as both an everyday reality and self-perpetuated duty, as

⁵⁶ “George F—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 30, folder 1412, NARA, CISDRC.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club*, 180.

Carlisle administrators rewarded these supervisory activities with relative autonomy and promotion up through the ranks.⁵⁹ However, under this structure, older enrollees were also capable of contesting school rules and defying commands from their “superiors.”

Additional correspondence contained in George’s institutional file indicates how he was able to challenge the disciplinary hierarchy by exercising relative autonomy over his whereabouts, and reveal that Carlisle officials enlisted the help of townspeople to guard against this threat. At midnight on April 21, 1917, George, who was then 24, emerged from a house on North College Street in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and was confronted by two men who had been looking for him. The home was the residence of a white woman, Mrs. Dora Shriver, who had been separated from her legal husband for two months, and had been receiving visits from George since that time. That night, he had been neither an intruder nor a thief; neither drinking, nor causing a disturbance—only paying a visit to a woman with whom a relationship had been developing. Though the Superintendent had not approved George’s absence that evening as required, George had received permission from another Carlisle official to go into town due to his “most excellent” behavior during the day. But when George had not returned by 11:00 the following night, Edward Corbett, the Night Watchman, and Gustavus Welch, the institution’s Assistant Disciplinarian, set out in search of him.⁶⁰

Letters of correspondence exchanged between Superintendent Francis and Commissioner Sells describe how Carlisle officials exchanged information about George with white civilians and public officials, which ultimately led to his apprehension. On April 24th, Superintendent Francis related to Sells that he had had prior knowledge of George’s relationship with Mrs. Shriver, whom George had met while attending church services. Mrs. Florence Barron, an acquaintance of Mrs. Shriver and also a Catholic, had been alerted to the developing relationship and was disturbed by what she perceived as the impropriety of the situation. She reported this to Father Francis Feeser, the Catholic priest, who recommended that she inform the “proper authorities.”⁶¹ In turn, Feeser reported George’s behavior to the Superintendent. According to the Superintendent’s letter, the priest “had endeavored to persuade George F— to give up his manner of living.”⁶² Eleven days later, however, once Carlisle authorities became aware of George’s absence from the institution, they set out in search of him. A neighboring grocer had witnessed George enter Mrs. Shriver’s house, and was able to direct Corbett and Welch to the correct address. According to the officials, they waited under cover of darkness outside Mrs. Shriver’s home, and when George emerged, they “placed him under arrest” and transported him directly back to the disciplinarian’s office.⁶³

As demonstrated by this correspondence, Carlisle authorities—the Superintendent, Night Watchman, and Assistant Disciplinarian—enlisted numerous white civilians to observe, document, and inform on George’s whereabouts, in effect deputizing these white citizens as the disciplinary agents of Indian people enrolled at the institution. And while, to our knowledge, the priest, grocer, and neighbors were not authorized to apprehend George or administer punitive penalties, these letters do indicate that George faced increasing threat of punishment each time he eluded authorities. Upon George’s return to the institution, he waited to receive his sentence. Corbett and Welch had determined that he would be incarcerated in Carlisle’s guardhouse, but as

⁵⁹ “George F—. Student File,” NARA.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 33.

Corbett stepped out of the Disciplinarian's office to retrieve the keys, George bolted from the room where they held him. But having escaped one form of institutionalized containment, he was confronted with threat of arrest: as Superintendent Francis reported, "Word was immediately sent out to the local Police and Station Agents. This made it impossible for him to escape, and Sunday night after taps he returned of his own accord to the office of the Disciplinarian and gave himself up."⁶⁴ These events demonstrate how George was the object of a complex network of formal and informal surveillance, comprised of white men and women, a store clerk, public agents, and a religious official connected to the Carlisle institution by virtue of proximity. These letters also illustrate how the institutional rules, school administrators, civilians, and police of Carlisle described concentric circles of immobilization in which "runaway" men like George were contained, surveilled and punished.

Officially, George had violated rules that disallowed enrollees from leaving the institution without the prior permission of the Superintendent. But in consorting with a white woman, he also symbolically transgressed the anti-miscegenation statutes that criminalized interracial sex and marriage in this and previous eras. Pennsylvania had repealed its law in this regard in 1780, and so George's relationship with Mrs. Shriver would not have been technically illegal.⁶⁵ However, Mrs. Barron and many others interpreted George's behavior as "improper"; his relationship with Mrs. Shriver suggested an "unnatural" union between an Indian man and a white woman in a national climate of racial hostility towards Indian people. Moreover, George was not recognized as being a mature sexual subject: in correspondence, Carlisle administrators referred to George as a "boy," reinforcing the idea that any sexual relationship of his was aberrant—potentially criminally so. Though police did not arrest George that night, his return to Carlisle may be interpreted as a deliberate attempt to avoid embroilment within the penal system; George no doubt understood that the probability of being incarcerated was high. But having avoided incarceration in the local jail, George was nonetheless punished at the hands of Carlisle officials. In Superintendent Francis's final disciplinary decision, he stated "[George's] age, the fact that he is a member of the senior class and his rank as a Captain...demands exemplary behavior..." George was expelled, and left the school on April 30, 1917. Though he had evaded arrest by police, his punishment was steep: the Superintendent denied him the diploma that he would have received in a matter of weeks, and in so doing denied him what small advantage would have accrued from successfully graduating from Carlisle.⁶⁶

A Disciplinary Society

The punitive patterns discussed above bear striking resemblance to the panoptic schema described by Foucault. Devised in the last decade of the eighteenth century by Jeremy Bentham, the Panopticon is a prison structure meant to induce in inmates an awareness that they are at all times visible and potentially subject to the workings of disciplinary power; the intended effect is

⁶⁴ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁵ Edward Byron Reuter, *The Mulatto in the United States, including a study of the role of the mixed-blood races throughout the world.* (Badger, 1918), 131; Edward Raymond Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania, Slavery--Servitude--Freedom, 1639-1861*, Prize Essays of the American Historical Association, 1910 (Washington: The American historical association, 1911), 195.

⁶⁶ Graduates of Indian schools were declared competent and awarded U.S. citizenship during Commissioner Cato Sell's administration. George would receive neither as a result of being expelled for his perceived behavioral infraction. However, George would go on to become a highly respected and influential member of his community. He was elected as Governor of the Pleasant Point Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation in Eastern Maine.

the “guarantee of order.” In the panoptic structure, individual prison cells are constructed in a circular arrangement, facing a centrally located tower that may, at any time, be occupied by an observer. From the vantage point of the tower occupant, the inmates are permanently visible in their individual cells, but the inmates are unable to verify whether the tower is occupied: the tower windows are shielded by blinds that render any potential occupant invisible. In this way, as Foucault explains, “the major effect of the Panopticon [is] to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power...this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it...the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers.”⁶⁷ Foucault suggests that the panoptic principle may be applied to other institutions—schools, hospitals, and asylums—and achieve similar effects. As historian Jacqueline Fear-Segal has pointed out, Mariana Burgess, Carlisle’s print-making instructor, employed this strategy when she created the phantasmagorical persona of “Mr. See-All,” who claimed to witness students’ misbehavior from the school’s centrally-located bandstand and reported on these infractions by publishing them in the *Indian Helper*, Carlisle’s school newspaper.⁶⁸

Yet, the panoptic principle appears to have manifested at Carlisle in a more generalized manner as well. According to Foucault, the efficacy of the Panopticon lies in its ability to alter behavior, and although it is an architectural form designed to meet specific institutional ends, it is most truly a “political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.”⁶⁹ The Panopticon is inherently democratic; the identity of the tower occupant is unverifiable to those under observation, and therefore anyone can exercise this power. Foucault goes on to say that Bentham envisioned state power, as expressed in the panoptic schema, as destined to pervade the social body, “disciplining the non-disciplinary spaces,” down to the minutest dimensions of social life. This perfected disciplinary power, “gentler” than the preceding models of torture, is more pervasive and thus more effective: “this power had to be... like a faceless gaze that transformed the whole social body into a field of perception: thousands of eyes posted everywhere ...”⁷⁰ While Foucault locates punitive power initially in the pre-modern sovereignty of the king, he is interested in tracing how this power structure was supplanted by the self-regulating, modern disciplinary system, of which the Panopticon is the most fundamental representation. But the panoptic schema also provides a fruitful model through which to understand how race organized power relations at Carlisle, and how white American officials, citizens, and civilians disproportionately held punitive power over Indian people at the institutional, regional, and national level.

As we saw in the case of George F.’s forced return to Carlisle, students who “deserted” ran the risk of apprehension and return to the institution. In a 1911 letter to Commissioner Sells, Superintendent Friedman explained the system for student apprehension, while defending his rationale for carrying “runaways” on enrollment ledgers. Hoping to illustrate the soundness of this practice, he wrote: “First, on the part of the parent. The parents or guardians have a perfect right to expect the Government to use all possible care and diligence for an indefinite time in apprehending their son or daughter, when they have deserted and returning them to the school.” According to Friedman, as long as enrollees remained on the “books,” or Carlisle enrollment

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 201.

⁶⁸ Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club*.

⁶⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 205.

⁷⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 214.

ledgers, institutional employees would search for “deserters” *indefinitely*. Moreover, Friedman positioned these activities as heroic; as he explained, “We have repeatedly rescued these young people from cities and other places and from actual hunger and want,” but made a point to say that “Most of these young people desert for little or no definite reason, because of restlessness or some fancied wrong, because of trouble with a teacher or disagreement with a comrade.”⁷¹ Of course, those who fled the institution knew that they risked probable arrest at the hands of white citizens or public officials, and as such would have not made the decision to “desert” on a whim.⁷²

The area surrounding Carlisle was a dangerous place for Indian students, whose skin color marked them as being out of place. In December 1914, Superintendent to the Red Cliff Agency John W. Dady wrote Superintendent Lipps to request the re-enrollment of Adolph M. Adolph had been expelled in June of that year when he was eighteen, for what Lipps described as inexcusable offenses; he explained to Dady that he was ‘weeding’ out “other boys who had behaved in a similar manner” and that he could not justify lenience with Adolph.⁷³ The perceived offense, it seems, appears to have stemmed from Adolph’s ability to “pass” as white—his light complexion afforded him greater control over his whereabouts, something that many of his peers could not enjoy. For Lipps, however, this was a problem. As he put it to Dady, “Adolph is practically white so far as appearances go and he took advantage of that fact by running around Carlisle without permission.”⁷⁴ Indian people, evidently, were unwanted and unwelcome in town. The following month, Lipps would report on Simon S., also under Dady’s jurisdiction, in a similar manner: “Simon ran away from the school about two weeks ago. We have been making every effort to locate him but so far have failed. We have heard that he is somewhere not far away and he has been seen several times, but he is practically white and does not look much like an Indian, and so far he has been able to go undetected.” The police had been notified, and Lipps was confident that Simon would be located in a few days, at which point he would be returned to the reservation. “We are not keeping at Carlisle boys who refuse to obey the rules of the school,” Lipps explained. But according to their correspondence, Lipps and Dady felt that Simon was “too bright a chap to be left out of the school,” and Dady was to arrange his transfer to another boarding institution. By the time police apprehended Simon and returned him to the Red Cliff agency five months after his initial “desertion,” he was nearly twenty years old.⁷⁵

Public officials were also incentivized by assurances of monetary awards for the return of “runaway pupils” and invested with real power over Indian bodies—the power of surveillance. In 1915, Special Officer of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company M.A. Davis wrote Assistant Commissioner E. B. Meritt to complain that he had not been fairly compensated for the apprehension and return of eight “runaways”; he had only received payment for two. To illustrate this inequity, he wrote: “I have talked this matter over with my brother officers and they inform me that [they] have received three to five dollars for each and ever[sic] run-away Indian pupil they arrested, All I ask for is fair treatment and will welcome a letter from you stating where you stand on this matter.”⁷⁶ Davis’ request for “fair treatment” is telling; that he felt he was being unfairly compensated for the arrest and return of “runaway pupils” is indicative

⁷¹ “November 1910 Inspection,” NARA, 51.

⁷² See Brenda Child’s chapter, “Runaway Boys, Resistant Girls,” in *Boarding School Seasons* for an excellent discussion of the obstacles “runaway” Indian pupils faced when fleeing boarding institutions in this era.

⁷³ “Adolph M—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 91, folder 4098, NARA, CISDRC, 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ “Simon S—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 98, folder 4282, NARA, CISDRC, 29.

⁷⁶ “Pay for Returning Runaway Pupils.” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #119496-1915-Carlisle-821, NARA, CISDRC.

of just how pervasive and established this system of surveillance was in the area surrounding Carlisle. As is evident from the above, Davis had had a precedent set for his actions by his “brother officers” whose efforts had been remunerated in full. Davis’ letter also indicates the extent to which adults who managed to transgress the institutional boundaries of Carlisle would be confronted with an expansive surveillance network—“permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent”—like that of the panoptic schema described above.⁷⁷

The “desertion” of older enrollees from Carlisle became such a problem for institutional authorities that Carlisle police were under order to apprehend Indian people found outside the institution without permission. According to a 1915 article entitled “Stopping Carousals of Carlisle Students,” printed in the *Harrisburg Telegraph*, “local police, in conjunction with Indian department officials have begun a war on the solicitation evil which it is claimed is a big factor in disrupting the discipline of the school.” The article continued, “Orders have been issued to arrest all Indian students found in town without proper passes and other regulations are enforced.”⁷⁸ Moreover, these policing activities were not limited to the Carlisle vicinity, but spanned entire regions. In 1907, eighteen-year old Lee Pocatello and two other men, nineteen-year old Asa A. and seventeen-year old Weaver D., fled the institution, were arrested by police in Chicago, and were subsequently returned to Carlisle.⁷⁹ In 1910, fourteen-year old Robert D. and his companion Jesse G. left their Outing homes and were arrested by the police in Patterson, NJ in what Superintendent Friedman referred to as “an ordinary case of discipline.”⁸⁰ So commonplace was the arrest and return of “runaways” that the chief of the Carlisle Police knew the balances in enrollees’ bank accounts, because they would be expected to pay their own arrest fees:

According to an arrangement made by Superintendent Friedman with the Police of Carlisle in which we were to arrest any students found in town in citizen’s clothes and without guard passes or in an intoxicated condition and report the same to the School, we have the following fines due from these students. Two dollars from each as per agreement; Jonas P—, Horace P—, Walter A—, John M— and Fred W—.”⁸¹

In response to the Police Chief’s letter, Lipps once more refused to recognize these enrollees as adult men, perhaps in an attempt to lessen any legal penalty: “Inspector Linnen questioned the legality of paying for such services, and I do not feel warranted under the circumstances in requiring the boys mentioned, who have funds to their credit in bank, to pay these charges without first receiving instructions from your Office.”⁸² All of the “boys” to whom Lipps referred were between the ages of twenty and twenty-two. Two of the men had the outstanding amount paid by the institution; but the three with funds in their accounts remitted their own arrest charges. The administration of Indian enrollees’ monies in this capacity was

⁷⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 214.

⁷⁸ “Stopping Carousals of Carlisle Students,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*. May 4, 1915, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038411/1915-05-04/ed-1/seq-2/>>

⁷⁹ “Return of Three Runaway Students from Chicago.” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #86543-1907-Carlisle-821, NARA, CISDRC.

⁸⁰ “Arrest of Robert D— and Jesse G—.” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #53263-1910-Carlisle-824, NARA, CISDRC, 1.

⁸¹ “Fees Paid to Carlisle Police.” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #38426-1914-Carlisle-821, NARA, CISDRC, 4.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 3.

contiguous with the OIA's treatment of Indian people on the reservation, who were believed to be irresponsible and profligate: if they "wanted something they would go to the government agent, as a child would go to his parents, and ask for it."⁸³ Similarly, at Carlisle, all enrollees were deemed to be incapable of acting as their own agents, and their finances were under the complete control of institutional authorities: they had the final say about whether women or men would receive some of their savings for personal use and how much would be given them.

Records contained in Harvey C.'s file demonstrates how administrative paternalism at Carlisle impacted adults' ability to care for family members, sometimes the reason that women and men sought out training at the institution in the first place. In a letter dated July 2, 1913, nineteen-year-old Harvey wrote, "My Dear Mr. M. Friedman, I will write to you again and if you send to me my house an[sic] see my mother an[sic] she was very sick and how but that an[sic] see my mother or not I am very glad to sick[sic] my mother an[sic] than[sic] you tell me what you saw an[sic] because I am glad an[sic] if I go to my home an[sic] than come back again..."⁸⁴ Harvey was requesting a temporary leave of absence to tend to his ailing mother as his father had begged him to do, and he wanted to assure Friedman that if he went home to care for her, he would undoubtedly return. In reply, Friedman sent the following message: "My dear Harvey: I regret that this reply to your letter of recent date has been so long delayed, but in view of the fact that you do not have sufficient funds to your credit in our school bank to pay for your transportation home it cannot be arranged as is desired by you."⁸⁵ Unsurprisingly, on October 27, 1913, Harvey left his Outing home, presumably headed towards the Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico where his mother was, but returned—as he said he would—a mere three weeks later on November 4, 1913. By December 31, however, Harvey had forged a check, altering it from \$2.00 to \$12.00 and being in return "severely reprimanded."⁸⁶ By January 1915, Harvey's mother had passed away, and his father's calls for his return from Carlisle again resumed—likely the reason why he altered two additional checks, one in April 1915, and again in May, raising this check from \$1.75 to \$21.75. Though Harvey was remarkably allowed to finish out his term, leaving the institution in October 1916, these events demonstrate how Carlisle's stated objectives were frequently betrayed by administrative practices that produced catastrophic circumstances for adult enrollees. In Harvey's case, he was made to choose between obeying Friedman and staying put at Carlisle, or "deserting" in order to care for his sick mother in her final weeks. Like many others faced with similar decisions, Harvey chose loyalty to his family.

Gossip, Rumor, and "Women's Work"

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reformers sought to remake Indian homes in accordance with Victorian-era standards of puritanical cleanliness and rectilinear order as a way in which to render Indian communities knowable, and thus manageable.⁸⁷ As historian Margaret Jacobs has shown, influential women's organizations like the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA) played a significant role in creating discourses about Indian women as unfit mothers and homemakers, which in turn informed the official child-removal policies that

⁸³ *Meriam Report: The Problem of Indian Administration; National Indian Law Library, Native American Rights Fund (NARF)*. <https://www.narf.org/nill/resources/meriam.html>. Accessed 23 Apr. 2018, 8.

⁸⁴ "Harvey L. C.—. Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 112, folder 4664, NARA, CISDRC.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ "Punishment of Harvey C.—.," RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #56307-1915-Carlisle-821, NARA, CISDRC.

⁸⁷ Beth H. Piatote, *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature*, The Henry Roe Cloud Series on American Indians and Modernity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

were at the heart of the early assimilationist agenda in the U.S. These discourses positioned middle-class, white American women as the standard-bearers of the nation and legitimated their interference in the domestic affairs of Indigenous communities as essential for Indian “progress”; reformers like WNIA founder Amelia Stone Quinton used her connections to powerful statesmen to influence an assimilationist agenda that would evangelize, educate, and “care” for Indian people, while Alice Cunningham Fletcher measured allotments and recorded patrilineal family lines among the Nez Perce and Omaha.⁸⁸ This “women’s work” was as discursive as it was material; as Jane Simonsen has discussed, “Creating the illusion of a coherent national identity in this era was a crucial aspect of the cultural work that domestic writers did. The efforts of these writers and reformers to define domesticity as a white, middle-class trait were attempts to assert power over the lives and bodies of those whom they deemed foreign; bad housekeeping became a marker of racial inferiority.”⁸⁹ As these brief examples demonstrate, while the white American middle-class codified their own domestic ideals in law and culture, domestic discourses and the practice of homemaking became effective ways through which to solidify race, class, and gender hierarchies in a diversifying nation.

But for Indian women at Carlisle, domestic discourse could also be an intimate form of discipline. As discussed above, Estelle Reel promoted domestic training as liberating to the Indian “race” as a whole, and her standardized boarding school curriculum compelled Indian women to accept white American domestic standards as foundational to “civilized” living, proper femininity, and the health and prosperity of their families and communities. Carlisle officials enacted these mandates through a militarized daily regimen, and habituated institutional enrollees to chores, vocations, and habits assigned on the basis of their perceived gender: farming, tinsmithing and harness-making for “boys,” and sewing, cooking, and cleaning for “girls.” In this way, Carlisle authorities wedded Victorian-era ideals of maternalism, chastity, and purity with domestic labor as they taught Indian “girls” to become proper women; in short, to become properly domesticated. Yet even as reformist discourse characterized domestic training as “uplifting” labor on behalf of a “child race,” Indian women’s perceived breaches of behavioral expectations were met with talk of another kind: gossip.⁹⁰ What purpose did gossip serve for the Carlisle officials and white “Outing” patrons who participated in it, and how might we understand gossip about Indian women as a gendered form of discipline?

The punitive experiences of Indian women at Carlisle and under the “Outing” illuminate how Victorian-era rhetoric about Indian women as being in need of “uplift,” protection, and oversight were supplemented by “idle chatter” as a way in which to challenge Indian women’s authority over their minds, bodies, relationships, and labor. In the same way that the unpaid and frequently unacknowledged “women’s work” of domestic labor supported the patriarchal household and male-dominated political activity in the public sphere, informal disciplinary phenomena—gossip, rumor, and hearsay—was frequently used by white American “Outing mothers” to affirm their racial, moral, and intellectual superiority over the Indian women who labored in their homes. As I argue, white American women engaged in “loose talk” about their domestic workers in order to expand their sphere of influence over the semi-private setting of the

⁸⁸ Margaret D. 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 Jane E. Simonsen, *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860-1919*, Gender and American Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 3.

⁹⁰ William Jones, October 15, 1903, “Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” United States Office of Indian Affairs, 1903, part 1, 367.

Outing system, and to supplement, modify, and extend the institutionalized disciplinary structures that were largely under the political purview of white men. While Carlisle officials punished Indian men through confinement in the guardhouse, expulsion, or arrest at the hands of police, school authorities and Outing home patrons (both “Outing mothers” and, to a lesser extent, white male heads-of-households) frequently subjected Indian women—less mobile than Indian men due in part to the nature of their labor which kept them indoors and under observation—to extensive assessments about perceived promiscuity, untrustworthiness, or personal failures in morality via private correspondence and semi-public conversations. Viewed through the prism of white American middle-class notions about “proper” domesticity, gossip emerges as a disciplinary phenomenon—a means by which Outing patrons and Carlisle officials could assert race and class solidarity with one another, and a process through which white American men and women attempted to discredit and control the Indian women under their “care and protection.”

Indian women who labored “under the Outing” experienced intense scrutiny by Carlisle officials, reservation agents, and white American families who frequently described Indian women as untruthful while accepting hearsay issued from their white peers as valid sources of knowledge. These dynamics reflect instances of what Karen Adkins describes as “invisible gossip,” where those in a position of power use their authority to shame, humiliate, discredit, or demean their perceived antagonists, employing the rhetorical techniques of gossip while refusing to recognize it as such.⁹¹ In adopting Adkins’ definition of gossip as epistemologically productive, I argue that Carlisle authorities, Outing home patrons, and white civilians used evaluative talk as a system of knowledge production that defined, categorized, and organized white and Indigenous bodies into racial, class, and gender hierarchies while reifying their own subject positions as the exclusive bearers of racial power and authority. These phenomena reveal how the use of gossip by white American citizens further extended settler-colonial control over Indian women in the Outing system and under the jurisdiction of Carlisle authorities and their professional milieu.

“Undesirables”

On January 7, 1915, Superintendent Oscar Lipps sent a letter addressed to James Henderson, the Superintendent of the Cherokee Agency in Cherokee, NC, regarding Lucinda R., a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old Cherokee woman enrolled at the institution. He began, “My dear Mr. Henderson: I regret very much to advise you that Lucinda R—, who is enrolled here from the Agency under your jurisdiction, is in a pregnant condition and that I must ask you to cooperate with me in caring for the girl.”⁹² Lucinda had been a member of the Outing program the summer before, and was employed at the home of Alexander Holcombe and his wife, who lived near the Johnston household in which Lucinda’s friend, Margaret B., was employed as well. As members of the Outing program, both Lucinda and Margaret would have been responsible for performing a variety of domestic duties for the families who resided in the homes in which they lived, and would have also been expected to conform very strictly to both Carlisle’s and the host families’ rules. Occasionally, Lucinda was permitted on Sundays to go across the street to visit

⁹¹ Karen Adkins, *Gossip, Epistemology, and Power: Knowledge Underground* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁹² “Lucinda R—. Student File.” RG 75, Series 1327, box 8, folder 364, NARA, CISDRC, 25.

her friend, and the two of them would travel together to see another companion, Jane, who lived in Bala.

On one such Sunday, Lucinda arrived at Margaret's house only to discover that she had already left for Jane's without her, and made the decision to continue on the usual route to Bala unattended. It was during this time that Lucinda told Carlisle administrators, after they detected her pregnancy, that she had become intimate with a "strange man she met while on her way to visit Jane O— in Bala" but that she could not recall his name and had never seen him before.⁹³ On hearing this news, Mrs. Holcombe was furious that Lucinda "claim[ed] that it happened before she returned to Carlisle last August" and felt "sure that she [Lucinda] is not telling the truth in reference to this."⁹⁴ Mrs. Holcombe was insistent on this point, and offered the following proof to Lipps that Lucinda was lying: "She never went to visit Jane O— in Bala except in daylight on Sunday afternoons and the walk between the homes is along much travelled streets. She was never allowed to go even to the Post Office except with one or more of our children."⁹⁵ In other words, Lucinda was monitored constantly—by passersby in broad daylight, by the Holcombe's white children, and by Mrs. Holcombe herself—and so could not possibly have had the interaction she claimed she did.

In the days following this correspondence, Mrs. Holcombe was engrossed in building a case against Lucinda. She wrote Lipps that she had previously scolded Lucinda for exchanging "suggestive correspondence with a boy named Harold Gilbert" and reported that "She [Lucinda] also was very fond of one of the young men in the foot-ball squad and wrote to me...of her delight at having been his selected one to go to the Penn-Indian game in Phila. She did not mention his name."⁹⁶ Indeed, Mrs. Holcombe was of the opinion that the father of Lucinda's child might be identified in either Harold Gilbert or the unnamed football player, in whom Lucinda had had prior romantic interest. Two weeks later, Mrs. Holcombe wrote Lipps again:

After consultation with my sister who was in our house the last ten days of July I feel that Lucinda has not told the truth as to the happenings on Sunday July 26th. That week my sister took her in company with our three little girls to an amusement park... Margaret B— left the house with her and returned with her on July 26th... We trust that Lucinda has already told you the truth in regard to the matter.⁹⁷

In response to this letter, the Outing manager wrote "Last evening I had Lucinda over in my room for about an hour, but I failed to get any other story from her, than that which she has already told others. This child adhered to this story in such a way that we cannot doubt her word. She goes to her home in Cherokee, N.C., this afternoon and, I suppose, the truth, if there is any other story, will never be known."⁹⁸ That afternoon, after having been expelled from Carlisle, Reed made her way back home to her brother and grandfather who anticipated her return. But prior to her expulsion, Lipps exchanged correspondence with Superintendent Henderson and Mrs. Holcombe regarding Lucinda's perceived transgression. In a letter dated January 25, 1915,

⁹³ Ibid., 27.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 29.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 38.

Lipps wrote Henderson that “This whole affair is to be regretted, but there appears to be no one to blame but Lucinda herself,”⁹⁹ while a previous letter sent from Lipps to Mrs. Holcombe suggested that Lucinda’s pregnancy could perhaps be attributed to *her* neglect: “[Lucinda’s] confession reveals the fact that she became thus while living under your care and protection last summer.”¹⁰⁰ As evident from the above, Mrs. Holcombe was under scrutiny herself by Carlisle authorities who expected her to fulfill her civic duty to tend not only to her family, but to the woman in her household who, as an Indian person, was presumed to be a legal ward of the U.S. government and by extension the white Americans under whose “care and protection” she labored.

Lucinda’s inherent worth was also called into question in these exchanges. In another letter to Henderson, Lipps wrote with regard to Lucinda,

I desire to call your attention to the importance of sending to Carlisle only such students as have some purpose and ambition. We have expended a great deal of money this year in weeding out undesirable pupils...I believe more real good for the Indian race would be accomplished with only a few hundred desirable students, than to undertake to crowd the school with a lot of undesirables.¹⁰¹

Without a shade of doubt, Lucinda here was one of the “undesirables” to which Lipps referred, and was so designated because of her physical “condition,” for which she was solely responsible, according to him.

As an Indian woman enrolled in Carlisle and under the Outing program, Lucinda would have been expected to perform the “personal purity” preached in institutional dogma as a singularly important goal in itself and the primary way in which to maintain one’s “reputation” and “morality.” In 1913, the School Rules detailed the ways in which enrollees would be instructed:

In order to assist employees in giving proper instruction in personal morality, a series of books has been placed on the authorized list; these books furnish material and suggestion for vital and careful instruction to young men and young women. Copies of these books should be in the hands of those employees whose duty it is to give boys and girls frank and careful information concerning their physical welfare and sex relationships¹⁰²

Male enrollees would receive this information from the physician, a trained medical professional, while Carlisle’s head matron, Matilda Ewing, tutored Indian women. Lucinda would have been expected to maintain “personal morality” along these lines, and her pregnancy would have branded her as falling clearly afoul of these criteria for moral conduct. As a result, she had been expelled for what was perceived as her personal impropriety and failures in feminine morality. But the above correspondence also demonstrates how informal talk behind

⁹⁹ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 40.

¹⁰² United States Bureau of Indian Affairs. *Rules for the Indian School Service*. Department of the Interior, United States Indian Service, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1913).

closed doors, in private correspondence or semi-public forums, enabled white American women like Mrs. Holcombe to position themselves as the racial and moral superiors of Indian women even as they were commonly subordinated to men on the basis of gender. In this way, Mrs. Holcombe used gossip to assert racial and class solidarity with powerful men like Lipps, and as a means of disciplining Lucinda into her “proper” social role as the racial subordinate of all members of the white Holcombe family. Moreover, this kind of evaluative talk often served as the basis of official “news” about Indian women and men at Carlisle, as gossip among Carlisle authorities and others in positions of power over Indian people became catalogued, organized, and cited in a corpus of formal government knowledge, serving as a kind of reference book that would enable U.S. officials to mitigate future threats to their power and authority.

A 1915 Investigative report demonstrates how gossip among white Americans could be a catalyst for punishment, and further reveals how student “immorality”—code for evidence of sexuality—was a favorite topic of conversation among Carlisle authorities and one of Lipps’ pet concerns during his tenure as superintendent. At the direction of Commissioner Sells, Indian Service agent J.H. Dortch spent five days at Carlisle in April 1915 in order to investigate the conditions of the institution, and his writing illustrates how many of his impressions were obtained by word of mouth. Under section 5, “Discipline,” Dortch reported: “The chaos which reigned at this school a year ago, and with which you are familiar, was not exaggerated if the statements of many employes [sic] are correct. Nearly all with whom I talked referred to them with a shudder. The girls openly defied the then matron and did not hesitate to order her to shut her mouth in language as picturesque as it was scandalous, to secretly meet the boys of the school, and to arrange means for the boys to enter their sleeping rooms at night.” He went on, “If the conditions at the girls’ building were bad, those at the boys’ were inexpressibly so. I was told that the boys brought liquor on the grounds, got drunk and ‘scrapped’, defying all authority, even hanging the outing agent by the heels from a third-story window; that drunken students would parade the grounds, shooting pistols, and in fact, in true old-time western style ‘shoot up’ the school.” Dortch’s report indexes how school administrators’ behavioral expectations of Carlisle enrollees were deeply gendered, delimited by racial stereotypes about Indian women as promiscuous and Indian men as lawless.

But the report also demonstrates how Dortch accepted employee gossip as being more than merely propositional, trivial talk about Indian people; instead, these anecdotes were treated as reliable testimonies that he accepted as official knowledge-claims. “From what I heard,” Dortch writes, “I do not believe that conditions were exaggerated in last year’s reports. Immorality also was said to prevail almost openly at the hospital, where conditions were said to be almost intolerable.”¹⁰³ As a counterpoint to descriptions of the past “chaos,” Dortch praised Ewing’s dominance over the female enrollees: “Her control of these two hundred and odd girls, mostly young women and many practically white, was simply excellent. Quiet and unassuming, by some psychological power of impressing her individuality upon these formerly wild and said to be unmanageable girls, she has gained a complete ascendancy over them.”¹⁰⁴ Though Dortch assured Sells that the previously “unmanageable” Indian women had been “dominated,” other disciplinary documents suggest that employee oversight was not complete, but supported by a system of external bureaucratic intervention through institutions like the U.S. legal system, if white authority figures deemed it necessary.

¹⁰³ “Inspection Report of J.H. Dortch for May 1915,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #31080-1917-Carlisle-150, NARA, CISDRC, 19.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

Like Lucinda, other Indian women who experienced pregnancies were subjected to intense interrogation, but some additionally found themselves embroiled with U.S. law. For example, in 1913, while “under the Outing,” nineteen-year-old Amelia H. became pregnant by a white man, George Kraft, and gave birth to a child. A legal suit was brought against Kraft, *Commonwealth vs. George Kraft*, in which he was charged with “f & b”¹⁰⁵—fornication and bastardy. Kraft and Amelia were unmarried at the time of the child’s conception, which occurred in a public space, Barnwood Inn, and so was more likely to be punished by law than other occurrences of the same crime.¹⁰⁶ Then-Superintendent Friedman wrote Amelia, ensuring she understood the disgrace she had brought upon her patrons’ home: “Mrs. Smith is very angry, that you deceived her as you did and of course she has no pity for you. She claims you disgraced her name and her household and no amount of money will repay her for the shame that she feels, all on your account.”¹⁰⁷ Adding to this insult, he continued, “. . .you also made a bad name for the Carlisle School and for your race. I am very much out of Patience with you myself and if I had not been compelled to handle your affairs I would have nothing to do with you either.”¹⁰⁸ A marriage was “allowed” between Amelia and Kraft, described by the Outing Agent as being kind and honorable, although a man of “low berth” —but only after Amelia’s pregnancy had been investigated by the Outing Agency, the Chief of Police in Jenkintown, PA, and a host of Carlisle officials, and only after Amelia was compelled by Carlisle administrators to testify against Kraft in a Pennsylvania court of law.

Other Indian women who similarly transgressed institutional expectations of “personal purity,” but did not become pregnant, were handled differently. Hannah K. was six months shy of her eighteenth birthday when she was “committed to Sleighton Farm, a reform school for girls on June 5, 1913”¹⁰⁹ for “fornication.” The Cumberland County Court sentenced her to reform school for a period of two consecutive years, at which time she was “placed out on parole . . . under the control of the same institution until . . . twenty-one years of age.”¹¹⁰ As demonstrated by the extreme measure of re-institutionalization, Indian women’s sexualities were considered to be dangerous and in need of regulation and control; at the direction of the county court, Hannah had been removed from Carlisle and incarcerated in a reform “school” for her crime of “fornication,” and would go on to experience further criminalization as a parolee. In other scenarios, paternal identities carried great importance in instances when women who became pregnant gave birth—proof of moral failings in the form of new life. For example, eighteen-year-old Elizabeth B.’s student file notes under “Character and disposition” that she “Got into serious difficulty with a colored hired man while under the outing. Gave birth to a child.¹¹¹” Further remarks reveal that in the three years she had been at Carlisle, she had “spent nearly all her period of enrollment in homes under the outing system.”¹¹² There is no indication in Elizabeth’s file that she married, nor any other correspondence about the “serious trouble,” but the relative paucity of official correspondence in Elizabeth’s file could suggest that Carlisle authorities opted for home-visits and informal conversations in lieu of written documentation

¹⁰⁵ “Amelia H—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 16, folder 745, NARA CISDRC.

¹⁰⁶ W Logan MacCoy, “Law of Pennsylvania Relating to Illegitimacy,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 7, no. 5 (1917): 26.

¹⁰⁷ “Amelia H—. Student File,” NARA, 16.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁹ “Care of Hannah K—,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #50541-1915-Carlisle-821, NARA, CISDRC.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ “Elizabeth B—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 43, folder 2125, NARA, CISDRC, 1.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

about her pregnancy, and points to the ways in which colonial control in this context frequently manifested as control over the sexualities of Indian women.¹¹³ While Amelia and Elizabeth's files contain information about the identity of their children's fathers—described as a white man of “low berth” and a “colored hired man”—in the case of Lucinda's child, identifying the father was a comparatively complex issue fraught with the potential for disgracing the Holcombe family, according to the head-of-household.

Almost one full year after Lucinda had been expelled from Carlisle, Holcombe, consumed with anger, wrote the following to Lipps:

Dear Sir:-

It is impossible to express our annoyance and surprise at learning from Miss Johnston that it is now being rumored that our son is the father of the child born to Lucinda R— last year. We can not understand how such a maliciously false tale could be started except as an indirect result of the absolutely false and rotten story which we learn has been told by Eva J—...Our son is an active boy of 16 years who leads his class in High School and whose spare time for several years has been spent in the work of the Boy Scouts. He has never had much time for girls and has never shown more than common civility to any of your pupils who have been in our home. It is a perfect outrage that irresponsible people should circulate such false rumors against us in a way from which we have no defense. Mrs. Holcombe and I have always taken a great deal of interest in the girls you have sent us...We have tried to treat them not as servants but as helpers in our home and they have been allowed as much as possible to share in our family pleasures. Eva J— however was so filthy about her person that our children did not wish to be near her. We were much grieved last year to learn of Lucinda's trouble but we cannot feel that it was brought about by any carelessness in our observance of the rules of the Outing System. It seems so unfair after all this time to allow malicious rumors to be given credence. Our present pupil Olivan A— has been well cared for in every way and we feel she has some very desirable traits. She has seemed satisfied in our home and she says that she has not made any statements which would injure or annoy us. You, who have sons of your own, can readily understand our desire to shield our boy from such absolutely false and unfair accusations which are being made after all this lapse of time.

Very truly yours,
A.H. Holcombe¹¹⁴

Holcombe's letter of outrage reveals much about the household environment in which their “helpers” lived while under the Outing system. As seen from the above, rumors about the Holcombe son's potential involvement in Lucinda's pregnancy was met with indignation, as Holcombe rushed to his son's moral defense, who was purportedly too immersed in his studies and participation in the Boy Scouts to have shown her anything but “common civility.” While he does not accuse Lucinda directly of spreading such an “absolutely false and rotten tale,” he does cite Eva, a symbolic stand-in for Lucinda, as the source of his grief, and details the ways in

¹¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁴ “Lucinda R—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 8, folder 364, NARA, CISDRC.

which his children “did not wish to be near her” because she “was so filthy about her person.” Further, Holcombe’s narrative sutures Eva’s personal grooming habits to her status as a “helper” in his household, whom he allowed, as was presumably Lucinda, “as much as possible to share in [their] family pleasures,” thus reiterating the ways in which Eva’s Indianness was her defining feature and rightfully placed her in a subservient position to Holcombe and his white family.¹¹⁵

Holcombe’s letter also reveals how the Outing system assisted in the subordination of Indian women to men and white Americans under state-sponsored, institutionalized structures of patriarchal colonialism. Under this structure, Indian women who labored in the homes of white patrons were expected to accept “proper” modes of feminine behavior predicated on docility, compliance, and agreeableness that frequently translated into performing subservience on the basis of race and gender. Holcombe’s reference to “irresponsible people” as the cause of his outrage points to the racial and gendered expectations of Indian women in these volatile domestic settings; Holcombe expected Lucinda and Eva to reward his benevolence with loyalty rather than with what he describes as injurious statements. These sentiments were far from anomalous; as Shari Huhndorf (Yupik), Rayna Green (Cherokee), Camilla Townsend, and others have discussed, Indigenous women have historically been regarded both materially and metaphorically as sites of colonial conquest.¹¹⁶ Indigenous women like Pocahontas and Sacagawea have been canonized in the imperial imagination as the authenticators of European incursion, willingly choosing the invaders over their own people by facilitating colonial exploration and expansion. By extension, these women have been mythologized as traitorous to their own peoples, thus opening space in the American imaginary for Indian women to be regarded as potentially disloyal colonial subjects even if, by appearance, they perform collusion. Thus, as Holcombe drew upon his status as the white male head of household to refute the accusations of a “filthy” Indian servant, he also drew upon a racist and patriarchal lexicon of stereotypes about Indian women as physically dirty, sexually unbridled, and notoriously traitorous in order to elicit Lipps’ sympathy and guard his son’s reputation. Moreover, as Holcombe’s complaint progressed, he painted Lucinda’s pregnancy and Eva’s testimony as acts of betrayal; as Kyla Tompkins points out, black, Irish, and Indian domestic workers held intimate knowledge of white Americans’ tastes, preferences, and weaknesses as domestic laborers, and as such could stage what she refers to as “kitchen insurrections”—a notion of duplicity that Holcombe drew upon in his letter to Lipps, as well.¹¹⁷ However, that Holcombe felt it was necessary to defend his son against rumors started, as he suggests, by Eva, indicates how Indian women could also issue “flying reports” as a form of discursive ideological resistance under potentially dangerous, modern conditions of settler-colonial oppression.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ See: Rayna Green, “The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture,” *The Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 4 (1975): 698–714; Shari Huhndorf, “Indigenous Feminism, Performance, and the Politics of Memory in the Plays of Monique Mojica,” in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, Cheryl Suzack et al., (UBC Press, 2010); Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005).

¹¹⁷ Kyla Wazana Tompkins, *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the Nineteenth Century*, America and the Long 19th Century (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

¹¹⁸ In *Groundless*, historian Gregory Dowd examines how gossip, hoaxes, legends, and rumors were important discursive technologies for both American Indian people and colonists. Dowd argues that “flying reports”—as rumor was called on the early American frontier—have served as the basis of received wisdom on a surprising array of topics, and demonstrates how the veracity of master historical narratives is perhaps less interesting than the manner in which they were created. For more information, see: Gregory Evans Dowd, *Groundless: Rumors, Legends, and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier*, electronic resource, Early America : History, Context,

That there was a young man around Lucinda's age in the house at the time of her pregnancy does not definitively indicate that Holcombe's son fathered Lucinda's child. Yet, the fact of the young man's presence does call into question her reported inability to identify the "strange man" she met one Sunday afternoon, and Mrs. Holcombe's insistence that she had previously been scolded for her "suggestive" behavior when it came to young men. Lucinda's statements could suggest that perhaps she was intentionally trying to conceal the identity of the "strange man," either because he was no stranger at all, or because he was the wrong kind of stranger—a stranger with relative power over her. While we cannot tell from Lucinda's student file whether she was being abused at the hands of her Outing families, the documents examined above point to the ways in which women of childbearing age who were placed in domestic scenarios were at risk for pregnancy and sexual violence—a potentiality that Carlisle administrators also acknowledged.¹¹⁹ At the local level, these letters of correspondence demonstrate how the Outing system supported the institutionalized disciplinary structures at Carlisle that labored to properly domesticate Indian women, while enabling white Americans to reinforce race, class, and gender hierarchies by exercising punitive power over the bodies and psyches of their domestic "helpers." Gossip, rumor, and hearsay furthered these objectives, as Indian women were frequently denied recourse to accusations that circulated amongst Carlisle officials and Outing home patrons, and which often resulted in steep consequences—re-institutionalization, expulsion, or criminalization.

Conclusion

Disciplinary documents relating to adult enrollees reveal new dimensions of Indian-white struggle over labor, land, mobility, sexuality, and identity at Carlisle. In the "new order of things" implemented by Superintendent Moses Friedman and carried out by subsequent superintendents, adults were recruited with promises of industrial training that would enable them to attain "self-sufficiency" by obtaining meaningful work, but the instruction offered was intentionally substandard, informed by racial philosophies, or settler "commonsense," that asserted the inherent inferiority of all Indian people. Inasmuch as Carlisle claimed to prepare its enrollees for self-sufficiency and ultimately citizenship by "teaching" them the value of hard work and bestowing upon them the accouterments of "civilization," the punitive patterns examined above tell another story altogether. As we have seen, the increased enrollment of adult Indian women and men was met with new punitive phenomena—institutional rules, isolation in the guardhouse, expulsion, and arrest at the hands of police—legitimated by an institutional ethos that claimed to "uplift" Indian people to their rightful place in "civilized" society as the subordinates of white American citizens. The nature of adult enrollees' perceived infractions, including leaving the institution without permission, exhibiting their sexualities, and attempting to assert control over their finances, provide evidence that the policies of this era produced punitive patterns which enabled the U.S. government to further extend colonial control by

Culture (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). For another important discussion of discursive forms of resistance, see James C. Scott's work, and especially chapter 6: "Voice Under Domination," in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

¹¹⁹ "Sarah D—. Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 106, folder 4500, NARA, CISDR.

excising adult Indian people from their communities, and by removing them as competitors in an increasingly urban market economy.¹²⁰

For many adults at Carlisle, the formal and informal disciplinary structures implemented by Friedman mitigated against expressions of autonomy, independence, and self-sufficiency: ostensibly, the very things that they were meant to be “learning” in this institutional setting. For white American officials and civilians, Carlisle’s disciplinary structures facilitated and encouraged punitive activities as a form of power that cohered around racial lines of affinity. At Carlisle and beyond, all Indian bodies were suspect, and all white Americans deputized as potentially powerful disciplinary agents of the settler state. Yet, the official, bureaucratic, and paternalistic disciplinary structures institutionalized at Carlisle were supported by informal disciplinary structures as well. White American school officials, public officers, and civilians wielded gossip, rumor, and hearsay as important conduits of information-exchange about the Indian people in their vicinity and under their jurisdiction. As I have shown, gossip was an epistemologically important phenomenon used by white Americans to ally themselves with one another, affirm their superiority on the bases of race, class, and gender, and exchange intimate information about Indian people in order to reify radically unequal distributions of power as natural—even “good.” In this way, gossip served as a unique technology that facilitated in-group solidarity for white Americans, while serving as a form of gendered discipline, as Indian women were indoctrinated into white, middle-class notions of femininity and punished for failing to live up to those standards. In the next chapter, I extend this discussion to analyze how Indianness at Carlisle was construed as a kind of social aberrance, often in medicalized terms, and labor—hoe handle medicine—promoted as the “cure.”

¹²⁰ William J. Bauer, *We Were All like Migrant Workers Here: Work, Community, and Memory on California’s Round Valley Reservation, 1850-1941* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

Chapter Three: “Hoe Handle Medicine”

On June 11, 1886, an article entitled “Hoe Handle Medicine” appeared in *The Indian Helper*, the official publication of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. “On a bright summer morning,” the narrator began, “a young man with a silk handkerchief around his throat and a very sad, sick looking face knocked at the doctor’s door. A lady came to the door and told the man that the doctor was out in the garden hoeing corn. He went where he was told.

‘Well, sir, what is the matter?’ the doctor asked.

‘Doctor,’” cried the ailing man, “‘I feel sick all over. My head aches, I can’t eat. I am weak. I want medicine.’

‘Yes, I see. Let me look at your tongue. Ah! Yes. Now your pulse. Yes, sir,’ said the doctor, ‘you must have some medicine, or you will die. But, this corn must all be hoed before 10 o’clock, and now I have to go to see a sick person, down street; so while I am gone, you hoe my corn for me. You know how to hoe?’

‘Yes,’ the sick man replied, “‘my father was a farmer but I don’t have to work. I have enough money to hire my work done.’

‘Very well,’” said the doctor, “‘this will not hurt you, so go on hoeing till [sic] I come back.’”

The doctor left, and the sick man picked up the hoe and got to work. When the first row was complete, he took off his handkerchief, and before long he had hoed all six rows of corn, just in time for the doctor’s return.

“‘Well! Well! My young man. How are you feeling now?’

The sick man did not say anything, but kept looking for a bottle of medicine he thought the doctor was going to get for him.

‘The work hasn’t hurt you? Has it?’ asked the doctor.

‘Oh, no.’” said the sick man.

“‘I thought not. Let me feel your pulse again. Splendid! Now go home, and take this medicine two times every day. Do it faithfully, and be honest about your eating. Don’t use tobacco, and this medicine will cure; Give me one dollar for this medicine.’

‘One dollar?’ asked the astonished sick man.

‘That is all I charge, when sick people come to me. If I have to go to them I charge more.’

‘But in mercy’s name! What is it for? Where is your medicine? I did not take any medicine?’

‘My dear young friend,’ the doctor explained, “‘I gave you my hoe to work with. I gave you hoe-handle medicine, and let me tell you the truth, sir. You are rusting out. Going to pieces, dying, because you do not exercise.’

The young man paid the dollar. He was a little angry at first, but when he thought more about it, he felt sure the doctor was right, and went back and thanked him. He took exercise every day,” the story concluded, “and grew to be a strong, and healthy man.”¹



¹ “Hoe Handle Medicine,” *The Indian Helper*, 1, no. 44. June 11, 1886. Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC).

“Hoe Handle Medicine” was written two decades before the Office of Indian Affairs would acknowledge that their own indifference had produced student health crises at off-reservation boarding schools, but it presaged developments in medicine that would have a lasting impact on Indian people and their communities.² This chapter takes up those changes to consider how American attitudes about health, morality, and labor were mobilized at Carlisle in ways that construed the condition of being Indian as a social pathology. As the previous chapter discussed, after the turn of the twentieth century, U.S. officials and reformers had largely abandoned the notion that Indian people could be fully assimilated; industrial and domestic labor was now prescribed in the spirit of “improvement” in the hopes that hard work would transform “idle” Indian people into productive American citizens, as the parable above suggests. Much of this “improvement” was to take place in the Outing Program, which underwent significant changes in the years before Carlisle’s closure. In 1916, when Carlisle Superintendent Oscar H. Lipps developed training partnerships with the Ford Motor Company and the General Hospital in Lancaster, PA, Indian women and men ostensibly had new avenues of self-sufficiency and upward mobility open to them. But as I explore in this chapter, the etiological chaos of the late nineteenth century created new opportunities for racial prejudice to be expressed as scientific “fact,” and these shifts were reflected at Carlisle in surprising ways.

How did advances in medicine impact social attitudes about Indian people at the turn of the twentieth century, and how was this relationship expressed at Carlisle? While the previous chapter demonstrated how Carlisle administrators meted out punishment to adult Indian enrollees as a way to assert their superiority over Indian people, this chapter extends that discussion to show how Indianness was treated as an illness—a social pathology to be identified, confined, and eradicated. In part, the structure of the Outing System made these realities possible; as an institutional system that, in its early years, alienated Indian people from their own communities and placed them “out” in service to white Americans, labor performed under the “Outing” was construed as good and desirable—even medicinal—for Indian people. I begin this analysis by describing how transformations in American medicine were ignored by the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA), as demonstrated by health policies and procedures at American Indian boarding schools. As Jean Keller, Cliff Trafzer, and other boarding school historians have demonstrated, it was not until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century that the OIA implemented any systematic medical care of Indian pupils, who suffered astonishing rates of tuberculosis, trachoma, influenza, measles, and other infectious diseases.³ But because adult Indian women and men have been overlooked as the dominant population at Carlisle, the health issues that uniquely impacted Carlisle adults have also been neglected in existing literature.

² As historian Jacqueline Fear-Segal has pointed out, articles like “Hoe Handle Medicine” were likely authored by Carlisle’s printmaking instructor, Marianna Burgess. For more information, see: “Man-on-the-Bandstand: Surveillance, Concealment, and Resistance,” in *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation*. University of Nebraska Press, 2007. For another interesting discussion about the relationship between linguistic propaganda, labor, and artistic instruction at Carlisle, see: Kevin Slivka, “Art, Craft, and Assimilation: Curriculum for Native Students during the Boarding School Era,” *Studies in Art Education* 52, no. 3 (2011): 225–42. See also: Jacqueline Emery, *Recovering Native American Writings in the Boarding School Press* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2017).

³ See, for example: Jean A. Keller, *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute, 1902-1922*, Native American Series (East Lansing, Mich: Michigan State University Press, 2002); Clifford E. Trafzer, *Fighting Invisible Enemies: Health and Medical Transitions among Southern California Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).

As I demonstrate in this chapter, adult Indian women and men at Carlisle experienced venereal diseases, pregnancies, and other issues relating to sexuality—a fact that Carlisle officials and governmental agents were loath to address through the administration of medical care. Instead, Carlisle officials dealt with these problems by issuing moral reprimands, drawing upon and concretizing gendered and racial stereotypes about Indian people as irreligious, impure, and lacking human value. In this context, Indianness itself was often identified as a symbolic and literal contaminant at Carlisle. In the second section, I examine how the pathologization of Indian people on the basis of race guided punitive processes of isolation at Carlisle and beyond. This section demonstrates how U.S. officials used Carlisle as a de facto carceral institution, and shows how the transincarceration of Indian women and men in external facilities was a colonial strategy of containment, confinement, and quarantine.⁴ In the last section of this chapter, I turn to the Outing System and its expanded training “partnerships” with the General Hospital in Lancaster, PA, and the Ford Motor Company in Detroit, MI. As I demonstrate in this final section, Indian women and men were promised new avenues of self-sufficiency as they trained to become nurses and automobile mechanics. But as disciplinary documents attest, those who entered into these employment opportunities were met with intensified forms of discrimination and often treated by their supervisors as a social contagion to be eliminated. Analyzing the use of medicalized discourse in wage labor scenarios reveals processes of Indigenous pathologization in the American workforce. Applying a medical lens to Carlisle’s training programs broadens our understandings of the ways in which the proletarianization of Indigenous people and other non-white populations had profound medical and moral connotations that worked to further establish white bodies and the spaces they occupied as powerful and normative. In considering these experiences, this chapter demonstrates how *hoe handle medicine* is an apt metaphor for diffuse settler-colonial labor that “cured” by exploiting adult Indian women and men in the homes, factories, and fields of white America.

Identifying the Contaminant: Indianness as Illness

By the turn of the twentieth century, advances in Western medicine had reordered public conceptions of health and illness in the United States. In the first half of the 1800s the miasma, or filth, theory of disease predominated the medical imagination of the Western world, which posited that illness was caused by the “bad air” produced by rotting organic matter and could also be a physical manifestation of sinfulness.⁵ By the latter portion of the nineteenth century, however, this explanation for the spread of infectious diseases was being challenged by the emergent theories of Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister, William Osler and other leading practitioners of Western medicine who had successfully proven biologically-based theories of germ proliferation.⁶ As medical historians have amply demonstrated, the 1880s were a period of intense debate in American and European scientific communities, as the new bacteriology—

⁴ I draw upon Liat Ben-Moshe’s definition of transincarceration as the movement from one carceral space to another, usually involuntarily. See: Liat Ben-Moshe. *Genealogies of Resistance to Incarceration: Abolition Politics within Deinstitutionalization and Anti-Prison Activism in the U.S.* Sociology-Dissertations. Syracuse University, (2011); Liat Ben-Moshe, C. Chapman, and A. Carey, *Disability Incarcerated: Imprisonment and Disability in the United States and Canada* (Springer, 2014).

⁵ Jacob Steere-Williams. “The Germ Theory.” Georgina M. Montgomery and Mark A. Largent, eds., *A Companion to the History of American Science*, Wiley Blackwell Companions to American History (Chichester, West Sussex, UK ; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2016).

⁶ Ibid.

characterized by the appearance of “isolation hospitals,”—spurred novel questions about the nature of disease that would dramatically alter the practice of medicine and inform the public health campaigns of the early twentieth century.⁷ As medical historian Jacob Steere-Williams has noted, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, American bacteriologists were “Armed with knowledge of many microorganisms responsible for the spread of infectious diseases...[and] follow[ed] three commands: identify, isolate, and disinfect.”⁸

For non-white and immigrant populations, however, these medical advances did not always produce positive results. As the practice of medicine in the U.S. fell evermore under the exclusive purview of elite white men, developments in the field served the interests of a white population that was fearful of contagion, and which clung to cultural beliefs about non-white, immigrant, and urban communities as being particularly disease-ridden.⁹ The sordid history of medical isolation, observation, and experimentation on populations of color in the U.S. demonstrates the consequences of these racist beliefs; white Americans legitimated discriminatory practices with narratives that identified certain groups as potential contagions that threatened the health of their own communities. One particularly infamous example of this process can be seen in the long-term isolation of Irish immigrant Mary Mallon. Mallon—or “Typhoid Mary,” as she would come to be known, earned her living as a domestic cook in the Sloane Maternity Center in Manhattan, where she purportedly infected over 25 people with typhoid fever as a “healthy carrier” of the disease.¹⁰ From 1907, when she was first forcibly quarantined on North Brother Island, to 1938, when she died of apoplexy, Mary was an object of public ridicule and racial spectacle, and an early example of inhumane medical experimentation on populations deemed criminal, expendable, or otherwise valueless.¹¹

In the context of the Jim Crow South and the Great Migration of Southern Black Americans into urban areas, historians Katherine Van Wormer and Charletta Sudduth recount how racism similarly impacted the lives of Black women domestic workers who labored in the homes of white families. As Vinella Byrd recalled of her employer in an interview with Sudduth just six months before her death, “He didn’t want me to wash my hands in the wash pan. They didn’t have a sink. They had a wash pan where you washed your hands. After that, I didn’t wash my hands at all.”¹² In an instance where anti-black racism clearly inflected dominant conceptions of cleanliness, Byrd’s white employer feared contamination by the very woman who cooked his meals and cleaned his home, ironically forcing her to forgo sanitary precautions. Similar examples of the relationship between racism and pseudoscience are seemingly limitless; from the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 403.

⁹ See, for instance, Mary Ting Yi Lui, *The Chinatown Trunk Mystery: Murder, Miscegenation, and Other Dangerous Encounters in Turn-of-the-Century New York City* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Andrea Patterson, “Germs and Jim Crow: The Impact of Microbiology on Public Health Policies in Progressive Era American South,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 42, no. 3 (2009): 529–59; Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown*, *American Crossroads* 7 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Priscilla Wald, *Contagious: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ Filio Marineli et al., “Mary Mallon (1869-1938) and the History of Typhoid Fever,” *Annals of Gastroenterology: Quarterly Publication of the Hellenic Society of Gastroenterology* 26, no. 2 (2013): 132–34.

¹¹ Priscilla Wald. “Cultures and Carriers: ‘Typhoid Mary’ and the Science of Social Control.” *Social Text*, no. 52/53, 1997, pp. 181–214.

¹² Katherine S. Van Wormer, David W. Jackson, and Charletta Sudduth, *The Maid Narratives: Black Domestic and White Families in the Jim Crow South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012).

scientific spectacle of Saartjie Baartman to the infamous Tuskegee experiments, racial prejudice has historically been used to justify bad medicine, and vice versa.¹³

In the American Indian context, the battle-cry of the new bacteriology—“identify, isolate, and disinfect”—offers a lens through which to interrogate social attitudes about health and illness in relation to a population that, in the same era, suffered from rising morbidity and mortality rates and limited access to medical care. Like John Milton Chivington’s genocidal utterance, “Kill ‘em all, big and small. Nits make lice,” “identify, isolate, and disinfect”—or perhaps, eradicate, can be unpacked as a discursive and material process of Indigenous pathologization applied to Indian people themselves as much as to the diseases with which they, and others, came into contact.

Although tuberculosis and trachoma were serious threats at American Indian boarding institutions, the Office of Indian Affairs largely ignored advancements in the fields of medicine and science that could potentially ameliorate the suffering of thousands of Indigenous children, youth, and adults. In fact, it wasn’t until 1908 that the OIA, under the direction of Commissioner Leupp, implemented a systematic approach to student health, and before Leupp’s appointment of Dr. Joseph A. Murphy as Medical Supervisor in 1909, one of his final acts as Commissioner, the Indian Service had no government agent tasked with the administration of medical care at all.¹⁴ By 1904, however, tuberculosis had reached such epidemic proportions in Indian communities that this disease alone forced Commissioner Jones to acknowledge the crisis and cultivate a sense of urgency about the eradication of this and other infectious diseases at Indian schools.¹⁵ In her aptly named monograph, *Empty Beds*, historian Jean Keller compares incidences of illness at off-reservation Indian boarding schools in the school year of 1911-12, and her findings paint a bleak picture of what life was like in these institutions. While Sherman Institute admitted a significant thirty-six percent of its student body to the infirmary in that year, seventy-eight percent of Carlisle’s population was admitted to the institution’s hospital in the same time period, while at Haskell Institute in Lawrence, KS, that number climbed to ninety-two percent.¹⁶ Consequently, Keller argues, cultivating and maintaining a healthy student population increasingly occupied boarding school superintendents, replacing “assimilation” as the sole goal of these institutions.

¹³ In the early nineteenth century, KhoiKhoi woman Saartjie “Sarah” Baartman was displayed posthumously at the Muséum national d’histoire naturelle in Paris, France as an object of scientific interest and symbol of primitiveness, known as the “Hottentot Venus.” Baartman was exhibited throughout Europe and studied by George Cuvier, French naturalist. Baartman spoke Khoisan, Dutch, French, and English. For more information about Saartjie Baartman, see: Natasha Gordon-Chipembere, ed., *Representation and Black Womanhood: The Legacy of Sarah Baartman*, 1st ed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Londa Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, eds., *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*, Race, Gender, and Science (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). “Tuskegee” references the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service at Tuskegee University. The subjects of this highly unethical experiment, poor black men from Alabama who had syphilis, were told that in exchange for their participation in the study, they would receive free medical care. As the object of this experiment was to better understand untreated syphilis, the men never received medical care. For more information about this medical experiment and its impact on study subjects, see: Allan M. Brandt, “Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.” *The Hastings Center Report*, 8, no. 6, (1978): 21–29; Susan Reverby, *Examining Tuskegee: The Infamous Syphilis Study and Its Legacy*. (University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Clifford E. Trafzer, *Fighting Invisible Enemies: Health and Medical Transitions among Southern California Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jean A. Keller, *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute, 1902-1922*, Native American Series (East Lansing, Mich: Michigan State University Press, 2002), 117.

Quantitative studies like Keller's document how the indoctrination of Indian children proceeded for decades without consideration for the physical, mental, or spiritual health of the student population. But as I argue here, Carlisle administrators, white civilians, and U.S. officials regarded Indianness itself, rather than the ailments of Indian people, as a pathology of equal consequence. As health, civilization, morality, and Americanness were closely correlated Carlisle teachings, Indianness as a heritable disadvantage emerged as the corollary to this philosophy. And while the OIA largely ignored advancements in the fields of medicine and science—or implemented them too late—the agency was quick to adopt pseudoscientific explanations about Indian suffering that hearkened back to the medico-moral musings about disease transmission proffered by the physicians of earlier eras.¹⁷ For the adults at Carlisle who were continuously disciplined in Victorian-era dictums about chastity and purity, as the foregoing chapter demonstrated, sexuality was often a site of open conflict that Carlisle officials sought to manage and control. In part, they did this by making sex and sexuality public and visible, through interrogation and investigative reports.

In 1915, for example, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells appointed special officer J.H. Dortch to conduct an inspection of Carlisle, and included in his findings was his impression that “immorality” prevailed at the institution. Of particular concern, Dortch explained, was the institution's proximity to the fringes of a city that was expanding. Under “Discipline,” Dortch wrote, “Adjoining [Carlisle's] grounds on this side is a most undesirable portion of the city. Several factories are located not far away, and the territory between them and the school is dotted with apparently disreputable looking shacks.” He continued, “Here is the cause of much of the trouble with the boys. I am told that in the evening many girls of easy virtue are in the habit of making appointments with the boys, and as a result, certain venereal diseases have appeared. These girls are said not to be regular women of the town,” Dortch clarified, “but a class which is difficult for the town authorities to deal with.”¹⁸ Dortch visited Carlisle for only five days to conduct his investigation, from April 22-27. But this “immorality” was of such concern that in his final report, he dedicated nearly ten pages, or one third of the document, to a discussion of this issue and recommendations for ridding the institution of “incorrigibles.”

Superintendent Lipps similarly regarded this sexuality issue as a stain upon the institution's reputation, and believed that the only course of action was to remove the “demoralizing” class of individuals. In defending his decision to expel students who had contracted a venereal disease, Lipps wrote to Commissioner Sells:

...students have not been sent away from Carlisle on account of venereal trouble until assurance was given by the Physician that danger of infection was apparently eliminated. In several instances students so affected were retained in school at their own request and because their previous satisfactory conduct warranted the giving of such special consideration. However, I yet insist that those young men who have been consistently unruly and careless should not be retained at Carlisle when they have contracted venereal disease any longer than is necessary to effect

¹⁷ Cliff Trafzer, *Fighting Invisible Enemies*, 72.

¹⁸ “Inspection Report of J.H. Dortch for May 1915,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #31080-1917-Carlisle-150, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC), 25.

a cure, regardless of what may seem to be the advisable course of action in other schools.¹⁹

In closing, he suggested “The foregoing will indicate that the sending home of students who have become diseased is not so much a result of the disease as the culmination of a decidedly unsavory reputation and an equally unsatisfactory record.”²⁰ The disease, Lipps seemed to suggest, was merely symptomatic of “undesirable” enrollees’ true natures.

Yet Lipps also regarded Indian men who suffered from sexually transmitted infections as themselves a kind of social disease, an idea that echoed popular fascination with racial contagion and “outbreak” hysteria. In October 1914, a twenty-four year old Nez Perce man named Wet-yet-mas-ta-kit wrote Lipps to request re-enrollment after having been sent home for contracting a venereal disease the previous summer: “Dear Sir: It will be a relief to know from you if I can be again admitted to Carlisle to finish my term of four years, which I have but two more years to the time my term finishes.” In response to this inquiry, Lipps adopted a stance of moral superiority: “...you cannot be given permission to return to Carlisle. You were sent to your home because you were morally undesirable rather than physically, and your re-enrolment [sic] at Carlisle would result in as pernicious an influence as would have your retention here in the first place.” Though Lipps assured Wet-yet-mas-ta-kit that he was expelled for moral rather than physical reasons, his elaborate reasoning suggested otherwise: “Other students as diseased as you were are being weeded out just as rapidly as cures are being effected.” Evidently, Lipps regarded Wet-yet-mas-ta-kit’s physical condition as threatening to the health of the student population, just as the mere presence of invasive plant species threatened to overtake susceptible gardens. Drawing on the conventions of “outbreak” narratives—a formula that first identifies the contagion, discusses its circulation, and resolves by ensuring its containment or eradication—Lipps also promoted the stigmatization of Indian women and men impacted by such issues rather than addressing these infections as a matter of collective welfare.²¹ In closing, Lipps admonished Wet-yet-mas-ta-kit to “settle down to some earnest work,” reinforcing the idea that labor would straighten him out, if only he could muster the self-discipline.²²

As much as the techniques employed at Carlisle to ferret out “undesirables” mirrored public concern with infection and crowded spaces, they also amplified the moral and metaphorical connotations of “contagion” that circulated in the Progressive-era discourses of fiction writers and social reformers alike.²³ But communicable diseases were not the only source of collective preoccupation in this era; the parameters of psychological illness were also being defined and delineated, and diagnoses of “hysteria,” “lunacy,” and “nymphomania” became convenient tools to control women unprotected by kin, class, or racial status.²⁴ As eighteen-year-

¹⁹ It is unclear whether other schools did, in fact, have a policy regarding cases of venereal disease; it is possible that this health issue impacted the students at other schools as well. Institutions such as the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, KS, and the Hampton Institute in Virginia, both had model homes in which students co-habitated, which could have provided an occasion for sexually transmitted infections to be communicated amongst students.

²⁰ “School Policy Regarding Venereal Diseases,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #36636-1915-Carlisle-822, NARA, CISDRC.

²¹ Priscilla Wald, *Contagious*, 2.

²² “Edward P— (Wet-yet-mas-ta-kit) Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 92, folder 4139, NARA, CISDRC.

²³ Priscilla Wald, *Contagious*, 116.

²⁴ For an interdisciplinary reference on this subject, see: Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts’ Advice to Women*, 2nd Anchor Books ed (New York: Anchor Books, 2005).

old Sarah B.'s experience demonstrates, "troublesome" women at Carlisle were scrutinized for signs of psychological "abnormality" that could legitimize their removal or expulsion from the institution. In 1917, Sarah (Menominee) accused Head Matron Ewing of pushing her down a flight of stairs. Likely due to the seriousness of the charges—Sarah sustained a severe back injury and endured a prolonged period of bed-rest—Commissioner Sells appointed Frank A. Thackery, Superintendent and Special Disbursement Agent in the Indian Service, to conduct an independent investigation of the "recent difficulty." Over the course of the following week Carlisle administrators isolated Boyd from her peers, subjected her to interrogative questioning, and communicated with one another about what they perceived to be her insubordinate nature. With the detached rationality of a scientific "expert," Thackery sought to expose the rebellious element that threatened institutional authority, employing the conventions of the church and the courtroom to establish himself as Sarah's moral, intellectual, and racial superior.

On February 6, 1917, while a host of Carlisle administrators looked on, the deposition began. In this interrogation, as Sarah was asked to defend the statements she had made about Ewing against the ostensibly disinterested questioning of the "independent" investigator, Ewing maintained her innocence and Assistant Matron Knight corroborated her colleague's story. Nonetheless, Boyd maintained her position, reiterating that she had not slipped down the stairs—Ewing had pushed her, resulting in a painful injury and subsequent hospitalization. Unsurprisingly, nowhere in Thackery's report to Sells does he defend Sarah's version of events as possible. Instead, he opens his report by remarking that "The trouble came about by reason of statements made by Sarah B— to the effect that Mrs. Ewing had pushed her down the stairway" preemptively positioning Sarah's testimony as unmerited slander.²⁵ Thackery elaborated:

It is evident, after the attempt to put Sarah B— in the lock-up, she became hysterical. . . she was screaming and waving her hands in a frantic manner. Many of the girls heard her screaming, as did also Mrs. Ewing, and Miss Greynolds. A considerable number of the girls and the three matrons all agreed that she was undoubtedly hysterical while lying on the floor. . . A number of the girls were at first inclined to sympathize with Sarah B—, but later when they learned the facts, gave their support to the matron. The two principal exceptions to this are Sarah Fowler and Elizabeth J—, who still seem inclined to make trouble and would undoubtedly do so if they could get any support.²⁶

Such was the official report sent to the Commissioner by Thackery, who described Sarah's response to physical injury as excessive, reifying his subject position, as well as Ewing's, as objective, rational, and truthful. He closed: "I believe that the matrons with the assistance of their company officers and the better element of Indian girls will be able to handle this matter satisfactorily themselves."²⁷ Having arrived at the conclusion that Sarah had fabricated the assault—despite evidence that she had been intimidated by Ewing and coerced into retracting her initial accusation—Thackery left Sarah in the care of the woman against whom she testified. In the context of an institution that sought to eradicate Indigeneity and produce docile laborers, health, civilization, morality, and Americanness were strongly correlated in institutional

²⁵ "Materials About Sarah B—. Assault Incident," RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #14230-1917-Carlisle-150, NARA, CISDRC, 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

teachings; and as the corollary to this philosophy, Indianness—that stubborn quality of refusing obedience to U.S. authority—was an external marker of criminality, recalcitrance, and pathology.

Containing the Contagion: Isolation at Carlisle and Beyond

In the late nineteenth century, as scientists identified new bacteria and developed techniques with which to isolate them, isolation hospitals also multiplied across the U.S. to meet the increasing public demand for spaces in which “diseased” individuals could be quarantined from the healthy population.²⁸ At the same time, tenement houses, urban slums, and ghettos exploded to accommodate a diverse array of cultural and ethnic populations who threatened to reconstitute the very meaning of Americanness, and who had been isolated in the enclaves of growing metropolises. Simultaneously, Indian populations had for the most part been divested of their traditional lands, confined in large numbers to their reservations under the watchful, and frequently corrupt, eye of the reservation superintendent. Often prevented from visiting their children who had been forcibly removed to off-reservation boarding institutions, Indian parents endured long stretches of familial separation, intentionally subjected to such conditions in order that Indian children might be better stripped of their cosmologies. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, adults comprised the majority of Carlisle’s population after the turn of the twentieth century and were relatively more mobile than their younger counterparts, sometimes successfully fleeing the institution and evading apprehension and return to the facility. But as the institution’s objectives shifted from that of assimilating Indian people into American society as equal citizens, to compelling Indian people to accept their subordinate social status as menial laborers, those who were identified as behaviorally problematic also endured isolation from their communities in the form of confinement at Carlisle and in external facilities.

In order to be rid of perceived moral threats to institutional order—code for those suffering from sexually transmitted infections—Carlisle officials would sometimes return adults back to their homes, as they had done with sick children in prior decades.²⁹ But in the event that women and men were sent back home to their communities, reservation superintendents often protested, rendering individuals more susceptible to transincarceration in other facilities. In 1915, for instance, Superintendent of the Sisseton Indian Agency E.D. Mossman wrote Lipps to challenge the return of Howard S., a nineteen-year-old man who regularly resided under his jurisdiction, and who had contracted a venereal disease while away at Carlisle. “Really I am very much disappointed and chagrined to find Howard in this sort of trouble” Mossman lamented, “I think you ought certainly have kept him there.” He continued, “[Howard] has told me the entire miserable story, and it is incomprehensible to me how conditions could exist for the months they did without the management of your school knowing about them and warning the boys against them.” Of course, administrators did have some idea about the “conditions” of the school. In the fall of 1914, Commissioner Sells had himself lectured the men at Carlisle about their ostensible failures, and appointed J.H. Dortch the following April to investigate the causes of disciplinary disturbance, as discussed above.³⁰

²⁸ Steere-Williams, “The Germ Theory.”

²⁹ Indian children endured terrible conditions at off-reservation boarding institutions, frequently becoming ill and dying; others who became sick while attending these institutions were often sent home to die.

³⁰ The six areas covered in Dortch’s report were: 1) Historical information; 2) Material conditions of school plant; 3) Work being done and planned; 4) Employees; 5) Discipline; 6) Services rendered by Supervisor in Charge, and 7)

Mossman, however, maintained that Carlisle's employees were negligent in their duties, in a somewhat transparent attempt to redirect responsibility away from himself: "It would seem that the school was entirely responsible and ought certainly take the responsibility for not only curing this boy of his physical ills, but put his character in at least as good condition as it was when he was received by the school... What do you expect me to do now with Howard?"³¹ Mossman's question is telling; it is possible that he, like other reservation superintendents, had a special interest in keeping Indian men away in order to maintain control over the community. But it is clear that Lipps didn't want adult Indian men at Carlisle, either. In his response to Mossman, Lipps characterized the institution as a degraded atmosphere, and charged Indian agents' unwillingness to keep allegedly unmanageable men on the reservation as the cause of its current disrepute. "The fact is Carlisle is full of veritable hell holes," he wrote. "Some of them have been described by William E. Johnson in *The New Republic*."³² So far as I have been able to determine, the cause of degeneration here at Carlisle is that for some years this school has been used as a dumping ground for boys and girls who are unable to be controlled on the reservation." To emphasize this point, Lipps went on: "Only a few months ago I heard of a Judge in some western state sentencing a boy to one year in the penitentiary or to go to the Carlisle Indian School. There is no question but what conditions here have been deplorable."³³ As this exchange demonstrates, U.S. officials used Carlisle as a de facto carceral institution—a place of isolation and confinement for unwanted Indian people.

In an extreme example of the many purposes Carlisle served in the twentieth century, in 1912 a forty-five year old Apache man named Justin R. H. was paroled out under the institution's jurisdiction. According to a proclamation signed by the Governor of Arizona, in 1906 Justin was charged with the crime of murder in the second degree in Yavapai territory, and had been serving his term of life imprisonment in the territorial prison. In 1912, however, Governor Richard E. Sloan commuted Justin's life sentence to a term of thirty years, and with time off for good behavior and the benefit of time served, Justin was released out on parole to "his friend and advisor" Carlisle Superintendent Moses Friedman. According to his "student" file, Justin was a former pupil; he had been enrolled at Carlisle in 1884 at the age of seventeen, and was returned home to the San Carlos agency in Arizona four years later on account of ill health. Nearly a quarter of a century later, however, he would be "enrolled" at the institution under an entirely different set of circumstances.

Recommendations, and nearly one-third of the report was dedicated to a discussion of disciplinary issues. For more information, see: "Inspection Report of J.H. Dortch for May 1915," RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #31080-1917-Carlisle-150, NARA, CISDRC.

³¹ "Howard S—. Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 72, folder 3555, NARA, CISDRC.

³² *The New Republic* was a prohibition periodical issued weekly from 1913-1916. The editor of the journal was William E. "Pussyfoot" Johnson, an Anti-Saloon League member who, from 1906-1911, served as Special Officer of liquor traffic suppression in Oklahoma. In making reference to Johnson and the publication he edited, Lipps is referring to the disciplinary issue of liquor consumption at Carlisle. Indian men at Carlisle frequently went into town to drink at saloons or acquire liquor to bring back to the institution. Many Indian men were jailed in town for these activities as well, which made alcohol a constant point of contention and subject of correspondence. For more information about Johnson's prohibition activities as Chief Special Officer of the Indian Service under President Theodore Roosevelt, see: Kathryn A. Abbott, "Alcohol and the Anishinaabeg of Minnesota in the Early Twentieth Century," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1999): 25-43; "Johnson, William Eugene 'Pussyfoot' (1862-1945)," Jack S. Blocker, David M. Fahey, and Ian R. Tyrrell, *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: An International Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, 2003).

³³ "Howard S—. Student File," NARA.

Letters of correspondence contained in Justin's file demonstrate how Carlisle could easily shift from a factory of cultural elimination to a place of incarceration and surveillance, often serving these purposes simultaneously. These documents also illustrate how U.S. officials engaged a rhetoric of benevolence to disguise what were fundamentally punitive practices. Governor Sloan's original proclamation of parole indicated that Justin was to be placed under the *protection* of then-Superintendent Friedman, a fact also acknowledged years later by Friedman's successor, Oscar Lipps. But even as Justin was placed "under the Outing" to perform continuous labor for fifteen dollars a month, seven days a week, he also was expected to comply with institutional rules (intended for school-aged youth, ages 14-18) and the employees who enforced them.³⁴ As Lipps remarked to Carlisle's Outing Agent D.H. Dickey, "I want [Justin] to understand that he is under the control of the school. The Arizona State authorities placed him on parole in the care of the school. If he shows any disposition not to do as the school authorities advise, I shall get into immediate communication with the Governor of Arizona, who will send officers for him, and he will be sent back to the penitentiary or be placed on parole somewhere in the state."³⁵ Failure to adhere to Lipps' rules could have additional legal consequences, as Carlisle officials were deputized, in this instance, as parole officers.

As far as Justin knew, Lipps was invested with the authority of judge, jury, and jailor on an everyday basis. For example, when Justin sought a pardon from the Governor of Arizona, Lipps withheld his recommendation in exchange for good behavior: "I will consider [writing to the Governor of Arizona], if your conduct continues good. You have done well most of the time under the outing although you had some trouble...I will ask Mr. Dickey to investigate this trouble which you got into and if you can show that you were not to blame, I will consider your case favorably. Whether I do this depends entirely upon your future conduct." The "trouble," further correspondence reveals, was that Justin left his outing home without permission. Months later, while working under the Outing in Trenton, New Jersey, Justin wrote Lipps repeatedly, asking him to send him a portion of his savings that were being held at the bank in Carlisle. After finally receiving some of his own funds, however, he found that it was not enough to cover basic living necessities in the dead of winter while needing to secure room and board. Additional correspondence shows that as a result, Justin was made to choose between his overcoat and eating, and had decided to pawn his clothing in order that he might have some shelter and food. Shortly thereafter, however, he faced starvation and sent a letter to the institution again to beg for some of his own money. Furious with these humiliating and dangerous circumstances, he wrote Lipps, "O, right my friend, I see now, you wanted me starving to death."³⁶

Further exchanges demonstrate that Justin's accusations were correct. After Outing Agent Dickey visited Justin two weeks later, discovered that he had been "legally married to a colored girl," and related this new information to Lipps, Justin's circumstances radically deteriorated: Lipps reported his location to Arizona authorities, and refused to send any additional funds to Justin. Facing both starvation and isolation in New Jersey with his wife, Justin's punishment was cruel. A final letter from E.B. Meritt shows that as Justin—and presumably his wife—nearly starved to death, the Indian office deliberated on how best to physically remove the couple from the Trenton area, and settled on notifying local authorities of the couple's presence. As a black woman and Indian man married in the early twentieth century, they would have been targeted as

³⁴ "Justin H—. (R—. H—.) Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 2, folder 82, NARA, CISDRC.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

a racial spectacle—an abnormal amalgamation—and confronted with the ever-present threat of racialized violence, an experience that was one of simultaneous exposure *and* isolation.³⁷

In other cases, racial “passing” could serve as protection for those who had fled Carlisle without permission, allowing them to evade notice as an Indian escapee. As a 1913 newspaper clipping (publication unknown) entitled “Indian Deserter from Carlisle Nabbed Here,” preserved in Max F.’s (Colville) file, reports:

Max F—, an Indian who is alleged to have deserted from the U.S. Industrial Training school at Carlisle, was arrested last evening by Patrolman Buttorf. [Max] has been working for a number of weeks at one of the industrial plants, where he has passed himself as a negro. Instructions for [Max’s] arrest were received yesterday by the police department from M. Freedman [sic], superintendent of the school and an officer will arrive in the city today to take [Max] to Carlisle. [Max], who is twenty-three years old, declares that he cannot legally be kept in the industrial school and does not intend to remain there.³⁸

Curiously, while Commissioner Leupp himself proclaimed that Indian people would be “induced to find contentment as “ditchers, miners, railroad hands, or what not”—as Max had done, apparently—Friedman was intent upon his continued confinement at Carlisle.³⁹ Not only does the article demonstrate how racial phenotype was used to determine the rightful location of bodies in space, it also demonstrates how Carlisle superintendents illegally held adult women and men at the institution, evidently without any qualms whatsoever.⁴⁰ Similarly, records relating to Max’s experiences document how U.S. officials employed apprehension tactics reminiscent of those legislated by antebellum-era Fugitive Slave laws, which fact further illustrates how state power often manifested as white power and white Americans’ implicit authority over all bodies of color in this era.⁴¹

In addition to the forcible detention of adults like Max at Carlisle, other tactics were employed to limit the mobility of adults, and institutions ranging from insane asylums, to sanitariums and hospitals also employed as spaces of isolation and incarceration. External facilities such as the House of the Good Shepherd in Reading, PA could also function as holding pens for those who were unwanted by Carlisle administrators but whose presence—at least on paper—was needed for statistical purposes. A clerical practice demonstrates how Carlisle

³⁷ Tavia Amolo Ochieng’ Nyongó, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

³⁸ “Max F—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 5, folder 202, NARA, CISDRC.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Because Indian women and men eighteen-years-of-age and older made their own application to Carlisle, they could not legally be held at the institution without their consent. However, once entering institutional grounds, they implicitly gave up a considerable amount of control over their whereabouts, as they entered into the jurisdiction of Carlisle authorities who acted as their legal guardians, despite the illegality of this practice.

⁴¹ As Saidiya Hartman writes, “This unabashed denial of slavery as a public institution fabricated the nation’s innocence by masking the public dimensions of slavery as an institution and focusing on the relations between individuals. Certainly *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, the Fugitive Slave Law, the power of police exercised by any and every white person over slaves and free blacks, the interference of the state in disposals of slave property, laws forbidding interracial assembly, and the modeling of racial relations in the image of master-slave relations attest to the public character of the institution” (174). Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Race and American Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

officials created these absent presences: those who were sent away to external facilities were listed as being “under the Outing”— a catch-all designation that disguised processes of transincarceration while ensuring the continued allocation of treasury funds for the “upkeep” of all Carlisle “students.” This designation thus allowed Carlisle administrators to continue carrying enrollees on the rolls (and continue to receive governmental appropriations for that individual’s support), while avoiding scrutiny from the Indian Commissioner or bad publicity, as occasionally happened with behavioral “scandals” at the institution. This designation also enabled administrators to continue to assert control over adult women and men by maintaining pseudo-guardianship over them, as those enumerated in Carlisle ledgers were presumably, if not legally, under the jurisdiction of the Carlisle Superintendent. Of course, adults who had surpassed twenty-one, the age of majority, could not legally be held at Carlisle, but as demonstrated by Justin’s and Max’s experiences, forced, illegal detention nonetheless occurred.

Sometimes, an individual’s relatively advanced age prevented Carlisle authorities from successfully incarcerating “recalcitrant” women and men in external facilities. In 1914, for example, Superintendent Lipps charged twenty-two year old John S. (Chippewa) and nineteen-year-old John B. P. (Sioux) with entering the Girl’s Dormitory, and threatened the two men with incarceration in the State Reformatory. Documents contained in the men’s files suggest that Lipps attempted to follow through with this threat. He had secured Commissioner Sells’ permission to transfer the men, but ultimately the reformatory was unwilling to accept either of them on account of their ages: at nineteen and twenty-two, the men were regarded as too old to be reformed.⁴² In another instance, Lipps was considering a twenty-two year-old Kickapoo man, Grover A. (Nan-mah-ah-qua), for incarceration in the State Reformatory.⁴³ Though his alleged crime is unclear based on available archival documents, in 1914 Lipps wrote Edwin Minor, agent to the Kickapoo Agency, to advise that Grover had been expelled and would be returned to the agency. As Lipps explained, “I regret to report to you that Grover A— again misconducted himself on the night of March the 25th, last, and when he was tried by a court martial he was sentenced to a term of confinement in the school guard house to be followed by expulsion.” He continued, “Under date of April 10th the Office approved the findings of the court and authorized me to have him placed in the State Reformatory. As such an arrangement is hardly practicable because of Grover’s age it has been decided best to expel him and to send him to his home.”⁴⁴ In closing, Lipps wrote: “Trusting that he will decide to settle down to work on his own place and that he will yet make an effort to do better than he has done here, I am, Very truly yours.” In 1917, Grover was self-employed as a farmer in Powhattan, Kansas, and lived with his wife Nannie and their nine-month-old child. He would go on to serve in World Wars I and II, and live a long life of eighty-two years.⁴⁵

In other cases, however, more vulnerable individuals, many of them young women, languished for years in external facilities as punishment for perceived infractions ranging from promiscuity to the alleged crime of having no kin to care for them. Founded in 1889 and intended for the reformation of “erring women and unprotected children,” the House of the Good Shepherd in Reading, PA, was one of those facilities. Documents relating to women in their

⁴² “John B—, P—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 91, folder 4109, NARA, CISDRC.

⁴³ According to a 1917 WWI draft card, Grover was born in 1891, rather than 1892. “Grover A—, in *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*,” State: Kansas, Registration County: Brown, Roll: 1643423. Ancestry.com. Accessed 19 May 2019.

⁴⁴ “Grover A—, (Nan-mah-ah-qua) Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 89, folder 4052, NARA, CISDRC.

⁴⁵ “Grover A—, in *U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*,” Ancestry.com.

teens and early twenties show how women placed in the Outing system were especially vulnerable to re-institutionalization, and demonstrate how numerous Carlisle women were sent to the convent in 1914, directly from their Outing homes, at the direction of Superintendent Lipps. These records also reflect how white Americans regarded the bodies of Indian women as sites of contagion—a factor that appears to have influenced administrative decisions to commit Indian women to external institutions. Frequently, commitment to the House of the Good Shepherd was punishment for bad behavior; a practice rationalized as necessary on the basis of Indian women’s “race,” gender, and presumed pathology. This practice also illustrates how Carlisle authorities could have used transincarceration as a method of eugenicist control.

The House of the Good Shepherd was of a class of Roman-Catholic institutions in the U.S. referred to as Magdalene Laundries (or asylums, as they were also called), in which “fallen” women labored under grueling conditions and were told that in so doing, they could “wash away” their sins.⁴⁶ Prostitutes, unmarried women who became pregnant, women who themselves were the children of unwedded mothers, the destitute, and others deemed “wayward” were involuntarily committed to U.S. Magdalene Laundries by the thousands, suffering abuse, starvation, isolation, and loss of community and identity, all in the name of “salvation.”⁴⁷ While in Ireland these women came to be collectively known as Magdalenes, U.S. laundries have received comparatively less attention. But in the last two decades, the devastating legacy of these institutions has received increase attention thanks, in part, to the global film industry. The 2002 film *Magdalene Sisters*, which follows the experiences of four women involuntarily committed to a laundry in mid-twentieth-century Ireland, received critical acclaim and popularized interest in these abysmal facilities.⁴⁸

In addition to the general lack of discussion around U.S. institutions of this kind, the presence of Indigenous women in the Laundries is under-examined. Carlisle records offer a small, though incomplete, window into a few young women’s experiences at the Reading facility in the early twentieth century, and expand our understanding of how Carlisle administrators used this institution as a place of isolation and as a space through which U.S. officials could continue to control the behavior, bodies, and sexualities of those sent to languish there during childbearing years, in their mid- to late-teens and early twenties. At the time of their commitment, Gertrude B. P. (Standing Rock Sioux), Carrie P. A. (Chippewa), and Lillian C. (Sioux) were between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, while Agnes W. (Menominee) was twenty years of age. As was the case with Indian men and the State Reformatory, it is possible that Indian women who had surpassed the age of majority were refused entrance to the House of the Good Shepherd, as well.⁴⁹

Documents relating to Lillian C. (Sioux) illustrate how young women who labored in the Outing could be stripped of all rights as a result of extreme power disparities between themselves and their patrons. These materials also document how these young women could be exposed to racist accusations against which they struggled to defend themselves, usually unsuccessfully. In 1915, Lillian was fifteen years old when she was committed to the House of the Good Shepherd,

⁴⁶ Rene Kollar, “Magdalenes and Nuns: Convent Laundries in Late Victorian England,” *Anglican and Episcopal History* 73, no. 3 (2004): 309–34.

⁴⁷ Michelle Jones and Lori Record, “Magdalene Laundries: The First Prisons for Women in the United States.” *Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences*, 17 (2014): 166-179.

⁴⁸ *Magdalene Sisters*. Directed by Peter Mullan. Momentum Pictures, 2002. For a more recent major motion picture that treats the Laundries thematically, see: *Philomena*. Directed by Stephen Frears. BBC Films, 2013.

⁴⁹ It is possible that Lipps could not legally incarcerate students in external institutions once they had reached the age of majority, just as he could not force them to stay at Carlisle.

having been accused by her Outing home patrons of nearly causing the “double murder” of the twin infants in her charge. According to a report from Outing matron Lida Johnston, Lillian had placed a worm in the napkin of one of the infants, passing it off as tape worm, in an attempt to be sent back to Carlisle—a resistance technique of intentional misbehavior that others with similar aims also employed.⁵⁰

As a young Indian woman in the early twentieth century, Lillian would have been taught to covet the prospect of motherhood as woman’s highest calling, and thus her “attempted murder” of twin infants would have been perceived as truly monstrous in the eyes of her Outing patrons and those tasked more generally with her domestic training and supervision. Carlisle authorities were similarly aghast at this prank, and planned her transfer to the convent of the Good Shepherd, where “She would be under constant observation and training and only her good traits and characteristics encouraged to predominate.”⁵¹ In a deliberate usurpation of the rights of Lillian’s parents, letters of correspondence show that Lipps and John R. Brennan, superintendent at Pine Ridge, plotted to intentionally lead Andrew C., Lillian’s father, to believe that he had no legal authority over his daughter or her whereabouts. A letter dated June 30, 1915 sent from Brennan to Lipps reveals in detail the extralegal measures taken to ensure Lillian’s ongoing confinement:

Dear Sir:

In answer to your letter of June 7, in regard to Lillian C—, I will say that it is difficult to say what is best to do with such a girl, guilty of such a crime.

She is only fifteen years old, rather young to send back to the reservation, and keep out of school altogether.

I will recommend that she be placed in some reformatory school in Pennsylvania. It came nearly being a double murder, and I believe the discipline of your school and the hideousness of the crime will justify this action.

I had a boy, attending a school on this reservation, sent to the state reformatory school of South Dakota, who was found guilty of larceny in an aggravated form. He was about the same age of this girl.

Your civil authority could take the evidence of all concerned and pass sentence, which would seem legal to the parents of Lillian.

Very respectfully,

John R. Brennan

Superintendent.

As indicated by this letter, Brennan felt that Lipps should exercise authority he legally did not have, and make it appear as though Lillian’s parents had no choice but to accept their daughter’s loss of freedom. This scheme worked; despite Andrew’s attempts to have his daughter released, she would languish at the convent for another two years, until 1917, in payment for “the most fiendish attempt to commit a crime that has ever been perpetrated at [Carlisle].”⁵²

⁵⁰ This happened at Carlisle frequently, and Kevin Whalen has documented similar tactics at the Sherman Institute in his text *Native Students at Work: American Indian Labor and Sherman Institute’s Outing Program, 1900-1945* (University of Washington Press, 2016).

⁵¹ “Lillian C—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 119, folder 4814, NARA, CISDRC.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Other young Carlisle women lived at the convent along with Lillian, having been committed for reasons similarly relating to perceived “incorrigibility.” Although Gertrude B. P.’s (Sioux) file is relatively lacking in information about her commitment, letters of correspondence show that she was incarcerated at the House of the Good Shepherd in 1915, when she was seventeen years old, for “care and protection.” Interestingly, documents relating to Gertrude show that Lipps routinely used the word “care” as a synonym for what in reality was the restraint, confinement, and incarceration of women deemed to be unmanageable.⁵³ Indeed, Carlisle administrators often used sanitized rhetoric to describe their own actions, but in describing the personal attributes of “incorrigibles,” they were quick to draw upon colonial tropes of Indian women as dirty and licentious— notions that characterized the reproductive capacity of Indigenous women as being potentially dangerous, which reified gendered discourses of Indigenous subordination as imperative to the health of the settler nation.

In 1915, for example, Lida M. Johnston, the “Girls’ Outing Agent” at Carlisle, mobilized this colonial rhetoric as she reified the ideological divide between civilization and savagery as one of cleanliness versus filth. Writing to Lipps of the “progress” seventeen-year-old Carrie P. A. (Chippewa) was making at the House of the Good Shepherd, Johnston explained, “Carrie is the most responsive of the three Indian girls placed there. She has made the best progress. She has attended the day school, regular academic work, and is in the sixth grade. She plays the mandecello and the piano and has done fairly well. She does very good work in crocheting.” However, lest Lipps mistake Carrie’s seemingly refined domestic sensibilities for a complete “improvement in her conduct,” Johnston clarified, “Her worse features seem to be laziness and uncleanliness,” and advised that Carrie “should not return to her home as she described the conditions there.”⁵⁴ To Johnston, continued “laziness and uncleanliness” necessitated ongoing incarceration at the convent, and many white women would have similarly regarded life among the Sisters as infinitely more “uplifting” for Indian people than life within their own communities.

In another example of the ways in which the colonialist trope of “dirty Indians” was used to legitimate the confinement of young women to the Catholic institution, Carlisle’s Head Matron Matilda Ewing described the urgent need to isolate fifteen or sixteen-year-old Charlotte C. (Chippewa). Speaking of Charlotte’s fitness for incarceration, in 1915 Ewing was quoted as saying the following:

‘...regarding case in question of Charlotte C—, I think with the Supt. that it is really too bad to send her back to the reservation to such surroundings as Dady [the Indian agent] refers to, but with our girls here who need all the uplift we are able to give them I feel that a girl who has such filthy habits as [Charlotte] has shown and utterly ignores all advice...I feel that the only salvation for her is to place her in a school for girls under the care of one of the good Sisters.’

Lipps echoed Ewing’s sentiment: “It cannot be necessary to add that Charlotte is almost a hopeless case and that I agree with Mrs. Ewing that the other girls here should be relieved of the presence of a girl like Charlotte, who cannot be anything but a contaminating and demoralizing influence on all those who have to associate with her.” Charlotte was spared incarceration at the House of the Good Shepherd, but just barely; the “contaminating influence,” further

⁵³ “Gertrude B—. P—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 47, folder 2327, NARA, CISDRC.

⁵⁴ “Carrie P—. A—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 107, folder 4533,10, NARA, CISDRC.

correspondence revealed, was bed-wetting.⁵⁵ As these examples illustrate, Carlisle officials and U.S. agents used different forms of isolation as punishment for Indian people deemed to be wayward, troublesome, or otherwise abnormal, and as a way to contain what was frequently thought of as the “contaminating” potential of Indianness itself—a process of pathologization that is central to the architecture of white supremacy and world-historical forms of imperial domination, as Ann Laura Stoler has assiduously described.⁵⁶ In the final section, we turn to the training programs established between Carlisle and the Ford Motor Company in Detroit and General Hospital in Lancaster, PA. Letters of correspondence reveal how white supervisors used a language of disease and pathology in reference to the Indian people enrolled in these programs which affirmed labor as the “cure” for Indian peoples’ supposed tendency towards idleness, even as those discourses worked to affirm white bodies as the rightful occupants of public spaces of employment shared with Indigenous laborers.

Eradicating the Disease: Labor as Panacea

As historian Kate Kane writes in her powerful essay “Nits Make Lice: Drogheda, Sand Creek, and the Poetics of Colonial Extermination,” the dehumanization of Indigenous people is fundamental to the colonial project; an ideological precursor to physical genocide. She remarks of Chivington’s deployment of the “nits make lice” phrase, “The Indigenous peoples...in the turning of the metaphor become parasites who take sustenance from a national body to which they offer nothing in exchange...Invoked in the metaphor...is the potential for the apparently harmless immature insects to develop into troublesome and potentially destructive adults.”⁵⁷ Drawing on Kane’s analysis, in what follows I examine how Indian women and men at the Ford Motor Company and the nurse training program in Lancaster, PA endured simultaneous dehumanization, racialization, and pathologization at their respective institutions, oftentimes being forced out altogether as a result of this treatment. Like the “nit” that must be exterminated in order to prevent a parasitic infestation, the Indian people in these training partnerships were treated as expendable labor, and resisted this degradation in important ways. These records contribute another understanding of the ways in which the federal Indian policy of “assimilation” was a process of proletarianization, and document how federal institutions assisted in the subordination of American Indian people to white Americans in the private sector of the national economy in this era.⁵⁸

In 1915, an article entitled “Ford ‘Original Americans’” appeared in the February issue of the *Ford Times*, published monthly by the Henry Ford Motor Company and circulated to would-be consumers. This brief article discussed twenty-five “students,” Indian men over twenty-one

⁵⁵ “Charlotte J. C.— Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 132, folder 5194, NARA, CISDRC.

⁵⁶ See: Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁵⁷ Katie Kane, “Nits Make Lice: Drogheda, Sand Creek, and the Poetics of Colonial Extermination,” *Cultural Critique*, no. 42 (1999): 81–103.

⁵⁸ Alice Littlefield has demonstrated that vocational training in federal boarding institutions was a process of proletarianization, as the schools prepared Indian people for employment in the wage-labor workforce. Following Littlefield, I draw on this phenomenon of proletarianization to examine American Indian participation in training “partnerships” in the private sector. See: Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack, eds., *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). For additional information about Native people and labor under various Outing programs at the turn of the twentieth century, also see work by William Bauer Jr. (2009), Kevin Whalen (2016), and Robert Trennert (1988), who has described how the Phoenix Indian School produced laborers for the citrus and agricultural industries in the Southwest.

years of age, who were enrolled at Carlisle under the “Outing Program” as employees at the Ford automobile plant headquartered in Detroit, MI.⁵⁹ The article began by suggesting that the men were still students at Carlisle, and after listing each employee by tribe, concluded, “These Indian students are splendid types of the Ford workman, and have proved themselves worthy representatives of their alma mater and of the principles which the United States Government has inculcated through its courses.”⁶⁰ Designated first as Carlisle students and later as Ford employees, the article points to the ways in which Carlisle placed adult Indian men out for wage labor as members of the economic underclass in a prolonged period of tutelage, symbolically extending their status as “students” into the space of the factory.

Two years before the U.S. War Department repossessed the Carlisle barracks for use as a wartime hospital, Lipps established a blacksmithing course as a supplement to Carlisle’s vocational training curriculum, an offering that was meant to be a precursor to apprenticeship at the Ford factory in Detroit. Ostensibly, Indian men could enroll in the basic blacksmithing course at Carlisle, and once having successfully completed it, could petition to be nominated for the training school at Ford, a program that in some ways—at least on paper—duplicated the Carlisle regimen of a half-day split between labor and learning.⁶¹ The arrangement was, in theory, a symbiotic one. According to a 1917 letter to Commissioner Sells detailing the Carlisle-Ford partnership, enterprising Indian men would train first at Carlisle and later at Ford, where they would work an eight-hour day and in the evening attend courses in mechanical drafting and automobile engineering. They were told that after completing night school classes and successfully demonstrating mechanical competency that they would be hired outright as Ford employees, enjoying the “five-dollar-day” that became a hallmark of early Fordism and symbolic of Henry Ford’s progressivism in the marketplace.⁶²

For the Carlisle men, there were very real benefits to be had by training at the Ford plant. In Detroit, they would have enjoyed relatively increased autonomy over their whereabouts, were relinquished from the infantilizing and overly-scrutinizing gaze of Carlisle administrators, and earned far more even at the apprenticeship rate of \$2.72 a day than they would have as a farmhand in one of Carlisle’s Outing districts.⁶³ But despite these relative advantages, the training arrangement at Ford could also be highly punitive and exploitative—a way to avoid paying higher wages to Indian men who had not yet been promoted to fulltime mechanic, effectively keeping the Indian mechanics in an extended, underpaid, and unnecessary period of apprenticeship—since factory labor at Ford was largely unskilled, laborers could be adequately trained in under two days.⁶⁴ Additionally, the mandatory age for graduation from the Henry Ford Trade School was eighteen—an age that most of the Carlisle men had far surpassed at the time of their employment at Ford, thus adding a dimension of humiliation to mandatory attendance in the

⁵⁹ This was a labor system developed by Carlisle founder Richard Henry Pratt that placed Indian students in the homes of white Americans to perform domestic and farm labor from 1879-1904. The “Outing” underwent shifts in later years under the aegis of successive superintendents. Superintendent Oscar H. Lipps was responsible for developing the Ford “Outing” agreement, a radical departure from earlier iterations of the Outing, which mirrored shifting objectives in Office of Indian Affairs policy and racialist sentiments about American Indians’ proper “place” in American society as menial or wage laborers.

⁶⁰ “Ford ‘Original Americans,’” The Henry Ford Motor Company, *Ford Times*, 9 no. 7, (February 1916), 305.

⁶¹ “Blacksmithing Industrial Training Information,” RG 75, CCF Entry 121, #55108-1917-Carlisle-920, NARA, CISDRC.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ “George M—. Student File,” RG 75, Series 1327, box 116, folder 4747, NARA, CISDRC.

⁶⁴ Georgios Paris Loizides, “‘Making men’ at Ford: Ethnicity, Race, and Americanization During the Progressive Period,” *Michigan Sociological Review* 21 (2007): 109–48, 76.

mechanical drafting courses alongside boys and young men in their late adolescence and early teenage years.⁶⁵

Along with the European immigrants and Black Americans who flooded Detroit in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Carlisle men at Ford endured much more than humiliation and infantilizing treatment. Sociologist Georgios Loizides describes how labor at the factory was assigned on the basis of race, so that Ford's Americanization project was also necessarily an exercise in racial stratification within the laboring class. American Indian workers are absent from Loizides' discussion, but his analysis of race relations at Ford offers insight into the environment that the Carlisle men navigated while working in Motor City. As Loizides explains, managerial policies at Ford were predicated upon racist conceptualizations of differing physical ability, so that racial hierarchies were established even within the theoretically democratic factory populated by interchangeable, laboring bodies. Anti-black racism at Ford was an ugly affair, as indicated by the type of labor assigned to black laborers: "Whether relegated to the Foundry department or not," Loizides writes, "Black workers were given the worst jobs."⁶⁶ Similarly, Stephen Meyer points out that "American industrialization was unique, because successive waves of immigrant workers constantly recreated the conflict between preindustrial and industrial values and habits with each generation of American workers."⁶⁷

In the early years of the twentieth century, Ford's production line was considered fairly desegregated. Additionally, the fact that by 1914 Ford had promised that all laborers would receive the same compensation for their work—five dollars a day—would have made jobs at the factory highly appealing to Black and American Indian men who had little opportunity to earn similar wages elsewhere.⁶⁸ For the same reasons, however, racial discrimination was pervasive at the plant. As researcher Robert Mansfield remarked after a visit to the Ford plant in 1926, "Mr. Ford owes a great deal to his negro workers for the work they are willing to do. In other words, he would have a hard time finding white workers enough who would do it and do it so well. I think in Ford's the negroes were doing 'the hardest, roughest, and dirtiest work' in many instances... Young white foremen in charge of some of these men certainly did not think kindly of the work. Only 'n—ers, wops, and dagos' would do it, said one."⁶⁹ Similarly, historian Frederick Hoxie describes a situation that would have been very familiar to Indian laborers in the early twentieth century; as Commissioner Robert "Valentine reminded a dissatisfied Colorado beet farmer in 1909, 'If you were hiring white labor to do this work, in all probability you would have to pay them more wages than you do the Indians.'⁷⁰

⁶⁵ See: "Andrew Beechtree Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 144, folder 5605, NARA, CISDRC; "Henry Ford Trade School Information Brochure, 1931-1941," from the Collections of the Henry Ford, Object ID 64.167.450.1 <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/373433#slide=gs-252397>. Accessed June 25, 2019; Samuel Gaft, "The History of the Henry Ford Trade School, 1916-1952" University of Michigan Dissertations, 1998.

⁶⁶ Loizides, "'Making Men' at Ford," 133.

⁶⁷ Stephen Meyer, "Adapting the Immigrant to the Line: Americanization in the Ford Factory, 1914-1921," *Journal of Social History* 14, no. 1 (1980): 67-82.

⁶⁸ This came with strings attached; As Ford historian Elizabeth Esch explains, "The five-dollar wage signified the most dramatic commitment on the part of the company to controlling production through controlling the lives of workers" (36). For more information about racial hierarchies and Ford, see: Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Color Line and the Assembly Line: Managing Race in the Ford Empire*, American Crossroads 50 (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018).

⁶⁹ As quoted in Loizides, "'Making men' at Ford," 134.

⁷⁰ Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 206.

Henry Ford is credited with revolutionizing American industry with his five-dollar-day, moving assembly line, and Model-T. But less is known about how Ford's assimilationist agenda towards immigrant and other non-white populations intersected with the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs' efforts to "civilize" Indian people. The article featured in the 1915 Ford Times, "Ford's 'Original Americans,'" hints at that intersection. It also gestures towards the ways in which employment at Ford could extend the paternalism of the U.S. government over Indian workers by continuing to deny them autonomy and authority over their whereabouts and resources. In some cases, the training partnership between Carlisle and Ford was a positive experience for the men who participated in it; in others, archival evidence suggests that the partnership was an easy way to extract labor from the Carlisle men while withholding their wages. In almost all instances, disciplinary documents show that the Carlisle men were infantilized and pathologized on the basis of race, in a process that devalued their labor, made their bodies expendable, and refused them the "upward mobility" that was held out as a reward for hard work and company loyalty.⁷¹

Letters of correspondence relating to Grover M. (Potawatomi) document a blatant pattern of anti-Indian racism, infantilization, and labor exploitation at Ford. Grover was twenty-three years old when he arrived at the Ford factory in 1915. Like the others sent to Michigan, he would have completed the blacksmithing course offered at Carlisle, and been designated as a student-apprentice on his arrival. As correspondence from Mr. Wagstaff, the head of Ford's Sociological Department, indicates, Grover and the rest of the Carlisle men were enrolled in day school while working night shifts, and according to a 1916 letter from Wagstaff to Lipps, the Carlisle men evidently disliked this arrangement and avoided it: "The Indian boys have been very fortunate in escaping night work but there is no good reason why they should be favored in this respect. We do not concede school work as an excuse as there are day classes for night workers. I have always liked the spirit with which these boys have tackled anything they were put at, and am a little surprised that a brand new one should raise an objection."⁷²

A separate document reveals, however, that Grover had another reason for missing work. According to his file, in 1916 Grover had contracted a venereal disease and was being treated by a physician at Ford, choosing not to disclose this information to his supervisor. Further correspondence reveals that it is possible that Grover had anticipated dismissal from Ford if his condition was discovered. As Lipps wrote to Wagstaff in regard to Grover, "If you feel that it is necessary to send him away, do not consider our feelings regarding the matter. While a student here, Grover was a good sort of a fellow and seemed to be interested in his work. However he shows traces of a poor quality of white blood and very little, if any, of Indian blood and it may be his present low inclinations are the result of the lack of good family and early training."⁷³ Wagstaff agreed; he similarly attributed Grover's illness to heredity. As he explained to Lipps, "Our factory medical department sent [Grover] to the hospital because treatment did not progress favorably while he was working, swollen conditions interfering. . . He has always worked along willingly and I think should be given a further chance. We can't blame him if he was unfortunate in his selection of parents. His experience will likely be a lesson to the other boys."⁷⁴ As

⁷¹ Stephen Meyer, "Adapting the Immigrant," 68.

⁷² "Grover M—. Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 117, folder 4770, NARA, CISDRC.

10. This arrangement would be inverted by 1917, when the men would work day shifts and attend night courses, as discussed above. See: "Blacksmithing Industrial Training Information," NARA, CISDRC.

⁷³ "Grover M—. Student File," NARA.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

evidenced by these exchanges, both Lipps and Wagstaff felt that Grover's condition could be attributed at least in part to poor parentage and heredity. Echoing eugenicist discourses such as that published by Madison Grant in the same year, Grover's chief transgression, according to Lipps and Wagstaff, was the polluted blood that made him a racial and social abnormality: communicability personified.⁷⁵

By January 1917, Grover was up for dismissal. As the head of Ford's Educational Department, G.W. Griswold, wrote to Lipps, "We are pulling this man's record as a quit. He has been absent for about two months, claiming to have been due to eye trouble. Examination by our Medical Department a month ago, failed to reveal any particular cause for this trouble... We do not feel that he sufficiently appreciates a job here to warrant out[sic] taking the matter up with him and are consequently pulling his record as a quit."⁷⁶ A month and a half later, however, Griswold withdrew this threat. On February 28th, 1917 he again wrote Lipps, this time with another proposition: "This young man on presenting further proof to our Medical Department that he has been physically unable to work, was given one last chance and is being reinstated to the Student's Course." Griswold explained, however, that Grover's reinstatement came with a caveat: "We wish to inquire at this time as to whether or not you care to again have him enrolled at the Carlisle Indian School and a portion of his pay sent you as is done with the other boys. We feel that this plan would be advisable."⁷⁷ By this time, Grover was twenty-five years old, well past being considered appropriately "school-aged" and far beyond the disciplinary grasp of Carlisle administrators. In a reflection of this reality, his "Outing" card shows that he was dropped from the rolls on January 3rd of 1917. As a handwritten note remarked of his dismissal, "Did not behave himself. Have not been able to keep track of him."⁷⁸ Re-enrollment at Carlisle would have thus been a way to maintain control of Grover's resources and mobility while at Ford. As we saw in connection to Justin R. H. (Apache), Lipps would not hesitate to cut off Indian men's access to their financial resources, a cruel action that might leave them to face dire circumstances, including the possibility of starvation.

Otto T.'s experience demonstrates Carlisle officials' typical administrative response to Indian men who were considered "contaminating influences": immediate eradication. In 1913, twenty-year-old Otto contracted syphilis and was being considered for dismissal from the institution. As Carlisle's physician smugly reported, "I regret to report that Otto T— is afflicted with primary syphilis. Joseph S— presented himself this morning with a glorious dose of gonorrhoea[sic]."⁷⁹ Joseph was slated for expulsion and fled the institution before receiving punishment, but Otto was not as fleet-footed. As Superintendent Lipps wrote to Walter Dickey, Indian Agent to the Red Lake Agency, "In view of the fact that Otto's condition is a menace to the other students as well as of undesirable moral influence I would thank you to advise me at once how you can co-operate with me to effect his return home. If he has any funds to his credit with you it may be possible to arrange so that he can be placed in some Hospital for treatment." In response, Dickey objected, "Otto has no funds on deposit to his credit at this Agency. He has an uncle within the Cross Lake District, but this man has no funds either, and I am entirely at a loss to know what to advise in the premises. As you know we have no hospital at the Red Lake

⁷⁵ Madison Grant and Henry Fairfield Osborn, *The Passing of the Great Race; or, The Racial Basis of European History*. 4th Rev. Ed., with a Documentary Supplement, with Prefaces by Henry Fairfield Osborn (New York: Scribner, 1922).

⁷⁶ "Grover M—. Student File," NARA.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ "Otto T—. Student File." RG 75, Series 1327, box 113, folder 4674, NARA, CISDRC.

Agency though we anticipate the construction of one during the current fiscal year. Could not this young man be placed in some of the sanatoriums throughout the United States?”⁸⁰ As the above correspondence illustrates, Otto was unwanted both at Carlisle and back home and was being considered for confinement in a sanatorium. Instead, however, he was placed under the “Outing” and then subsequently at Ford, in a familiar pattern of elimination that had come to characterize Carlisle administrators’ responses to Indian women and men who were “troublesome,” ill, or otherwise unwanted. For Carlisle men deemed to be moral contaminants, labor was always the cure. As a 1916 *Ford Times* article entitled “Real Ownership” suggested, “Do you want Health? Work for it.”⁸¹

Many Indian men and women did not accept this kind of treatment without fighting back, however. Additional correspondence reveals that Otto was determined to use the avenues open to him to improve his life. These materials also document the racism he encountered from Ford and Carlisle officials as a result of his desire to pursue his goals. In January of 1917, Ford supervisor Griswold placed Otto on suspension for truancy from the course in which he was enrolled, and resolved to “hold up” his timecard in order to force Otto to attend classes. In the following weeks, Otto wrote acting Carlisle Superintendent C.V. Peel, detailing the disagreement with Griswold—evidently younger than Otto, then twenty-two—from his perspective. He wrote, “You cannot understand the cause of my release from the students’ course until Mr. Griswold explains it to you because I never stated in the telegram...I was called up to the office of Mr. Griswold on the 5th of January. He then commenced to ask me why I don’t attend the students’ meeting held every day up at the Educational Dept.” He continued,

I told some of the reasons why I can’t go every meeting. He commenced to say some of the things that I didn’t feel like hearing which is as follows:
‘There are five hundred men behind you, looking for a chance to get in the factory as students; waiting for you to get out if you don’t follow the rules of the students’ course.’

‘Don’t you know that it is the only reason why you are working for the Ford Motor Company is simply because you are a student, there is nothing else.’”⁸²

In pleading his case to Lipps, Otto explained that he was determined to learn about the different makes of cars, taking advantage of his location in the heart of the burgeoning automobile industry to attend a business course in downtown Detroit, in order to better his chances at securing gainful employment—a fact that Griswold obviously resented. He went on to say that he sought this additional training because he felt that the education he received at Carlisle and at Ford was inadequate: “A student finishing the course in the Ford factory does not know much about automobile[s]. Think of the many different kinds of cars. A man willing to run a garage business want to be able to handle any car that comes to his shop besides Ford car. To do this a man must have training in the place where they teach the automobiles in the proper way. My next step is this. The only thing I will ask from the school is to send all my money, and let us see what I can do in the automobile world.”⁸³ He concluded,

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Real Ownership,” The Henry Ford Motor Company, *Ford Times*, 9, no. 10, (May 1916), 472.

⁸² “Otto T—. Student File,” NARA, 11.

⁸³ Ibid.

I really thought that there is [no] use for me to stay with a company where they offer no encouragement, after I learned the opinion of Mr. Griswold toward the Indian students. But you know that yourself, when a man has a little office and some authority, that he would talk as though he is going to run over that fellow he is talking to, and this was the case of this young man when he didn't give me sufficient time to reason with him.⁸⁴

Ultimately, although Griswold constantly insulted the Indian men, Otto eventually returned to the Student Course to finish his certification—and at the close of January 1917, Ford hired him on as a regular employee, transferring him to Chicago.

Experiences like Otto's attest to the complexities of the struggles Indian men encountered in the early twentieth century. Whether at Carlisle or Ford, the stories about Indian men we have considered thus far point to how anti-Indian racism could manifest as a process of pathologization, as white Americans conflated the health status of Indian people with their Indianness. Oftentimes, Carlisle officials explicitly defined those who suffered sexually transmitted infections as diseased, prescribing labor as the "cure-all" for such ailments while drawing on and reinforcing colonialist tropes about Indian men as lazy and idle. In other instances, these materials document attempts on the part of Carlisle and Ford officials to keep Indian men in positions of subordination and subservience, and show how some men, like Thunder, were able to achieve success in spite of these actions. In many cases, these experiences demonstrate how officials at Ford and Carlisle propagated social attitudes about illness and Indianness as being synonymous with one another, which frequently resulted in the ejection of Indian men from these institutions. As I demonstrate in the final section, dominant attitudes about race, gender, health, and morality impacted Indian women in similarly complex ways.

As the corollary to the training partnership at Ford, Lipps established a nurse training program at the General Hospital in Lancaster, PA in 1916, and this training "partnership" created similarly prejudicial circumstances for the few Carlisle women who lived at the hospital. While there, those in training were expected to perform caretaking labor on the ward, and were evaluated by the Head Nurse according to gender-specific criteria about proper conduct. Documents relating to Ozetta B. and Emerald B., two young women who trained at the General Hospital in 1916, demonstrate how different behavioral expectations could be for Indian men and women in the early years of the twentieth century.

Ozetta B. (Pottawotami) was nearly twenty-one years old in 1916 when she was punished for having her photographs made. As a letter from Lipps reflects, Ozetta's file would be permanently marred by punishment received for this "offense." He explained, "I am sorry to have to file with your permanent record here at the school, the report and photographs of you which Miss Johnston has given to me. Neither I am sorry to say, is a very great credit to you."⁸⁵ Given the times, the photographs in question [Figs. 1 and 2] were likely interpreted as being

⁸⁴ "Otto T—. Student File," NARA, 5.

⁸⁵ "Ozetta B—. Student File," RG 75, Series 1327, box 106, folder 4506, NARA, CISDRC, 6.



Fig. 1 “Ozetta B—, c. 1916”
RG 75, Series 1327, box 106, folder 4506,
NARA, CISDR.



Fig. 2 “Ozetta B— and Unidentified Female,
c. 1916”
RG 75, Series 1327, box 106, folder 4506,
NARA, CISDR.

suggestive of a relationship between two women in an era in which homosexuality was itself viewed as a psychiatric disorder, and coupled with the fact that the domestic, marriage, and kinship relations of Indian people were sites of ongoing conflict at this time, these photographs would have challenged the domestic teachings of the era, as well.⁸⁶ In the first image, for example, Ozetta’s posturing rebels against the demure self-styling expected of women in the early twentieth century. Her pants alone would have been a fashionable statement of defiance in any context, but as a nurse her choice of clothing additionally bucked the expectation that she dress in the professional costuming of crisp, white, starched uniforms, which mirrored the aesthetically sterile environment of the hospital.

⁸⁶ For more information about Indian homes and forms of domesticity as sites of colonial conflict in this era, see: Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers & Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933*, First Peoples : New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Victoria K. Haskins, *Matrons and Maids: Regulating Indian Domestic Service in Tucson, 1914–1934* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012); Margaret D. 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); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Beth H. Piatote, *Domestic Subjects: Gender, Citizenship, and Law in Native American Literature*, The Henry Roe Cloud Series on American Indians and Modernity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism*, Cultural Studies of the United States (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

In the second image [Fig. 2], Ozetta leans against an unidentified friend who is dressed in attire that would have been considered more properly feminine. Reaching her hand in through the heavy cape that adorns her companion's narrow shoulders, it is difficult to tell whether Ozetta extends her arm in a hug or embraces her friend at her waist; her forearm disappears into the folds of her companion's cape, and along with it, the viewer's satisfaction of knowing where her hand has landed. While there are many aspects of the photograph that could potentially raise the objections of Ozetta's supervisors—the sheer audacity of having her photograph made, being one of them—it is also possible that the opacity of the women's relationship was the greatest offense of all, along with the obvious pleasure that they derived from being in one another's company. A letter from Lipps to Ozetta demonstrates his disapproval; after receiving a complaint from the hospital's Head Nurse with Ozetta's photos enclosed, Lipps thus wrote to her to remind her that he had the power to destroy her reputation. "The record you are making now," he explained, "will count either in your favor or against you when you apply for work in the future...so you see how very important it is that you watch every action of yours and make your record clean every day."⁸⁷

Documents relating to the punishment of eighteen-year-old Emerald B. (Chippewa), a nurse-in-training along with Ozetta, further emphasize how transgressing the race, class, and gender expectations of their white supervisors could have significant consequences. Letters of correspondence contained in Emerald's file document the harsh treatment the Indian women received under the Supervisor of Nurses, Miss Taylor, and show how in the event of a perceived behavioral transgression, Carlisle officials were more likely to side with other white institutional authority figures than with the Indian women under their aegis. For Emerald, this prejudice created an intolerable atmosphere, which led her to flee the hospital altogether in 1916. A letter dated May 9, 1916, sent from Outing matron Lida Johnston to Lipps, demonstrates how the complaints against Emerald were largely unrelated to her professional abilities, and were instead about Emerald's obvious rejection of her subordinate status. After visiting the hospital the previous day to investigate the issue, Johnston reported: "Miss Taylor took charge of the nurses in February of this year. New rules were put into effect. Emerald seemed to resent the new order of things. Whenever a privilege was given her, she took advantage of it and went just a little further. She remained off duty for every little ailment."⁸⁸ After detailing Emerald's period of recovery after tonsillitis surgery, subsequent illnesses, and Emerald's apparent unwillingness to follow the doctor's recommendation that she take bed rest, Johnston continued, "Miss Taylor further reports that Emerald had a pleasant cheery disposition and was well liked by the patients. As a nurse she was a hard worker,-was not a loafer, but she was not thorough. She was inclined to slick things over. She spent money freely, had too many clothes, was the best dressed girl in the institution, was always receiving boxes by express, flowers, etc."⁸⁹ Taylor felt that Emerald was a competent nurse and well-liked by her patients, but resented her expensive tastes. Indian women, evidently, were not allowed to hold the title of "best dressed."

Yet in the eyes of her supervisors, Emerald's fashion sense was, perhaps, not her worst infraction. Johnston's report further explains, "After [Emerald's] tonsillitis operation and time was given her to recover, instead of caring for herself she got up and went automobiling. In fact, she went automobiling at every opportunity. The party with whom she went most frequently is a

⁸⁷ "Ozetta B—. Student File," NARA, 6.

⁸⁸ "Emerald B—.", RG 75, Series 1327, box 105, folder 4482, NARA, CISDRC, 8.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Mr. Hall. I learned that this young man has no definite employment.”⁹⁰ Like the Carlisle women who labored in the homes of white Americans as domestic servants, Emerald was also subject to heightened scrutiny intended to limit their mobility and prevent sexual partnerships from forming, which the act of “automobiling” with Mr. Hall materially and symbolically rejected. On May 8, 1916, the day she fled the hospital, Emerald wrote Lipps: “I feel as tho I have done you a wrong because you have been so good to me. I have been sick on and off for quite a while, Miss Taylor, our Supt. says it is due to my ‘running around.’ Well I entertained my company once a week, that’s all and I can hardly see what harm is in that. It agreed with the rules of the hospital... As for Miss Taylor I intend to expose her mistreatment of the nurses. I’ll remain here till I receive further orders from you. I’ll do anything you wish except return to the hospital and I guess she wouldn’t have me now anyway.”⁹¹

In response, Lipps was unforgiving. Four days later, on May 12th, he wrote, “I have miss Johnston’s report of her visit to you, also your letter. I feel that you have acted very unwisely. You have not lived up to the rules of the Hospital as you should. You have not taken the advice or even orders from your superior officer in the manner you should. You did not consult me but took matters into your own hands and left the Hospital.” He continued, “Your chief aim seems to be to have a good time and you are willing to sacrifice your training, your health and your general welfare in other ways, to get this good time.”⁹² He did not advise, he explained, a return to her training; instead he would send her back to her home, to reside “in the care of [her] own people.”⁹³ In closing, he made it clear that he felt she was ill-suited for nursing, rejecting Emerald’s accounting of her actions: “I hope that you will in time see the mistake you have made in not finishing your training at the Lancaster Hospital and I trust that when you have fully regained your health, you may again, take up the work in a profession for which you have a natural aptitude.”⁹⁴ What Lipps thought that profession might be, he did not say, but that was beside the point; Emerald would not be allowed to return to the hospital to resume her training, as punishment for “having a good time,” behavior that rejected the many hierarchies—racial, professional, gendered, and classed—in which she was to play a subordinate role. Ultimately, her rejection of these expectations rendered her a threat to institutional order—a moral contagion—and resulted in her removal from the hospital. Despite a nation-wide need for nurses to tend to the wounded of WWI, Ozetta and Emerald were expendable.

Conclusion

In 1918, the same year that Carlisle was repurposed as wartime hospital, an inspection was taking place at the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians in South Dakota, the federal facility for the supposed care of “insane” Indian people. In reference to plans for the facility’s enlargement, special investigator R. Newberne noted in his final report, “I understand that Canton has a waiting list of 70 or more. This list does not include the feeble minded and many of the epileptics, who, for eugenic purposes as well as for their personal comfort, should be incarcerated.” He continued, “Regardless of what the general Indian policy of the future may be, it would be humane and economical for the United States Government to make some provision

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 7.

for the mental derelicts of the Indian race...I believe that Canton would be a good place to centralize this benevolent work...Why not increase capacity to 500?"⁹⁵ Mass incarceration, Newberne seemed to suggest, could also serve eugenicist ends.

Five years later, after dozens of inmates had died of abuse and neglect at the hands of Canton's Superintendent, the chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, George Vaux, Jr., conducted another inspection of the asylum. Much like Newberne's findings in 1918, Vaux reported to the Board that conditions at the "hospital" were excellent, but stated that it "would appear to be both humane and economical to increase materially [Canton's] resources." Expanding on this sentiment, he continued:

I am not one of those who believe that the Indian Bureau can or ought to be terminated within a few years...In fact the quickest and cheapest way to bring it to an end is to enable it to so perform its duties that the Indian as an Indian will cease to exist... I am convinced that it has been a serious disadvantage to discontinue some of the schools which have been laid down of recent years...

"Similar reasons," Vaux concluded, "make me arrive at the conclusion that the wisest policy is to strengthen such federal enterprises as the Canton asylum."⁹⁶ As one Canton investigation would reveal in 1929, boarding school officials were often responsible for the commitment of inmates to the facility, and given this fact, it is not surprising that Vaux would lament the closure of off-reservation institutions like Carlisle.

In the context of a boarding institution designed for the "assimilation" of Indian people, Indianness itself was often construed as a social pathology, and labor frequently promoted as panacea—the primary means by which the Indian "race" would be uplifted. But as this chapter has illustrated, the ostensibly "uplifting" policies of the Indian Office in the early twentieth century did little to educate Indian people or make them self-sufficient, and instead assigned them their appropriate place within the racial, classed, and gendered social hierarchies of America. The successful "improvement" of one's life as an Indigenous person in this era thus meant accepting one's subordinate status as a racialized menial laborer, and failure to do so was often cited as evidence of racial inferiority and met with steep punishment. As I demonstrate in the following chapter, Indian people who refused to accept their role in this social order were also vulnerable to diagnoses of psychological abnormality, and the mere existence of facilities like the Canton Asylum legitimated race-based forms of incarceration. In drawing connections between the pathologization of Indian people at Carlisle and the eugenicist impulses behind Indigenous confinement at Canton, I situate both institutions within a broader history of medical confinement and experimentation on populations of color in the U.S., and locate the practices of both facilities on a continuum of U.S. policies aimed at the eradication of Indigenous populations. From the weaponization of smallpox to the forcible sterilization of Indian women in mid-twentieth-century America, Indigenous people have historically been regarded as a threat to the legitimacy of the settler nation and subject to violent forms of colonial elimination.

⁹⁵ R. Newberne, "Special Report on the Canton Asylum," April 14-15, 1918, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 2, folder 35833, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁹⁶ George Vaux, Jr. to the Board of Indian Commissioners, June 30, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 2, folder 67319, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

Chapter Four: “A Fit Subject”

On September 20, 1905, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp received a letter from the U.S. Indian Agent at Muskogee regarding a 57-year-old Cherokee woman by the name of Josephine R. As the Indian agent explained, Josephine had been adjudged “insane” almost one month to the day before this correspondence and was being held in the local jail at the instruction of William Ross, her legal guardian. He continued, “[The enclosed] papers clearly show that said Josephine R— is insane and a fit subject for custody and treatment in a lunatic asylum, and I therefore respectfully recommend that the Superintendent of the Canton, South Dakota, asylum be instructed to send an attendant for Josephine R— at the earliest possible date.”¹ Like the other Indian people held at Canton between 1902-1934, Josephine would be forcibly confined at an institution that offered very little in the way of psychiatric care or medical treatment. Indeed, the circumstances around Josephine’s commitment to Canton—her designation as “a fit subject” for custody and her temporary incarceration in the local jail before her transfer to the asylum—exemplify the institution’s carceral appeal for those wanting to be rid of Indian people regarded as inconvenient or behaviorally “troublesome” in some way. As this chapter demonstrates, a wide array of historical actors used Canton as a repository for unwanted Indian women and men, who, once committed to this facility, languished there for many years on end, often until death. U.S. officials, inconvenienced family members, legal guardians, boarding school superintendents and prominent citizens are identified routinely in Canton materials as those responsible for initiating the confinement of Indian people to Canton. That white citizens from different regions and walks of life felt emboldened to police, surveil, and commit Indian people to the facility demonstrates the extent of white American deputization in this era.

What did it mean, exactly, to be identified as a “fit subject” for treatment at Canton? This chapter answers that question by examining the circumstances around the commitment of Indian people to a facility that offered only punishment, abuse, and neglect if it offered anything in the way of “treatment” at all. Reading across the grain of Canton files and the pseudoscientific discourses that circulated in the American public forum at the turn of the twentieth century, I demonstrate how the Canton facility was used as a place to which Indian people could be disappeared, frequently by the very officials tasked with the “uplift” of Indigenous communities. The previous chapter demonstrated how the condition of being Indian was often construed as a social pathology at Carlisle and in other institutional spaces of Indigenous labor, as the “troublesome” behaviors of Carlisle enrollees were conflated with inborn racial characteristics. As I argued in that chapter, Carlisle officials’ disciplinary practices and the punitive patterns that accompanied them point to the ways in which the ostensibly “uplifting” policies of the Indian Office in the early twentieth century were intended to educate Indian people in their appropriate “place” within the racial, classed, and gendered social hierarchies of America—a process of proletarianization and subordination to white Americans in the private sector of the national economy. The successful “improvement” of one’s life as an Indigenous person in this context thus meant accepting one’s subordinate status as a racialized menial laborer, and failure to do so was frequently construed by U.S. officials and white Americans as the collective failure of the Indian “race.”

¹ “Josephine R. File,” RG 75, Canton Asylum, box 1, Records of Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, Case Files of Insane Indians, 1905-8, NARA-FW.

As the foregoing chapters also demonstrated, Indian people at Carlisle and beyond did not easily or willingly accept social subordination as the inferiors of white Americans, and resisted this designation in many important ways. But as reform-minded politicians encouraged the development of institutions designed to curb the unforeseen effects of American “progress,” Indian people who refused to accept their role in this new social order became vulnerable to diagnoses of psychological abnormality proffered by explanatory frameworks that promoted race-based understandings of social inequality. Building on the discussions put forth in the preceding chapters, in this chapter I demonstrate how psychiatric diagnoses of insanity could be—and were—of enormous social utility in this era. Frequently cited as proof of the white superiority that eugenicists were so eager to confirm, diagnoses of insanity could also be used as ideological weapons that legitimated the forcible incarceration of Indian people in facilities like the Canton Asylum for an immense array of perceived abnormalities. This reality, I contend, must be understood as the natural consequence of the various federal Indian policies designed to “assimilate” Indian people into the dominant body politic by suppressing the expression of Indigenous cosmologies, lifeways, and kinship networks; in short, by eradicating “Indianness” altogether. While this version of “assimilation” was meant to take place within boarding institutions designed for this purpose, as I demonstrated in the first chapter, adult Indian women and men at Carlisle and beyond were paradoxically punished for enacting the independence, autonomy, and self-sufficiency that they were supposed to be “learning” in this era.

This chapter examines previously unexplored connections between disparate sites of Indian confinement, the white Americans who presided over them, and the social attitudes that legitimated the long-term incarceration of Indigenous people on the basis of “insanity.” I begin with a brief overview of Canton’s founding before transitioning into a discussion of nineteenth-century philosophies about race, nation, and insanity, and the ways in which pseudoscientific discourses intersected with ideas about Indigenous lifeways as deficient, dirty, or abnormal. I then shift to an examination of the reasons for which Indian people were confined at the Canton facility, beginning with a discussion of “feble-mindedness” and the use of this facility for eugenicist purposes. The following section, “‘The Indian as an Indian will cease to exist’: Boarding School Connections” examines connections between Canton and off-reservation boarding schools, before transitioning into an analysis of the ways in which conflicts over land, power, knowledge, and wealth rendered certain Indian people vulnerable to incarceration at Canton. Finally, this chapter concludes with the assertion that Canton was used as a place of eugenicist confinement—a facility to which Indian people could be disappeared, and a settler institution supported and reinforced by other institutions of the state, unlike “total institutions.” In exposing the motivations behind the confinement of Indigenous people, this chapter locates the practices of the Canton facility on a continuum of policies aimed at the eradication of Indigenous populations.

“These Horrors Cannot be Erased”: The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians

The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians was founded in 1902 in Canton, South Dakota, the result of legislation introduced by Senator Richard Pettigrew. Hoping to prove his political acumen as a junior member of the Senate, the ambitious lawyer-turned-politician advocated for the construction of the facility as a way to attract attention to the state, newly-admitted to the Union in 1889. While the construction of the Canton asylum was formally a result of Pettigrew’s bill, the inspiration for such a facility came from Peter Couchman, U.S. Indian Agent at the

Cheyenne River Agency, who wrote in correspondence dated May 1897 that he had been using the reservation guardhouse to hold the “demented Indians” under his jurisdiction.² As Canton researchers Todd Leahy, Carla Joinson, and Diane Putney have variously noted in their works, state hospitals often refused to accept Indian and black women and men into their facilities, citing overcrowding as a convenient way to disguise racial prejudice and the widespread conviction, in relation to Indian people, that the administration of Indian affairs was a federal, rather than state, issue.³ Given the apparent need for an institution intended for the exclusive care of “insane” Indian people, Pettigrew’s proposal thus appealed to philanthropically-minded citizens and Indian Service officials alike, who evidently saw the opportunity to extend their campaign of racial “uplift” into the purportedly abnormal psyches of Indian people.⁴

Despite garnering the vocal support of Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Smith, however, Pettigrew’s proposal was not universally accepted. Secretary of the Interior Cornelius Bliss was adamant that a new asylum would not, in fact, serve the interests of the Indian Service, especially when the Government Hospital for the Insane in Washington, D.C.—St. Elizabeth’s—already accepted Indian patients and had been designated for expansion.⁵ But rather than abandoning his pet project, Pettigrew redoubled his efforts to win favor among his political peers, and sent out surveys to Indian agents across the United States in order to determine with hard data the extent to which Indian people suffered from mental illness. A letter dated June 10, 1897, sent from Pettigrew to the Indian agent of the Southern Ute Agency reads:

Dear Sir:

That I may act intelligently in connection with a proposition to create an asylum for insane Indians, I would like from you answers to the following questions:

How many insane Indians are there on the reservation under your charge?

Is insanity as common among Indians as among whites?

Have you any special course of treatment for mentally diseased Indians?

Truly Yours,

R. F. Pettigrew⁶

By September 1897, Pettigrew had received his answer: fifty-nine “insane” Indians were spread across twenty-one Indian reservations, and according to U.S. officials, of those fifty-nine, twenty-six required confinement. Though this small number seemed to contradict Pettigrew’s insistence that Indian people required a psychiatric facility all their own, the survey results

² As quoted in Todd Leahy, *They Called It Madness: The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1899-1934* (Baltimore: Publish America, 2009). Bill S. 2042 (1897), for the construction of an insane asylum for Indians; referenced as an enclosure in a letter from Pettigrew to secretary of the interior, June 24, 1897, NARA RG 48, box 227.

³ See, for instance, Carla Joinson’s chapter “Where Will All the Insane Indians Go?” in *Vanished in Hiawatha: The Story of the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016). Disability studies scholar Kim Nielsen also addresses Indigenous confinement at the Canton Asylum using a disability studies lens. See: Kim Nielsen, *A Disability History of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2012).

⁴ Joel Pfister, *Individuality Incorporated: Indians and the Multicultural Modern*, New Americanists (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁵ Leahy, *They Called It Madness*, 16.

⁶ R.F. Pettigrew. 1897, RG 75, Folder 723.0 Asylums Box 63, Canton Asylum, Consolidated Ute Agency, NARA-Denver, 26.

justified a separate institution for “insane” Indian people in the eyes of Congress, and appropriations were made for the construction of the asylum.⁷

As a businessman and attorney at law, ex-mayor of Canton Oscar S. Gifford was an inappropriate choice for the director of any psychiatric facility. He had no medical training at all, a fact confirmed by the twenty deaths that occurred at Canton while he was supervisor. But as a popular merchant and well-known politician, Gifford was nonetheless favored as superintendent of the new facility, and occupied this position from 1902-1908, when he would be removed after his gross incompetence and near-continuous absence from the institution was discovered. As Joinson notes, while asylum superintendents elsewhere in the country were generally trained medical practitioners, “Canton Asylum was run like an Indian boarding school, and no one had thought to substitute a physician for a lay superintendent.”⁸ Gifford’s successor, Harry Hummer, was a trained physician—educated at Georgetown University, no less—but he too would be subject to numerous internal investigations and eventually removed on similar charges of neglect and malpractice. Of the hundreds of Indian people who suffered at the hands of Gifford and Hummer over the decades of this facility’s operation, dozens died at the asylum, many of whom were buried in unmarked graves in a small cemetery adjoining Canton’s grounds. Putney estimates that an average of four inmates died at Canton annually, amounting to roughly 120 deaths between 1903-1934; Pemina Yellow Bird (Three Affiliated Tribes) puts this figure even higher, at an average rate of ten “discharges” a year, nine of which she attributes solely to the deaths of Indian people.⁹ As Yellow Bird writes of the atrocities perpetrated at Canton, “These horrors cannot be erased.”¹⁰

“Civilized society...practically manufactures its own unfit”: Race, Civilization and Insanity

There are few extant studies about the Canton Asylum. All of the peer-reviewed publications about this facility are authored from a non-native perspective, but Susan Burch’s 2014 article, “Dislocated Histories,” as well as her forthcoming manuscript, *Committed* (2021), have been informed by the author’s collaborations with descendants of Indian people confined to Canton. These works are important for the evidence they provide about Indigenous struggles and lives lost at this institution, but older scholarship about the institution often duplicates the uncritical assumptions about Indian people that legitimated the construction of the facility in the first place. This chapter thus adopts a critical stance towards the Canton facility and previous interpretations of “patient” experiences. In order to understand how Canton deviated in significant ways from institutions that provided medical care—however limited—to people in need, it is important to review the intersections between the development of psychiatric thought and contemporaneous discourses about Indian “assimilation” at the turn of the twentieth century. Doing so will enable us to discern the ways in which many of those held at the Canton facility were neither patients nor in need of psychiatric care, but were in many cases targeted for removal from their communities for behavior that was characterized as abnormal, or in some way threatening to established racial, social, and sexual hierarchies in white America. The

⁷ Leahy, *They Called It Madness*.

⁸ Joinson, *Vanished in Hiawatha*, 80.

⁹ Diane Putney, “The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934,” *South Dakota History* 14, no. 1 (1984): 1–30; Pemina Yellow Bird, “Wild Indians: Native Perspectives on the Hiawatha Asylum for Insane Indians,” *Center for Mental Health Services*, N.d., 1–10, 5.

¹⁰ Yellow Bird, “Wild Indians.”

confinement of Indian women and men at Canton, rather than providing insight into Indian “insanity” in this era, instead indexes the ways in which their incarceration at the institution was an acceptable form of social elimination that required little justification, or even review.

Eastern State Hospital, founded in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1773, was the first state institution to administer to the insane of all classes in the United States.¹¹ While those early institutions were characterized by what was referred to as “moral treatment”—where lay superintendents ran facilities that held “lunatic balls,” and where good behavior was rewarded with extra privileges—with the 1824 opening of the Hartford Retreat in Connecticut, American physicians had claimed asylum medicine as a specialty unto itself.¹² Twenty years later, in 1844, thirteen asylum superintendents from cities across the northeast met in Philadelphia to define the direction of their emerging field, and with that meeting the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane (later to be changed to the American Psychiatric Association), the first professional medical organization to exist in the United States, was born.¹³ As historian Gerald Grob notes of the composition of late-nineteenth-century American asylums, by 1880 91,997 insane persons were confined out of a national population of 50 million, and of that population, 52 percent were female, 71 percent native born, 93 percent white, and 7 percent Black.¹⁴ Most of these commitments, Grob explains, were initiated by family members “Confronted with behavior that threatened the integrity of the family or situations with which they could not cope...[and who] began the process of institutionalization as a last resort and with a vague understanding that it was the lesser of two evils.”¹⁵ The confinement of an individual in an asylum meant their earning power was lost to the family, and thus for many American families at the turn of the twentieth century, mental illness presented serious social, familial, and economic quandaries.¹⁶

For American Indian communities in this era, however, the concept of insanity presented a somewhat different set of vulnerabilities. With the creation of the federally-funded off-reservation boarding school system intended for the “civilization” of Indian people, white American citizens championed the notion that theirs was a superior way of being. In an affirmation of this belief, social reformers thus frequently derogated the continuance of tribal customs as evidence of Indian peoples’ stubborn heathenism and savagery, often likening these practices to forms of madness, illness, or uncleanness in order to emphasize the supremacy of American ways and rationalize the policies with which they addressed these ostensible Indian “problems.” In the late 1880s, for example, politicians, reformers, and news publications circulated news of the Ghost Dance “hysteria” spreading across the plains, warning white Americans that the dances were preparations for a massive Indian uprising.¹⁷ At Carlisle, student

¹¹ Norman Dain, *Disordered Minds: The First Century of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia, 1766-1866* (University Press of Virginia, 1971).

¹² See: Piper Murray, “Bronte’s Lunatic Ball: Constituting ‘A Very Safe Asylum’ in Vilette,” *Victorian Review* 26, no. 2 (2000): 24–47; Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago, 1987).

¹³ Robert Whitaker, *Mad in America: Bad Science, Bad Medicine, and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Pub, 2002).

¹⁴ Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society, 1875-1940* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 8-9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁷ See: Rani-Henrik Andersson, *The Lakota Ghost Dance of 1890* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008); William Coleman, *Voices of Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000). Sam Maddra, *Hostiles? The Lakota Ghost Dance and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2006; Jeffrey

publications similarly warned against the destructive influence of Indigenous traditions, frequently using satire and parable as their weapons of choice. In 1887, for instance, an article authored by “Aunt Mertha” entitled “Pawnee Medicine and an Indian Lodge” was printed in *The Indian Helper*, Carlisle’s official school publication from 1885-1900.¹⁸ Writing of the homes, ceremonies, and healers of the Pawnee—early adherents to Wovoka’s Ghost Dance philosophy—“Aunt Mertha” recounted a story she had once told to little boys and girls about the “queer doings” of this Oklahoma people. “There are men among the Indians who pretend to do wonderful things,” Mertha warned her audience of (presumably white) children, “They are called doctors and they make the other Indians think they have great power given them by Indian gods.” “Is it true?” one little boy asked, bewildered. “No” Mertha reassured him; “the Indian doctors are just as ignorant as the other Indians, but they have great influence in the tribe, and are more in the way of their real progress than anything else.” This was evidenced, Mertha continued, by the living conditions among the Pawnee. As she explained:

‘I have seen such dirty things thrown in the ashes, and have noticed time and again men spit in the ashes near to where I thought the bread was baking. Then the Indian women are not careful to wash their hands before they go at mixing the bread. So you see my dear children, I did not feel much hungry when they offered me that bread to eat. I have been told that it is generally good and sweet.’

‘I should like to know about the *dance*.’

‘So should I’

‘And I,’ said another, and before Auntie had time to say more, every tot in the room was swinging his or her hands and calling out ‘Dance! Dance! Yes, Dance! Auntie, tell us about the dance,’ but Auntie disappointed them by saying, ‘Not now, my dears, but next time you come to see me I will tell you all about the Pawnee Medicine dance.’¹⁹

Suturing Pawnee ceremony to deception and filth, “Pawnee Medicine and an Indian Lodge,” like other Carlisle parables, sought to inculcate in Indian youth a healthy distrust of their communities. As Aunt Mertha (likely Marianna Burgess, Carlisle’s printmaking instructor) pathologized Indigenous lifeways and derogated ancestral practices as “ignorance,” she also reinforced white American forms of domesticity as a norm to which Indian children and their communities should aspire.

In 1902, the year before the Canton asylum opened, another article entitled “A Protest Against the Abolition of the Indian Dance” appeared in Carlisle’s *Red Man and Helper*, reflecting the endurance of this administrative anxiety. In a departure from the moralistic tone that came to be the hallmark of Carlisle publications, the author of this piece used satire as a shaming mechanism:

Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee*, Studies in North American Indian History (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Jacqueline Fear-Segal has pointed out that articles like “Pawnee Medicine” were likely authored by Marianna Burgess, Carlisle’s printmaking instructor. See: Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man’s Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation*, Indigenous Education (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

¹⁹ “Pawnee Medicine and an Indian Lodge,” Nov. 4, 1887, *The Indian Helper*. 3, no. 13, 1-4, CISDRC, Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections, Dickinson College.

I fail to see the necessity of checking the Indian dance. If learned scientists advise an occasional relaxation of work or daily routine with such ardor that even the inmates of insane asylums are allowed to dance their dances then the same logic should hold good elsewhere. The law at least, should not be partial. If it is right for the insane and idiot to dance, the Indian (who is classed with them) should have the same privilege.²⁰

Likening dancing Indians to those who might occupy the wards of the insane, the article communicated what Indian people at Carlisle had been taught in numerous other ways: Indianness itself was an abnormal state of being, frequently construed as a form of illness. In this instance, Indianness was a degree or two removed from insanity.

A decade earlier, Henrietta Briggs-Wall, American suffragist and superintendent of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, put this sentiment to another use. As the caption of a four-by-six-foot pastel painting entitled "American Woman and her Political Peers" suggested, "In many states women are classed, politically, with idiots, convicts, the insane, and Indians—not allowed to vote." The original illustration was displayed at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 in addition to the "Greater America" Exhibition of Omaha in 1896, and was later reproduced in numerous other mediums, including postcard format [Fig. 1]. While the image was meant to arouse shock and dismay on behalf of white American women who felt they were unfairly "classed" politically among the nation's disenfranchised, the painting also demonstrates how intimately entwined "Indianness" was with cultural conceptions of criminality, insanity, effeminateness, and other forms of "degeneracy" in the American imaginary of this era.

²⁰ The original piece, written by Gertrude Bonnin, was reprinted in the *Red Man and Helper* and editorialized by Carlisle staff in order to discourage participation in ceremonial dances. "A Protest Against the Abolition of the Indian Dance," Aug. 22, 1902, *Red Man and Helper*. 3, no. 2, 1-4, CISDRC, Cumberland County Historical Society.



Fig. 1

Henrietta Briggs-Wall. "American Woman and her Political Peers, 1893." Hutchinson, Kansas: Henrietta Briggs-Wall, 1911. Postcard. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (116).

In the world of Western medicine, psychiatrists similarly contemplated the nature of insanity—its causes, characteristics, and cures—drawing upon contemporaneous theories that posited reason as the exclusive purview of mankind and civilization as humanity’s highest achievement. The elite American and European men who dominated the medical profession thus often looked to women, non-white, and non-Western peoples who, in their estimation, had not achieved similar forms of intellectual, physical, or cultural advancement in order to determine whether insanity might be attributed to civilization gone awry. For example, in the July 1847 edition of the *American Journal of Insanity*, a Dr. Millingen pronounced that ““Insanity is of rare occurrence in barbarous nations”” and that ““Civilization appears to favor the development of madness.”” He explained, “The wants of the savage are circumscribed: he gives vent to the burst of his passions without control, and their violence subsides when they are gratified. In a more polished state of society, man dwells upon his injuries real or supposed, acts silently, and cherishes hopes of enjoyment, amongst which the sweets of revenge are not the least

seductive.”²¹ Insanity, Millingen mused, was a lamentable, but perhaps unavoidable, byproduct of civilization.

Half a century later, British and American psychiatrists evidently still clung to this self-congratulatory, if somewhat counterintuitive, notion. In 1904, for example, Dr. Robert Jones authored an essay entitled “The Development of Insanity in Regard to Civilization,” in which he stated:

It appears that insanity increases as man departs from the savage and semi-civilized states and approaches the highest civilization. In primitive states of society and among uncivilized races, insanity is rare, the pure psychoses are unknown; the chief forms—apart from the low grades, idiocy and imbecility—being associated with the taking of drugs and corresponding to the insanities of civilization resulting from alcohol, ether, cocaine, morphine, etc., and which in the main are curable... Highly civilized man thus lives in a more complicated environment, which calls for the higher forms of self-control and more prolonged and varied efforts than are customarily aroused by the simple emotions and elementary sensorial stimuli of a primitive life. In these efforts numbers of unfortunate ones will not succeed; they are incapable of elevation to this higher plane of civilization owing to mental, physical, and moral deficiencies.

Jones continued, “Not having the qualities essential to success, they are left behind, evolution proceeding at the expense of the less fit—those, in fact, whom civilization itself in the struggle renders unfit for the standard it has itself fixed.” He concluded, “It is thus seen that civilized society, in forcing the pace, practically manufactures its own unfit... its own paupers, its own lunatics, and its own criminals.”²² “Civilized” societies were so refined, so resplendent and decadent, that they drove themselves crazy with achievement. By comparison, Jones implied, non-western cultures lacking in high incidences of insanity had simply failed to reach a comparable state of perfection.

Fitness for Confinement: Feeble-mindedness, Heritable Insanity, and Eugenics

Given the flimsy logic behind turn-of-the-century theories about race, nation, civilization, and insanity, it is no surprise that Indian people were committed to Canton for reasons that appeared to be entirely unrelated to soundness of mind, and which barely disguised the underlying motives behind these wrongful commitments. As the following documents suggest, these motivations were often racially-inflected, and as a 1918 report demonstrates, the notion of using Canton for the practice of negative eugenics—the process of selecting against traits viewed as undesirable in a human population—was discussed openly among Indian Office officials. In 1918, for example, Commissioner Sells dispatched medical inspector R. E. Newberne to conduct an investigation of Canton, one of many over the institution’s thirty years of operation. But while Hummer’s conduct was generally the subject of these internal investigations, asylum conditions were the topic of interest in the spring of 1918; as Newberne’s report reflects, the facility was

²¹ Millingen. *The American Journal of Insanity*. Edited by the Officers of the New York State Lunatic Asylum, Utica, 4, (1846-48), Google Books, 94.

²² Robert Jones, “The Development of Insanity in Regard to Civilization.” *The American Journal of Insanity*, 55, no. 4, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, April 1904): 577-596.

being considered for expansion, an improvement that he supported as an act of public service for the greater good. Under “Enlargement,” he wrote, “I understand that Canton has a waiting list of 70 or more. This list does not include the feeble minded and many of the epileptics, who, for eugenic purposes as well as their personal comfort, should be incarcerated.”²³ Vague, second-hand reports frequently characterized diagnoses of “feeblemindedness” in this era, but this did not seem to affect Newberne’s convictions.²⁴ He went on, “Regardless of what the general Indian policy of the future may be, it would be humane and economical for the United States Government to make some provision for the mental derelicts of the Indian race before the problem is passed on to the states.”²⁵ Echoing the prejudice expressed by employees of state hospitals, Newberne likewise felt that the “mental derelicts of the Indian race” were a problem to be dealt with in federal, rather than state, facilities. “Why not increase the capacity of Canton to 500?” he mused. “This will not be too large and the time is not far distant when the truth of this proposition will be evident.”²⁶ Mass incarceration, he seemed to suggest, could also serve eugenicist ends.

As a federal institution, Canton was under the ultimate aegis of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who was—at least in theory—responsible for approving each new candidate for commitment to Canton, after a physician’s recommendation had been made and before an inmate’s transfer to the asylum. Indeed, letters of correspondence exchanged between Hummer, various Indian Commissioners, and U.S officials scattered across the country document how individual cases of “insanity” were generally confirmed by agency superintendents, backed by the opinion of the resident physician, and occasionally affirmed by a short letter of approval from the Commissioner. But these documents also demonstrate how, unlike the general population in the U.S., Indian people were committed to Canton at the behest of U.S. officials and individuals to whom they bore no immediate relation as family members.²⁷ These records also show how the mere existence of the facility made it appealing for those who simply wanted to rid themselves of “troublesome” Indian women or men, in much the same way that the Central Lunatic Asylum in Petersburg, VA, constructed for freedmen and women, was used as a ““dumping ground for society’s outcasts.””²⁸

On March 11, 1918, for example, agency physician H.C. Meek wrote to the Superintendent of the Tongue River Agency, John A. Buntin, in regard to the potential confinement of a twenty-seven-year-old woman named Josephine S. who, in his opinion, was destined for incarceration. He explained, “This woman is a hopeless imbecile, and shows a defective Physical development characterized by a [sic] marked lack of control over the muscles of locomotion.” Meek went on, “She has had several children all born out of wedlock. These

²³ R. Newberne, “Special Report on the Canton Asylum,” April 14-15, 1918, RG 75, CCF-1907-1939, box 2, folder 35833, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

²⁴ Garland E. Allen, “The Misuse of Biological Hierarchies: The American Eugenics Movement, 1900-1940,” *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 5, no. 2 (1983): 105–28.

²⁵ Newberne, “Special Report,” NARA-DC.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ As medical historian Gerald Grob writes of commitment in the nineteenth century, “The diagnosis of insanity often did not involve the community. Nor were most commitments begun by law enforcement personnel. Proceedings were usually initiated by members of the immediate family. Confronted with behavior that threatened the integrity of the family or situations with which they could not cope, relatives began the process of institutionalization as a last resort and with a vague understanding that it was the lesser of two evils.” Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society, 1875-1940*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 9.

²⁸ Caroline Norris, “A History of Madness: Four Venerable Virginia Lunatic Asylums,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 125, no. 2 (2017): 138–82, 159.

children are all dead with the exception of one and according to statements made to me they have all of them been defective either mentally or physically.” He concluded this callous “medical” opinion by stating: “I suggest that an effort be made to isolate this woman in order to prevent the birth of any more defective children, as well as [sic] to protect the morals of the community in which she lives. She is absolutely without moral responsibility and is, apparently [sic], about to be confined again.” “P.S.— ” he scribbled at the bottom of the page, “This woman is also a deaf mute.”²⁹ In this instance, the agency physician tasked with the medical care of those in his jurisdiction was responsible for the commitment of an Indian woman and the separation of Indian children from their mother.

As Disability studies scholar Susan Burch has demonstrated, Americans in this era viewed physical disabilities like deafness as markers of deficiency, inferiority, and limited mental capacity, which meant that disabled Indian people would have experienced discrimination on the basis of race and ability, in addition to other axes of social stratification, such as gender.³⁰ As Meek’s letter demonstrates, disabled Indian women were reviled as potential founts of social degeneration who could, in the minds of many, be rightfully confined or even sterilized, as would happen with increasing frequency in the coming decades.³¹ Barring the feasibility of forcible sterilization, however, institutional confinement could also serve as a means to prevent “defective” Indian women from having children who would, as many eugenicists believed, inherit the “undesirable” traits of their mothers.³² Remarkably, Josephine would not be committed to Canton that year, but documents relating to Nellie K. demonstrate how Hummer authorized the confinement and prevented the release of disabled Indian women or others with perceived abnormalities, and legitimated this practice as an act of public service. These documents also demonstrate how boarding school officials used Canton much like Carlisle officials used the House of the Good Shepherd: as a means by which the sexualities of young Indian women could be controlled, and as a transcarceral space of racialized punishment.³³

On June 30, 1919, Hummer wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs regarding Nellie, an eighteen-year-old woman who had been diagnosed with epilepsy and committed to Canton from the Pipestone Indian School in Montana. He began, “We are dealing here with a constitutional psychopath, who occasionally manifests hysterical symptoms, who is a pathological liar and who has a very decided weakness toward the male sex, probably nymphomania. Her conduct here has been very satisfactory between episodes, but during the

²⁹ H.C. Meek to John A. Buntin, March 11, 1918, RG 75, Folder 723.0, Asylums box 63, Northern Cheyenne, NARA-Denver, 1.

³⁰ Susan Burch, *Signs of Resistance: American Deaf Cultural History, 1900 to World War II*, The History of Disability Series (New York: New York University Press, 2002).

³¹ Sally J. Torpy, “Native American Women and Coerced Sterilization: On the Trail of Tears in the 1970s,” *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 24, no. 2 (January 2000): 1–22.

³² See: Charles Benedict Davenport, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (H. Holt, 1911); Richard Louis Dugdale, *The Jukes; a Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease, and Heredity* (Putnam, 1910); Henry Herbert Goddard, *The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeble-Mindedness* (The Macmillan company, 1921); Paul A. Lombardo, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles: Eugenics, the Supreme Court, and Buck v. Bell* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, Second edition, American Crossroads 17 (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016).

³³ I draw upon Liat Ben-Moshe’s definition of transincarceration as the movement from one carceral space to another, usually involuntarily. See: Liat Ben-Moshe, *Genealogies of Resistance to Incarceration: Abolition Politics within Deinstitutionalization and Anti-Prison Activism in the U.S.* Sociology-Dissertations. Syracuse University, 2011; Liat Ben-Moshe, C. Chapman, and A. Carey, *Disability Incarcerated: Imprisonment and Disability in the United States and Canada* (Springer, 2014).

outbreaks, she is very troublesome.”³⁴ In debating whether Nellie’s conduct merited continued confinement at Canton, Hummer went on, “The question is, what is to be done with her. If we decide to hold her, it would seem equivalent to a life sentence. If we decide to permit her to leave, we should expect to hear disconcerting news at almost any time.”³⁵ Eventually Hummer released Nellie into the custody of her sister, but other Indian women similarly described as sexually unbridled generally did not experience early release from the institution, if they were discharged at all.

In 1924, for example, responding to a query about the potential release of a thirty-six-year-old Chippewa woman named Wah-bish-ay-she-quay, Hummer wrote:

This woman is an imbecile, without capability of differentiating between right and wrong, has vicious tendencies at times, is without sexual restraint and is totally unable to care for herself in any manner. Great harm would certainly follow her release and, as she is within the procreating age, she would bring into the world a number of degenerate offspring. Accordingly, I must most earnestly recommend that her mother’s request be denied. She is beautifully cared for here, is cheerful and happy and does not desire any change, having practically forgotten her mother and home surroundings and there is no possibility that any good would come of the proposed change.³⁶

Characterizing Wah-bish-ay-she-quay as a threat to public safety, Hummer refused her release, adding that her ability to reproduce further legitimated this decision. Having first been committed at the recommendation of the agency physician, Wah-bish-ay-she-quay would remain at Canton until her death six years later at the age of forty-three, enduring confinement at the institution for twenty-four years, or just over half of her life.³⁷

In another instance of forcible long-term confinement, Agnes C. (Menominee) spent seventeen years at Canton, committed to the facility in November 1917 at the age of twenty-six. As her institutional file indicates, Agnes attempted to secure her own release from the asylum on numerous occasions, by corresponding with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and keeping him informed of her “good health.”³⁸ As communications from Hummer to Sells indicate, however, Hummer construed Agnes’ many letters to the Commissioner as evidence of her ongoing need for confinement. On October 21, 1919, Hummer wrote:

Sir: -

I have the honor to enclose herewith a letter written to you by Agnes C—, patient. This woman is feeble-minded, as you will readily detect from reading her letter, and wishes to be discharged and allowed to go to her home at the Keshena Agency. Several days ago she received a letter from her husband asking her why she did not come home, as he thought she had been here long

³⁴ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 30, 1919, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 14, folder 57067, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 15, 1924, RG 75, CCF 1907-39, box 17, folder 67465, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Agnes frequently used this phrase in her letters to the Commissioner.

enough. It would not prove a surprise to me, if it developed that the husband was not mentally alert. It would be highly improper in my opinion to discharge this woman, though she will never be bright, as she experiences great difficulty in getting along under the best of conditions and I am sure that with this husband and several children to look after, she would be immeasurably [sic] worse off than she is here.³⁹

Drawing on the notion of heritable feeble-mindedness—the same rationale that served as the basis of the Supreme Court’s 1927 landmark ruling, in *Buck v. Bell*, that states could perform involuntary sterilization procedures—Hummer characterized Agnes’ family’s collective determination as evidence of mental instability shared between relatives.⁴⁰ After describing a fight between Agnes and another person confined at Canton, Hummer continued, “Agnes has had several fights during her residence here, but ordinarily gets along fairly well. She helps with the dish-washing in the hospital building, but this is under supervision.” He concluded, “Another potent argument against her discharge is that she is well within the child-bearing age and any offspring must be defective.”⁴¹

Hummer’s final sentence was seemingly an afterthought, but a potent one that captured American anxieties about the correlation between feeble-mindedness, femininity, and social degeneracy. Writing of the ways in which diagnoses of “feeble-mindedness” were used as a mechanism of controlling female sexualities at the turn of the century Grob explains, “Worries about hereditary feeble-mindedness fed into concerns about sexual misconduct... Fears of deteriorating sexual morality and shifting social expectations for women accompanying America’s increasing urbanization and mobile immigrant populations were only exacerbated by the new emphasis on the danger of feeble-minded women.”⁴² Like many other Indian women at Canton deemed abnormal, first, by virtue of their “race,” Hummer appears to have subjected Agnes to ongoing confinement for the purpose of preventing the birth of Indian children, and this decision was reinforced and perhaps even dictated by Assistant Commissioner E.B. Meritt. As Meritt explained in response to one of Agnes’ numerous letters, “you are advised that the Office does not believe it to be to your best interest to permit you to return to your home at this time. Dr. Hummer has been directed to keep you at Canton *indefinitely* (emphasis mine).”⁴³ Years later, under the direction of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, Dr. Samuel A. Silk would issue a report that would contradict many of Hummer’s “diagnoses,” and order the release of women and men who had been confined at Canton for years on end. In a summary of Silk’s findings, the following was recorded at the top of the report:

(1) AGNES C— Imprisoned since 1917.

Thus described in the medical certificate “admitting” her:

“Rather fussy, discontented, irritable, refuses to work at times, limited mentality.”

Her record since 1917 is thus given by Dr. Hummer himself:

³⁹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 21, 1919, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 14, folder 91415, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁰ See: Lombardo, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles*.

⁴¹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 21, 1919, NARA.

⁴² Lombardo, *Three Generations, No Imbeciles*, 15.

⁴³ E.B. Meritt to Agnes C., November 24, 1920, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 14, folder 91415, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

“Usually quiet and well behaved. Very neat and tidy, no mannerisms, correctly oriented, memory fair, education limited, judgement undeveloped, no delusions or hallucinations but is over-sexed. Mentally she is deficient.”

Dr. Silk found no psychosis. The patient thinks she is well and could take care of herself.⁴⁴

Despite Hummer’s attempts to prevent the birth of Indigenous children, however, the forcible confinement of Indian women at Canton rendered them subject to sexual assault and rape, as Agnes’ pregnancy, which occurred while she was incarcerated, attests. On March 26, 1921, Agnes gave birth to a baby girl, who died six months later.⁴⁵ As these records indicate, many of the struggles at Canton were, in fact, struggles over the right to exist as an Indigenous person in the U.S.

Documents relating to Edith S. (Chippewa) demonstrate similar struggles for survival, and show how U.S. officials separated mothers from their children through commitment to Canton—a practice that reformulated the OIA’s removal of Indian children from their communities in the 1880s. On November 17, 1924, twenty-nine-year-old Edith was committed to Canton on the recommendation of Mrs. Spinney, the field matron at the Lac du Flambeau agency. A handwritten letter from Edith’s friend, a Mr. B. Fitzgerald, indicates that Spinney had secured Edith’s removal from the agency without court sanction—a fact that Assistant Commissioner E.B. Meritt both acknowledged and dismissed. As he explained to Mr. Fitzgerald,

Acknowledgement is hereby made of the receipt of your letter of November 16, 1924, asking whether Mrs. Spinney, field matron at Lac du Flambeau, has a right to send people to the insane asylum without examination... The records of this Office show that Mrs. Shroader was committed, not because she was insane, but because she was feeble minded, and that the commitment was made upon the recommendation of Superintendent C. H. Gensler.⁴⁶

Evidently unbothered by the illegality of Edith’s commitment, Meritt sidestepped the issue by suggesting that “feeble-mindedness” and “insanity,” while perhaps medically distinct, were synonymous from the standpoint of the Indian Office and its application of federal authority. Drawing on the opinion of the agency physician, Meritt continued,

Mr. Gensler uses the following language:

We have a feeble minded woman here aged about 29 years who is having a baby every year. We must get rid of her as she is a nuisance and a menace to society. She was married at one time but is now divorced. The man was forced to marry her. She has babies just the same whether married or not.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ “Sane Indians Imprisoned at Canton Asylum,” October 2, 1933, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 4, folder 7448, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁵ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 31, 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 2, folder 88523, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁶ E.B. Meritt to B. Fitzgerald, November 24, 1924, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 17, folder 78302, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

As Meritt's letter reveals, Spinney and Gensler worked together to "get rid" of Edith—to incarcerate a woman they defined as a "menace to society," using their unquestioned power as U.S. officials to confine her to the asylum. In so doing, they mobilized a rhetoric of sexual moralism popularized by reform organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and American Purity Alliance.⁴⁸ Yet, Gensler also duplicated the rationale expounded by eugenicists who promoted the sterilization and isolation of society's "defectives" as a way to prevent the transmission of undesirable traits. And while Hummer did not have the means to perform surgical sterilization, as Yellow Bird has pointed out, the long-term confinement of Indigenous women during childbearing years offered an alternative that similarly suppressed sexual reproduction.⁴⁹

In his analysis of the utility of psychiatric diagnoses as mechanisms of eugenicist control, legal historian Paul Lombardo notes that the rise of "feble-mindedness" as a public malaise marked a shift in the role of medical practitioners and social reformers alike, from philanthropic officials to guardians of the established social order in which white, native-born Americans occupied the upper echelon. "Progressivism," Lombardo writes of this chimerical era, "had many faces."⁵⁰ As a public official tasked with the supposed "uplift" of Indian communities, Meritt's correspondence likewise suggests that Indian Office officials legitimated the institutionalization of "degenerate" Indian people with diagnoses of "feble-mindedness," recasting those commitments—however wrongful—as necessary to the protection of an American society in various stages of degradation. As Meritt concluded his remarks to Fitzgerald, "After you have read this letter you will understand why [Edith] was committed to the asylum. The Office believes that if you are a true friend of this woman you will be glad that she is now in a place where she will be protected."⁵¹ It was Fitzgerald's duty as friend and patriot, Meritt implied, to condone Edith's confinement at the Canton facility. Like Agnes, Edith would experience long-term incarceration at the asylum, and be released at the direction of Dr. Silk a decade after her initial commitment. As the experiences of these women indicate, diagnoses of "feble-mindedness" could destroy entire Indigenous families, as U.S. officials used this diagnosis as a means to tear Indian mothers from their children in an intentional pattern of familial separation.

"The Indian as an Indian will cease to exist": Boarding School Connections

While incurring the wrath of a reservation agent, agency physician, or field matron might result in commitment to Canton, boarding school officials were also responsible for the forced confinement of Indian people to the facility. As a letter from Ora Padgett, superintendent of the Pipestone Indian School, indicates, children and youth as much as adults were vulnerable to incarceration at Canton for a variety of ostensible psychiatric ailments, and their transfer could

⁴⁸ Susan F. Harding, "American Protestant Moralism and the Secular Imagination: From Temperance to the Moral Majority," *Social Research* 76, no. 4 (2009): 1277–1306.

⁴⁹ Yellow Bird writes that many of Canton's inmates were thirty years of age and under, and that "incarceration there was terminal: institutional policy declared these Native people to be 'defectives,' and as such, procreation must be prohibited and they must be sterilized before they could be discharged. Since the superintendent did not know how to conduct sexual sterilization procedures, inmates simply remained until they died." Yellow Bird, "Wild Indians," 5.

⁵⁰ Lombardo. *Three Generations*, 17.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

be made without parental consent.⁵² Letters of correspondence document how Hummer's relationships with boarding school superintendents like Padgett could be mutually beneficial. By 1920, Hummer had evidently tired of his limited sphere of influence over Indian people, and began a campaign to purchase additional land that would enable him to increase Canton's holding capacity. In order to rationalize this expansion to Congress, he mailed surveys to Indian agents across the country to inquire into the number of "insane" living under each jurisdiction, as had been done years earlier at the institution's founding. In response to those queries, Padgett replied that he was currently unaware of any "Indians of unsound minds," but promised that "If at any time in the future it would be necessary to send any one to your institute who are mentally incompetent I will take the matter up with you by letter." As a seeming afterthought, he closed, "Do you ever take in children of school age, boys or girls, that are feeble minded?"⁵³ As Padgett's letter indicates, he could disappear Indian children to Canton with relative ease in his capacity as school superintendent.

As historian Cynthia Landrum notes in her monograph about the Flandreau and Pipestone institutes, Padgett shared the racist assumptions of Indian inferiority espoused by Estelle Reel, Commissioner Charles Burke, and other officials in this era; sentiments that shaped the disciplinary objectives of the boarding school system, the rhythm of Indian students' daily lives, and the nature of historical trauma passed from one generation of Indian people to the next.⁵⁴ Writing of a 1919 decision to eliminate kindergarten and the seventh and eighth grades at Pipestone, Landrum remarks that the students' purported lack of English-language proficiency was an ongoing source of bitterness for Padgett, who stated in a 1923 report that "a number of older boys in the primary grades had 'stopped growing mentally'...Padgett further described the boys as potentially subnormal individuals who should be assigned to an employer as a 'Robinson Crusoe where they can serve as his man Friday.'"⁵⁵ With such blatant racism espoused openly at Pipestone, Padgett's response to Hummer's inquiry indicates that he was likely considering the commitment of Indian children to Canton as a way to eliminate the symbols of his own failures as superintendent. Contrary to the efforts of boarding school officials and against all odds, Indian students at Pipestone continued to speak their Indigenous languages, refusing powerlessness and choosing instead to resist the intentional divestiture of their ancestral ways of being. It is unclear whether Padgett sent any "feeble-minded" children to Canton in 1921, but his letter demonstrates how insidious the layman's diagnosis of "feeble-mindedness" could be in this era. Canton records also indicate that other boarding school superintendents corresponded with Hummer, and reflect that in some instances they successfully confined Indian people to the asylum.

There are many gaps in records relating to the Indian people held at Canton, due to the fundamental nature of the facility—one that sought to erase Indigeneity in manners both literal and figurative—as much as to Hummer's administrative negligence. But because Hummer's actions were investigated numerous times by U.S. officials during his tenure as the institution's

⁵² There were no formal commitment procedures at Canton; only the approval of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was needed. See: Anne Dilenschneider, "An Invitation to Restorative Justice: The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians," *Northern Plains Ethics Journal* Published by the Northern Plains Ethics Institute, North Dakota State University 1, no. 1 (2013): 105–28.

⁵³ Ora Padgett to Harry Hummer, June 24, 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 15, folder 46420, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁵⁴ Brenda J. Child, "The Boarding School as Metaphor," *Journal of American Indian Education* 57, no. 1 (2018): 37–57.

⁵⁵ Cynthia Landrum, *The Dakota Sioux Experience at Flandreau and Pipestone Indian Schools* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 96.

superintendent, the reports that issued from these investigations offer comparatively more insight into the circumstances around the confinement of Indian people than do Hummer's own record-keeping. For instance, a 1933 investigative report authored by Dr. Samuel Silk found that Hummer enacted the ongoing confinement, often until death, of Indian people that he defined as "mentally deficient." Writing of this devastating malpractice, Silk reported to Commissioner Collier, "I was especially impressed with the relatively large number of patients who were free from any mental symptoms, and whose behavior in the institution over a period of years did not show anything strikingly abnormal to justify their detention there." He continued,

I pointed out such patients to Dr. Hummer and he agreed with me that they did not show any evidence of active mental disease and could take care of themselves in any community, especially on an Indian reservation, but assumed the position that these people were below normal—mentally deficient—and they should only be discharged after they were sterilized, and as he did not have any means of doing this, there was nothing left but to keep them there.⁵⁶

In addition to the discussion of Hummer's admission of guilt, Silk went on to affirm that other U.S. officials were responsible for the wrongful commitment of Indian people to Canton. Silk wrote, "Many patients, young males and females, who have been in Canton for many years, were sent to that institution because of some difficulty at a school or agency—a fight with a white man, or a fight with a husband or wife... Some of them never had any schooling, can neither read nor write."⁵⁷ Silk did not name the superintendents responsible for the commitment of Indian people, but available records indicate that they were sent from, or had connections to, the following boarding institutions:

Pima School in Sacaton, Arizona
Klamath School in Salem, Oregon
Ft. Washakie Shoshone School, Wyoming
Pipestone Indian School, Minnesota
Rapid City School, South Dakota
Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, Oklahoma
Wittenburg Indian School, Wisconsin
Seneca Indian School in Wyandotte, Oklahoma
Hayward Indian School in Hayward, Wisconsin
Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania⁵⁸

The fact that many Indian people were committed to Canton at the behest of boarding school superintendents and other U.S. officials is a significant and notable departure from trends among other American populations at this time. As Grob has observed of psychiatric institutionalization during the late nineteenth century, diagnoses of insanity were often a private

⁵⁶ Samuel A. Silk to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 3, 1933, RG 418, Records Relating to the Department of the Interior, 1902-43, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁵⁷ Samuel A. Silk, Report on Canton Asylum, October 2, 1933, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 4, folder 7448, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁵⁸ Based on available Canton documents, I have identified these boarding institutions as facilities that sent Indian people to Canton.

affair; immediate family members—rather than public officials—were frequently those who initiated the commitment proceedings of their kin, however reluctantly.⁵⁹ By comparison, Canton had no formal commitment procedures, and as Canton records attest, the commitment of Indian women and men was often initiated by local agents—boarding school superintendents, reservation officials, and officers of the law—rather than by blood relatives. Moreover, because the asylum was under the direct aegis of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, his approval was the sole obstacle that stood between an Indian person’s freedom and long-term confinement. There was no reversal mechanism; the Commissioner deferred to Hummer’s medical opinion, which is one reason for the interminable sentences of confinement that Canton inmates endured.⁶⁰ Unlike the general American population in which older adults increasingly made up the majority of institutional populations, the Indian people held at Canton were also younger on average than those confined to almshouses or mental hospitals, the two predominant types of Progressive-era facilities that shared responsibility for caring for American society’s infirm at the turn of the century. Grob notes,

No data is available for the age distribution of all of the mentally ill, but of the almshouse population as a whole 33 percent in 1880 and 40 percent a decade later were 60 years or older. In Massachusetts...more than 60 percent of the insane in almshouses in 1893 were 50 years or older—a statistic which indicates that almshouses provided care for a substantial number of aged insane persons.⁶¹

In contrast to Grob’s estimates for the general population, clinical psychologist Anne Dilenschneider has found that many of the Indian people held at Canton from 1902-1934 were under the age of thirty, although the age demographics at this facility are similarly difficult to determine based on the available amount and quality of archival data.⁶² Moreover, of the 182 people who died at this facility, over half of its overall population, Dilenschneider finds that the average age of death was just forty-two years old.⁶³

It is possible that not all of the Indian people sent to Canton from boarding institutions were students. As historian Frederick Hoxie has noted, by 1891 the Indian Service had been placed under civil service regulations, and by 1893, Congress authorized the Indian Office to grant boarding school superintendents dual titles as reservation agents—a shift that explains the high rate of correspondence sent in and out of boarding institutions that sometimes appeared to be entirely unrelated to the affairs of “school aged” youth.⁶⁴ But although boarding school superintendents appeared to enjoy a broadened scope of power during this time, their reign was far from secure; their authority was incrementally diminished by subsequent Indian Commissioners, such as Francis E. Leupp, who were less convinced by the political efficacy of the boarding school system than were their predecessors. And while Canton appeared to operate on an entirely distinct plane of federal bureaucracy, it too was at risk of being shuttered along with a boarding school system that was becoming increasingly outmoded—much to the chagrin

⁵⁹ Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society*, 9.

⁶⁰ Diane Putney, “Canton Asylum,” 7.

⁶¹ Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society*, 10.

⁶² Dilenschneider, “An Invitation to Restorative Justice.”

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 81.

of certain U.S. officials who had a vested interest in keeping both boarding institutions and Canton running at full capacity.⁶⁵

In 1923 Board of Indian Commissioners Chairman George Vaux Jr. expressed an interesting sentiment. Reporting on his findings after an inspection visit to Canton, he wrote that the conditions at the facility were excellent, and remarked that it “would appear to be both humane and economical to increase materially [Canton’s] resources.” Elaborating on this opinion, he continued:

I am not one of those who believe that the Indian Bureau can or ought to be terminated within a few years... In fact the quickest and cheapest way to bring it to an end is to enable it to so perform its duties that the Indian as an Indian will cease to exist... I am convinced that it has been a serious disadvantage to discontinue some of the schools which have been laid down of recent years and the talk of abandoning others has wrought great damage, and has materially held back Indian progress.⁶⁶

“Similar reasons,” Vaux concluded, “make me arrive at the conclusion that the wisest policy is to strengthen such federal enterprises as the Canton asylum.”⁶⁷ Given the fact that boarding school officials were sometimes responsible for the commitment of Indian people to the facility, it is not surprising that Vaux would lament the closure of highly populated institutions like Carlisle, shuttered five years earlier, in 1918.

Documents relating to a 26-year old Chippewa man named James W., a former Carlisle enrollee, demonstrate what Gilles Deleuze (thinking with Foucault) has noted about the ways in which disciplinary power traverses institutions. He observes, “discipline cannot be identified with any one institution or apparatus precisely because it is a type of power, a technology, that traverses every kind of apparatus... linking them, prolonging them, and making them converge and function in a new way.”⁶⁸ Similarly, these records illustrate how the mutually reinforcing relationship between schools and asylums enabled U.S. officials to reinforce one another as the disciplinary agents of Indian people. On February 18, 1916, Carlisle Superintendent Oscar Lipps wrote to Robert Cochran, Superintendent of the Mount Pleasant Indian School in Michigan, regarding the “absolute necessity” of committing James to a psychiatric facility. As additional documents suggest, James was an employee of the DuPont Powder Works plant, and had been drinking with coworkers at a saloon in Paterson, NJ when police arrested him for “dancing the

⁶⁵ After Francis E. Leupp’s appointment as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, responsibility for educating Indian youth was increasingly transferred to day schools and American public schools. U.S. officials, influenced by social reform discourse, gradually came to believe that educating Indian children in proximity to their home communities would be an effective way to ensure that older Indian people would accept the Progressive-era teachings that their children had assimilated. For more information on the increasingly important roles of day schools and American public schools in Indian Affairs, see: United States Office of Indian Affairs, “Annual Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs,” 1906, 1907, and 1908. For an early example of Progressive-era propagandistic literature, see: Marianna Burgess, AKA Embe, *Stiya, a Carlisle Indian Girl at Home: Founded on the Author’s Actual Observations*, electronic resource (Cambridge [Mass.]: Printed at the Riverside Press, 1891).

⁶⁶ George Vaux, Jr. to Board of Indian Commissioners, June 30, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 2, folder 67319, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 26.

war dance,” and subsequently detained him in a padded cell.⁶⁹ Significantly, when New Jersey State Physician Dr. Robert Armstrong initially examined James while he was incarcerated, Armstrong “pronounced him rational of mind...but he advised that James have medical aid.”⁷⁰ He was then released to the City Hospital in Newark, NJ and placed under the charge of Dr. John Clark. Later that very day, however, Clark would reverse Armstrong’s opinion, sending the following message to Lipps by telegraph: “James W— we believe is insane please remove him tomorrow.”⁷¹

Two days after Clark’s message was received, Lipps wrote Cochran again, this time inquiring about James’ citizenship status. As Lipps explained,

The New Jersey authorities claim that he should be returned to Michigan, as he is a citizen of that state. If he is to be considered a ward of the Government, he probably could be sent to the Federal Asylum in Washington, D.C., or to the Indian Asylum at Canton, S.D. He was placed in a hospital by our Outing Agent, Mr. Dickey, on the recommendation of the physician for the purpose of observation. It was thought, perhaps, after he sobered up, he would be all right, but it has turned out that he is insane and will have to be committed to an insane asylum.⁷²

In a final bid, perhaps, for Cochran’s cooperation, Lipps closed, “Will you kindly let me have your recommendation as to what you think is best to be done?”⁷³ Just over one week later, around the first of March, Lipps received a letter from Ward 12 of the Graystone Park Hospital in Morristown, N.J. “Thank God!” James proclaimed, “I am well again.”⁷⁴ Evidently James had evaded confinement at Canton, but as these documents attest, there were significant differences between the ways in which committed Indian people were handled as compared with the general American population. Records relating to James demonstrate how U.S. officials took extralegal measures to intervene into the lives of Indian people and enact their forced confinement on illegitimate grounds, as alcoholism was considered in this era. As Grob observes, legal grounds for commitment among the general population “involved extreme rather than marginal behavioral symptoms,” and as alcoholism was not categorized as sufficiently “extreme,” James could not legally be confined for that reason.⁷⁵ In this instance, it is difficult to pinpoint what his most “extreme” behavioral symptom might have been. Was it his drunkenness, purported violence, or Lipps’ embarrassment that a former Carlisle “boy” had been arrested? In a context where Carlisle superintendents and law enforcement officials had well-established connections and often worked together to limit the ability of Indian men to move freely throughout the region, it is possible that James’ minor infractions amounted to a much bigger transgression—the presumed criminality of his Indianness, exhibited in his urban rendition of a so-called “war dance.”

⁶⁹ “James W—. Student File.” RG 75, Series 1327, box 94, folder 4178, National Archives and Records Administration, Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (CISDRC),17.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 18.

⁷² Ibid., 14.

⁷³ Ibid., 14-15.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society*, 9.

Land, Power, Wealth, and Knowledge: Grounds for Confinement

In another example of illegal confinement—this time at the behest of a white spouse—James H. (Dakota) spent upwards of seven years at Canton after having been declared *sane* by the Insanity Commission of Boyd County, Nebraska, who had examined him at the request of his wife, Blanche. Evidently under the influence of alcohol at the time of his hearing, James was subsequently transferred to Canton while Blanche stayed behind on the Rosebud reservation with their seven children, who were between the ages of eight and twenty-one. During his confinement at Canton, James fled the institution twice; once in February 1918, and again in October 1919, with the assistance of his brother-in-law Christopher Anderson, in whose home he remained until 1920. According to a letter sent from Chief Medical Examiner Robert Newberne to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in January 1920 Newberne had been instructed to travel to Anderson's home to conduct an investigation into James' sanity, and included in the final report was a discussion of the circumstances that led to his confinement. As Newberne explained,

[James] began to drink at 21 years of age, and continued to use intoxicants with some degree of regularity...when they could be conveniently obtained, until the age of 44, when he promised his dying mother that he would drink no more—a promise which he kept for five years, [until] he plunged into the debauch that landed him into the insane asylum where he was detained for nearly six years.⁷⁶

Suturing James' perceived debauchery to his status as an Indian, Newberne went on to report that James was a "quarter-blood Cheyenne enrolled as a Sioux" and that after marrying a white woman, the couple had numerous children—one of which was "mentally deficient"; another boy was described as "a hunchback." Under the heading of "Domestic Worries," Newberne continued:

[James] grew old prematurely and his Indian blood, which was scarcely noticeable when he was a young man, came into evidence as the years went by. Today, the husband is an old man, gouty and rheumatic at 56, and the wife, although the mother of seven children, is a young woman, full of energy, ambition and visions for the future, at 39. It is she who vigorously opposed the release of her husband from the asylum throughout all the years of his incarceration. *It is she who demands and deserves the best of the bargain in the property settlement which she and her husband are trying to effect* (emphasis mine).⁷⁷

As was the case with others held at the facility, diagnoses of insanity often pointed to conflicts over land, as appeared to be the case with James' confinement to Canton. Indeed, Newberne's report reveals how the "discovery" of Indian blood served as legal justification for James' commitment to Canton—a place from which Indian people rarely emerged. Under "Reputation," Newberne wrote:

⁷⁶ R. Newberne to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 22, 1920, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 13, folder 80745, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

James H— has a good reputation except for his drinking habits. His word and his credit are good, and his opinion is respected. No one regards him as insane. In the communities in which he is known he is classed as a white man—a good citizen. When his wife had him declared insane, the officials of Gregory County discovered for the first time that he could be classified as an Indian; hence he was sent to Canton instead of Yankton.⁷⁸

But by the same token, Newberne's report indexes a logic of white supremacy which, as black feminist scholar bell hooks has argued, always-already imbues cultural conceptions of whiteness with goodness.⁷⁹ Blanche's whiteness enhanced her credibility as an authority on her husband's "insanity"; her whiteness was also the basis upon which Newberne viewed her as financially "deserving." By comparison, James' identification as Indian (despite having lived his entire adult life as a white man) meant total—albeit temporary—loss of rights under the law. James would be released shortly after Newberne's report was concluded, which found him to be sane. But the documents relating to his confinement at Canton exemplify the ways in which the commitment of Indian people to the facility could disguise conflicts over land and increase the likelihood of property loss, as I describe in more detail in the final chapter. Similarly, these records demonstrate how the initiation of commitment was itself a way to exercise racial capital, as unscrupulous American citizens drew upon a collective fantasy of whiteness to assert their power over Indian people as good and natural.

Records relating to a thirty-nine-year-old Lakota man, Peter G. B., demonstrate how powerful community members could draw upon their social status as white citizens to silence Indian people in possession of information viewed as potentially destructive. Similarly, these documents demonstrate how local law enforcement officials, the county court, and reservation agents potentially worked together to secure Peter's disappearance to Canton. In November of 1912, Peter was charged with larceny on the Rosebud Sioux reservation where he resided; he had stolen two horses from two separate men, a crime he had allegedly committed once before, and after pleading "not guilty," was remanded to the county jail until further instruction. At issue, according to a deposition made before the county's insanity board, was Peter's mental state. As Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of South Dakota, Charles Morris, stated of Peter's behavior at his earlier trial, Peter's public defense lawyers "and others noticed that the said defendant acted as though he were mentally deranged and the facts were accordingly reported to the Court...the case was continued over the May 1913 term that investigation might be made of the mental condition of said Peter —."⁸⁰ This, evidently, was done, and Peter was removed for some unknown reason first to the federal psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C., St. Elizabeth's, and then subsequently to the Canton asylum, three years after this initial ordeal, on May 3, 1916.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ In the essay "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination," hooks writes "Ideologically, the rhetoric of white supremacy supplies a fantasy of whiteness. Described in Richard Dyer's (1988) essay 'White' this fantasy makes whiteness synonymous with goodness...Socialized to believe the fantasy, that whiteness represents goodness and all that is benign and non-threatening, many white people assume this is the way black people conceptualize whiteness. They do not imagine that the way whiteness makes its presence felt in black life, most often as terrorizing imposition, a power that wounds, hurts, tortures, is a reality that disrupts the fantasy of whiteness as representing goodness," 341. See: bell hooks, "'Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination,'" in *Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 338–46.

⁸⁰ "Peter G—. B—. File," RG 75, Series 2: Canton Asylum Individual Patient Files, 1910-1916, box 8, NARA-KC.

At first glance, Peter's removal to the federal facility in Washington D.C. might seem to be a simple mistake of bureaucratic indifference. It is possible that the county court erroneously believed him to be a U.S. citizen, which would have made Canton an inappropriate receiving facility, at least in theory. Alternatively, it is possible that Canton had no vacancies at the time of Peter's lunacy hearing, rendering St. Elizabeth's the only other viable option. Because state facilities often refused care to non-citizens and persons of color, and as Indian people were considered legal wards of the federal government, their care would have fallen to federal employees and institutions. Yet, a typewritten statement dated March 13, 1914 suggests that Peter believed that his institutionalization was actually retaliation; a thinly-veiled attempt to disappear him from his community by effecting his removal 1,500 miles away to St. Elizabeth's, rather than to Canton, which was a mere 220 miles away from his home on the Rosebud reservation. As stated in the document (likely transcribed by a St. Elizabeth's nurse):

Nothing definite is known containing the circumstances which necessitated the patient's admission to this institution, aside from what is given by the patient. He states that he was arrested in company with two other Indians charged with having stolen horses. The other two Indians were given two and three years, respectively, in the penitentiary, while he, having plead[sic] "not guilty," was held over to a subsequent session of the court. He insisted that he was not guilty, and thinks that because they could not prove his charge against him they adjudged him insane and sent him to this institution. He thinks a neighbor of his named Whipple must have instigated this, because he (the patient) knows of some misdeeds, among which is a murder, of which this Whipple is guilty. He thinks Whipple was afraid that the patient would make this known to the authorities, and had him taken out of the county and sent to this institution.⁸¹

Far fetched? Perhaps upon first glance. But Whipple was a white man, and was also, importantly, one of the complainants against Peter, having accused him of stealing his spotted sorrel mare two years earlier.⁸² While it is possible that Peter ascribed more power to Whipple than he actually possessed, it is also possible that Peter's story cannot be so easily dismissed. Additional materials contained in his file indicate that Peter was highly intelligent and an astute observer. He was also highly educated and could read and write very well, as evidenced by a lengthy critique of capital punishment ("it defeats the very purpose for which it is prescribed") and another long letter written entirely in the Lakota language.⁸³ Were these documents the rantings of a lunatic? Probably not. Indeed, it seems more likely that Peter, like others held at the Canton facility, was victimized by a network of U.S. officials that simply eliminated sources of disturbance to their power and authority. If Peter had been in possession of knowledge about a powerful white man, this fact would have made him a person of interest to local authorities, many of whom were corrupt.⁸⁴ His incarceration at Canton certainly fits within a broader pattern

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² In the deposition given by Assistant U.S. District Attorney Morris, two men are named as Peter's alleged victims, and it is the descriptions of these men that enable me to deduce that one was a non-Indian man. While Morris refers to Let Them Have Enough as an "Indian," no such racial designation is assigned to John Whipple, making it likely that Whipple was a white citizen. "Peter G—. B—. File," NARA-KC.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Thomas Biolsi writes, for instance, of race relations on the Rosebud Reservation, "In the Rosebud Country, one's rights—the rights that matter, materially, in the local scene—are inseparably tied to one's race." See: Thomas Biolsi,

of loss of rights and life authorized and enacted by federal officials and white American citizens in this era, for reasons that were, at base, about conflicts over Indian land and the wealth that could be derived from it.⁸⁵ The possibility that Peter was privy to information about a murder committed by Whipple would have, from the standpoint of Whipple and his accomplices, thus made Peter's disappearance imperative. What better way to neutralize Peter's potentially damaging testimony than to have him adjudged insane?

Documents relating to forty-two-year-old Emily Waite (Chickasaw) reveal similarly bizarre circumstances around her commitment. These records also document how non-existent commitment procedures enabled exploitative family members to confine their kin to the facility.⁸⁶ Correspondence contained in Waite's file reflect that she was sent to Canton in 1906, at the behest of her sisters, Irene Kerr and Sarah Lasater (née Waite), as a transfer from the State Sanitarium in Norman, Indian Territory.⁸⁷ As correspondence from the Indian Agent at Muskogee to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp reveals, however, the circumstances around Waite's commitment were rather unusual. Sensing duplicitous motives, the newly-appointed Indian Agent Dana Kelsey wrote to Leupp in a letter dated October 21, 1905. Evidently, he was becoming impatient with Emily's relatives, who desired to have her transferred but who refused the requisite procedures:

During the early part of my term of office, the relatives of said Emily Waite addressed a letter to me saying that they had decided to place her in the Asylum at Canton, and asked that steps be taken immediately looking wards her removal. In accordance with the rules and regulations of this office, I called upon them to fill out certain papers, giving information in regard to her condition, and to have her adjudged insane by the United States Court. This they refused to do, saying that they could see no reason for adjudging a person as insane who had been recognized as of unsound mind for seven or eight years, and they have become very impatient about having her transferred at once.⁸⁸

To make matters even more suspicious, as a federal facility Canton was (according to the public record) intended for destitute non-citizen Indians who had no other means of caring for themselves—circumstances that would have been altogether unknown by Emily. In fact, the

Deadliest Enemies: Law and Making the Race Relations On and Off Rosebud Reservation (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 178.

⁸⁵ As a case in point, in the 1920s, a spate of murders occurred in Indian Country after oil had been discovered in Osage County. As pioneering Indian law historian Rennard Strickland (Osage, Cherokee) estimates, nearly 300 Osage men and women were murdered by white partners who intermarried in order to take advantage of headrights and mineral-related income after disposing of their Osage spouses. Writing of the utter failure of so-called law enforcement officials in Osage County, Strickland explains, "The deaths came from bombs, pushing from a train, poison, ground glass, shotguns, exposure and with almost every weapon imaginable from knives to wrenches to dynamite. The law failed not so much because of its complexity but because of the complicity of those charged with its enforcement. Never in the history of Indian policy or state government has there been such widespread and documented corruption, both civil and criminal." See: Rennard Strickland, "Osage Oil: Mineral Law, Murder, Mayhem, and Manipulation," *Natural Resources & Environment* 10, no. 1 (1995): 39–43, 43.

⁸⁶ This occurred less frequently than did the forcible commitment of Indian women and men at the request of unrelated persons.

⁸⁷ Indian territory at the time.

⁸⁸ "Emily Waite File," RG 75, Canton Asylum, box 1, Records of Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, Case Files of Insane Indians, 1905-8, NARA-FW.

Waite were a prominent—and somewhat infamous—Chickasaw family: Fred Tecumseh Waite, Emily’s brother, was a member of Billy the Kidd’s gang of outlaws before trading in his pistols for politics, and the Waite sisters were just as captivating.⁸⁹ While Fred would serve as the Attorney General of the Chickasaw nation before his death in 1895, both Emily and Sarah would go on to graduate with business degrees from Oberlin, the first coeducational college in the United States.⁹⁰ Emily’s highly-educated siblings also married quite well; for example, in 1897 Sarah was wedded to a white man by the name of Milas Lasater, who would become one of the wealthiest men in their Chickasaw community of Paul’s Valley, and enjoy a long career in politics and banking, earning widespread admiration for his philanthropy and playing a substantial role in the drafting of the Chickasaw Constitution.⁹¹

But despite the Waite family’s extensive resources, documents contained in Emily’s file indicate that she was prevented from sharing in her family’s comfortable lifestyle, and that her siblings claimed that her mental decline was precipitous. As a lengthy letter authored by Emily’s sister Irene and sent to the Indian Agent suggests, the Waite were concerned for Emily, who had embarked on elaborate travels after her father died and her eldest brother relocated the family to Ohio in 1891. As Irene explained, Emily did not care to finish her term of schooling at Oberlin like the rest of her siblings, and “She at once laid in a handsome wardrobe and went on a visit to friends of the family in Gainesville, Texas, where she remained for some time leading a gay society life.”⁹² After traveling up and down the coast of California and eventually returning to Oberlin to earn her business degree, Emily soon grew tired of life in Ohio and set sail for France. Irene continued, “[Emily] remained about four years in Paris, writing us at long intervals and seeming to be engaged in teaching young French children the English language.” She elaborated, “All of her letters were filled with abuse of the American people whom she termed ‘Foreigners,’ saying the Indians were the only true Americans and the nobility of America.”⁹³ Irene’s letter went on for a page and a half more, detailing the many places Emily traveled and reporting that her sister had even laid claim to the Swedish throne.⁹⁴

To twentieth-century Americans, this behavior would have certainly appeared outlandish. Yet, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that Emily’s sisters simply resented the fact that she marched to the beat of her own drum, clearly rejecting the gendered expectations that women limit their ambitions in order to better serve the needs of others. In this light, it thus seems likely that the Waite sisters, although well-traveled and well-heeled themselves, were quite envious of Emily’s gumption. Significantly, buried in Irene’s lengthy letter to Agent Kelsey is information about the Waite estate, and a note about Emily’s earlier decision to separate her landholdings from those of her siblings. This detail, while seemingly incidental, could possibly explain the odd circumstances around Emily’s removal first to the Norman Sanitarium, and then even further, nearly 700 miles away from their home in Paul’s Valley to Canton, SD. The transfer from a local state facility to Canton even baffled the Indian Agent and another U.S. official, who exchanged letters that indicated they both thought the Waite siblings and Emily’s legal guardian—a white man named John T. Hill, who approved the transfer—were in grave error.

⁸⁹ Billy the Kidd (1859-1881) was an outlaw who gained notoriety for his involvement in the “Lincoln County War,” a violent dispute between two rival factions in the territory of New Mexico. For more on Billy the Kidd’s life and death, see: Frederick Nolan, *The West of Billy the Kid* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015).

⁹⁰ Mike Tower, *The Outlaw Statesman: The Life and Times of Fred Tecumseh Waite* (AuthorHouse, 2007), 146.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² “Emily Waite File,” NARA-FW.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

As C. G. Moore, the probate clerk of Paul's Valley, wrote to Agent Kelsey, "is it possible that some private Sanitarium could be selected that would not be to[sic] expensive, in which ward would receive better treatment, that is, more individual care and attention[?]" He explained, "This ward has an allotment, a good one, that is rented out on a share crop basis, and produces about \$500. annually; the Judge feels that this ward is entitled to the best that her estate will afford, and desires that you state your ideas concerning same. From your experience do you know of a better place [than Canton], that her estate will justify the sending her to [?]"⁹⁵ Evidently, at least a few U.S. officials knew that Emily came from a family of means and could thus afford a private facility, if she was destined for institutionalization. Despite the dubious circumstances around her commitment, however, Emily was transferred from Norman to Canton. When her first legally appointed guardian, John Hill, died in 1913, her sister's husband Milas Lasater assumed her legal guardianship, thereby also assuming authority over her land and income.⁹⁶

Oklahoma historian Angie Debo's extensive work on corruption in Indian Territory in this era provides crucial insight into what was likely happening behind closed doors in the Waite family. As Debo remarks of the consequences of rampant Indian-white intermarriage within the southeastern tribes, "The Chickasaws had been recklessly generous to their intermarried citizens, and as a result these white men monopolized the best agricultural lands in the Nation. In 1890 the Indians attempted to protect themselves by enacting a law providing that intermarried citizenship should confer no property or political rights, but the white men held meetings and defiantly resolved that if any attempt were made to dispossess them they would 'exterminate every member of this council from the chief down.'" ⁹⁷ Given these realities, it takes no great leap of the imagination to surmise that the Waite's vast landholdings, Lasater's political ambitions, and the prospect of great power likely contributed to the bizarre conditions of Emily's confinement, even in the absence of a smoking gun. Despite these unknowns, however, some remarkable facts are clear. In 1906, an advertisement for the Paul's Valley First National Bank appeared in the Thursday, September 13 edition of the *Paul's Valley Democrat*, a newspaper that Milas Lasater founded in 1898. Included among a list of the board of directors was John T. Hill, Emily's first guardian, while Milas Lasater served as Vice President of "The People's Bank."⁹⁸ There was, at least, one concrete business connection between the two men who authorized Emily's incarceration and removal from her community. One other detail rings out across historical time and space: Milas and Sarah Lasater would gain control over the entire Waite estate, including Emily's separated landholdings, and after Oklahoma was admitted to statehood, donate the land for the development of a state-run epileptic hospital.⁹⁹ Emily Waite would live out her remaining years at the Canton facility, where she would die in 1929. Heart failure was listed as her cause of death.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ "Emily Waite File," NARA-FW.

⁹⁶ John T. Hill's last will and testament was disputed by his surviving family members. See: Hill v. Buckholts, Oklahoma Supreme Court, *Oklahoma Reports: Cases Determined in the Supreme Court of the Territory of Oklahoma* (State Capital Printing Company, 1920), 196-204.

⁹⁷ Angie Debo, *And Still the Waters Run: The Betrayal of the Five Civilized Tribes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 13.

⁹⁸ *Pauls Valley Democrat*, September 13, 1906, 3, no. 26, ed. 1, Pauls Valley, Indian Territory, "The Gateway to Oklahoma History," Oklahoma Historical Society.

⁹⁹ Tower, *The Outlaw Statesman*, 216.

¹⁰⁰ "Emily Waite File," NARA-FW.

Total Institution? Power and the Porousness of Institutional Boundaries

In “Power and Powerlessness: The People of the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians,” Scott Riney engages Erving Goffman’s observations in *Asylums*—based on field work conducted at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Washington, D.C. from 1955-56— in order to better understand power relations at the Canton facility. Writing of the dynamic between Canton employees and occupants, Riney suggests “For its inmates, the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians resembled Goffman’s model of the ‘total institution,’ one that in its all-encompassing character effectively isolated them from the outside world, challenging their autonomy and their identities as both American Indians and human beings.”¹⁰¹ While Riney offers us an often successful attempt to “bring the inmate voices forth and give them status as actors in the institution’s history,” there are a number of ideological issues with his interpretation of the Canton Asylum, not least of which is the assertion that Canton can be analyzed as a facility bearing any resemblance to Saint Elizabeth’s Hospital, a psychiatric facility that actually administered medical care.¹⁰² While it is true that the autonomy of the Indian people held at Canton was radically circumscribed, Canton was also a space in which the settler-colonial project of Indigenous elimination was intentionally carried out. As one Canton employee remarked about Peter G.B., for instance, on February 15, 1917, Peter “favors the Sioux patients and thinks they should do as they please; when excited, calls the Sioux together, motions and talks to them, shakes his fists and immediately they begin doing something that will cause trouble.”¹⁰³ Indeed, as evidenced by the many case studies examined in this chapter, Indian women and men were incarcerated at Canton precisely *because* they were Indian, and once inside the facility, remained there to be punished as Indian people, as well.

Other documents indicate that the Canton facility was altogether distinct from the kind of institution that Goffman described. For example, the four central features that Goffman ascribes to total institutions do not map neatly onto Canton, and sometimes bear no similarities to Canton at all. Sleep, play, and work were often conducted in the company of others at Canton, as Goffman notes of daily life in total institutions. But here is where Canton ceases to resemble the dynamics that Goffman so painstakingly described. At Canton, the day’s activities were not tightly scheduled, nor did they proceed logically from one to the next—and they never culminated “into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution.”¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the Canton Asylum did not administer care of any kind to its Indian occupants, as many who occupied this facility were never in need of medical or psychiatric attention until after their arrival, as a result of the horrible abuse and neglect endured at the hands of employees. Instead, Canton was supported by other institutions of the settler state—the Office of Indian Affairs, off-reservation boarding schools, and jails, among others— and derived its power from its relationship to these institutions, the practices that took place within them, and the U.S. officials that presided over Indian people, as well. In the next chapter, we look more closely at the daily lives of those confined to the Canton institution, and the treatment endured under the guise of “care and maintenance.”

¹⁰¹ Scott Riney, “Power and Powerlessness: The People of the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians,” 1997, 41-64, 43.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ “Peter G—. B—. File,” NARA-KC.

¹⁰⁴ Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 6.

Chapter Five: “Care and Maintenance”

Care and maintenance. The phrase looms large in the grammatical hierarchy of language used to refer to the Indian people confined at the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians. It appears in hundreds of official documents with alarming regularity—alarming given the staff’s rampant abuse and neglect of those held at the facility against their will. “Enclosed please find list of patients at the Asylum...who have paid for their Care and Maintenance...” reads one example.¹ In another document, the Superintendent of Canton, Harry Hummer, writes to collect payment on behalf of John G.B., a Sioux man he kept confined continuously at the institution from the time of his commitment in 1917: “This statement shows a balance to his credit at the Pine Ridge Agency on May 1, 1931, of \$1832.26. This office has no knowledge as to amount of his yearly income. It would seem, however, that part of these funds might be used to pay for his Care and Maintenance at this institution.”² In another example, Hummer writes: “I agreed to obtain information as to the financial status of such patients...with a view of determining their ability to pay for care and maintenance at this institution. There was found to be fifteen such patients, one of whom has since died.”³ As I observed in chapter four, “A Fit Subject,” U.S. officials rationalized the construction of this facility by contriving a need for a separate institution to administer psychiatric treatment to destitute non-citizen Indian people—a “pork barrel” project envisioned as a way to attract commerce and create jobs within the young state of South Dakota. Despite this manufactured appearance of federal benevolence, however, archival records demonstrate that Hummer readily accepted annual disbursements—up to \$400.00, in many instances—for the “care and maintenance” of those who were forcibly confined to the institution and prevented from leaving, effectively forcing Indian people to pay for their own incarceration, neglect, and abuse out of their Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts.⁴

The phrase “care and maintenance” appears routinely in the archive, mostly in contexts related to finances—payments requested and sent from Indian agents to Hummer, for example—but not always. Sometimes, the couplet—or some variation thereof—appears in letters authored by Indian women and men inquiring after a loved one held at the facility, as reflected by one document stamped “received” on June 9, 1921. In this instance, a Yankton man named Thick Hair wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles Burke, to request his sister’s release from the facility where she had been held since August of 1919.⁵ “Dear Commissioner,” he began, “My sister Mrs. Two Teeth has now been confined in the Insane Asylum at Canton close onto two years, she never was violent but seemed to have some hallucinations of some sort or another. I presume its [sic] affection of the brain therefore incurable.”⁶ He continued, “We here her relatives desire her return as she has funds with [the] office, Individual money which may be

¹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 24, 1927, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 8, folder

² Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 15, 1931, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 8, folder 52545, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

³ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 20, 1928, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, Canton Asylum, box 18, folder 56470, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴ IIM (Individual Indian Money) accounts were administered by federal officials. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of the Interior’s website on Indian Affairs: <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/dhs/individuals-indian-money-accounts>

⁵ Mrs. Two Teeth, *Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940*; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M595, 692 rolls); Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Year: 1909; Roll: M595_89; Page: 17; Line: 15. Ancestry.com

⁶ Thick Hair to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 19, folder 2632, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

used to provide for her care & support while she shall live out the rest of her existence near her relation[s], we desire to have her with us and regret to be unable to go and see her as often as we would were she here amongst us.”⁷ He closed, “Please direct the office of the Asylum to send her back to this Agency as soon as possible and you will be conferring a great favor on us. I am yours Truly, Thick Hair.”⁸ Like many other Indian people impacted by the unending confinement of their relatives at Canton, Thick Hair’s appeal for his sister’s release was unsuccessful, and Mrs. Two Teeth died a year and a half later.⁹

Given the realities of this institutional environment, what “care and maintenance” could Indian people have possibly received while incarcerated at Canton? The routinized fact of death at the facility betrays the emptiness of *care and maintenance* as an illocutionary phrase, as well as the absence of both actions—care and maintenance—from this institutional context.¹⁰ Instead, the dyad signals a pattern of institutionalized neglect, dispossession, and violence directed towards Indian people and points to intimate entanglements: of life and death, land expropriation, and relationships created or transformed by the confinement of Indian people to the facility. I attempt to unravel some of those entanglements. I analyze the realities the saccharine expression attempted to disguise, as Canton Superintendent Harry Hummer hid behind the facility’s walls and the professional competence that his title and position falsely projected. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, Canton was used as a carceral facility for the unwanted; reservation agents, U.S. officials, white civilians, and boarding school superintendents were often responsible for the transfer and confinement of Indian people to Canton, unlike the general population of the U.S. at this time.¹¹ Psychiatric diagnoses of insanity could be—and were—put to use for malefic purposes in the context of American Indian communities. Similarly, diagnoses of insanity were used as ideological weapons that legitimated the forcible incarceration of Indian people at Canton, and in many instances, those diagnoses barely disguised the underlying motives behind those wrongful confinements—motives which were often eugenicist in nature.¹² Building on chapter three, “Hoe Handle Medicine,” which demonstrated how the condition of being Indian was construed as a social pathology at Carlisle and beyond, “A Fit Subject” demonstrated the natural consequence of those racist ideologies: the disappearance of Indian people to Canton for an immense array of perceived behavioral infractions, and the collusion (or utter indifference) of the many U.S. officials whose approval was required in order to commit Indian women and men to the facility indefinitely.

This chapter concludes my analysis of the punitive connections between ostensibly distinct federal institutions through which Indian people moved, and to which they were often disappeared at the turn of the twentieth century. In this final chapter, I engage Australian historian Patrick Wolfe’s seminal work to show how the “logic of Indigenous elimination” that

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 7, 1922, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 19, folder 2632, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

¹⁰ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2d ed, The William James Lectures 1955 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1975), 131.

¹¹ Grob observes that most commitment proceedings in the nineteenth century were initiated by family members, rather than law enforcement or members of the community. See: Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Illness and American Society, 1875-1940*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983), 9.

¹² As I discussed in chapter 4, Hummer intentionally confined Indian women to the facility in order to prevent the birth of Indigenous children. Pemina Yellow Bird similarly points this out in her recent article about the Indian women and men held at Canton.

undergirds settler-colonialism was enacted, in modern form, within the Canton facility. I contribute a broader understanding of the role that Canton played as a space of Indigenous elimination in which white Americans wielded the ability to punish Indian people as a form of racial power, and how they strengthened that power as they enacted it within and through the institutions of the settler state. This chapter demonstrates how federal facilities like Canton can and should be added to the variegated structure of settler-colonialism that Wolfe has described—an institution that the settler society used at the turn of the twentieth century to mitigate against potential threats to their colonial might—threats created by the unfinished business of Indigenous elimination in the United States. Writing of this process, Wolfe observes: “Settler colonialism has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event.”¹³ He further elaborates,

In its positive aspect, elimination is an organizing principal of settler-colonial society rather than a one-off...occurrence. The positive outcomes of the logic of elimination can include officially encouraged miscegenation, the breaking-down of native title into alienable individual freeholds, native citizenship, child abduction, religious conversion, resocialization in total institutions such as missions or boarding schools, and a whole range of cognate biocultural assimilations.¹⁴

Adding to that list of positive outcomes, I argue that the Canton facility, as a settler institution, played an overlooked, but important, role in modern processes of Indigenous elimination as a space in which land dispossession, reproductive suppression, cultural destruction, and social isolation—in addition to the frequent dissolution of Indigenous life—was enacted under the guise of American benevolence. Much of the extant scholarship about the Canton facility has analyzed this institution as a space in which American Indian “patients” perished due to complications of their particular circumstances. However, these analyses reflect an assumption of U.S. officials’ good intentions gone awry. For example, historian Diane Putney writes of Canton:

For thirty-two years, the Bureau of Indian Affairs operated and maintained the facility at Canton, providing Indian patients with treatment that was influenced by a mixture of humanitarian concern, neglect, and deference to local economic interests. The institution started as a place to alleviate the suffering of mentally ill tribesmen from the Indian reservations; it ended as an institution that itself caused genuine human misery.¹⁵

Much of this work has also excluded analyses of Canton’s functional, political, or quotidian relationship to other U.S. institutions to which Indian people were removed in this era. By comparison, in the previous chapter I addressed this omission with the observation that

¹³ Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4, (2006): 387–409, 388.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Diane T. Putney, “The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1902-1934,” 1984, 31, 1.

Canton's characteristics departed in significant ways from the total institutions that Erving Goffman described in *Asylums* (1961), a concept that Wolfe and Scott Riney also use in their work. In this chapter, I extend that analysis to demonstrate the many ways in which U.S. officials and Canton employees enacted explicit forms of Indigenous elimination and dispossession, and how they did so by disguising the hideousness of these processes with false promises of "care and maintenance," among other discursive, ideological, and material deceptions.

This chapter is organized into three thematic sections that address issues related to Indigenous land, relationships, and life as impacted by Canton, beginning with a discussion of the conditions at the facility. Following the work of Ann Laura Stoler, Cathleen Cahill, Lisa Lowe, and others who have described world-historical forms of imperial violence in everyday, intimate settings, I situate this discussion of "care and maintenance" within the theoretical framework of "intimate colonialism," benevolent violence and other seeming antinomies.¹⁶ Drawing on this framework of intimate encounters in colonial settings, in the next section I analyze documents relating to Indigenous life and death for what they can tell us about the consequences of incarceration at this facility, as well as the legacy of historical trauma passed on to subsequent generations of Indian people.¹⁷ These documents reveal modern forms of "caring" disregard for Indigenous life as witnessed by the many Indian people who died at this facility, and demonstrate how Canton's façade of philanthropic legitimacy facilitated this destruction of life with relative ease. As Pemina Yellow Bird writes in relation to the Indian women and men who perished at Canton, Indigenous communities impacted by this history have begun the painful work of healing, and I contribute my voice to those which have undertaken the process of recovering from this trauma.

Following this discussion, I turn to records relating to the interpersonal relationships created, transformed, or halted as a result of the institutionalization of Indian women or men to Canton, focusing in particular on records relating to Jerome Court. Indian women and men could, and did, resist bodily, spiritual, and psychological destruction, and archival materials register the possibility—however slight—that they also sought out joy in this hostile institutional environment. Records relating to Court document a remarkable instance of Indigenous criminalization, and show how race, class, gender, and social expectations came to bear upon the lives of Indian people confined to this facility. These records register the myriad steps that Indian people undertook to secure their freedom, and show how, in the context of U.S. law, whiteness was the most effective defense of all. Finally, I discuss scenarios in which Indian people were divested of their landholdings and locate this analysis of land dispossession within the realm of the intimate. In many instances, land-owning women and men were confined to Canton against their will indefinitely, only to have their property and resources disposed of without their consent

¹⁶ See: Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers & Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933*, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Margaret D. 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); Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015); Ann Laura Stoler, ed., *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, American Encounters/Global Interactions (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Ann Laura Stoler, "Matters of Intimacy as Matters of State: A Response," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): 893–97.

¹⁷ As Susan Burch has documented in her article "Dislocated Histories," the consequences of institutionalization at Canton rippled throughout Indigenous communities, impacting Indian people for generations to come. She treats this phenomenon more fully in her forthcoming manuscript, *Committed* (forthcoming 2021). See: Susan Burch, "'Dislocated Histories': The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians," *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* 2, no. 2 (2014): 141–62.

by legal guardians tasked with the care and protection of Indigenous interests. These records document the ways in which the complex social and political structures of legal guardianship, competency, and sanity rendered Indian people vulnerable, ultimately, to territorial dispossession—which demonstrates the key role that Canton played in ongoing process of territorial acquisition on a case-by-case basis of land theft and expropriation.

Federal Benevolence, Intimate Invasions, and “Benign” Violence

In Canton correspondence, Superintendent Harry Hummer referred repeatedly to the “care and maintenance” that Indian people received at the facility, but there is little evidence to suggest that he administered care of any kind—interpersonal, medical, or otherwise—to the Indian women and men he kept confined there. Instead the institution’s façade of providing psychiatric care to ostensibly “insane” Indian people lent legitimacy to Hummer’s practice of confining Indian women and men indefinitely, often because he believed them and their potential progeny to be “defective.”¹⁸ After a series of investigations in which the institution’s shocking conditions were revealed, Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier would remove Hummer from his post in 1933. But for decades, the Superintendent’s abusive treatment of Indian people went unchecked, even though Hummer’s mismanagement of the facility had been investigated multiple times by the Indian Office, and thus was well known by many, even if it was not publicly recognized. For many officials, Indian people were simply not worth the trouble of interference; for others, Hummer’s title as a Georgetown-trained physician was proof enough that the “insane” Indian “patients” at Canton were in good hands, and indeed, in letter after letter, high-ranking Indian agents deferred to Hummer’s recommendations about whether specific Indian people were well enough to be released from the institution. Despite the fact that the Indian Office frequently received correspondence from Indian relatives pleading for the release of their loved ones, the Office of Indian Affairs’ assumptions about Indian inferiority made those demands easy to dismiss. Similarly, U.S. officials’ convictions in the superiority of American ways emboldened them to dictate the conditions of Indian peoples’ lives, while still hewing closely to the image of benevolent paternalism dictated by the era’s cultural ideals.¹⁹

¹⁸ This phrase was used routinely in reference to Indian people considered for confinement, or confined already, within the Canton facility. As an example of this, Hummer refused to release a Menominee woman named Agnes from Canton, and explained this decision in a letter to the Commissioner: “She has a splendid home here and is receiving every care and attention, but is discontented and wants to go home and care for her family. This she is mentally unable to do and the great danger of increasing the number of defective offspring should outweigh her wishes.” See: Harry Hummer to Commissioner, December 30, 1918, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 14, folder 95088, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

¹⁹ Historian Jeffrey Ostler notes that in the 1830s, under the direction of President Andrew Jackson, the removal of Southeastern Indigenous Nations including the Choctaw and Cherokee west of the Mississippi River was also conceived in terms of “benevolence” towards a disappearing people. Writing of the power of the ideology of American benevolence, Ostler explains, “Because the lies associated with removal are so glaring—not only the refusal to admit the policy’s destructiveness but the fictions that Indians were vanishing, that removals would be entirely voluntary, and that Indians would be guaranteed permanent homes in the West—professions of benevolence can seem nothing more than a figleaf to cover naked greed. This perspective, however, underestimates the capacity of ideologues to convince themselves of the truth of what they want to believe and to hold inconvenient facts and troubling doubts at bay. Officials’ constant repetition of their arguments about the benevolence of removal seems to have been intended as much to reassure themselves as to convince skeptics,” 364. At the turn of the twentieth century, U.S. officials appear to have relied upon similar rhetorical strategies in justifying the forced confinement of Indigenous people at Canton as a form of governmental care and paternal duty. For more information about Indian removal and its consequences, see: Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from*

Canton's two-story granite exterior and well-kept grounds mimicked the serene and orderly environment expected of contemporaneous asylums, but the institution's placid façade disguised truly hellish interior conditions. Apart from the abysmal conditions endured by the Indian people who occupied the facility, Hummer and his staff were at constant odds. Despite the fact that he had been involuntarily scrutinized by the Indian Office on many prior occasions, in 1929, Hummer invited his own investigation. Putney notes that Hummer hoped the Indian Office would force one of his female attendants, Nurse Fillius, to correct her excessive drinking, and in February of that year wrote to the Commissioner describing "the 'deplorable conditions' at his own institution and asserted that only a stranger and layman could provide an impartial and unbiased report."²⁰ Shortly thereafter, Commissioner Burke arranged for a full investigation, and Dr. Samuel Silk, a psychiatrist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., was appointed to the task.

Silk visited Canton for six days in March 1929, and his findings were astonishing. According to his report of the institution's conditions, "patients" were kept confined to their beds, meals were taken haphazardly on the floor, women and men lay in their own excrement, chamber pots were found to be overflowing, and four men were found padlocked in their rooms.²¹ The "operating room" was also inspected, and found to have no equipment whatsoever, aside from "a surgical table, a slop sink, and two wash bowls"; similarly, the windows of the "solarium," an open-air structure built for tubercular patients, were found to have wooden bars placed across them—in the event of a fire, no one would be able to escape.²² As these conditions clearly illustrate, Canton was not a place of care, medical or otherwise; it was a place of disappearance, where Indian people were sent to die. Indeed, Canton may have resembled an asylum, but it created more crises than it cured. As noted in chapter four, Putney estimates that four deaths occurred each year at this facility, meaning that from 1902-1934, approximately 121 Indian women and men died as a result, and given the descriptions contained in Silk's report, it is evident that these deaths were due to extreme conditions of torture, starvation, neglect, and spiritual abuse.

Canton employees kept notes on the Indian women and men confined to the facility; these notes reflect the physical deterioration of Indian people in very short periods of time. For example, a Laguna man named Fidel P. was described as weighing 125 pounds on August 1, 1921; one month later, staff recorded his weight as 115 pounds.²³ In another case, a twenty-four-year-old Chippewa man named Joseph was observed on May 15, 1913, as having a good appetite. In June, the following month, his appetite was described as good, but it was noted that he was having digestive troubles. In July, staff observed that his appetite was fair. By August, his appetite was poor and his digestive troubles were more severe; he had a severe cough and was in poor physical condition. On September 18, he died. Nowhere in his file does staff indicate any attempt to alleviate his suffering. Moreover, the number of deaths that occurred as a result of

the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). Genocide: Native Nations For information about the specific effects of Indian removal on Southeastern nations, see Choctaw historian Donna L. Aker's text, *Living in the Land of Death: The Choctaw Nation, 1830-1860*, Native American Series (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004).

²⁰ Putney, "Canton Asylum," 16.

²¹ Samuel A. Silk to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 13, 1929, "Silk Report," State Archives of the South Dakota State Historical Society, accessed via: Honoring the Dead. <https://honoringthedead.omeka.net/items/show/23>

²² Ibid.

²³ Report regarding Fidel P—., August 1, 1921 and September 1, 1921, RG 75, box 63, folder 623, Canton Asylum, General Correspondence, Northern Pueblo Agency, NARA-Denver.

tuberculosis was in decline by the 1920s among the upper class—thanks in large part to Robert Koch’s identification of tuberculosis bacilli, more widespread acceptance of germ theories of disease, and modified attitudes towards illness in general.²⁴ But when it came to the treatment of non-white communities, outmoded moral arguments prevailed. As Frank Snowden explains, epidemiological studies of tuberculosis “demonstrated that although tuberculosis affected the elite, it was above all a social disease that disproportionately afflicted the ‘dangerous classes.’” In the context of an era in which sufferers were viewed as unpatriotic, Indian people were the most dangerous of them all.²⁵

Hummer appeared unmoved by the deaths of women and men at Canton. As a case in point, on May 22, 1920, Hummer wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in regard to a woman named Emma:

Sir:

I have the honor to report that Emma T—, an insane female admitted from the Standing Rock Indian Agency May 15, 1919, died suddenly yesterday afternoon at 3:40 P.M. This woman had been in her usual state of health until yesterday and was out on the lawn with the other patients until after three o’clock in the afternoon. Miss Katie Knox, attendant, came into the office at 3:35 P.M. and reported that [Emma] did not seem very well and asked me to come to the ward and see her. I responded immediately and accompanied Miss Knox to the ward and found the patient dead. She had been menstruating and it is supposed that the exertion of walking up the stairs produced a sudden heart failure.”²⁶

Hummer’s reference to Emma’s supposed frailty during menstruation reflects the masculinist perception that only one sex was fully “normal,” but the comment also registers a nascent understanding of the gendered stereotypes as powerful tools, and how they might be used to deflect attention away from his mismanagement of the facility.²⁷ As the previous chapter demonstrated, U.S. officials employed similar arguments to legitimate the confinement of Indian women to Canton; these patriarchal stereotypes were frequently codified in reform discourse as commonsense, and used to legitimate intimate interference into Indian communities.

A 1916 campaign, implemented by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells, is a case in point. Faced with increasingly dire emergency conditions on Indian reservations, largely the result of widespread federal neglect, Sells initiated a “Save the Indian Babies” campaign in which Indian Service employees—especially field matrons—were encouraged to correct what were viewed as the unsanitary conditions of Indian homes and Indian women’s inability to properly care for their children. In order to further this aim, Sells authored a pamphlet entitled “Indian Babies: How to Keep Them Well,” and set to work on its distribution to all Indian reservations. As Sells explained to a presumed readership of Indian Service employees:

²⁴ Frank M. Snowden, “Tuberculosis in the Unromantic Era of Contagion,” in *Epidemics and Society, From the Black Death to the Present* (Yale University Press, 2019), 292–331.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 299.

²⁶ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 22, 1920, RG 75, CCF 1907-1934, box 19, folder 45087, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

²⁷ Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts’ Advice to Women*, 2nd Anchor Books ed (New York: Anchor Books, 2005).

We can not solve the Indian problem without Indians. We can not educate their children unless they are kept alive...

Statistics startle us with the fact that approximately three-fifths of the Indian infants die before the age of 5 years...I earnestly call upon every Indian Bureau employee to help reduce this frightful percentage...

With this idea uppermost, all employees whose duties bring them in touch with Indian families must work in closest harmony for surrounding the expectant Indian mother with favorable health conditions...

The sanitation of the homes of such women should have special attention, and no baby allowed to be born into an environment germinating disease if prevention is available...

It will be the duty of the field matron to learn of conditions existing in Indian homes and of cases requiring medical attention and report them to the superintendent. It will be her duty to see that the prospective mother knows what equipment is necessary for the proper care of her new-born babe, and the importance of the provision which the husband should make for the health and comfort of the mother and child should be early and urgently impressed upon him.²⁸

In other words, U.S. officials, rather than Indian mothers, knew what was best for Indian babies. This campaign, and other forms of domestic interference into the lives of Indian people, is one example of what scholars have referred to as “intimate colonialism”; a process that Cahill describes as “changing the fundamental nature of Native familial and social systems—the most intimate of relationships.”²⁹ “Policy makers knew,” she further elaborates, “that the intimate decisions about how to raise children, how husbands and wives should relate to each other, and what their homes should look like were not private questions but key political concerns.”³⁰ Similarly, Sells’ statement reflects a conscientious use of what Susan M. Ryan has described as the “grammar of good intentions,” a discursive strategy that packages violent ideologies in a language of benevolence.³¹ In this instance, Sells suggests that the suffering of Indian people and their children is a direct consequence of Indian women’s inferior abilities as mothers; an issue that might be rectified by field matrons’ “caring” interference into the most intimate spaces of Indigenous life.

Similar beliefs were reflected in Indian Office correspondence about Indian women confined to Canton, and in some instances, U.S. officials cited the presence of multiple children as reason enough to have Indian mothers committed.³² In other cases, however, Indian women gave birth to children while confined to the facility. Disability studies and Canton scholar Susan

²⁸ Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Indian Babies: How to Keep Them Well*. Washington, Government Printing Office, (1916).

²⁹ Cathleen D. Cahill., *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, 58.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Susan M. Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

³² These commitments were often eugenicist in nature. For more on this subject, refer to chapter four.

Burch has analyzed how institutionalization at Canton impacted the life of Elizabeth Alexis Fairbault, a Dakota woman born in 1882, who lived on the Sisseton Reservation in South Dakota. Like other women in this era, Elizabeth had given birth to multiple children—six in total—but only three survived to adulthood. Elizabeth’s life was filled with hardship on the reservation; she had struggled with alcoholism, and in May 1915, “clad only in a camisole,” she appeared at the office of the Indian Agent where she was subsequently detained.³³ “According to her husband,” Burch writes, “Elizabeth Fairbault ‘was only drunk.’”³⁴ But the interaction was so offensive to the Indian agent, that “he contacted BIA headquarters in Washington, DC, requesting permission to have her committed. Official approval came back on May 13, and, on May 29, a police officer and agency doctor arrived at the Fairbault home and forcibly took the thirty-two-year-old woman to the Indian Insane Asylum.”³⁵ Eleven years after her initial confinement there, Elizabeth gave birth to a baby girl, Cora Winona, on September 28, 1926. Two years later, Hummer would record Elizabeth’s death as “heart failure.” Cora Winona would remain at Canton for another two years, until 1930, when Hummer would send her to an orphanage in Arizona. Burch notes that Elizabeth’s relatives have never identified the whereabouts of Cora Winona, which indicates that her transfer to the orphanage and failure to notify the Fairbaults was an intentional act of familial destruction, in a vein akin to what the OIA sought to accomplish in the forced removal of Indigenous children to boarding institutions.

There were other infants born at the facility, as well. Burch estimates that at least four babies were born at Canton, while Anne Dilenschneider, a clinical psychologist who has also researched events at the facility, suggests that that number was even higher, around seven births from 1902-1934.³⁶ In addition to Elizabeth Fairbault’s daughter, at the time of this writing I have been able to identify records confirming the birth of four separate children born to the following women: Agnes C. (Menominee); Susan B. (Ute); Lizzie V. (Paiute); E-nas-pah (Diné). The outcome of the babies’ lives, and the lives of their mothers, illustrate the horrors of this institution and its role as a place of Indigenous disappearance. In 1921, Agnes’s daughter, Dolores, died of broncho-pneumonia seven months after her birth.³⁷ Agnes would be released at the direction of Samuel Silk in 1933, after spending sixteen years of her life confined to the facility.³⁸ On November 8th, 1906, Lizzie V. gave birth to a baby boy, who was fathered by a Chippewa man named Frank, also confined to Canton. At the direction of Superintendent Gifford, in 1907 Lizzie and Frank’s “illegitimate” son was removed to the Children’s Home, an orphanage, in Sioux Falls, SD, to be “placed in a christian Indian family of the better class.”³⁹ Ten years later, on April 17, 1917, Lizzie died while still confined to the facility.⁴⁰ On March 10, 1913, Hummer wrote the Commissioner to inform him of the action taken to “admit” a daughter

³³ Susan Burch, “Dislocated Histories,” 144.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Anne Dilenschneider, “An Invitation to Restorative Justice: The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians.”

³⁷ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 31, 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 88523, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

³⁸ Superintendent of Keshena Agency to Dr. L.L. Culp, December 22, 1933, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 18, folder 51468, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

³⁹ Oscar Gifford to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 19, 1907, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 11, folder 77872, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁰ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 14, 1919. RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 8, folder 35438, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

born to Susan B. (Ute) the previous day.⁴¹ No explanation was made of the circumstances of the infant's birth, but given the fact that Susan was admitted to Canton in October 1912, she likely arrived at the institution pregnant. Five months later, Hummer informed the commissioner that Susan had died; at the time of this writing, I have not been able to identify records relating to the whereabouts of Susan's child.⁴²

In a letter written to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, the Superintendent of the agency at Shiprock, New Mexico, a man named W.T. Shelton, wrote in regard to E-nas-pah (Diné), who died of pulmonary tuberculosis one month after giving birth to a baby girl. As Shelton indicated in this letter, Hummer was "very anxious to dispose of the child," and one month later, she was buried next to her mother in the cemetery adjoining Canton's grounds.⁴³ These painful events demonstrate the key role that Hummer, the Office of Indian Affairs, and U.S. officials played in the destruction of Indigenous life. In an era in which Indianness was itself defined as a pathological state of being, the loss of life at the Canton facility was the most extreme iteration of this ideology. These realities challenge previous discussions (Putney 1984, Joinson 2009) of the institution as a place where "patients" resided, and instead demonstrate the role the facility played as a violent, settler space where Indigenous lives were intentionally destroyed. The routinized fact of Indigenous death at this institution suggests that Canton was a place of chaos, social death, and homicide.⁴⁴

Hummer treated the institution as his own private laboratory, and one letter shows how his actions were motivated by eugenicist fantasies. After Samuel Silk's 1933 final report, incoming Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier directed L.L. Culp, special physician of the Indian Service, to assume control over the Canton facility. Once there, Culp set about releasing Indian people identified by Samuel Silk as being healthy enough to return to their families.⁴⁵ Culp wrote continuously to Commissioner Collier about his work while at Canton, and in one letter spoke of Elizabeth Fairbault's daughter. After news of Canton's forced closure broke, one of Elizabeth's children, Simon Fairbault, wrote the Commissioner inquiring about the whereabouts of Cora Winona. In response, Culp reported that "on account of the mental condition of [Cora Winona's] parents, [Cora] was retained in the institution until July 24, 1930, for the purpose of observation in determining whether or not the laws of heredity would manifest themselves in the usual direction."⁴⁶ He continued by explaining that Cora was nearly four years old at that time, and "normal both physically and mentally."⁴⁷ Culp then reported that Cora's father, Frank S., who had himself been confined at Canton, wanted her to be placed in the Good Shepherd Mission in Forth Defiance, AZ, and this evidently was done.⁴⁸ As Susan Burch has pointed out, these realities point to the ways in which individual histories of Indigenous confinement at Canton are

⁴¹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 10, 1913, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 13, folder 32954, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴² Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 16, 1913, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 19, folder 101050, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴³ W.T. Shelton to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 11, 1909, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 13, folder 26831, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁴ See: Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected*, Nation of Newcomers: Immigrant History as American History (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

⁴⁵ Silk recommended 17 people for release; 5 women and 12 men. See: L.L. Culp to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 21, 1933, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 3, folder 7448, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁶ L.L. Culp to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 26, 1934 RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 4, folder 7448, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

inextricably tied to broader patterns of forced removal and the removal of specific historical actors from our frames of reference.⁴⁹ As I discuss in the following section, the multiple removals of Indigenous people to, from, and between settler institutions at the behest of U.S. officials broaden our understanding of the ways in which white racial privilege and hierarchies of power worked in the U.S. At Canton, as was the case at Carlisle, the only commonality shared by the disparate historical agents who surveilled, transported, or policed Indian people was their whiteness. Records relating to a Sioux man demonstrate how this pattern came to bear on those confined to Canton in astonishing ways.

“Trouble with a Girl”: Race, Gender, and Confinement at Canton

In a remarkable instance of sensationalized “insanity,” in 1923 a Sioux man named Jerome Court made newspaper headlines when he fled the Canton Asylum and was followed by a woman named Ava Dunn. As the *Argus Leader* of Sioux Falls, SD reported in an article entitled “Holding Woman in Indian Case,” “Ava Dunn, ex-employe [sic] of the Hiawatha federal Insane asylum, Canton, is not technically in the toils of the law today, as United States Deputy District Attorney Edward Barron said a charge might not be filed until late this afternoon in the investigation to show that she aided Jerome Court, an Indian inmate at the asylum to escape August 23, after having severed her connection with the institution.”⁵⁰ As the article reflects, Dunn was an ex-employee of Canton who had been detained in connection to the escape of Court, a twenty-six-year-old Fort Totten man who entered the facility in July of 1923. Court was considered dangerous; after having been declared insane by the Board of Insanity in Benson County, North Dakota, he was transferred to Canton. Additional letters of correspondence reflect how Court’s confinement was much to the relief of the Superintendent of the Fort Totten jurisdiction, W.R. Beyer, who made it known that Court was a considerable source of disturbance on the reservation and he wanted him gone.⁵¹

Court spent little more than six months at Canton, but during his time there it appears that he was intimately involved with Dunn, who evidently reciprocated Court’s affections. A handwritten statement written by Court on September 6, 1923, entitled “Trouble with a girl,” details the development of their relationship and subsequent escape from Canton. As Indigenous perspectives are few and far between in Canton materials, I have reproduced this statement in its entirety for what it can tell us about his experience, and the possibility that he sought comfort through intimate connection while confined to this facility. Court writes:

When the 1st time I came she gave me some shining smiles & peculiar looks, I know [sic] right there that there was some-thing in it, & it interested me, also, as it would with any other young man. At thereafter, mealtimes she frequently shine her contagious smiles to me. Of course I paid back with one or two of mine. Finally; we had our 1st meeting, & this took place, in the laundry-like little room, in the base-ment of the main building so the same with any other flirtations, we mentioned our love so

⁴⁹ Susan Burch. “Dislocated Histories.”

⁵⁰ “Holding Woman in Indian Case,” *Argus Leader*, August 30 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁵¹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 3, 1924, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

& so to each other, etc., we went after cool down to the hospital basement, & there the 1st stolened [sic] kiss came into effect. We then accomplished some clothes washings after that. We had a lunch in the kitchen, & sat out on the porch with some friends. It came late so she escorted me to my dormitory but before I entered we experienced another kiss & from there on & on we have a little of a conversation but it was very seldom we met according to opportunities, also occasionally we would work together n some tiny work, & the kissing proposition occurs at each preavailable opportunity, & from there on now & then, we would slip a note to one another perhaps at meal times we produce something similar to love signs. & on some certain night on several occasions she will enter our dormitory with a little lunch or something pertaining to refreshment. & one time in one of our little short conversations we made an agreement. She was the 1st to motioned [sic] the suggestion & of course I made no hesitation. I O.K.'d it with proper earnestness I know with her influences that we would safely escape of this asylum, so we made out our plan with proper schedule on a special date for the elopment [sic] this was accomplished by secret notes. When she brought them lunches she did not brought it only to be but also to one [illegible] of the other boys in the same dormitory & of course she was accompanied by Mr Sorenson every time she comes there. And as I was saying, when we planned to run away, which we did, I was captured & returned to the asylum.

Yours truly,
Jerome C. Court.⁵²

Court portrays himself in this statement as a gentle and thoughtful man—a far cry from the way U.S. officials described him, as “criminally insane.” As his statement suggests, Court felt close to Dunn—they had proclaimed their love for one another—and thus he likely believed that she was acting in his best interest when she helped him to escape the terrible environment in which he was confined. Hummer also laid blame for Court’s unauthorized absence, at least in part, at Dunn’s feet; on August 26th, 1923, wrote the Commissioner that he would do everything in his power to prosecute Dunn to the fullest extent of the law.⁵³

Dunn’s actions did not square with the image of femininity dictated by the times, nor did she live up to the expectation that female employees would influence the Indian Service for good. In the public sphere, American men may have been responsible for enacting laws that profoundly impacted the lives of Indian people, but as scholars of women’s work in the American West have shown, white women were in many ways the foot soldiers of the federal project of “Indian uplift.” In *Federal Fathers and Mothers*, for example, Cahill demonstrates how white women furthered the work of Indian assimilation by leveraging the private domain of the home as the exclusive *public* province of white, middle-class American women. Writing of the influx of women into the Indian Service in the late nineteenth century, she explains that “policy makers called specifically for female employees, arguing that they were better suited to

⁵² Jerome Court handwritten statement, September 6, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁵³ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 26, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

the work of assimilation—that precisely because of their gender, they possessed the qualities necessary for moral suasion and moral authority.”⁵⁴ Indeed, Cahill observes that in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, highly educated American women increasingly sought positions with the Indian Office, so that by 1898, single women comprised 42 percent of Indian Service employees, and “a full 62 percent of the 2,649 employees in the Indian School Service. Through 1910, the proportion of women held steady at around 55 to 60 percent of Indian School Service employees,” and by 1925, the Indian Service employed more than 1,000 women.⁵⁵ This “women’s work” had ideological underpinnings: Indian people were to learn through observation and mimicry, meaning that Indian Service employees would themselves serve as “object lessons.” And white American women—naturally maternal, selfless, ethical, and nurturing, according to many of the era’s commonsense dictums—were supposed to be ideally suited for this work.

Given these prevailing ideologies, there were profound moral connotations to Dunn’s involvement with Court. As well-known reformer and writer Helen Hunt Jackson wrote in her 1883 “Report on the conditions and needs of the Mission Indians of California” on the subject of the good influence white women would have on Indian communities,

...in our judgment, only women teachers should be employed in these isolated Indian villages. There is a great laxity of morals among these Indians, and in the wild regions where their villages lie, the unwritten law of public sentiment...hardly exists. Therefore the post of teacher in these schools is one full of temptations and danger to a man. Moreover, women have more courage and self-denying missionary spirit, sufficient to undertake such a life, and have an invaluable influence outside their school-rooms. They go familiarly into the homes, and are really educating the parents as well as the children in a way which is not within the power of any man, however earnest and devoted he may be.⁵⁶

While Jackson wrote in the last decades of the nineteenth century, little had changed in the early years of the twentieth; Dunn’s involvement with Court would have still been viewed as a significant racial betrayal and as a shocking refusal to act with the propriety expected of a woman tasked with the care of the “insane.” Dunn appears to have acknowledged this herself, for in one letter sent to Court, she lamented, “I can’t see why it is so oful [sic] for me to love you? Many white men marry Indian women so why not white women Indian men.”⁵⁷

Letters exchanged between U.S. officials in reference to Dunn and Court illustrate how powerful stereotypes about Indian men and contemporaneous expectations about white American women came to bear upon them and their sensationalized escape. These records also show that while Dunn and Court both failed to perform their proper social roles and faced steep consequences as a result of these actions, Dunn’s whiteness and femininity could ultimately be used as her most effective legal defense. In Hummer’s August 26th letter to the Commissioner, he recounted news of Dunn and Court’s whereabouts. Evidently, the previous day a policeman at

⁵⁴ Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers & Mothers*, 67.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁵⁶ Helen Hunt Jackson, *Report on the Condition and Needs of the Mission Indians of California*, (Washington, 1883), 10.

⁵⁷ Ava Dunn to Jerome Court, September 3, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 17, folder 72127, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

Sioux Falls, SD had wired Hummer to inform him that he had “an insane Indian under arrest and asked if we had lost one.”⁵⁸ Hummer reported to the Commissioner that he had answered the policeman affirmatively, but that Court managed to escape, and made his way to the train station with Dunn. According to a train conductor, the couple had departed Sioux Falls, for Sioux City, Iowa, at 6 am. “We succeeded in getting the number of a trunk which she checked from Sioux Falls to Sioux City and wired special agent McCauley to arrest the party who claimed that trunk,” he wrote. Two days later, Dunn and Court had both been apprehended, and a subsequent letter sent from Hummer to the Commissioner on September 2, 1923, describes the capture. “Having a rather promising tip that Miss Dunn was in Sioux Falls on August 28, 1923,” Hummer explained, “I made a trip to that city in the company with the Lincoln County sheriff and managed to trap her at the Western Union Telegraph office at five P.M.”⁵⁹ He went on, “Filing a charge against her before the Assistant U.S. District Attorney at seven thirty P.M., we succeeded in getting a confession from her and the promise of her assistance in securing the patient, if we would give her as much leniency as compatible with the law.”⁶⁰

Letters of correspondence detailing the Court-Dunn case reflect how the couple’s capture was facilitated by the numerous citizens and officials who provided tips to Hummer and communicated about sightings of the pair, much in the same way that law enforcement officials, white civilians, and Carlisle authorities worked together to secure the return of “runaway” Indian men. In this instance, Indian Service officials did not view Court’s escape as an act of self-preservation; instead they viewed it as a reflection of Court’s fundamental criminality, as indicated by Hummer’s plan to file charges under the Mann Act of 1910. The Mann Act, also known as the White Slavery Act, made prostitution a felony and sought to prevent men from trafficking white women across state lines for “immoral purposes.”⁶¹ At the time of this writing, I have not been able to identify charges brought against either Court or Dunn under the Mann Act. But as charges under this act were most commonly brought against men, the prosecution of a white woman would have been extremely unusual. Notably absent from correspondence about the two is any discussion of Court’s ostensible “insanity.” Dunn may have behaved badly in the eyes of society, but as records referring to Court reflect, U.S. officials overwhelmingly regarded him as criminal by nature.

By the same token, Dunn held powerful bargaining chips; it was by virtue of her gender that the law could protect her, in the same way that her whiteness marked her as a natural ally to other white U.S. officials. In part, her femininity was a cloak of protection that enabled her actions to be viewed in a relatively more lenient light; by comparison, as Fort Totten Superintendent Beyer described him, Court was “desperately insane.”⁶² Beyer was, he claimed,

⁵⁸ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 26, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁵⁹ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 2, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Hummer’s original comment was that he “swore out a warrant for [Dunn’s] arrest yesterday in Canton, charging her with abduction, until we could get her, when the charge might properly be changed to one of violation of the Mann act.” Charges were most commonly brought against men; syntactically speaking, it is unclear whether Hummer intended to prosecute Dunn or Court. For more information about the administration of legal penalties under this act, see: Jessica R. Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Cambridge, Massachusetts ; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014).

⁶² W.R. Beyer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 19, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

terrified of Court—but as one letter indicates, his purportedly violent behavior at Fort Totten may have been due to the complications of an untreated venereal disease.⁶³ Hummer portrayed Court in equally stark terms—as egotistical, violent, immoral, and alcoholic, which necessitated keeping Court continuously restrained in chains and irons, according to one letter—but insisted that he was unafraid of Court.⁶⁴ Instead, Hummer uncharacteristically cited those attributes as proof that Court was not insane, but merely dangerous, and that he should be released.⁶⁵ On January 31, 1924, Court was released from the Canton facility and placed on a train headed for the Sisseton Agency in South Dakota. While there, he wrote a letter to Ava Dunn, who evidently retained her own freedom and was working at the Dunning Hospital in Chicago, IL. Evidently unaware of Court’s release from Canton, she sent Hummer a telegram to inform him that Court had contacted her with his location and was waiting for a reply. “Keep this confidential,” Dunn instructed Hummer, “I might be able to help.”⁶⁶

Dunn’s telegram to Hummer reads as an attempt to redeem herself by further proving her loyalty to him; similarly, the note reflects how the act of surveilling Indian people could serve as a powerful confirmation of white racial solidarity. As I demonstrated in chapters two and three, Indian men who successfully escaped Carlisle were often confronted with a network of white civilians and others who were authorized to effect their capture and return to the institution. As I pointed out in those discussions, one’s phenotype often dictated one’s rightful location in time and space: Indian men who were phenotypically white, or “practically white,” as one Superintendent remarked of one Carlisle escapee, enjoyed increased mobility in and around Carlisle’s vicinity, while those who fit racial stereotypes were unwanted in town. Similarly, records relating to the Dunn-Court scandal illustrate how surveillance at the hands of white Americans came to bear on the lives of Indian people confined to the Canton facility, and show how profoundly race organized social and legal power in this institutional context, as well. These records show that while Dunn failed to perform her whiteness and femininity properly, ultimately it was U.S. officials’ collective fear of Indian men that outweighed Dunn’s social infractions. Court had been declared “insane” in a court of law, and thus Dunn should have assumed legal culpability in his escape from Canton. But in this instance—as with many others—Dunn’s whiteness would be her most effective protection. Similarly, when Marie C. escaped with Canton employee Vernon Ball, who raped her, according to a statement made by Marie after the assault, Hummer found her testimony impossible to believe: “All the evidence now in my possession is circumstantial or dependent upon the word of this patient,” he explained to the Commissioner, “who, legally, is not competent to testify. I wonder if your Office cares to detail an under-cover man to work up a case against Mr. Ball.”⁶⁷ As these records suggest, one’s confinement to Canton exacerbated social vulnerabilities, while providing U.S. officials with a convenient way to rationalize their infantilization of Indian people and their assumption that they were incapable of acting as their own agents.

⁶³ W.R. Beyer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 8, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁴ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 6, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁵ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 11, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁶ Ava Dunn to Harry Hummer, February 21, 1924, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 68370, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁷ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 28, 1931, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 18, folder 42427, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

Legal Guardianship and Legalized Land Theft

When Hummer confined Indian people to Canton he facilitated broader patterns of land theft and resource expropriation. Archival records reflect how the complex legal structures of guardianship, wardship, competency, and citizenship—in addition to the cultural connotations associated with these legal categories—seized upon the Indian women and men confined to the facility in complicated ways. Canton was intended, according to the facility’s political architects, for the treatment of Indian people who had no other means—familial or otherwise—of procuring the psychiatric care that they ostensibly needed. But as the experiences of Jerome Court and others held at the facility attest, U.S. officials often used Canton as a place of disappearance for Indian people regarded as unwanted, undesirable, or otherwise “troublesome” in some way. Many of these commitments enabled U.S. officials to preserve their power over Indian people by removing those who presented a challenge to federal authority, but records also document how the possibility of acquiring Indigenous land could be a catalyst for initiating commitment procedures. These documents illustrate how allotted Indian people confined to this facility were vulnerable to land theft and resource expropriation, which demonstrates how the essential work of settler-colonialism was also facilitated by Canton and its “caring” regime.

To return to the case that began this chapter, in 1921 a Sioux man by the name of Thick Hair wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to demand the release of his sister, Mrs. Two Teeth, who had been confined at Canton for nearly two years. Unsuccessful in his petition to secure his sister’s freedom, Thick Hair would learn of her death a year and a half after writing to the Commissioner. A letter dated June 18, 1921, written nine days after Thick Hair’s original plea was received, reveals Hummer’s rationale for refusing Mrs. Two Teeth’s release. As he explained to the Commissioner, “...Mrs. Two Teeth is an old lady from the Crow Creek Reservation, suffering from senile dementia and is totally unable to care for herself. She was sent here to receive the treatment that her condition requires, has no chance of improving and should remain here until her death, which is only a matter of time.”⁶⁸ In another letter in this series of correspondence, the Indian agent at Crow Creek agreed with Hummer’s decision, stating that he felt Thick Hair’s motives were dishonest: “she has no relatives upon this reservation who are willing to care for her and see that she does not harm herself or others.”⁶⁹ As was the case with others who died during their incarceration at this facility, Hummer obscured the conditions of Mrs. Two Teeth’s death with opaque medical verbiage. This language would have been difficult, if not impossible, for any non-specialist to understand or decipher, and thus would have left concerned Indian relatives entirely uninformed of their loved one’s condition, and entirely without recourse—legal or otherwise.

Interestingly, records relating to Mrs. Two Teeth reveal that two years after she was confined to the institution, her husband was committed for similarly vague reasons relating, ostensibly, to senility in old age. A letter from Hummer to the Commissioner documents the Indian Office’s typical disinterestedness in the state of affairs at Canton, once again illustrating how Hummer’s decisions were rarely challenged, or even questioned by higher-ranking U.S. officials; in one example, in 1909 Dr. Joseph Murphy, the Indian Service’s chief medical officer,

⁶⁸ Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 18, 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 18, folder 47481, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁶⁹ H.P. Marble to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 18, 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 18, folder 47481, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

was tasked with investigating Hummer and found him to be “‘above reproach’.”⁷⁰ In reference to whether Two Teeth should be released back home along with his wife at the request of her brother, in 1921 Hummer wrote the Commissioner, “I have the honor to report that Mr. Two Teeth is in approximately the same condition as his wife, suffering from senile dementia and is considerably more disturbed and more difficult to manage, so that I feel compelled to advise against returning him to his home and recommend that he be continued under treatment in this institution.”⁷¹ Two Teeth was thus retained at the institution, and would endure the loss of his wife the following year. Records relating to Mr. and Mrs. Two Teeth are relatively sparse; beyond Thick Hair’s request for his sister’s release and Hummer’s announcement to the Indian Office that Mrs. Two Teeth had died, there are few existing documents that might provide insight into what their life was like at the institution or the nature of their relationship together. Despite the relative scarcity of personal information about the Two Teeth family, however, letters exchanged between the Indian Office, Hummer, and H.E. Wright, the clerk in charge at the Crow Creek Agency, offer additional insight into the many ways in which confinement at Canton could exacerbate simultaneous social and legal vulnerabilities, and demonstrate how U.S. officials rationalized the simultaneous confinement of relatives to this facility.⁷²

On July 27, 1925, three years after the death of Two Teeth’s wife, Wright wrote the Commissioner to inquire about Two Teeth’s assets, and whether they might be used to cover costs relating to his confinement at Canton. Wright explained,

Receipt is acknowledged of Office letter...requesting information as to whether or not Two Teeth, an inmate of the Canton Insane Asylum, is so financially situated so as to be able to pay for his maintenance at Canton at the rate of \$400.00 per annum.

In reply, I have to inform your Office that Two Teeth has to his credit in this office as Individual Indian money the sum of \$622.48 which is available for the purpose mentioned above. He also has 160 acres of farm land, appraised at \$3000.00, which can be sold and used for this purpose.⁷³

As indicated from this letter, once the balance of Two Teeth’s Individual Indian Money (IIM) account had been depleted, Wright surmised that the Indian Office might be inclined to dispose of his land in order to pay for his confinement at the facility. It is unclear whether Two Teeth’s allotment was sold out from under him at this time; a subsequent letter from Crow Creek Agent W.E. Dunn reflects that he was of the opinion that the land should be retained until the price per acre increased, at which point he recommended it be sold to pay Hummer. As Dunn explained in a letter dated September 29, 1925, “this old gentleman has funds in the amount of \$633.12 on

⁷⁰ Putney, “Canton Asylum,” 11.

⁷¹ Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 5, 1921, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 18, folder 47481, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁷² Other relatives were confined at Canton together, as well. According to various archival records, I have identified the following relationships: sisters Susan and Jane B. (Southern Ute); after Charles C.’s death in 1909, his son Peter and daughter Mary were confined to Canton (Menominee); Zonna Y. and her mother Drag Toes (West Navajo); Juanita E. and her daughter Frances (Pueblo); Brothers Joe and Frank M. (Cherokee); Siblings James and Annie S. (Chippewa); Seymore and Mary, parents to son Edward, and his legal wife Mary (Menominee).

⁷³ H.E. Wright to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 27, 1925, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 8, folder 51361, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

deposit to his credit at this agency that would be available for [the purpose of his maintenance at Canton], as careful inquiry among the members of this tribe has failed to disclose any near relatives or dependents who are in need of assistance.”⁷⁴ Dunn continued,

In view of the above, it is my belief that the money on deposit to his credit at this agency should be made use of for his benefit during his lifetime. This old gentleman also has an allotment of 160 acres on this reservation that could when his present funds become exhausted, and land prices advance, be sold and the proceeds of the sale used for his care. I would not, however, under present land values recommend its sale at this time.⁷⁵

By December, Assistant Commissioner E.B. Meritt had authorized the expenditure of \$100.00 per annum from Two Teeth’s IIM account for the time being, although it is likely that this rate was reassessed at a later date. But on July 18, 1930, Hummer wrote the Commissioner to inform him of Two Teeth’s death, employing the same obscure medical language that characterized all such reports to the Indian Office: “He was seventy-nine years of age and suffering from senectus, including advanced arterio-sclerosis and chronic interstitial nephritis and gradually faded away during the intense hot dry spell which we are experiencing.”⁷⁶ Wright instructed Hummer to inter the elder at Canton; Two Teeth, like his wife, would never return home.⁷⁷

In another instance of piecemeal land expropriation, in 1920 a thirty-four-year-old Pine Ridge woman named Mary C. was being considered for commitment to Canton. According to letters of correspondence exchanged between Hummer, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and her mother, Mrs. Julia C., Mary was an allotted resident of South Dakota, referred to as an epileptic. A letter from Julia to H.M. Tidwell, Indian Agent at Pine Ridge reflects that Mary’s mother wrote the agency under the auspices of securing care for her daughter; she described how Mary’s health impacted the circumstances of her family’s life in some detail. “Please inform me as to what I can do about my daughter Mary C—,” Julia began, “She has been causing quite a bit of trouble. Of course she is of age and has her allotment patented but at the same time she is an epileptic and has hysteria [sic] and we have always had to take care of her.”⁷⁸ She continued,

Last fall she went away so we had her brought back. She would not come directly home but persisted in staying away saying she was her own boss and could do as she pleased. She made considerable trouble for the people who kept her—actually threatening to burn their house and was very abusive to members of the family and they refused her their home so she went to another place but they would not let her stay so she had them take her to another place but was refused again so she

⁷⁴ W.E. Dunn to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 29, 1925, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 8, folder 51361, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 18, 1930, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 20, folder 00, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁷⁷ According to Canton researcher Todd Leahy, Mrs. Two Teeth was interred at Canton on January 10, 1923; her husband was interred at the institution on July 18, 1930. For more information, see: “Appendix III: Names of Indians Buried in the Hiawatha Asylum Cemetery” in Todd Leahy, *They Called It Madness: The Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, 1899-1934* (Baltimore: PublishAmerica, 2009).

⁷⁸ Julia C— to H.M. Tidwell, May 24, 1920, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 15, folder 45714, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

went to another place to stay for a few days but when the time came she would not leave. She had such bad spells that they could not stand her so they notified us to bring her away.⁷⁹

She concluded this letter with a bid, it seems, for the Superintendent's help: "Now what I want to now is. Can you do any thing for us in this case? We would like to put her in a place where she will not bother people as she is also hard for us to control. Have you authority over her or not? We want an immediate reply." "Respectfully," she closed, "Mrs. M.H. or Julia C—."⁸⁰

While Julia's appeal made an impression upon the agent at Pine Ridge, who agreed to write to Hummer, additional correspondence reflects that Mary was also being considered for confinement to the state hospital at Yankton. At issue, evidently, was her citizenship status; as was the case with James Walker, a former Carlisle student discussed in the previous chapter who was considered for commitment at Canton, Mary's citizenship status would determine the location of her confinement in this instance, as well. If the Indian Office confirmed Mary's status as a federal ward, she would be eligible for institutionalization at Canton; but if she was determined to be a citizen of South Dakota, the state facility would be the lawful receiving institution. A letter dated June 8, 1920, reflects the legal quagmires associated with determining the status of an individual Indian person's citizenship, and reveals the extent to which the law in regards to this issue was open to interpretation—thus authorizing Hummer to act in accordance with his own preference in such matters. In a letter from Hummer to Agent Tidwell about the legality of holding Mary, Hummer quoted OIA circular 1571, in which it was stated:

Inasmuch as the Supreme Court of the United States holds that citizenship is not incompatible [sic] with wardship, insane Indians who sustain to the Government the relation of citizen wards may be admitted to the Canton Asylum, if they cannot be cared for in non-federal institutions. The commitment of this class of patients should be through due process of law, provided, however, that when such process cannot be immediately invoked, any patient requiring intermural restraint may be admitted, provisionally, upon the consent of his nearest relative, or other person having the right of natural or legal guardianship over him.⁸¹

Hummer went on to say that while he believed Mary should be admitted to the state hospital at Yankton, he was not totally confident that his interpretation of the circular was correct, thus forwarding the question to the office of the Commissioner. In response, Assistant Commissioner E.B. Meritt confirmed that Tidwell should look into Yankton first, but stated that if there was not space available at the state hospital, that he would approve Mary's transfer to Canton. Notably, Meritt echoed Hummer's apparent concern that the commitment be "legal"—a concern that might reflect Hummer's awareness that the Indian Office was watching his conduct closely. The Indian Office's latest investigation into Hummer's management of Canton had only recently

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Harry Hummer to H.M. Tidwell, June 8, 1920, RG 75CCF 1907-1939, box 15, folder 45714, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

been concluded, and since that time Indian Service personnel had subjected Hummer to near-continuous scrutiny.⁸²

In spite of this apparent concern over due process, however, Meritt's letter reflects the same kind of subjective interpretation of the law that facilitated the wrongful confinement of hundreds of Indian people to Canton under the auspices of "care." Indeed, there were so many loopholes in commitment procedures at Canton that nearly everyone was admitted on some kind of exceptional basis, making those caveats extremely dangerous from the standpoint of the Indian people who stood to be confined to this facility indefinitely. If Yankton would not accept Mary, Canton would, but—as Meritt explained—the Indian Office believed that her confinement should be initiated in accordance with the laws of South Dakota, "unless there is the need of immediate restraint." He elaborated, "Being a citizen Indian with a patent in fee allotment, it appears that [Mary] is in a position to defray the expense of her care at Canton should she be sent there as a patient. Please look into this feature of the matter, and if it is decided to send this woman to Canton, make such recommendation as you may deem appropriate."⁸³ Land, Meritt's letter reveals, was truly at the heart of the matter.

As Dakota historian Elizabeth Cook-Lynn has observed of South Dakota's historical dealings with the Great Sioux Nation, land theft "rose out of a policy of extermination. A policy that was put in place because the Sioux could not be defeated in war. And they could not be coerced in a hundred other ways that were tried into giving up their lives."⁸⁴ Similarly, additional records about Mary and others confined to Canton reveal how land was intimately tied to disputes over citizenship, competency, and commitment to the facility. Additional documents of correspondence about Mary reveal that she had evidently evaded confinement at both Canton and Yankton in 1920, for in 1927, U.S. officials again resumed exchanging letters on the same subject that had preoccupied them seven years earlier. According to these documents, in February 1927, legislation was passed that provided for the cancellation of patents that had not been applied for during the twenty-five-year trust period. As Commissioner Charles Burke wrote to Congressman John Cochran on March 10, 1927, in reference to Mary,

The legislation referred to in our letter of February 19, 1927, (S.2714), has been enacted and the act approved by the President on February 26, 1927, and the unapplied for but accepted patent in fee issued to the Indian during the trust period may be canceled provided she has not sold or mortgaged any part of the land...

After cancellation of the patent part or all the land may be sold on petition of the allottee, and the proceeds used for her benefit.

The asylum at Canton is full and there is no chance now and will not be in the near future for the Indian's entrance therein; but the Superintendent will be required to make some arrangements as soon as possible for her care in some

⁸² Hummer was subject to numerous investigations conducted by the Office of Indian Affairs and various officials appointed to the task, in the following years: 1909, 1914-15, 1929, and 1933.

⁸³ E.B. Meritt to Harry Hummer, June 17, 1920, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 15, folder 49714, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, "Land Reform," *Wicazo Sa Review* 14, no. 1 (1999): 103-12, 107.

State institution, or by some person, and the proceeds of the sale of her land used in payment.⁸⁵

Whether confined at Canton or Yankton, the Indian Office mused, Mary's patent could be canceled, and the land sold off for her "benefit." These documents provide a powerful example of the kind of small-scale land theft that has historically defined South Dakota's relations with the Sioux, and other Indigenous Nations, who have resided in the Plains region since time immemorial. "If you do not understand the crimes of the past," Cook-Lynn writes, "you do not understand the crimes of the present."⁸⁶ Similarly, historian Thomas Biolsi reflects upon the legacy of colonial incursion into Sioux territory by recounting a visit with an elderly Lakota man, who remarked to Biolsi in 1991 that "the Lakota were not truly a 'sovereign nation,' as the younger people and tribal attorneys were insisting, but that they were 'captives' or 'wards' of the United States."⁸⁷ Mary's story is thus not simply a part of the historical past—it is also, as the elder's comment reminds us, a part of the Lakota present.

Records relating to a Quapaw man named Robert Thompson similarly demonstrate how Hummer facilitated Americans' unrelenting quest for Indigenous land and resources by keeping Indian people confined at Canton.⁸⁸ Thompson was committed in 1907 at the direction of the U.S. Court in Indian Territory, where he would remain for the next sixteen years. Few documents remain that reference Thompson, and thus information about his arrest and alleged crime is unknown at the time of this writing. In the archival records that have been preserved, however, letters of correspondence between various U.S. officials reflect that Thompson was in possession of an oil-bearing allotment, which in 1923 earned him \$28,758.41 (\$433,850.50 in 2020 USD) in mining royalties. A letter sent from the Superintendent of the Quapaw Agency, Oliver K. Chandler, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles Burke reveals details about Thompson's legal and financial circumstances. In 1923, Thompson was being considered for transfer from Canton to the state hospital at Vinita, Oklahoma, and Assistant Commissioner E.B. Meritt wrote to the Quapaw agent to gather facts about Thompson's citizenship status. In response, Chandler wrote that Thompson was considered both a citizen of Oklahoma and a ward of the U.S. government, and noted that his 240 acres of land was being leased out for agricultural, business, and mining purposes.⁸⁹ In a 1921 letter to the Commissioner from a previous Indian Agent, Superintendent Carl Mayer explained that while all Quapaw Indians were considered citizens of Oklahoma and allowed to vote, Thompson was not, which likely meant that he had been declared "incompetent" and deemed incapable of assuming the self-sufficiency associated with the responsibilities of citizenship.⁹⁰ But as an independent investigation into the

⁸⁵ Charles Burke to John Cochran, March 10, 1927, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 15, folder 49714, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Thomas Biolsi, "The Birth of the Reservation: Making the Modern Individual among the Lakota," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (1995): 28–53, 40.

⁸⁸ Robert Thompson's full name is used here because he has been written about elsewhere.

⁸⁹ Oliver K. Chandler to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 27, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1934, box 15, folder 21996, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁹⁰ Janet McDonnell, "Competency Commissions and Indian Land Policy, 1913-1920," *South Dakota History* 11, no. 1 (1981): 21–34.

administration of Indian estates would find just a few years later, the discovery of oil on Indian land and designations of “incompetency” often went hand in hand.⁹¹

In 1924, the year after Thompson was released from Canton and transferred to hospital at Vinita, Dakota activist, writer, and scholar Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkála Šá) released a report that would rock the Indian Office. The report, entitled “Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes—Legalized Robbery,” was co-authored with Charles H. Fabens, an attorney with the American Indian Defense Association, and Matthew K. Sniffen of the Indian Rights Association—two of the era’s most influential figures in Indian reform. The findings were a shocking indictment of the Indian Office and its general indifference towards the Five “Civilized” Tribes (Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole), as the co-authors described what they referred to as the “legalized robbery” of the Oklahoma nations. In large part, this “legalized robbery” was facilitated through the establishment of “competency commissions,” which traveled to the reservations to assess Indian peoples’ “preparedness” for self-sufficiency, citizenship, and ability to manage their own affairs.⁹²

Competency commissions and the damage that resulted from them have largely been associated with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells’ administration (1913-1920). But as historian Katherine Ellinghaus has shown, in 1906, well before Sells’ time, the Burke Act established the legal category of competency which enabled the U.S. government to remove an individual’s allotment from trust status, thus rendering the lands taxable. The Burke Act was reactionary; nearly two decades earlier, The General Allotment Act of 1887 stipulated that the government would hold lands in trust for a period of twenty-five years, after which period the allottee would be awarded a fee-simple patent, enabling them to sell or lease their lands at their own discretion. By 1906, however, U.S. officials had tired of administering trust responsibilities, and with the ratification of the Burke Act, Congress granted the Secretary of the Interior the power to forcibly remove allotments from trust status. This process, known as forced fee patenting, had immediate consequences: millions of acres passed out of Indian possession, as avaricious white Americans saw the opportunity to procure desirable tracts of land at a cost well below their actual value. Shortly thereafter, in the midst of this frenzy, the Congressional Act of May 29, 1908, transferred jurisdictional power over all probate matters in Eastern Oklahoma to the County Courts. In this way, thousands of Indian people and their landholdings were rendered vulnerable to the duplicitous dealings of court-appointed guardians, who held legal authority over the assets of their wards and their “restricted” allotments.⁹³ Historian Janet McDonnell

⁹¹ In the scathing 1924 report “Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians,” co-authors Gertrude Bonnin, Charles Fabens, and Matthew Sniffen wrote that at the conclusion of their investigation into the administration of Indian estates in Eastern Oklahoma, it was found “that when oil is ‘struck’ on an Indian’s property, it is usually considered prima facie evidence that he is incompetent, and in the appointment of a guardian for him his wishes in the matter are rarely considered,” 7. Zitkala-Sä, Charles H. Fabens, and Matthew K. Sniffen, *Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians: An Orgy of Graft and Exploitation of the Five Civilized Tribes, Legalized Robbery*, Indian Rights Association. Publications 2d Ser, no. 127 (Philadelphia, Pa: Office of the Indian Rights Association, 1924).

⁹² Historian Janet McDonnell notes that competency commissions in Sells’ era were comprised largely of governmental officials serving in a permanent capacity, as well as local Indian superintendents acting in a temporary advisory role. For more information, see: Janet McDonnell. *The Dispossession of the American Indian, 1887-1934*. Indiana University Press, 1991.

⁹³ As Bonnin et al. remark, “It is impossible to state the total number of Indians who have been plundered, or the value of their property, but of the 64,339 whose restrictions were removed in 1908, probably not more than five or ten per cent have anything left. Now most of them are living back in the hills, or being cared for by friends and relatives. There are about 18,000 restricted Indians, who have property—their children, born since the rolls closed, do not appear on the records. As these adults die however, their property becomes unrestricted, and the grafters, like

estimates that forced-fee patenting alone resulted in the transfer of 23 million acres out of Indian hands from 1887 to 1934; the Indian Land Tenure Foundation puts the figure of expropriated land during this period even higher, at 27 million acres of converted tracts.⁹⁴ As Bonnin, Fabens, and Sniffen put it, “in many of the [Eastern Oklahoma] Counties the Indians are virtually at the mercy of groups that include the county judges, guardians, attorneys, bankers, merchants—not even overlooking the undertaker—all regarding the Indian estates as legitimate game.”⁹⁵

Forced fee patenting and “legalized robbery” in the county courts did much to dispossess Indian people of their allotments, but Indian people confined to institutions like Canton were even more vulnerable to dispossession, as additional documents contained in Robert Thompson’s file attest. Remarkably, Thompson’s case was even included as evidence in Bonnin’s report, cited as one instance of the ways in which the guardianship system furthered the “pauperization” of Indian people who had not been declared competent, and/or whose land still remained under the protection of federal trust status. Below the heading “In Briefer Form,” the co-authors explained: “a number of glaring cases will show that in the activities of the informal organization of grafters, sex or age makes no difference; the young child, the adult, the incompetent (mentally or physically) are all robbed in the same thorough, nonchalant scientific manner. The ‘system’ has but one object—Get The Money and Get It Quick!”⁹⁶ After detailing a number of cases in which grafters procured allotted land through deceitful means—including one in which a deceased woman’s thumb was imprinted on a last will and testament—the co-authors made the following report:

Robert Thompson, an incompetent restricted Quapaw Indian, about fifty years old. He was sent to an Insane Asylum. When the present guardian took charge of this estate, a little over two years ago, \$24,000 was received for. The Liberty Bonds and all securities have been disposed of, and the balance now on hand (November, 1913) amounted to \$54.40.⁹⁷

Interestingly, the records preserved in the Canton archive tell a somewhat different, though similar, story about Thompson’s financial circumstances. For example, in a letter sent from Superintendent Chandler to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in March 1923, Thompson had

vultures, are soaring around...” 16. In other words, whether allotments were restricted (held in trust) or unrestricted (fee-patented), Indian people were vulnerable to dispossession. In many cases, Indian people sold their allotments in order to pay for food, clothing, and other basic necessities; in many others, legally-appointed guardians squandered Indian peoples’ assets, and failed to protect their wards’ interests.

⁹⁴ See: Katherine Ellinghaus, *Blood Will Tell: Native Americans and Assimilation Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), especially Chapter Two: “Chaos: The Dawes Commission and the Five Tribes,” and Chapter Three: “Practically White: The Federal Policy of Competency. See also: Janet A. McDonnell, *The Dispossession of the American Indian, 1887-1934* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). For a digitized resource on the history of Allotment Legislation in the United States, visit the Indian Land Tenure Foundation’s (ILTF) website: <https://iltf.org/land-issues/history/>. The ILTF notes that their Allotment History timeline is based on Charles Kappler’s extensive work on laws pertaining to Native American and treaties with the United States. Oklahoma State University has made the seven-volume series accessible via the following address: <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/kapplers>.

⁹⁵ Bonnin et al., “Oklahoma’s Poor Rich Indians,” 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

on deposit \$70,176.76.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, the 1924 report provides important insight about the vulnerabilities associated with institutionalization under settler colonialism, and how those vulnerabilities were exacerbated by the actions of a legal guardian appointed, ostensibly, to protect Thompson's interests. Additionally, according to Chandler's letter to the Commissioner, Thompson's allotment had been leased out for business purposes, garnering \$28,758.41 from oil mining, and \$1000.00 for agricultural lease rentals annually.⁹⁹ This huge income is a far cry from the \$54.40 the 1924 report cited as the amount then at Thompson's disposal, and while this discrepancy may be an error in accounting, it is also possible that the disparity between the two figures supports Bonnin et al.'s observation that guardians allotted their wards wholly inadequate monthly allowances, while siphoning off large sums for themselves, or extracting exorbitant rates for their "services."¹⁰⁰

For example, as was the case with a young Choctaw girl named Ledcie Stechi, her guardian withheld all of the income from an oil-bearing allotment appraised at \$90,000.00, aside from the \$15.00 monthly allowance for the support Ledcie and her enfeebled grandmother. In 1923, at the time of Bonnin's investigation, Ledcie was examined in Idabel, Oklahoma in April, where she was found to be severely malnourished and infected with malaria. By August 14, she had died.¹⁰¹ Nearly 800 miles away, one month later, on September 28, Robert Thompson was released from the Canton Asylum to be forcibly transferred from one institution to another, and much of the correspondence about Thompson reflects the kind of duplicity that Bonnin and her colleagues described, and which cost Ledcie her life.¹⁰² Indeed, one of the last letters of correspondence exchanged about Thompson was written by Harry Hummer to then-Commissioner Charles Burke, and its contents provide evidence of the ways in which the "care and maintenance" of Indian people at Canton facilitated similar processes of dispossession. "The thought occurred to me," Hummer mused, "that 'if [Thompson] is a citizen of the State of Oklahoma, then why can we not collect from his property the sum of \$400.00 per annum for his care and maintenance, either from the date of his admission (October 31, 1907), provided the terms of the Office circular 1735 are retro-active, or, if not, from the date of said circular to date [?]'"¹⁰³ If Hummer had his way, Thompson would furnish \$400.00 per year, or \$6,400.00 total, in back payment for his forced confinement.

Legal guardians who stood to gain from committing their ward to Canton found ways to do so, often with relative ease. A Cherokee woman's case is one example; as mentioned in the previous chapter, in 1905 a woman named Josephine R. (Cherokee) was confined in the local jail at Muskogee on the instruction of her legal guardian, William P. Ross, before being transferred to Canton. Federal records reveal that Ross was Josephine's son-in-law, who was married to

⁹⁸ O.K. Chandler to Commissioner, March 27, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 21996, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Bonnin et al. note "that an examination of 14,229 probate cases in six counties where the Indian population is largest shows the average cost of administration to be TWENTY per cent, and in some instances it has been as high as SEVENTY per cent...Incidentally, the cost for probating Indian estates in other sections of the country cannot exceed a total of \$74. In most cases the cost is not over \$20...excessive and unnecessary administrative costs, unconscionable fees and commissions, are allowed by many of the County Courts to professional guardians, attorneys, et al.," 5.

¹⁰¹ Bonnin, et al., "Oklahoma's Poor Rich Indians," 27-28.

¹⁰² Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 28, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 21996, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

¹⁰³ Harry Hummer to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 30, 1923, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 16, folder 21996, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

Josephine's only daughter, Maud. According to Ross's petition for Josephine's commitment, she had no means of caring for herself, and no living family able or willing to do so, either. These records do not explain why Ross was unable to care for his mother-in-law, and evidently his unwillingness to do so was never questioned by the many U.S. officials with which he communicated about the confinement of his legal relative. Rather, Ross was well-connected; he was the nephew of Cherokee Principal Chief William Ross, and thus easily able to citizens willing to swear under oath that Josephine was without means of care. As one of these affidavits, signed by a man named H.B. Bryant, stated,

Be it remembered that on this 7th day of September 1905, before me a Notary Public in and for the District and Territory aforesaid, duly commissioned, qualified and acting as such, personally appeared H.L. Bryant known to me as the person whom he represents himself to be and being duly sworn states... That he is acquainted with the family of Wm. P. Ross, of Bartlesville, Indian Territory, and knows that Josephine R—., an insane person, has been in his care and custody for some time. That he is informed and believes that said insane person is without means, and that he knows of no relatives or friends who is willing to care for her without the assistance of the United States Government.¹⁰⁴

Despite the fact that two sisters, a niece, and a son of were listed on Josephine's intake questionnaire, Ross obtained two other sworn statements by prominent citizens and friends who confirmed that Josephine had no means and no relatives to care for her. It is not difficult to surmise what Ross's motivations were. A letter stamped "received" on September 21, 1905, indicates that Josephine was in possession of oil-bearing land leased out to the Kansas & Texas Oil, Gas, and Pipe Line Co.—land that Ross appears to have acquired on her behalf.¹⁰⁵ But despite the fact that the Canton facility was intended for destitute Indian people, Josephine was one of many for whom exception was made, and she was admitted into Hummer's custody shortly thereafter. These records reflect how Indian women were doubly vulnerable in a settler society that sought the elimination of Indian people; similarly, these documents reveal how women in possession of property could be targeted even by their own relatives. The 1905 letter, sent from Ross to Hummer, also reflects that Ross paid for Josephine's transportation to the institution out of the oil-mining royalties in her name, which assets he controlled. As her intake

¹⁰⁴ H.L. Bryant, "Josephine R—. File," O.B. Clevenger, H.L. Bryant Affidavit, September 7, 1905, RG 75, Canton Asylum, box 1, Records of Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, Case Files of Insane Indians, 1905-8. National Archives and Records Administration, Ft. Worth.

¹⁰⁵ Josephine was included on the Guion Miller Rolls, a historically significant legal and genealogical resource. The Guion Rolls were created by Guion Miller, who was appointed Special Commissioner of the Court of Claims and tasked with the identification of claimants for a suit brought against the United States. In 1902, the Eastern Cherokee sued the U.S. for abrogation of treaties entered into in the years 1835, 1836, and 1845, and on May 18, 1905, the United States Court of Claims ruled in favor of the claimants. The Eastern Cherokee were awarded \$1 million of appropriations, and approximately 125,000 individuals made application to receive their share (\$133.33) of compensation, although only a portion of these applications were approved (approximately 30,000). The result is the Guion Miller Roll, which contains the applicant's name, date and place of birth, names of relatives, and other significant genealogical information. For more information, see: National Archives and Record Administration, American Indian Records, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Guion Miller Roll, 1906-1911. Also see: U.S., *Records Related to Enrollment of Eastern Cherokee by Guion Miller, 1908-1910*. M685, microfilm, 12 rolls. Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793-1999, Record Group 75. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Ancestry.com.

questionnaire further suggests, Ross described Josephine at the time of her commitment as being afflicted with “hallucinations in regard to money or property,” which perhaps reflects Josephine’s awareness that in addition to her freedom, she was being dispossessed of her assets.¹⁰⁶ Josephine’s allotment likely continued to produce royalties, which undoubtedly lined the pockets of her son-in-law, for the remainder of her confinement at Canton. And in 1909, it appears that she was transferred to the Eastern Oklahoma Hospital at Vinita, just as Robert Thompson (discussed above) would be years later. In 1920, the U.S. Census records Josephine’s place of residence as “Venita Ward 4.”¹⁰⁷ No other records about Josephine’s life have been located at the time of this writing.

Josephine was one of many individuals sent to Canton from Indian Territory, and the language used to describe those slated for confinement often portrayed them as criminal by virtue of their Indianness and ostensible “insanity.” Lucy C. (Seminole) was another woman who had means for private care but was nonetheless transferred to the Canton facility. It is possible that the language used in reference to her painted a picture of a dangerous criminal in order to rationalize her transfer, but it is impossible to be sure. Nonetheless, in letters of correspondence about Lucy, she is described as “troublesome and hard to control”; similarly, a 1905 newspaper article in the *Muskogee Phoenix* describes how one Choctaw woman named Sylvia was physically detained by officers of the law, thus demonstrating how “insane” Indian women were, like Indian men, criminalized by U.S. officials. As the newspaper article related, Sylvia was “The Second Indian From the Territory taken to Dakota,” and the reporter further explained that “Silvie Riddle [Sylvia Riddley] was included in the number of white insane which was shipped from Indian Territory some time ago. Before the prison car left for St. Louis, however, it was discovered that this woman was a Choctaw Indian. She was taken in charge by the marshal at Ardmore and held until the Indian agent and the department had been notified.”¹⁰⁸ The reporter concluded by noting “This is the second insane Indian from Indian Territory to be sent to South Dakota. The first one was Lucy Crane, who was sent to Canton, August 23, 1904.”¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

In September 1933, Dr. Samuel Silk visited Canton one last time, to see whether the changes he recommended in his 1929 report had been implemented. Instead of finding improvements to the condition of the facility and the Indian people confined there, however, he found conditions to be largely the same. At incoming Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier’s direction, Hummer was removed from his position, and by October 1933, the public had caught wind of Silk’s findings. As one Washington, D.C. newspaper reported in an article entitled “Shackling of Sane Indians in Asylum Out West” on October 15, 1933 “Dr. Silk charges that a substantial number of the inmates are now and always have been sane, and were placed in the asylum after some slight difficulty at a school or reservation. He found another group

¹⁰⁶ “Josephine R—. File,” Josephine R. Intake Questionnaire. RG 75. Canton Asylum, box 1, Records of Indian Inspector for Indian Territory, Case Files of Insane Indians, 1905-8. NARA-FW.

¹⁰⁷ Josephine R—. in the 1920 Census. *1920 United States Federal Census*. Year: 1920; Census Place: Venita Ward 4, Craig, Oklahoma; Roll: T625_1458; Page: 9B; Enumeration District: 20. Ancestry.com.

¹⁰⁸ “The Second Indian From the Territory taken to Dakota,” *Muskogee Daily Phoenix* (Muskogee, Indian Terr.), 4, no. 150, ed. 1, Friday, February 10, 1905. Oklahoma Historical Society, Gateway to Oklahoma History. <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metaph352055/m1/1/?q=Insane>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

actually mentally defective, but who, nevertheless, need no treatment for actual insanity.”¹¹⁰ The article concluded, “‘It is not only that the medical director of St. Elizabeth’s finds these patients to be sane,’ Commissioner Collier declared, ‘the records of the asylum itself, as transcribed by Dr. Silk, show them to be sane. They necessarily are known to be sane to the director of the asylum, Dr. Harry R. Hummer, yet they have been kept year after year.’”¹¹¹ By December, Dr. Silk had ordered the release of seventeen Indian women and men back to their homes, and the transfer of 71 people who had been confined to Canton, who would be transported from South Dakota to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Washington, D.C.¹¹² By April 1934, Canton was closed for good. And while the facility would not be used for the confinement of Indian people again, it would go on to become the South Dakota State Penitentiary until 1946, when three years later the structure would temporarily house sick patients in its new identity as the Canton Inwood Hospital, before the original building was bulldozed.¹¹³

The Canton facility facilitated more than Indigenous suffering; it also furthered the essential work of settler colonialism as it eased the transfer of Indigenous land to white ownership. Records relating to the Indian people forcibly confined to this facility reflect what I refer to as “caring” disregard for Indigenous life, disguised by false promises of “care and maintenance” in institutional correspondence. Dozens of Indigenous women and men were disappeared to this facility and left there to die—an explicit form of Indigenous elimination authorized by the U.S. officials responsible for the incarceration of Indian people to Canton, and enacted by Harry Hummer and his cadre of institutional employees. Beyond the gross neglect of the people confined to the facility, however, Hummer also intentionally destroyed Indigenous life and did so in the name of scientific curiosity. These realities demonstrate the role the institution played as a space of Indigenous disappearance.

Records relating to one sensationalized escape and interracial “romance,” as it was characterized in official correspondence, illustrate how Jerome Court’s experience of criminalization, surveillance, and apprehension resembled the treatment of “escaped” Carlisle men. The case of Court and Dunn also demonstrates the production of white feminine innocence, and shows how whiteness was the most effective legal defense of all. Records relating to the Dunn-Court scandal register compelling evidence that U.S. officials used the facility as a space to which “troublesome” Indian men could be disappeared and document the complex ways in which Indian men were criminalized on the basis of race and gender. Finally, analysis of records relating to legally-appointed guardians reveals how Canton facilitated the dispossession of Indigenous land. While Canton has been analyzed as a carceral facility and its effects described in terms of communal dislocation, extant literature has not interrogated the role of the facility in broader patterns of land expropriation, the essential work of settler colonialism. This chapter has documented the many ways in which the Canton facility and legal structures that defined Indian people as always-already deficient, abnormal, or childlike facilitated Indigenous land theft on a small-scale, case-by-case basis. The analysis of the double entendre of racialized discourse documents the quotidian violence embedded in the coded rhetoric of white supremacy. “Care and

¹¹⁰ “Shackling of Sane Indians in Asylum Out West Exposed,” Washington, D.C., October 15, 1933, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 3, folder 7448, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² L.L. Culp to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 21, 1933, RG 75, CCF 1907-1939, box 3, folder 7448, Canton Asylum, NARA-DC.

¹¹³ Putney, “Canton Asylum,” 30.

Maintenance” signals that white supremacy is at work, and indeed we see the powerful effects of these discursive strategies play out in settler institutions such as the Canton facility.

False Promises: Conclusion

False Promises argues that the stated objectives of Assimilation-era institutions such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879-1934) and the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians (1902-1934)—to educate, care for, or “cure” Indian people—were disingenuous. In centering records relating to the punishment of adult Indian people in settler institutions, this manuscript traces overlapping histories of Indigenous pathologization, criminalization, and racialization to reveal how Indigenous institutionalization benefited white Americans more than Indian communities. Juxtaposing punitive patterns exhibited at ostensibly distinct institutions reveals a commonality: white officials who oversaw Indigenous people in facilities like factories, asylums, and reform institutions used punishment as a way to establish themselves and other white Americans as the disciplinary agents and racial superordinates of Indian people. This comparative framework exposes how the shadow project of Indian “assimilation” was the consolidation of white supremacy in the very institutions created ostensibly for the benefit, uplift, and integration of Indian people into American society.

False Promises registers the struggles Indigenous people encountered as they negotiated settler institutions at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, this is not to say that Indigenous historical actors were always or only victims of the colonial regime. Indian women and men found ingenious ways to assert agency over their lives and secure educational and labor opportunities that were frequently unavailable to them due to limited resources back home, or because anti-Indian racism severely curtailed their options for employment. Upon their return home, many Carlisle graduates and attendees were accorded additional esteem in Indian communities, and by the early years of the twentieth century, Carlisle had achieved national fame as the alma mater of such greats as Louis Tewanima (Hopi), Jim Thorpe (Sac and Fox), and Luther Standing Bear (Ogalala). The institution also employed influential figures in American Indian politics, including Gertrude Bonnin, also known as Zitkála Šá (Sioux) and Angel DeCora (Winnebago). In the early 1900s, as the responsibility for educating Indian students shifted to institutions closer to home—reservation day schools and public schools, for example—large off-reservation boarding schools came to be regarded as institutions for higher education, much like colleges. The changing reputation of Carlisle, along with other socioeconomic factors and policy changes, likely contributed to the unprecedented influx of adult Indian women and men to the institution in the years preceding its 1918 closure.

Centering archival documents relating to the punishment of adult women and men at Carlisle illuminates new lines of inquiry that build upon existing boarding school scholarship about the experiences of children. Adults entered the institution for a wide array of reasons, and the length of their stay depended on individual factors specific to their personal circumstances, including their reason for seeking enrollment, their age, whether they had relatives at Carlisle, and their perceived deservingness of continued affiliation with the institution. Like many of their younger counterparts, adult enrollees were adept at negotiating, resisting, and selectively accommodating Carlisle authorities’ expectations; but unlike officials’ treatment of most children and youth, adults were regarded as potentially threatening to institutional order and the hierarchies of racial power that sustained structures of Indigenous punishment, oppression, and racism at Carlisle and beyond. In response to this influx of adults—which, according to institutional ledgers reached an apex in 1912—Carlisle authorities devised new means of controlling the institution’s transformed population of Indian “students.” Heightened surveillance, a new guardhouse, and collaboration with police officials in the town of Carlisle

were among those new developments in the institution's punitive repertoire, designed in response to increasing numbers of Indian women and men who were more sophisticated, more mobile, and more easily able to refuse obedience to institutional rules. These phenomena reflect a concerted effort to establish structures of power that benefited Carlisle's largely white staff rather than the Indian women and men, perceived as threatening, affiliated with this institutional space.

In response to the presence of this older demographic, Carlisle authorities also devised techniques that expanded the near-continuous surveillance of adults, and which facilitated the consolidation of a widespread surveillance network comprised of white American citizens and other non-Indian service officials, including rail station operators and law enforcement agents. Archival documents demonstrate that Carlisle officials accepted gossip, rumor, hearsay and other unofficial knowledge claims issued from their white peers as evidence of Indian adults' perceived misbehavior. Often, these informal conversations were initiated by displeased Outing patrons and codified into official reports created by Outing agents, who were also overwhelmingly non-Native, who then used this written documentation to lobby for the expulsion of "incorrigibles." These forms of communication were powerful punitive technologies that had steep consequences for the Indian women and men who were subjected to them. But in addition to serving as an especially humiliating form of punishment, gossip and rumor also facilitated the consolidation of a network of surveillance comprised of white civilians, local agents, and institutional officials invested in policing the Indian population in the town of Carlisle and elsewhere in the eastern portion of the United States, where many adults were placed "out" to labor in factories, or in the households and on the farms of white American families.

Adults often expressed an interest in enrolling at Carlisle in order to secure work in the Outing system or in one of the vocational training programs offered through the institution after 1915. Indian men, for instance, frequently sought entrance to the automotive industry by way of Carlisle's training "partnership" with the Ford Motor Company in Detroit. By comparison, Indian women were constrained by the gendered expectations of the era that prevented many women from securing work outside of the home. Labor at Carlisle similarly broke along gendered axes of opportunity, and the options available to Indian women at Carlisle included domestic service in white households or enrollment in one of the nurse-training programs established at hospitals in the vicinity of Carlisle, such as the General Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and the Protestant Episcopal Hospital in Philadelphia. Although many of these programs were not open to non-white women, archival records demonstrate that hospital officials made exception for the women enrolled at Carlisle.

Letters of correspondence show that the women and men enrolled in the training partnerships at the General Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and the Ford Motor Company in Detroit regarded these opportunities as some of the best that Carlisle offered, and although they granted enrollees a greater degree of independence, the programs were nonetheless highly inequitable. Anti-Indian racism was pervasive in these environments, and stereotypes about Indian people as profligate or promiscuous often informed policies directed at Indian trainees in the nursing programs or Ford factory. From the standpoint of Carlisle officials, racial conflict was a small price to pay for the "benefits" that would come with vocational training in a competitive atmosphere. Carlisle officials promoted the idea that Indian people who entered external labor arrangements benefited from "competing" with non-Indigenous laborers, in order to instill a sense of individualism in Indian workers and to correct what was viewed as Indian

peoples' tendency towards idleness and laziness. But archival records reflect that employment supervisors often discriminated against Carlisle enrollees on the basis of race, as was the case with many of the men who worked at Ford. Rather than benefiting the Indian workers, this discrimination created a hostile environment for trainees who often found clever ways to navigate this racism. Documents reflect that this behavior was met with steep punishment in the form of docked pay, suspension, job termination, and wage theft, and official correspondence demonstrates that there were profound racial, gendered, moral, and medical connotations to this punishment.

In this era, U.S. authorities promoted the idea that Indigenous lifeways were deviant and detrimental to a burgeoning American society intent upon economic, technological, and scientific progress. In order to survive in this changing nation, Indian people were frequently told that hard work would rectify the disease, impoverishment, and starvation conditions that many tribal nations suffered as a result of federal mismanagement and neglect. In a reflection of these sentiments, Carlisle authorities promoted a similar philosophy: the notion that labor would cure Indian people of their "Indianness." Applying a medical lens to Carlisle's training programs broadens our understandings of the ways in which the proletarianization of Indigenous people and other non-white populations worked to further establish white bodies as powerful in the spaces they shared with Indian people. Analyzing the use of medicalized discourse in punitive wage labor scenarios reveals processes of Indigenous pathologization in the American workforce as a mechanism of social control. At a time when Indian communities suffered from widespread disease, employment sometimes meant increased access to medical care. But because Indigenous laborers were expected to comply with the demands of their white employment supervisors, perceived instances of disobedience were often transformed into evidence of inherent Indigenous pathology. This pattern would play out in an extreme way at the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians, as reservation agents, boarding school superintendents, and other U.S. officials began defining disobedient Indian people as "pathological" and subjecting them to institutional confinement.

If quotidian forms of punishment failed to elicit Indigenous obedience, psychiatric diagnoses of insanity could also be of enormous social utility. Frequently cited as proof of the white superiority that eugenicists were so eager to confirm, U.S. officials used diagnoses of insanity to legitimate the confinement of Indian women and men for an array of reasons: needing medical care that was unavailable on the reservation; threatening white power and authority; refusing to conform with the Western social norms that they were meant to be accepting; having children out of wedlock; challenging boarding school teachings, and more. As these examples indicate, many Indian women and men—for many different reasons—were regarded as "fit" for confinement at the Canton Asylum. This reality must be understood as the natural consequence of the various federal Indian policies designed to "assimilate" Indian people into the dominant body politic by suppressing the expression of Indigenous cosmologies, lifeways, and kinship networks; in short, by eradicating "Indianness" altogether.

When Oscar Gifford opened the Canton Asylum in 1902, his stated objective was to administer psychiatric care to Indian people across the county who had been declared insane. To outsiders, the institution resembled a psychiatric asylum with its granite façade and serene grounds. But Gifford was the ex-mayor of Canton, South Dakota and a lawyer and popular businessman with no medical training, and this reality made itself known by the deaths, largely due to neglect, that occurred at the facility from the very beginning. As the years wore on, Gifford and his successor, Harry Hummer, were confronted with the need to keep the institution

filled to capacity despite a paucity of “insane” Indian people needing treatment. To meet this need, Gifford and Hummer undertook recruitment efforts at various points in their tenures as superintendent; both men sent out surveys to reservation agents in the hopes of securing a steady stream of “patients” and the associated per capita payments that each Indian man, woman, or youth symbolized. Nestled twenty miles southeast of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the asylum was sited near a half-dozen Indian reservations in the state of South Dakota alone, including the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation, Pine Ridge, Crow Creek, and Sisseton-Wahpeton. This location would prove to be especially convenient for Indian agents who slated certain Indian women and men regarded as “troublesome” for removal to the institution, as archival records reflect. Gifford and Hummer’s circulation of surveys regarding “insane” Indian people thus merely enticed reservation agents—and other U.S. officials, including boarding school superintendents—to use Canton as a place of Indigenous disappearance. Harry Hummer used the Canton Asylum explicitly as a place of eugenicist confinement, and this fact demonstrates the role that this “benevolent” facility played in pernicious forms of Indigenous elimination.

The Canton facility facilitated more than Indigenous suffering; it also furthered the essential work of settler colonialism as it eased the transfer of Indigenous land to white ownership. Records relating to the Indian people forcibly confined to this facility reflect a “caring” disregard for Indigenous life, disguised by false promises of “care and maintenance” in institutional correspondence. Analysis of records relating to legally-appointed guardians reveals how Canton facilitated the dispossession of Indigenous land. While Canton has been analyzed as a carceral facility and its effects described in terms of communal dislocation, extant literature has not interrogated the role of the facility in broader patterns of land expropriation, the essential aim of settler colonialism. The Canton facility, its staff, and the legal structures that defined Indian people as always-already deficient, abnormal, or childlike, facilitated Indigenous land theft on a small-scale, case-by-case basis. In this context, medical violence towards Indigenous people was always settler-colonial violence.

In centering punishment as integral to the administration of Indian affairs at Carlisle, Canton, and other settler institutions, *False Promises* demonstrates how the ostensibly “uplifting” policies of the Indian Office in the early twentieth century did little to educate Indian people or make them self-sufficient, and instead assigned them their appropriate place within the raced, classed, and gendered social hierarchies of white America. The successful “improvement” of one’s life as an Indigenous person thus meant accepting one’s subordinate status as a racialized menial laborer, and failure to do so was often cited as evidence of racial inferiority and met with steep punishment. With the establishment of the Canton Asylum in the early twentieth century, punishment could include indefinite confinement on medical grounds before death, thus enabling those responsible for the wrongful confinement of Indian people to Canton to maintain an appearance of innocence—even benevolence. The existence of Canton facilitated the disappearance of Indigenous people with relative ease, and the use of this institution by boarding school superintendents, reservation agents, and other interested parties for that purpose illuminates punitive connections between distinct American institutions that existed for the “benefit” of Indian people in this era.

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School graduated very few of its supposed students, and the Canton Asylum neglected or ended more Indigenous lives than it preserved, but these facts did not prevent officials from celebrating the “success” of either institution during their heydays. The stories of Indigenous struggles uncovered in the colonial archive suggest that these institutions were successful not because they assimilated Indian people, but because they produced structures

of power that benefited the settler society. In drawing connections between the punishment of Indian people at Carlisle, Canton, and other settler institutions, I locate the punitive practices of these facilities on a continuum of U.S. policies aimed at the eradication of Indigenous populations. In analyzing the double entendre of racialized discourse, *False Promises* documents the quotidian violence embedded in the coded rhetoric of white supremacy, and indeed we see the powerful effects of these discursive strategies play out in spaces like Canton. It is my hope that this study opens up new lines of inquiry about the ways in which Indigenous people negotiated these spaces and the consequences of Indigenous institutionalization for Indigenous communities.

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