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Full-Court Quest: The Girls from Fort Shaw Indian School, Basketball Champions of the World. By Linda S. Peavy and Ursula Smith. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 496 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

In the late nineteenth century, the federal government's policy toward American Indians shifted, partly as a result of the success being reported by Captain Richard Henry Pratt, an Army officer who convinced the federal government to fund the education of a group of Indian war prisoners at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, an all-black school in Virginia. Pratt believed that Indians would eschew their traditional languages, religions, and cultural values once they were properly educated in the values, ethics, and religion of white American society. Pratt successfully marketed his educational philosophy to the federal government and in 1879 was authorized to use the deserted military barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for the first off-reservation Indian boarding school, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Soon other Indian boarding schools modeled after Carlisle were established throughout the country. The curriculum at all of the Indian boarding schools was designed to assimilate American Indians into white, Christian society. The curriculum consisted not only of academic and vocational training but also in the early years included instruction in the arts, music, and American sports.

This is the historical context for *Full Court Quest*, a meticulously researched and immensely readable account of ten Indian girls who were introduced to the new game of basketball at Fort Shaw Indian School in 1896 and who so excelled at the game that they became state champions and demonstrated their excellence before an international audience at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair to become, as one Montana reporter noted, "the undisputed . . . world champions" (330).

As demonstrated by their previous collaborations, Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith are highly skilled at revealing the lesser-known experiences and contributions of women who have helped shape American history. Drawing from more than sixty oral interviews and thirty-six pieces of correspondence with family members, in addition to using tribal, state, and federal records; historical newspapers; pictures; and other archival sources, this work is no exception. Through this effort the authors aim to "place the experiences of the Fort Shaw team within the larger context of western American history, women's history, American Indian history, and the early history of basketball" and simultaneously "ground their stories in the particulars of tribal traditions and family dynamics" (xiv).

The greatest strength of *Full Court Quest* is the authors' keen insight into the personalities of these ten young women and their deep understanding of the historical forces at play in their lives. In the early chapters, each of the girl's cultural backgrounds, family situations, and paths to attendance at Fort Shaw are introduced, and their lives and experiences are situated within the forces of white encroachment into Indian territories and the rapid social change that Plains Indian societies endured as a result of these interactions. The authors aptly demonstrate the agency of these girls and their families as

they contemplate the opportunities presented to them by the newest of the federal government's Indian boarding schools at Fort Shaw.

Peavy and Smith's ability to use biography to inform history is most strongly developed in the latter chapters of the book. Using biographical research collected from the girls' family members and a thorough study of international expositions, the authors enable the readers of *Full Court Quest* to experience a remarkable intimacy with the girls as they encounter the St. Louis World's Fair. At the fair, as part of the larger Indian exhibit, a model Indian school is created in order to demonstrate the transformative power of the government's federal Indian schools. The Fort Shaw basketball team is chosen, among other students, to represent their school and to demonstrate life inside a typical Indian school. Although the superintendent assures the local public surrounding Fort Shaw that the girls are representing the school as students and not as an exhibit, the girls fully understand that they will be both "the observers and the observed" (309). Despite the following they earned from local Montanans back home, and the regard they have for their own athletic abilities, in St. Louis they know that they are on display and a curiosity to whites. As they perform the various roles they are sent to play, they contend with insensitive comments directed at them by visitors to the fair regarding the "nature" of Indians, a constant reminder of the disdain most whites have for "uncivilized" Indians. They cope with these comments by resolving to show fair visitors their skill on the basketball court. But in the end, their greatest honor was playing basketball in front of Geronimo, who was let out of confinement to "play Indian" for the spectators at the fair.

Full Court Quest is an important contribution to the history of women's sport. The game of basketball was invented in 1891, and girls' rules, which were created to control the pace and tenor of the game (and to protect the delicate nature of females), soon followed in 1894. The Fort Shaw girls did not adopt these rules, and local reporters described their game as fast and "fearless" (179). The authors aptly convey the shifting sexual and racial perceptions surrounding the girls as at first they are referred to as squaws and their game is billed as a clash between races, but later, as their athletic abilities become apparent, their game is described as "one of the best and most fiercely contested basket ball games ever seen in the city" (161). The girls routinely confront stereotypes as they play white girls' teams throughout Montana and demonstrate their skills in front of white male and female audiences. Ultimately, they force spectators, journalists, and residents of Montana to set aside sexist and racist attitudes and embrace the girls for their talent on the court. In doing so, the girls opposed late-nineteenth-century ideologies of Indian capability and white femininity.

There are a few weaknesses in the work, which suggest opportunities for future research. Although the scholarship on Indian boarding schools is rich, complex, and substantial, the authors provide a relatively flat description of the curriculum at Fort Shaw. Peavy and Smith use only a few pages to inform the reader about the education at boarding schools and include only the fact that military drills and the learning of "routine and ritual" were important parts of the curriculum as well as academic and vocational training (26).

Many chapters are dedicated to wonderfully descriptive accounts of the girls playing basketball across Montana in advance of the trip to St. Louis. The work would have benefited from using some of these pages to embed the girls' involvement on the basketball team within a more detailed examination of the gendered aspects of the boarding school curriculum. Peavy and Smith do not make use of the research which demonstrates that inherent in the teaching of civilization at all federal Indian boarding schools were lessons about gender. While the stated curriculum consisted of English lessons and academic instruction, industrial and citizenship training necessarily conveyed to students the proper economic, political, and social roles for men and women in society. The lessons about the proper, Christian roles of women and men and the relationship between them were also a part of the curriculum at boarding schools. As part of a larger assimilation process, American Indian girls were forced to learn new gender roles and to be uplifted to a white middle-class ideal of the "true woman." An analysis of how the girls negotiated these gendered lessons while simultaneously defying stereotypes of white femininity on the basketball court would have resulted in a deeper and much more complex narrative of their experiences at the Fort Shaw Indian School.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion to be drawn from the scholarship on Indian boarding schools is that the diversity of students in terms of age, family situations, and cultural traditions resulted in a variety of experiences, responses, and attitudes toward schooling. There were positive outcomes for many of the students of Indian boarding schools, and this work will contribute to our growing understanding of these outcomes. However, their depiction of boarding school life at Fort Shaw is overwhelmingly and simplistically positive. The authors acknowledge the assimilationist policies of the federal government's boarding schools, and they do illustrate some of the negative aspects of boarding school life through a few accounts of bouts of homesickness, disease, and the deaths of friends. However, the reader with a limited knowledge about boarding schools might conclude that most Indians who attended boarding schools had many more positive experiences than negative. Although the authors did not explore this, perhaps these girls reported more favorable experiences because many of them were the products of white fathers and Indian mothers and were already becoming acculturated before they attended Fort Shaw. If so, this suggests an interesting area of inquiry for future scholars.

Although only a minor detraction, the structure of the book results in a sometimes choppy and uneven narrative. The book is composed of 362 pages and is organized into 46 chapters. Interspersed within the primary storyline are shorter chapters that, for example, describe events occurring elsewhere in the nation that in later chapters impact the girls and their quest for basketball excellence. The invention of basketball in Massachusetts in 1891 is introduced in this way. Unfortunately, not all of these shorter chapters are made to flow into the primary storyline.

Despite these minor shortcomings, *Full Court Quest* is an engaging and important work that will appeal to a wide audience. In their acknowledgments, Peavy and Smith thank the family members who contributed to their

understanding of these ten remarkable girls and their experiences playing basketball at the Fort Shaw Indian School. The authors deserve high praise for considering the history of boarding schools from the perspectives of the descendants of these young women and for their ten-year effort to bring this story to a wider audience. The unfolding of this story began with Peavy's chance discovery of a photograph of a group of girls in buckskin dresses with a caption that read "Girls basketball team, 1903, Old Fort Shaw Indian School." I sincerely hope that Peavy and Smith continue to uncover the artifacts of women's lives, explore and analyze their contributions to our nation, and, as they do so expertly, write these women into history where they belong.

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"I Choose Life": Contemporary Medical and Religious Practices in the Navajo World. By Maureen Trudelle Schwarz. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 380 pages. \$50.00 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

In this book, Schwarz explores how Navajos perceive various biomedical interventions such as blood transfusions or organ transplants in light of the complexity and life-threatening health problems confronting many families and communities. To understand better the larger context in which some of these perceptions are expressed or discussed by Navajo participants in this book, there is a need for additional background information so that the sociocultural views of participants can be placed more appropriately in the ever-changing Navajo world.

The reader needs to understand that despite gradual increases in the number of health care resources for members of the Navajo (Diné) Nation after their return from their internment at Fort Sumner in 1868, the population's health status never recovered and has continued to lag behind that of the rest of the US population. The factors impacting the health status of Navajos, however, have been changing. For example, until the 1960s, the tribe's morbidity and mortality rate was primarily due to infectious diseases. Today, in addition to a high prevalence of chronic diseases, the leading cause of death for this population is unintentional injuries or accidents, followed by other preventable health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, pneumonia, and influenza (Indian Health Service [IHS], *Regional Differences in Indian Health, 2002–2003 Edition*, 2008). With the Navajos, as well as with other tribes, deaths associated with motor vehicle accidents and other forms of unintentional injuries often involve alcohol while chronic health problems such as heart disease are often a comorbidity of type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes mellitus is endemic in many American Indian communities, including those living on the Navajo Reservation. Diabetes is costly not only in terms of medical care but also because it adversely impacts the quality of life for individuals and their families who struggle with managing this disease. Diabetes, with its numerous complications, also shortens the life