

**“Truly Indian...Truly American”: Native American Activism and  
Identity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century**

by

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## Abstract

At the turn of the twentieth century, American Indians “played Indian” to reimagine the meaning of their Indianness and Americanness, and they showed what their Indianness can offer to the broader American society.

In my dissertation, I closely examine three American Indians who lived at the turn of the twentieth century: Charles A. Eastman, a Dakota physician and writer; Francis La Flesche, an Omaha ethnologist, and Angel De Cora, a Winnebago illustrator and art teacher. I argue that Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora, each appropriated dominant expectations and stereotypes about American Indians to reimagine what it means to be an Indian and an American, as well as to demonstrate that America’s future depended on American Indians.

Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora lived when mainstream Americans started to idealize Indians and their “primitive” cultures as a retreat from “overcivilized” urban, industrial America. In the face of rapid industrialization and urbanization and with the frontier closing, they romanticized Indians as a rugged, authentic antidote to the artificial, feminized urban, industrial city. Dime novels, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, and theatrical performances all celebrated what was seen as a bygone legacy of strenuous Western frontier life that contrasted with the seemingly dispirited, artificial life of rapidly modernizing America. Just at the time when American Indians were seen as “vanishing” and the frontier was declared “closed,” this imagined Indian inspired nostalgia and romanticism.

Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora were graduates of boarding schools that Euro-American educators hoped would assimilate American Indians into mainstream society. Nevertheless, rather than completely assimilating, they used their boarding school education to critique mainstream American society. Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora learned how to communicate in English and to “play Indian” for Euro-Americans who were beginning to see some value in American Indian cultures. Moreover, to deal with their own problems as an Indian “race,” they helped form the Society of American Indians, the first Pan-Indian organization to push for federal recognition of Indian citizenship. In addition, each found their own way—summer camps for white children, music, and Native art education for Native students—to reconstruct the meaning of both Indianness and Americanness.

In Chapter 1, I argue that the Dakota writer Charles Alexander Eastman presented himself as an “authentic” Indian and then used that “authentic” self to critique Euro-American civilization. Like many other antimodernist Americans, he believed that

“primitive” Indian virtues could help Euro-American children gain mental and physical strength to survive in modern society, where they tended to lose self-control. He created two summer camps, Camp Oahe for girls and Camp Ohiyesa for boys, which offered open-air education for children to learn how to live in nature without modern amenities. In his summer camps Eastman thus “played Indian” to teach Euro-American children to “go native.” He also helped to found the Boy Scouts of America, which taught “Indian wisdom” about living in nature. By exhibiting himself as the “first American” whose virtues were worthy of adoption, Eastman thus brought his Indianness to the center of American civilization.

An Omaha ethnologist, Francis La Flesche took another path to playing Indian. He presented himself as a “civilized” Indian by using American Indian melodies to help fashion an “American” music. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, “primitive” American Indian songs attracted American classical music composers who eagerly searched for an American musical identity. La Flesche, as an Indian ethnologist, was an informant and provided audio sources for Charles Wakefield Cadman, one of the renowned Indianist composers of his time. In Chapter 2, I argue that La Flesche used his position as an established ethnologist to criticize mainstream stereotypes of American Indians as an inferior “other.” Moreover, as an ethnologist, he utilized his knowledge, ability and networks to encourage Cadman’s romanticism and his eagerness to put American Indians at the center of American music, and therefore at the center of American identity. LaFlesche thus manipulated his Indianness not only to talk back to the majority, but also to Indianize America, enhancing white Americans’ fascination with “primitive” Indianness and making them reconsider Americanness.

In Chapter 3, I focus on Angel De Cora, a Winnebago illustrator and art teacher who founded the Native art curriculum at Carlisle Indian Industrial School. In a school which Richard Henry Pratt founded in 1879 to civilize Native children by teaching white American ways of living and eliminating tribal distinctions, she developed a Native art class where American Indian children could learn and produce tribally distinctive art and design. Furthermore, she believed that Native craftsmanship would provide her students with the means of their economic and cultural survival after graduation. De Cora thus made her students create designs useful for household furnishings and home décor. These interior house decorations satisfied curiosity about Indian artifacts. I argue that De Cora taught her Native students to be “Indian” again in modern American society. Through her art class, she redefined Indianness in her own terms and thus Indianized her students who often came to her classes without any ideas about their own tribal traditions. At the same time, by encouraging her students to work

on decorative objects for the home, De Cora Indianized the American home, turning it into what one newspaper called a “wigwam.”

Overall, my dissertation demonstrates how Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora claimed a place for themselves in mainstream American society while simultaneously creating an identity for themselves as Indian. Living in the period when mainstream Americans saw Indians as vanishing, they actively created and contested the meaning of Indianness and Americanness through their performances of self. In so doing, they complicated the worldview that posited Euro-Americans at the top of the racial and social hierarchy. My dissertation, therefore, reveals American Indians’ complex negotiations at the turn of the twentieth century over their representations and identity as both Indian and American.

## Acknowledgments

My interest in revealing the complexities within American Indian representations evolved from my experience as a high school student of living with a Navajo family for a year. While living there, I learned that there is a huge gap between imagined “Indians” and present-day American Indians. I started to wonder why imaginary Indians have been so powerful and so problematic in American culture. Since then, I was drawn into academic studies to reveal how and why these stereotypes and myths were constructed and manipulated by non-Native and Native Americans. Although this dissertation is in fact just the beginning of my search for answers, I hope this modest study will contribute to scholarship of American Indian representations.

My personal debts are too many to name every single person who helped me complete this study. Yet I would like to name some of the most significant people who were indispensable for the development of this project.

First, I owe my deepest gratitude to my adviser, Gavin James Campbell, Professor at the Graduate School of American Studies/Global Studies, Doshisha University. Since I entered in the master’s program at the Graduate School of American Studies in 2006, he has supervised me in many ways (not just about academic questions but also my personal life as well). Without his guidance and persistent help, this dissertation would not have been possible.

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University Archives, Smith College Archives, and Hampton University Archives.

Lastly, I would also like to express my gratitude to my family for their support and encouragement during my years in graduate school. My sincere thanks go to my parents for giving me precious educational opportunities. Also, I am grateful for my husband and our little son Takumi. Without their emotional support, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation.

All the errors that remain in this dissertation are, of course, my own.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: The Indian as the American Savior: Charles Alexander Eastman’s Indian and His Vision for America’s Future</b>	
<b>I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>II. Ohiyesa Becomes Charles A. Eastman .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>III. Promoting Indianness to Save Civilization.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>IV. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Indigenizing America through Music: Francis La Flesche Plays “Civilized” Indian to Talk Back to “Civilization”</b>	
<b>I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>II. Playing “Civilized” Indian to Talk Back to Civilization.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>III. “They must be Taught Music” .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>IV. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Chapter 3: “To Become Indian Again”: Angel De Cora’s Native Art Curriculum for Carlisle Indian Industrial School</b>	
<b>I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>II. “To Do Much Good among My People”.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>III. Native Art Teacher at Carlisle .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>IV. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Primary Sources .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Secondary Sources .....</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>114</b>

## Introduction

In 1915, Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), a Dakota physician and writer appeared in a picture inserted at the front page of the brochure to introduce “the school of woods” that he planned for non-Indian girls (Appendix, Fig. 1). There he dressed in full regalia, donning a feather headdress, welcoming the readers who are interested in the summer camp conducted by an “authentic” Indian. The brochure appealed to curious readers like this: “What other camp in the country has at its head a ‘Real Indian,’ trained in this unsurpassed school of the open air?” The brochure then explained what Eastman’s camp would offer — “the genuine Indian games, sports and dances, including archery, lacrosse, canoe ball, trailing, Indian signaling, sign language and fire-making,” and lessons for Indian handcrafts “including original and tribal designs in beadwork and basketry.” Eastman stressed the uniqueness of his camp offering Indian training in nature, taught by him — a “Real Indian.”<sup>1</sup>

While Eastman asked girls to bring their “bloomers and middy blouse” for daily wear, he also mentioned that they would be wearing “a special dress” of Indian design, which would be “made by and decorated under the supervision of Mrs. Dietz [Angel De Cora],”<sup>2</sup> a Winnebago artist and a Native art teacher at an Indian school. Together with the training and special dress, Eastman’s camp guaranteed non-Indian girls an “authentic” experience to “play Indian,” giving them the opportunity to “purify and refresh [their] whole being” by living with nature, away from the city during the summer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “School of the Woods” (promotional brochure, 1915), Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. Jones Library Special Collections (hereafter JLSC), Amherst, MA.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “OAHE (The Hill of Vision)—A Camp for Girls” (promotional brochure, 1916),



Eastman thus created his camp for girls to “play Indian,” encouraging this interest by “playing Indian” himself. Along with his camp for boys, Eastman’s camps were part of a broader anti-modernist trend in fin de siècle America, where Americans eagerly romanticized “primitive” Indians as an antidote to modern, industrial America, and its “overcivilization.” By picturing himself in a traditional, “authentic” Indian outfit, Eastman played with this romanticism to attract attention to American Indians as a whole. Playing an Indian who lives harmoniously with nature, Eastman used his “primitive” authority to talk about Indians, and show how Indianness could in fact offer much to broader American society and culture.

Eastman is only one example of many other Natives at the turn of the twentieth century who manipulated a variety of expectations and stereotypes about American Indians. Others include Francis La Flesche, an Omaha ethnologist, and Angel De Cora, a Winnebago illustrator and art teacher. While Eastman manipulated romantic notions about “primitive” Indians and worked with white children, La Flesche and De Cora found other means—music and Native art education for Native students—to reimagine their Indianness and promote it to the American public. In this study, I examine Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora’s way of appropriating dominant expectations and stereotypes about American Indians, and I will consider the following questions: Who were they? What kind of Indianness and Americanness did they imagine and play, and how were they different and similar at the same time? What were the possible long-term cultural and political impacts that their actions had on both American Indians and non-Indian Americans? In short, how and why did American Indians “play Indian”?

In the following chapters, I use these questions as a guidepost, and illustrate the

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Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder, JLSC.

ways Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora played Indian as a strategy to respond to mainstream Americans as well as to encourage interest in American Indians. Through their various works, they established their authority to speak about and for Indians and in so doing they reconstructed the meaning of Indianness and Americanness.

Fundamentally, they demonstrated to both non-Indians and their fellow Indians that America's future depended on American Indians. As a result, they thus shifted and shaped mainstream expectations about American Indians.

Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora lived the turn of the twentieth century when mainstream Americans believed that American Indians had only two choices to make in the face of more powerful white Americans: assimilation or extinction. Heavily influenced by Social Darwinist ideas, these Americans positioned Indians as "primitives" at the lowest rung on the ladder of civilization. Federal policy, like the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, reflected this philosophy, aiming to assimilate American Indians by making them private farmers, promising them eventual citizenship.<sup>4</sup> Boarding schools founded during this time also aimed to assimilate American Indians. As Captain Richard Henry Pratt, the founder of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, wrote, "To civilize the Indian, get him into civilization. To keep him civilized, let him stay," accommodating and educating Indian children in off-reservation boarding schools away from home seemed to be the best possible way to successfully assimilate Indians into

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<sup>4</sup> This policy promised citizenship for American Indians after twenty five years of cultivating "reserved" land as farmers. Despite its intent, it resulted in accelerating reduction and distribution of tribal lands to white American ownership. For more on the Dawes Act, see Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 70-81; Tom Flanagan, "A Failed Experiment: The Dawes Act," in Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara, and André Le Dressay eds., *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 42-54.

mainstream society.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 symbolized the other kind of “extinction” Indians faced. On December 29, 1890, nearly three hundred unarmed Lakota Indians, including women and children, were killed by the Seventh Cavalry near Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge reservation. Those who were slaughtered were Ghost Dance practitioners, part of a newly founded religion by the prophet Wovoka, which to many whites seemed dangerous and out of control. One newspaper editorial, for instance, noted the massacre was “unavoidable,” and celebrated that “the slaughter of red men, mad with the delusion of the appearance of a Messiah” proved “that Americans neither can nor will do anything but ‘kill out’ the Indians.”<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the picture taken on the morning after the incident that showed a pile of the dead Indians seemed to confirm the inevitability that the Indians would die out (Appendix, Fig. 2).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (1964; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 283; Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc eds., *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 14. For more on the Indian boarding schools, see Michael C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima eds., *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879-2000* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum, 2000); Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Editorial, *The New York Times*, January 22, 1891, accessed on November 15, 2015.

[http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9504E3D91239E033A25751C2A9679C94609ED7CF)

[free/pdf?res=9504E3D91239E033A25751C2A9679C94609ED7CF](http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9504E3D91239E033A25751C2A9679C94609ED7CF). For more on the massacre, see Heather Cox Richardson, *Wounded Knee: Party Politics and the Road to an American Massacre* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Jerome A. Greene, *American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> The original picture was reproduced as an illustration and inserted in the article written by Charles A. Eastman who noted about his visit to the Pine Ridge Reservation. Newspaper clipping. “A Doctor Among the Indians—Experience of Dr. Charles A. Eastman at Pine Ridge Agency.” Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. JLSC. See Figure 2 in the appendix for the picture.

The military thus seemed willing to kill every last Indian. In short, between assimilation and military defeat, most Americans thus assumed “primitive” Indians would soon disappear.

Ironically, it was also during this time that mainstream Americans started celebrating Indians as a “primitive” other who could restore authenticity to their lives. In the face of rapid industrialization and urbanization and with the frontier closing, they romanticized Indians as a rugged, authentic antidote to the artificial, feminized, industrial city. Dime novels, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, and theatrical performances all celebrated what was seen as a bygone legacy of a strenuous Western frontier life in stark contrast with the seemingly dispirited, artificial life of rapidly modernizing America.<sup>8</sup> Just as American Indians were seen as “vanishing” and as the frontier “closed,” this imagined Indian inspired nostalgia and romanticism. Anthropologists thus began collecting “vanishing” Indian cultures before they disappeared. White children in the Boy Scouts of America started playing Indian, learning “primitive” survival skills that could counteract the problems of modern life. Musical composers and artists, too, were attracted to these romantic Indians who could give “Americanness” to their art, distinguishing it from European forms.

This fascination over Indianness even led some woman suffragists to use an American Indian as their political symbol.<sup>9</sup> During this period, woman suffragists in

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<sup>8</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880-1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 13-16. For more on mainstream Americans’ celebration of American Indians and “primitive” others in contrast to their “overcivilized” life, see L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); John R. Haddad, “The Wild West Turns East: Audience, Ritual, and Regeneration in Buffalo Bill’s Boxer Uprising,” *American Studies* 49, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2008): 5-38. For the brief overview of the history and contents of the dime novels, see Edward T. LeBlanc, “A Brief History of Dime Novels: Formats and Contents, 1860-1933,” *Primary Sources & Original Works* 4, no. 1/2 (1996): 13-21.

<sup>9</sup> Gail H. Landsman, “‘The Other’ as Political Symbol: Images of Indians in the Woman

Oregon elevated Sacagawea, a Shoshone woman who accompanied the famed Lewis and Clark expedition, to the status of legend. Calling her a “woman pilot” who led the expedition, the writer and woman suffragist Eva Emery Dye constructed a myth of Sacagawea as a legendary woman indispensable to America’s progress.<sup>10</sup> Through Indian, Americans nostalgically recalled the strenuous frontier life that supposedly separated New World America from the influence of Old World Europe. Others used Indians to advance their own political status. Just like they physically possessed Indian lands, Americans imagined and manipulated these representations for their own purposes.<sup>11</sup>

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Suffrage Movement,” *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 247-284; Donna J. Kessler, *The Making of Sacagawea: A Euro-American Legend* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998).

<sup>10</sup> Dye wrote a novel on Lewis and Clark expedition, which eventually led woman suffragists in the West to build the statue of Sacagawea at the fairground of Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition held in Portland, Oregon in 1905. Eva Emery Dye, *The Conquest: The True Story of Lewis and Clark* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1902). For more on Dye, see Ronald W. Taber, “Sacagawea and the Suffragettes: An Interpretation of a Myth,” *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (January 1967): 7-13; Michael Heffernan and Carol Medlicot, “A Feminine Atlas? Sacagawea, the Suffragettes and the Commemorative Landscape in the American West, 1904-1910,” *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 9, no. 2 (July 2010): 109-131; Sheri Bartlett Browne, *Eva Emery Dye: Romance with the West* (Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2004); Miyuki Jimura, “Sacagawea Leads a Women’s Corps of Discovery: Oregon Suffragists, a World’s Fair, and the Making of a Sacagawea Myth,” *Doshisha Global Studies* 4 (2014): 71-91.

<sup>11</sup> For more on Euro-Americans’ construction of the images of American Indians, see Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953); Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991); Charalambos Vrasidas, “The White Man’s Indian: Stereotypes in Film and Beyond” in *VisionQuest: Journeys toward Visual Literacy, Selected Readings from the Annual Conference of the International Visual Literacy Association Annual Conference* (28<sup>th</sup>, Cheyenne, Wyoming, October 1996), 63-70, accessed on November 30, 2014, <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED408950.pdf>; Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); S. Elizabeth Bird ed., *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998); John M. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-1890* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Sherry L. Smith, *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Shari M. Huhndorf, *Going Native: Indians in American Cultural Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell

However, it was also during this period that American Indians started to make use of this imaginary, romantic Indianness. Graduates of Indian boarding schools who gained the knowledge and skills to communicate with Euro-Americans, began to talk publicly about their own affairs and American society. The boarding schools were originally created as the site where Euro-American educators would transform Indian children into “civilized” beings. Rather than completely assimilating, however, these children learned ways to communicate with mainstream Americans and even critique them, by using what they learned in the boarding school.

Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora were among whom who studied at the boarding schools and pursued higher education after graduation. Eastman studied at Flandreau Mission School and Santee Normal training school before he pursued higher education. La Flesche went to Presbyterian Mission School near the Omaha reservation before he began to establish himself as one of the first American Indian ethnologists. De Cora was taken to Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute when she was a little girl where she found her interest in art. Through boarding school education, Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora learned how to speak and write in English, and moreover, learned the mainstream expectations toward American Indians. They thus found their means to enter a national conversation about American Indians, and critique mainstream society while utilizing popular representations of American Indians. Through their writing, interactions with collaborators or teaching Native or non-Native children, they actively negotiated the meaning of their Indianness and Americanness.

It was also during this time that these boarding school graduates started to gather themselves as an “Indian” race beyond tribal distinction. In 1911, these educated

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University Press, 2001).

Indians helped form the Society of American Indians (hereafter SAI), the first intertribal political organization to claim citizenship rights for American Indians and to discuss shared internal affairs beyond individual tribal interests.<sup>12</sup> Each member of SAI also shared an interest in a broader cultural reform movement that critiqued the consequences of rapid modernization and industrialization. Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora were members of this organization, and they “played Indian” as their means to call for American Indian citizenship and to address the wider American public about issues that concerned American Indians as a whole. While Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora each used SAI as a base for political action, they also each found their own way – summer camps for white children, music, or Native art education for Native students – to reconstruct the meaning of Indianness and Americanness. No matter their particular path, they aimed to “Indianize” their fellow Indians and non-Indian Americans on their own terms. In so doing, they attempted to put American Indians closer to the center of America’s social and racial structure.

By highlighting the authority of American Indians to control their self-representation, I contribute to a broader scholarly conversation about American Indian representation. Scholarship like Roy Harvey Pearce’s *Savagism and Civilization*, a classic study about how white Americans constructed images of American Indians, revealed that white Americans understood American Indians and their cultures within a dichotomy of “savagism” and “civilization.” Through their relationship with Indians, Euro-Americans defined “savagism in terms of civilization,” and confirmed the role of

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<sup>12</sup> Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971); Michelle Wick Patterson, “‘Real’ Indian Songs: The Society of American Indians and the Use of Native American Culture as a Means of Reform,” *American Indian Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 44-66; Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race & Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

their civilization to “venture west toward noncivilization.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, white American constructed the image of Indians as antithesis to their civilization, and they used that image to “convinc[e] themselves that they were right, divinely right” to seek westward expansion.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, through the images of Indians, Euro-Americans “were only talking to themselves about themselves.”<sup>15</sup> Pearce’s study served as a precursor for other studies surveying how Euro-Americans from the colonial period to the 1950s constructed Indian images. It inspired studies of American Indian representation, such as the important work by Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., and Sherry L. Smith. These studies focused on white Americans’ perceptions about American Indians, treating the images of Indians as a product of the Euro-American imagination, and revealing how whites reflected upon themselves through imagining the Indian “other,” and how those images they created then shaped their attitudes toward federal Indian policies.<sup>16</sup>

Berkhofer examined white Americans’ perceptions of Indians from 1492 to the present, and revealed how Euro-Americans invented and used the image of Indians to imagine themselves in contrast to a “savage” other. That image “justified” westward expansion and federal Indian policies to remove or assimilate American Indians. Smith also examined how Euro-Americans, who were enamored with American Indian cultures at the turn of the twentieth century, each created imagined Indians based on their own particular needs. So, for instance, the famed naturalist George Bird Grinnell lamented how urban industrial life made whites “effeminate” and this drove him to record “vanishing” Plains Indian cultures and their “vigorous out-of-door” life, which

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<sup>13</sup> Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*, 232.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian*; Smith, *Reimagining Indians*; Bird ed., *Dressing in Feathers*; Huhndorf, *Going Native*.



he considered an escape from the pressure of “overcivilization.”<sup>17</sup> The writer Mary Austin, too, looked to Indians as a kind of salvation. In her case she saw a model of powerful womanhood in Seyavi, an Indian woman basket maker, because Sayavi offered “self-sufficiency and freedom from male domination.”<sup>18</sup> In addition, she pointed out how as the American frontier vanished, American national identity was filtered through Indians. In short, Smith demonstrates that Anglo-Americans found in American Indians convenient elements to support their own particular social views and cultural needs.

Berkhofer and Pearce wrote foundational texts about the representation of American Indians. They revealed how the image of the Indian “other” was constructed through the gaze of Euro-Americans and how it was inextricably linked with Euro-Americans’ reflections on their self-identity. The image of Indians, as these studies pointed out, was an overly generalized image that reduced the diversity of Native peoples and cultures into a singular identity. While they acknowledge the significance of American Indians’ presence, they overlooked actual American Indians’ involvement in the construction of their own image. In *The White Man’s Indian*, for example, Berkhofer pointed out that “the idea of the *Indian* or Indians in general is a White image or stereotype because it does not square with present-day conceptions of how those peoples called Indian lived and saw themselves,” and “the idea and the image of the Indian must be a White conception” because American Indians “neither called themselves by a singular term nor understood themselves as a collectivity.”<sup>19</sup> Berkhofer saw that Indian could use that white-created image to persuade whites that Indian leaders had a right to make decisions

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<sup>17</sup> Smith, *Reimagining Indians*, 55.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>19</sup> Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian*, 3.

about their own affairs.<sup>20</sup> However, Berkhofer also notes that it was up to white policy makers to decide whether they would incorporate these leaders' ideas, because "most policy makers believe they know better in the end what the Indian needs and wants."<sup>21</sup>

Sherry L. Smith, in her study about how Euro-American popularizers constructed Indians, acknowledges that at the turn of the twentieth century growing numbers of educated American Indians began to speak widely about themselves to non-Indians. However, Smith points out that "Anglo popularizers steadfastly ignored Indian writers, as well as activists, [... because] they preferred the supposedly more authentic, less tainted Indians of the reservation."<sup>22</sup> Moreover, as Smith illustrated, while Euro-American ethnographers desperately needed the cooperation of Native informants to authenticate their work, Euro-Americans had power over producing that knowledge, because "they had greater access to publishers, and by consequence, the hearts and minds of the American reading public."<sup>23</sup> As a result, Smith focuses on the process of how Euro-Americans imagined Indians, because they had the dominant position to control the public imagination.<sup>24</sup> According to Smith, then, even when American Indians attempted to publicize their opinions, the public image of the Indian remained under the control of more powerful Euro-Americans, who produced images suited to address their own particular anxieties and needs, and which often ignored actual Indian lives.

In short, by highlighting the actions and ideas of white Americans over the image of American Indians, Pearce, Berkhofer and Smith demonstrate the control whites had in

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 191-197.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, *Reimagining Indians*, 12.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 14.

establishing the “authenticity” of certain powerful and lasting images. However, all three overlook or underestimate how American Indians participated in constructing their own image and public identity. As a result, these scholars end up affirming the idea that American Indians were the passive victims of Euro-American conquest, who were “incorporated into the United States, given their individual civil rights, and allowed their cultural heritage, including their nations.”<sup>25</sup> They thus overlook the possibility that American Indians might have also reflected upon themselves, actively reconstructing their self-image and self-identity by manipulating that image to the white American “other.”

A few scholars have examined Native American self-identification. Philip J. Deloria for example, coined the phrase “playing Indian” and he examined the way Native intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century “played Indian” in response to mainstream fascination with antimodern, primitive cultures. He also showed how they acted as a bridge between two seemingly different cultures to generate deeper understanding about American Indians.<sup>26</sup> However, as Deloria demonstrated, American Indians needed to face the paradoxical consequences of their performance. While American Indians “played Indian” to try transforming common stereotypes, they were, at the same time, actually reinforcing those stereotypes.<sup>27</sup> The discomfort American Indians felt playing Indian is certainly understandable. But it is not my purpose to reaffirm this paradoxical consequence, because even if American Indians faced this dilemma they also seized upon these stereotypes as one of the few means that they

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<sup>25</sup> Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827-1863* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 7.

<sup>26</sup> Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 122.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 126; Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race & Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 4.

could use to talk back to mainstream Americans.

As a result, I take inspiration from recent trends in Native American Studies, which look at American Indian's self-performance in Indian disguise as a rhetorical strategy to talk back to their mainstream audience. Lucy Maddox, for instance, in her book on SAI observed that their performance was a political necessity to appease white Americans through which they could represent themselves in public. Yet Maddox's study just follows Hazel Herzberg's earlier 1971 study about the SAI, and she explains the failure of SAI to achieve its specific goals, such as failing to come up with a unified Indian perspective on federal Indian policies. As a result, she argues that in the end Natives themselves were the only audience that really mattered for their political and cultural self-determination.<sup>28</sup>

By saying the Native audience was the one that really mattered for American Indians' cultural and political self-determination, Maddox fails to see the contributions that SAI members made to the broader American society. The subjects of this study, Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora certainly addressed their Native audience as they tried to unify opinions about the problems they faced as Indians. However, they also helped spread their values to a white audience as well, by showing the contributions American Indians could make, and had already made, to American culture. By "performing" Indian, they created and contested the meaning of Indianness and Americanness, and complicated Euro-American expectations of racial and social hierarchy. Thus, this study advances earlier understandings by studying not only how American Indians were represented, or how Indians created their own representations, but how they "Indianized" the beliefs and understanding of mainstream Americans,

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<sup>28</sup> Maddox, *Citizen Indians*, 175.

eventually embedding their Indianness at the center of what constitutes America.

My interest in the active involvement of American Indians in complicating dominant images is indebted to a recent trend in Native American literary criticism. In particular I borrow Gerald Vizenor's notion of "survivance," a word he uses to describe the survival and resistance of American Indians rejecting "dominance, tragedy, and victimry" in the face of colonialism.<sup>29</sup> This concept of "survivance" encourages me to look at American Indians as active agents who reimagine themselves as Indians and Americans, narrating their stories in some forms of American culture. Moreover, by borrowing Craig S. Womack's idea of "Indianization," I reject "the supremacist notion that assimilation can only go in one direction" that "American Indians are being swallowed up by European culture."<sup>30</sup> Instead, I suggest that in some circumstances Euro-Americans are likewise "Indianized" by American Indians, even while Euro-Americans attempted to "Indianize" American Indians in their own terms. By examining Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora, I aim to reveal these three individuals' "survivance," their act of visualizing American Indians' active presence in America's history and future by passing on their stories to their Native and non-Native audience.

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<sup>29</sup> Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), vii. For similar approaches, see Malea Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 53, no. 3 (February 2002): 396-434; Ernest Stromberg ed., *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006); Sonya Atalay, "No Sense of the Struggle: Creating a Context for Survivance at the NMAI," *American Indian Quarterly* 30 no.3/4 (Summer-Autumn 2006): 597-618; Angela M. Haas, "Wampum as Hypertext: An American Indian Intellectual Tradition of Multimedia Theory and Practice," *Studies in American Indian Literatures Series* 2, 19, no. 4 (Winter 2007): 77-100; Rochelle Raineri Zuck, "William Apess, the 'Lost Tribes,' and Indigenous Survivance," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 1-26; Lisa King, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson eds., *Survivance, Sovereignty and Story: Teaching American Indian Rhetorics* (Boulder: Utah State University Press, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 12.

While emphasizing the skills that Indian graduates gained through their boarding school education, I do not romanticize the boarding school experience. Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora were in fact survivors of a continuous assault on Indian traditions and customs that often led to tragic consequences. After they left their families, whether they went to school willingly or against their will, they first needed to assimilate to their school's efforts to transform them into "civilized" humans, whose appearance and name fit Western standards, who could speak and write English, who converted to Christianity, and who understood the worldview that placed Euro-Americans at the top of the social and racial hierarchy.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, living in a confined, highly restricted environment away from their home, they needed to survive homesickness, infectious diseases, rules that banned the use of their original languages, and abusive punishment when they broke school rules. As I explain later in the third chapter, for example, when De Cora was thirteen she was kidnapped by a school recruiter and was displaced from her home and family for five years. Although she did not fully write about her homesickness, it was no doubt painful to face the reality of being more than 1,800 kilometers apart from her family. Likewise La Flesche's best friend in school died on campus of an unknown disease, most likely tuberculosis, which was one of the common infectious diseases Indian students got while they were at school.<sup>32</sup> La Flesche also witnessed his white teacher's excessive abuse and strict control over student behavior. All of these tragedies and hardships should not be ignored when one deals with Indian

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<sup>31</sup> Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, Lorene Sisquoc, eds. *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 15-16.

<sup>32</sup> Margot Liberty, "Native American 'Informants': The Contribution of Francis La Flesche," *Journal for the Anthropological Study of Human Movement* 11.2 (Autumn 2000): 308, accessed on October 18, 2015, [http://jashm.press.illinois.edu/11.2/11-2NativeAmerican\\_Liberty305-312.pdf](http://jashm.press.illinois.edu/11.2/11-2NativeAmerican_Liberty305-312.pdf).

boarding school experiences. Yet it should also be kept in mind that some children enjoyed some of their circumstances and took advantage of the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge they used to benefit themselves and their people. For this perspective, I am indebted to recent scholarship on Indian education that has revealed the unintended positive impact of boarding school education.<sup>33</sup>

To highlight American Indians' active participation in constructing American Indian representations, I examine Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora's response to Euro-Americans' expectations of American Indians and their attempts to rebuild their identity as Indian and American. I chose Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora, because I think each skillfully responded to dominant stereotypes and the challenge American Indians faced to assimilate and to maintain an Indian identity. In their field of expertise, they each played Indian, responding to Euro-Americans' expectations of American Indians, demonstrating that Indians could change and live proudly as American Indians. Each demonstrated, moreover, that their Indianness could in fact contribute to the future development of American society, rather than simply be nostalgia for a vanishing America. It was indeed their way of "survivance."

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), a Dakota writer and physician most skillfully manipulated this romantic notion of American Indians. Scrutinizing his writings, chapter 1 argues that Eastman took "authentic" Indian virtues from past Indian heroes, and showed how their example could save white children from problems caused by rapidly modernizing society. He created a summer camp, Camp Oahe for girls and

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<sup>33</sup> Amelia V. Katanski, *Learning to Write Indian: The Boarding-School Experience and American Indian Literature* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); 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); Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc eds., *Boarding School Blues*.

Camp Ohiyesa for boys, helping non-Indian children “go native” under his instruction. In so doing, Eastman claimed that American Indians could provide American citizens mental and physical strength to survive in modern society. By playing with romantic Indianness, he critiqued white American civilization, and showed that Indian virtues could save America.

Chapter 2 examines the Omaha ethnologist Francis La Flesche, whose writings and relationship with the Indianist composer Charles Wakefield Cadman demonstrated his ability to conform to mainstream society and to teach mainstream Americans about Indians. Unlike Eastman, La Flesche preferred presenting himself as a “civilized” Indian, because he believed that his “civilized” disguise enabled him to stand equally with Americans and made him eligible to talk about American Indians. By playing a “civilized” Indian, La Flesche first criticized mainstream stereotypes of seeing American Indians as an inferior “other,” and critiqued the hypocrisy of white American civilization. Moreover, as an ethnologist, La Flesche collected Omaha and Osage songs, and worked with Indianist composers like Cadman. In so doing, La Flesche showed that American Indians are central to what constitutes America, and American Indians thus hold a significant part of American identity.

In chapter 3, I examine Angel De Cora’s role as an art teacher at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. There she developed a Native art class where American Indian children could learn and produce tribally distinctive art and design. In the school which Richard Henry Pratt founded in 1879 to civilize Native children by teaching white American ways of living and eliminating tribal distinctions, De Cora encouraged students to learn to be “Indian,” and appealed to their racial pride. Furthermore, she showed that Indian art has a distinctive value for modern American society, in particular



for the furnishing of the modern home. By introducing American Indian arts and crafts as “useful” house decoration, and teaching her students to nurture their artistic skills to apply them to modern use, De Cora hoped to provide them with a means of economic and cultural survival. Her artwork and teaching coincided with a time when many non-Indian Americans avidly collected “primitive” American Indian artifacts in museums, World’s Fairs, and even private households. De Cora thus played with this expectation, and used her art not only to preserve Indian artistic cultures, but also to Indianize her Indian students as well as the American home.

All three chapters demonstrate the way each Native American intellectual reimagined what it meant to be an Indian and an American, and the way they evoked their audience’s fascination with Indians. By playing with Euro-Americans expectations of Indians, Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora showed their ability to adapt to new circumstances as they envisioned and promoted their version of Indians as the first Americans. Charles Eastman romanticized American Indian men as heroes whose virtues could save modern Americans from the state of being “overcivilized.” Francis La Flesche played Indian to make American composer’s Indianist music as Indian as possible, based on his expertise in the culture of the Omaha and Osage Indians. Angel De Cora illustrated and taught tribally distinctive American Indian designs, and created a ground for her students to gain the means for their cultural and economic survival as American Indians. In the process, she helped them Indianize American homes as well. These turn-of-the-century intellectuals not only worked strenuously for Indians’ political citizenship and integration into American society, but they culturally indigenized modern America as proud Indians and Americans. Examining all three individuals, I aim to illustrate the various ways American Indians claimed their active

presence in the face of colonialism at the turn of the twentieth century.

## Chapter 1

### The Indian as the American Savior: Charles Alexander Eastman's Indian and His Vision for America's Future

#### I. Introduction

In his first autobiography *Indian Boyhood* (1902), Charles Alexander Eastman, or Ohiyesa, invites his contemporary readers into the lively stories of a Dakota boy of the late nineteenth century, the nomadic life that he once lived as a youth. “What boy would not be an Indian for a while when he thinks of the freest life in the world? This life was mine.”<sup>1</sup> Opening his narrative in such a manner, he tells of his training in nature, his life with his family, his learning from the old medicine man's stories and Dakota legends. It was a tale of the “primitive” life of “a natural and free man” which “no longer exist[ed].”<sup>2</sup> Starting his autobiography with the theme of the “vanishing Indian,” Eastman writes his autobiography in a nostalgic manner, and gives his contemporary readers Indian virtues that seem to have disappeared when he started writing in 1893.<sup>3</sup>

His recollection of life as an Indian was celebrated by his white readers who were longing for an “authentic” account of the past that was vanishing. “No one can read this story of ‘Indian Boyhood’ without being profoundly touched by its pathos and its power,” noted a reviewer in the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. The book, the reviewer enthused, “presents Indian[s] in a new light [and ....it] should arouse sympathy and enlarge

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Eastman, *Indian Boyhood* (New York: McClure, Philips & Co., 1902), 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

<sup>3</sup> Eastman's most recent biographer David Martinez notes that Eastman began writing after 1893, when he moved to St. Paul, Minnesota. See David Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher: Charles Eastman and American Indian Thought* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2009), 7-8.

understanding in the public mind.”<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the *St Paul News* praised the book for providing “not only an authentic, but an interesting story of a life that is fast becoming only a memory.”<sup>5</sup> Eastman thus eventually gained fame as a best-selling author of books about American Indians. Until separating from his wife, Elaine Goodale Eastman, who was also a writer and his collaborator, Eastman wrote widely about Dakota cultures, American Indians in general, and addressed issues that concerned American Indians, especially in relation to U.S. government policy. Over his twenty-five years as a writer, he published eleven books, including two collaborative works that he did with his wife. His writings were widely read. His autobiographies in particular were frequently assigned in classrooms, and “translated into French, German, Danish, and Bohemian.”<sup>6</sup>

Eastman’s success as a writer was largely indebted to the cross-cultural skills that he gained from his early education. Eastman was born in 1858 and grew up learning traditional Dakota ways, later combined with a Euro-American education. Eastman lived in a period federal assimilation policies rapidly changed the lives of American Indians. The Dawes Act of 1887 aimed to assimilate American Indians by making them individual farmers by allotting them reservation lands rather than holding land in common with other tribal members, and promising them eventual admission to American citizenship. Boarding school education was another way of assimilating American Indians, by imposing on Native children an industrial education designed to make them “civilized” humans, whose appearance and outlook fit Euro-American

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<sup>4</sup> Comment on “Indian Boyhood,” Lecture Announcement 1904-05 (Southern Lyceum Bureau, Louisville, KY), Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder, JLSC.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Alexander Eastman, *Indian To-day: The Past and Future of the First American* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1915), viii.

standards.<sup>7</sup> To non-Indians, the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 confirmed the idea of the “vanishing Indian,” as “the marker” of complete defeat. After Wounded Knee, American Indians came to represent the nation’s past violence, portrayed in the forms of novels, movies, and other types of media, as caricatures that only existed in the past.<sup>8</sup> Living in such a period of enforced assimilation, Eastman chose to gain skills from white American education. Yet Eastman saw more than the simple dichotomy – “assimilation or extinction” – that white Americans assumed was the only path for American Indians to take during this era. Through his writings, he remained Indian while claiming his right to an “American” identity as well.

Eastman started writing only several years after he had the experience of treating wounded victims and burying the dead after the Wounded Knee tragedy.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Eastman’s tone of writings was strangely optimistic, and avoided extensive discussion of the difficulties that American Indians faced in the early twentieth century. Instead, Eastman used his books to celebrate romantic notions of Indian “primitive” life, in stark contrast to modern Western civilization. This romantic presentation of Indianness troubles contemporary scholars. One early critic, H. David Brumble III, examines *Indian Boyhood* and argues that Eastman was a “Romantic Racist and Social Darwinist.” In looking at Eastman’s superior observations on the childlike Indians, Brumble thus reduces Eastman to a “fully acculturated” assimilationist who deeply

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<sup>7</sup> Kevin Slivka, “Art, Craft, and Assimilation: Curriculum for Native Students during the Boarding School Era,” *Studies in Art Education* 52, no. 3 (Spring 2011): 226-227.

<sup>8</sup> Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 16; Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher*, 9; Hazel W. Hertzberg, *The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971), 12; Heather Cox Richardson, *Wounded Knee: Party Politics and the Road to an American Massacre* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Jerome A. Greene, *American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 5.

embraced a Western, modern mindset.<sup>10</sup> Eastman's omission of violent savagery against American Indian life, such as the Wounded Knee massacre, and his rather utopian descriptions of traditional Indian culture, reveals a troublesome picture of Eastman as one who devoted himself solely to the mainstream culture.

Recent critics, however, have revisited Eastman's writings and observed the complex but strategic performance behind his style of writings, reevaluating him as one of the early Native American writers who skillfully manipulated widespread stereotypes and expectations of Indianness.<sup>11</sup> Philip J. Deloria, for example, demonstrates the instances in which American Indians performed their Indianness to talk back to non-

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<sup>10</sup> H. David Brumble III, *American Indian Autobiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 148; Jennifer Bess, "'Kill the Indian and Save the Man!': Charles Eastman Surveys His Past," *Wicazo sa Review* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 8; Tony Dykema-VanderArk, "Playing Indian in Print: Charles A. Eastman's Autobiographical Writing for Children," *MELUS* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 9.

<sup>11</sup> The major driving force of this change in perception is, as Joy Porter puts it, contributed by "much critical debates over its position ... as postcolonial literatures." Acknowledging "chronic conditions" and "structural limitations" that American Indians lived under, recent critics argue that Native American literature should be observed as "part of resistance literature" (Porter, 59). See Joy Porter "Historical and Cultural Contexts to Native American Literature" in *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, eds. Joy Porter and Kenneth M. Roemer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Also, a significant and growing body of criticism both in Native American literature and in literature more broadly has helped this transformation. According to Kenneth M. Roemer, before the 1970s there were virtually no academics who specialized in Native American literature and it was quite uncommon for Native American literature to be included in college literature courses. However it began to attract more attentions alongside wider social and academic movements during the 1970s and 1980s, as represented in "Civil Rights and Ethnic Studies, in particular, but also "feminism and Women's Studies." With the rise in numbers of Native American academics, the presence of Native American literature became highly visible, and contributed in developing a "substantial body of criticism worthy of recognition, praise ... and ridicule." Kenneth M. Roemer, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, 1-4. Critics who follow this revised perception on Eastman are, for example: Peter L. Bayers, "Charles Alexander Eastman's *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* and the Shaping of Native Manhood," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 20, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 52-73; Penelope Myrtle Kelsey, "A 'Real Indian' to the Boy Scouts: Charles Alexander Eastman as a Resistance Writer," *Western American Literature* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 30-48; Malea Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 53, no. 3 (February 2002): 396-434.

Indian audiences.<sup>12</sup> He shows how Eastman acted as a bridge between non-Natives and Natives, by promoting “antimodern primitivism” to alter negative stereotypes “left over from colonial conquest” about American Indians.<sup>13</sup> Malea Powell also sees American Indian intellectuals’ use of major discourses about Indian as a “rhetoric of survivance,” that enabled them to “both respond to that discourse and to reimagine what it could mean to be Indian.”<sup>14</sup> Delineating her story through her close examination of Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins and Charles Alexander Eastman’s writings, Powell claims that their use of writing in a colonial context worked as a necessary tool for their survival and resistance within the dominant society. It enabled Eastman, in particular, to exhibit himself as “‘authentic’ as both an Indian and a citizen (Euro-American),” that qualified him to renegotiate the popular stereotypes about American Indian as well as to critique civilization.<sup>15</sup>

This chapter, following Powell’s concept of “rhetoric of survivance,” revisits Eastman’s re-appropriation of Indianness. I argue that Eastman, by responding to expectations of Indianness, reimagined an indigenized “American-ness” to offer lessons to both whites and American Indians. This chapter, however, will focus on how Eastman’s teachings were delineated to white Americans. Eastman offered white American audiences a supposedly first-hand account of Indian virtues that American Indians had developed through their trainings in nature. In doing so, Eastman envisioned a better future for America as a nation led by the very “first Americans.”

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<sup>12</sup> Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 126.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>14</sup> Powell, “Rhetorics of Survivance,” 396.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 418.

## II. Ohiyesa Becomes Charles A. Eastman

Eastman was born in 1858 on the Dakota reservation near Redwood Falls, Minnesota.<sup>16</sup> However, he spent most of his youth in Manitoba, Canada, following his relatives in exile after the 1862 U.S.-Dakota war. His name was Hakadah (Pitiful Last) at that time, because his mother died right after his childbirth, but he was later named Ohiyesa (Winner), to celebrate a victory in a village lacrosse game. In Redwood Falls and Manitoba, Eastman received his early education from his grandmother and his uncle. They taught him to develop his mental and physical strength and become a successful hunter and warrior. Among the traits that he learned through his training were, he later wrote, “courage, patience, self-control, and generosity.”<sup>17</sup> While he grew up as a healthy Dakota youth, his hatred toward white Americans also grew, because he was told that his father Many Lightnings and his brothers were among thirty-eight Dakota men who were taken hostage and hanged after the 1862 U.S.-Dakota war. In fact, his father was instead imprisoned in a federal penitentiary and still alive, but Eastman (then Ohiyesa), did not know this and so sought to use his skills for vengeance in the name of his lost father and brothers.<sup>18</sup>

However, his anger against white Americans seemed to ease after his father’s return. And it was at this time that his metamorphosis began. His father, Many Lightnings, now appeared before him as Jacob Eastman and persuaded him to learn the white American

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<sup>16</sup> Although Eastman appeared as a “full-blood Sioux” in many newspapers published during his era, he was actually a “mixed-blood” Dakota, born the son of Ite Wakanhdi Ota (Many Lightnings) and Wakantankanwin (Goddess) who was mixed-blood and had the English name of Mary Nancy Eastman. His mother was a daughter of Captain Seth Eastman, a noted artist. See Raymond Wilson, *Ohiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 12.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, 16; Eastman, *Indian Boyhood*, 9, 44-48; Charles Alexander Eastman, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization: Chapters in the Autobiography of an Indian* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1916), 1, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Eastman, *Indian Boyhood*, 285; Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, 16.



way of life. Jacob told him that he was exempted from the execution, and instead he stayed in prison for three years in Davenport, Iowa. During his imprisonment, Jacob converted to Christianity, and after eleven years of separation from his son, Jacob came to reclaim his son to his newly established life in Flandreau, South Dakota. It was Jacob who persuaded Ohiyesa to adopt the changes around them.

For Ohiyesa, the need to make a transition was not clear at first. When Ohiyesa met his father Many Lightnings, he was first confused about his honored father's acceptance of "so-called civili[z]ed life, or the way of white man."<sup>19</sup> Eastman later recollected his feelings as follows: "I could not doubt my own father, so mysteriously come back to us, as it were, from the spirit land; yet there was a voice within saying to me, 'A false life! A treacherous life!'"<sup>20</sup> Eastman perceived his father's return as a somewhat spiritual moment in his life, in which his reincarnated father from "the spirit land" inspired him to try a new life awaiting him. Having grown up in Dakota tradition, however, he was reluctant to admit that he should accept his father's way of life.

At the same time, though, this must have been a moment of realization for Eastman. Even in his woodland life, he had heard of the "supernatural" power of white Americans, creating "fire-boat," or "'fire-boat-walks-on-mountains' (a locomotive)."<sup>21</sup> Eastman's previous knowledge of white Americans' mysterious technology may have made it easier for Eastman to understand his father's saying: "the sooner [American Indians] accept [white Americans'] mode of life and follow [white Americans'] teaching, the better it will be for" American Indians overall.<sup>22</sup> In order to live in a society where American Indians were required to give up their traditional culture, he

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<sup>19</sup> Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

thought it was necessary to gain the language and knowledge that the dominant culture offered them. Eastman regarded this transition as his replacement of “bows and arrows” with “the spade and the pen,” white American’s knowledge and language. Eastman then decided to depart from his indigenous life to receive a Euro-American education.<sup>23</sup>

Eastman soon acclimated to the white American way of life. When he graduated from Boston University Medical College in 1890, Eastman assured himself that the time had come to “use all that [he] had learned for [American Indian’s] benefit.”<sup>24</sup> He was first appointed to be a government physician for the Lakota people at Pine Ridge Agency in South Dakota in the fall of 1890. There he met his wife, Elaine Goodale, who was working as a supervisor of education at Pine Ridge, and he soon announced their engagement on Christmas Day, 1890. The Wounded Knee Massacre that the couple witnessed right after their engagement only seemed to make their relationship stronger. Eastman and Elaine got married within a year.<sup>25</sup>

After he and his family moved to St. Paul, Minnesota in 1893, he attempted to establish himself as a private physician, but he never succeeded.<sup>26</sup> Largely in need of finding ways to make a living, engaged in a series of jobs including field secretary for the YMCA, organizer for a summer camp, lobbyist, lecturer, and agent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.<sup>27</sup> With the help of his wife, he also began writing. He wrote books on

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret D. Jacobs, “The Eastmans and the Luhans: Interracial Marriage between White Women and Native American Men, 1875-1935,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 23, no. 3 (2002): 35-36.

<sup>26</sup> According to Erik Peterson, “Eastman only actively practiced medicine for fewer than six years.” See Erik Peterson, “An Indian, an American: Ethnicity, Assimilation and Balance in Charles Eastman’s *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, 2nd ser., 4, no. 2/3 (Summer/Fall 1992): 148; Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher*, xiv.

<sup>27</sup> Peterson, “An Indian, an American,” 148; Carol Lea Clark, “Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa) and Elaine Goodale Eastman: A Cross-Cultural Collaboration,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, 13, no. 2 (Autumn 1994): 274.

American Indians that insisted that American Indians were capable of thinking through their own affairs, and their virtues deserve respect within the wider American society. In order to demonstrate this, Eastman displayed himself as the “authentic” “first American,” an American Indian who was also capable of living in the woods and in a modern society.

During the time Eastman was writing, people were primed to view American Indians as a “vanishing race,” an increasing number of literary and ethnographic works were done on natives, to capture the “wild” Indians who once lived freely in the West. With the strong influence of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, the image of Plains Indians in the feather headdress became a somewhat universal image that symbolized “Indians” beyond any tribal distinctions.<sup>28</sup>

In some ways Eastman confirmed these stereotypes in his writings. He often performed the Indianness his readers expected. This allowed Eastman to authenticate his “primitive” Indianness and made his books accessible to non-Indian readers. In the beginning of his book, *The Soul of the Indian*, for example, he put a picture of himself wearing a feather headdress, revealing his bare chest (Appendix, Fig. 3). Eastman posed himself before a dark background, looking up to the left, towards the light. With a slight smile on his lips, he situated himself as if he is going on a vision quest, communicating with the native spirits. Placing his “primitive” Indianness up front in the beginning of his book, he assures readers that his narrative of American Indian philosophy, a philosophy he held “before he knew the white man,” was “real.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, Eastman’s attempt to portray himself a “real” Indian can also be drawn from the

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<sup>28</sup> Jeffery R. Hanson, “Ethnicity and the Looking Glass: The Dialectics of National Indian Identity,” *American Indian Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 204.

<sup>29</sup> Charles A. Eastman, *The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), ix-x.

opening sentence of *Indian Boyhood*, where he claims that “the freest life in the world” was “mine.”<sup>30</sup> By using the possessive, he clearly indicates his ownership over the natural, free life of his youth, and confirms the story that he is going to tell is an “authentic” account of his experience and “true” Native experience in general.<sup>31</sup>

While Eastman confirmed popular stereotypes so that he could establish his credibility to tell the “true” story of the American Indian, Eastman also challenged those stereotypes by showing himself capable of becoming a modern American. In order to do so, Eastman demonstrated his allegiance to white middle-class expectations of the era, a loosely defined behavior that was any “civilized” person supposedly should have:

“physical and sexual self-restraint; intelligent citizenship and self-government; appreciation of art, music, and literature; and mastery over the natural world.”<sup>32</sup>

Eastman confirmed this by the photo located in the very beginning of his autobiography, *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*. Unlike the Indian headdress he wore in *The Soul of the Indian*, here he presents a photograph of himself in a suit and includes his signature in English (Appendix, Fig. 4). Unlike many pictures of American Indians taken by Euro-American photographers at this period, Eastman does not pose himself facing the camera.<sup>33</sup> While American Indian portraits taken by Edward Curtis, for

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<sup>30</sup> Eastman, *Indian Boyhood*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Gale P. Coskan-Johnson, “What Write Would Not Be an Indian for a While?: Charles Alexander Eastman, Critical Memory, and Audience,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 109.

<sup>32</sup> For discussion of reformed notions of “civilization” in the middle-class see Joseph O. Jewell, *Race, Social Reform, and the Making of a Middle Class: The American Missionary Association and the Making of Black Atlanta, 1870-1900* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 7; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1800-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996); Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>33</sup> Amy Nelson, “A Stylistic Analysis of American Indian Portrait Photography in Oklahoma, 1869-1904,” (M.A. thesis, University of Northern Texas, 2001), 11.

example, imply the documenting of a somewhat frozen, “innocent,” dying imagery of American Indians, Eastman’s portrait in the autobiography as well as of the picture in *The Soul of the Indian* reveal lively images of Eastman, as an Indian, with the obvious implication of his self-performance. In the portrait, Eastman takes a diagonal position, looking to his right. Posing again in front of a dark background with some lighting on his face, Eastman in his dark suit appeals to the audience with his civility and middle-class gentility, as opposed to the “barbarous,” “savage” image of American Indians in the wilderness.

His display of his state of “civilized” can also be seen from the pictures that he inserted in his books. Of all twelve pictures that he put throughout *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, only two pictures can be easily associated with the indigenous culture – pictures of tepees and Kicking Bear, gazing outward in his regalia. Eastman clearly uses the picture to stress his move to the upper social ladder from a “barbaric” state, by choosing to put photos of tepees and the log cabin on the same page (Appendix, Fig. 5). The place where the picture of teepees was taken is unknown. The picture of the log cabin was supposedly taken at Flandreau, South Dakota, as Eastman notes that it is a “typical Indian log cabin, such as Dr. Eastman’s father lived at Flandreau, Dakota Territory.”<sup>34</sup> Although these dwellings were situated in a similar, “wild” looking landscape, the picture of the log cabin shows a sign of “civilized” land use. A part of the land right next to the log cabin is fenced off, supposedly for a ranch or a field of the kind that Eastman’s father cultivated. Making a stark contrast to the picture of tepees, it visualizes Eastman and his father’s docility in accepting white American way of life, and convinces readers that his metamorphosis from “savage Indian” to

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<sup>34</sup> Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 17.

“civilized man” was thus a success.

Eastman shows his capability for becoming a “civilized” man to counter popular stereotypes that treat American Indians as “children,” who need paternal support from white Americans, and who would need instruction and patience to make them “civilized.”<sup>35</sup> Eastman, by taking his father and himself as an example, attacks this stereotype. While many, he writes, think “civilization is beyond the reach of the untutored primitive man in a single generation,” he points out that “it did not take my father two thousand years, or ten years, to grasp its essential features, and although he never went to school a day in his life, he lived a broad-minded and self-respecting citizen. It took me about fifteen years to prepare to enter it on the plane of a professional man, and I have stayed with it ever since.”<sup>36</sup> He actually spent seventeen years in preparatory, college, and professional education, but the length of time that Eastman spent was in fact, “two years less than [what was] required by the average white youth.”<sup>37</sup> Also, he includes the list of names of well-known white Americans who he “had honor of acquaintance with,” including Theodore Roosevelt, G. Stanley Hall, a leading psychologist and educator of his time, and Ernest Thompson Seton, a founder of the Boy Scouts of America.<sup>38</sup> Eastman was determined to demonstrate his self-reliance and “civilization” to his readers, and show them his ability to participate in the dominant society following white middle-class expectations.

Eastman was a strong advocate for American Indian citizenship.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, we

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<sup>35</sup> Coskan-Johnson, “What Write Would Not Be an Indian for a While?,” 125.

<sup>36</sup> Eastman, *The Indian To-day*, 100.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, vii.

<sup>38</sup> Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 192; Bayers, “Charles Alexander Eastman’s *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* and the Shaping of Native Manhood,” 59.

<sup>39</sup> Eastman was a member of the Society of American Indians (SAI), a group of Native intellectuals whose primary aim was to codify American Indian citizenship. However, it is unknown if Eastman himself embraced full citizenship status. According to David Martinez, a

can easily assume that Eastman's expression of his belief in American Indians' capability for their self-support is aimed to generate in the public mind the possibility of making American Indians into citizens.<sup>40</sup> Yet by displaying himself as a "real" Indian who is capable of adopting a white American way of life, it seems that Eastman found a way to directly discuss problems beyond the concerns of American Indians. By showing his credibility as both "primitive" and "civilized" at the same time, Eastman gained agency to imagine for himself what it means to be an Indian and an American.

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recent biographer of Eastman, it is "frustratingly ambiguous" to determine whether or not Eastman was a citizen. Yet Martinez thinks that Eastman did not have citizenship, because while his father had his homestead in Flandreau, South Dakota, Eastman never claimed his allotment, which could be used to claim his citizenship (David Martinez, facebook post to Malea Powell, December 8, 2011). Moreover, although the original provision of the Dawes Act "granted" citizenship for those who accepted a "civilized" mode of life and did not live on the reservation, the criteria defining a "civilized" Indian were confusing and ambiguous. It is this very problem that members of the Society of American Indians wanted to clarify and solve (Malea Powell, in personal communication with the author, December 8, 2011).

<sup>40</sup> American citizenship had always been obscure for American Indians, including birthright citizenship. Until the Dawes Act was enacted, legal status for American Indians had never been formally clarified. Even after the legislation, as Lucy Maddox explains, citizenship for American Indians had been randomly granted and denied depending on circumstances. Even when American Indian individuals managed to attain citizenship, though, it did not always mean that they had a right for suffrage as well. For instance, Sherman Coolidge, the first president of the Society of American Indians was regarded as a citizen and allowed to vote in Minnesota but was denied citizen status while he was in Wyoming. Under the Dawes Act, in 1887, Coolidge could become a citizen when he was allotted land in Wyoming, but was again denied citizenship when the Burke Act (which was an adjustment of the Dawes Act and required twenty-five years of land ownership for allotted Indians) was enacted in 1906. However, Coolidge later could become a citizen again because he parted from the reservation and accepted a "civilized" form of life under the original provision of the Dawes Act. Eastman wrote about his discomfort with this ambiguity. Eastman mentioned the legislation for citizenship as "confusing" and expressed that it was questionable if "there [was] a learned judge in these United States who [could] tell an Indian's exact status without a great deal of study, and even then he [might] be in doubt." Like many SAI members, Eastman was eager to clarify the legal status of American Indians as a whole. See Charles A. Eastman, "Indian Plea for Freedom," *American Indian Magazine* 6 (Winter 1918): 164; Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race & Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 107-108; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 174-175.

### III. Promoting Indianness to Save Civilization

Having established himself as credible for bringing Indian wisdoms to white American audiences, Eastman talked directly to white Americans who were anxious that their lives were “overcivilized.” In the early twentieth-century, there was active discussion about the way to face the problems that emerged from a rapidly modernizing society.<sup>41</sup> One of the popular problems to be discussed was the so-called “boy problem,” which raised alarms at the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency and the decline of moral and physical strength among future American citizens.<sup>42</sup> Increasing numbers of white Americans, especially those on Christian missions, began to have fears about “urban overrefinement and feminization [...] that seemingly] threatened manhood among growing boys.”<sup>43</sup>

Ernest Thomson Seton, a founder of Boy Scouts of America, expressed this anxiety by claiming that modern urban life was transforming “robust, manly, self-reliant boyhood” into “a lot of ‘flat chested cigarette smokers, with shaky nerves and doubtful vitality.’”<sup>44</sup> While some middle-class Americans sought solutions in the chivalrous tales of the medieval knight, Seton saw the solution in “primitive” Indianness. To nurture the ideal of “purity, self-control, courage, and reverence” in boys, Seton believed traditional Indian virtues could nurture self-control in boys.<sup>45</sup> “The Indian teachings in the fields of art, handicraft, woodcraft, agriculture, health, and joy [...] are what we need. [...The

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<sup>41</sup> For detailed discussion of the problems that white Americans felt in the face of modernization, see T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

<sup>42</sup> David P. Setran, “Developing the ‘Christian Gentleman’: The Medieval Impulse in Protestant Ministry to Adolescent Boys, 1890-1920,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 20, no. 2 (2010): 166.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ernest Thompson Seton, *Boy Scouts of America: A Handbook of Woodcraft, Scouting, and Life-craft* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1910), xii, accessed on November 29, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/boyscoutsofameri00seto#page/n13/mode/2up>.

<sup>45</sup> Setran, “Developing the ‘Christian Gentleman,’” 178.



Indian's] example and precept are what young America needs today," Seton wrote.

American Indian spirituality and character, Seton argued, would save white Americans from materialism, urbanization and "overcivilization."<sup>46</sup>

Eastman was an acquaintance of Seton, and as a secretary of the Boy Scouts of America, he shared concerns with Seton about the problems that modern society seemed to be creating. He also believed that the luxury and comfort materialism brought to urban people stripped boys of vitality and self-reliance. In particular, he was keenly aware of the fact that children in an urban "artificial" setting were alienated from nature. They were therefore deprived of the very thing they needed for healthy development of the manhood. Eastman, as an "authentic" Indian, thus presented "primitive" Indianness as a solution to these problems. Utilizing the popular notion that treated Indianness as an antithesis to civilization, Eastman depicted the Indian as a figure who preferred the simple life, in comparison to the materialistic nature of civilization. He noted that Indians enjoyed a "roving out-door-life" in contrast to the contained urban population of civilization.<sup>47</sup> Especially in this "roving out-of-door life," Eastman found virtues essential for maintaining "their physical excellence and strength, and sense of endurance and vitality."<sup>48</sup>

Eastman vividly illustrated these Indian virtues by calling upon a range of determined Indian heroes. These were men who bravely countered and then solved the problems that they faced when it came to the historical struggle with Euro-Americans. In his 1919 book *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains*, for example, he highlighted Crazy Horse, a renowned Sioux fighter, Eastman found "a gentle warrior, a true brave,

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<sup>46</sup> Ernest Thompson Seton, *The Gospel of the Red Man: An Indian Bible* (1936; reprint, San Diego: The Book Tree, 2006), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Eastman, *Indian To-day*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

who stood for the highest ideal of the Sioux.”<sup>49</sup> When Crazy Horse was four or five years old, Eastman explained, he hunted two antelopes and distributed them to his band of people who were suffering from starvation during a severe winter. He saved Hump, one of the foremost Sioux warriors, amidst a shower of arrows during the war with Gros Ventres. Furthermore, Eastman explained that Crazy Horse, as a brave warrior, masterfully handled his men, and “won every battle that he undertook, with the exception of one or two occasions,” and “managed to extricate himself in safety from a difficult position.”<sup>50</sup> Benevolence, toughness, and self-reliance made Crazy Horse a great leader. And he was, according to Eastman, along with Chief Joseph, a “pure patriot as worthy of honor as any who ever breathed God’s air in the wide spaces of a new world.”<sup>51</sup>

In Chief Gall, who commanded in the battle of Little Big Horn, Eastman saw “a most impressive type of physical manhood.”<sup>52</sup> Gall “appear[ed] most opportunely in a crisis, and in a striking and dramatic manner to take command of the situation.”<sup>53</sup> Eastman demonstrated this by drawing from Gall’s deliberative reaction when Marcus Reno, a military officer who served under General Custer, led his party and entered the Little Big Horn. In the confusion, when many were unprepared and excitable youths attempted to rush “madly and blindly to meet the intruder,” it was Gall who stopped them until they were fully armed with more guns and horses. His advice led the Sioux to victory, and Eastman noted that “Reno retreated pell mell before the onset of the

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<sup>49</sup> Charles A. Eastman, *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1919; reprint, Middlesex; The Echo Library, 2007), 32.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

Sioux.”<sup>54</sup> Drawing from this, Eastman celebrated Gall’s excellence as a strategist, as well as his bravery and endurance.<sup>55</sup>

What made these two masculine men of Dakota legend valuable, according to Eastman, was the experiences and training they received as children of the wilderness. Crazy Horse nurtured his “big-hearted, generous, courageous, and self-denying” character through the teachings of his parents.<sup>56</sup> Gall gained his physical courage and endurance from the early training and contests that he had gone through in his younger days. Receiving their early training in nature, Indians developed a soul that led to an essential manhood.<sup>57</sup>

Eastman interpreted that, like whites, Native American men had lost much of their virility from close contact with civilization.<sup>58</sup> He depicted Gall, for example, as “a real hero of a free and natural people, a type that is never to be seen again.”<sup>59</sup> Crazy Horse was, for Eastman, “one of the ablest and truest American Indians, [whose] life was ideal,” but whose character was now difficult to find among “so-called civilized people.”<sup>60</sup> Using these heroes as examples of a past that was vanishing, it seems that Eastman encouraged a sense of sorrow among his white audiences, generating sympathy and romantic attachment to the virtues of these Indian heroes.

However, Eastman did not just reduce these heroes to “vanishing” Indians. Instead he used their images to critique modern civilization, relating their “vanishing” virtues to what mainstream Americans had lost in exchange for their industrial, urban

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 38.

development. Eastman portrayed the demoralization that Native Americans experienced while they were in the process of assimilation, making a stark contrast to the lives of Indian heroes. He criticized materialism and the “inner-mode of life” as elements of civilization that spoiled Native Americans. Eastman indicated that whisky and gunpowder were the “two great ‘civilizers’” that destroyed Indian manhood, and he wrote, “from the hour the red man accepted these he had in reality sold his birthright, and all unconsciously consented to his own ruin.”<sup>61</sup> He also observed that Native acceptance of gunpowder and European weapons significantly changed basic principles of warfare among Indians. “The original Indian warfare [...] was founded upon the principle of manly rivalry in patriotism, bravery, and self-sacrifice,” he noted, and in such warfare, people were willing to risk their lives “for the welfare or honor of the people.”<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, with the introduction of European weapons, Eastman explained that warfare started to become more “cruel, relentless, and demoralizing” because such warfare was caused by “the desire to conquer and to despoil the conquered of his possessions.”<sup>63</sup> He made clear that this kind of material desire was unknown to American Indians before encountering European colonizers. While he agreed that European weapons were more convenient, he urged his readers to see that they were not suited to the purpose of primitive life.<sup>64</sup> In short, Eastman argued that European material goods destroyed Indian manhood, changing robust, self-sustaining Indians into helpless “victims” who no longer held vital control over their lives. “The whirlwind and tempest of materialism and love of conquest,” he wrote, “tossed them to and fro like

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<sup>61</sup> Eastman, *Indian To-day*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

leaves in the wind.”<sup>65</sup>

Eastman further stressed that adopting “the inner mode of life” also threatened American Indian manhood.<sup>66</sup> He criticized the reservation system as one that deprived Indians of their freedom. Confined in “the well-defined boundaries,” Indians were not able to hunt or interact with neighboring tribes outside of their boundaries. Giving up “his vast possessions to live in a squalid cabin in the backyard of civilization,” he explained that “[Indian] was practically a prisoner.”<sup>67</sup> He noted that the rations Plains Indians got as a replacement for the buffaloes white Americans had eliminated from Native lands, and stressed this ration system “fatally injured” the self-respect of these Indians. With such a system, they had become “time-serving, beggarly, and apathetic,” losing the masculine traits that they used to have in the past.<sup>68</sup>

This degradation that civilization had brought to Native Americans seemed to be experienced differently than the degradation white Americans were experiencing over the course of modernization. However, Eastman presumably attempted to connect these issues by providing the reasons why Native Americans were in a ruined condition. According to Eastman, materialism and abandoning freedom for concentrated life were the major causes of the problems for all modern peoples. Eastman observed that the recent ruined condition of civilization stemmed from excesses of wealth and a dense population. He stressed that people’s loss of connection with their nature would significantly prevent the further development of civilization as a whole. “[D]eprived of close contact and intimacy with nature,” he wrote, men and women would have “many

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 43-44.

deaf ears and blind eyes,” thus preventing them from becoming self-sufficient.<sup>69</sup> He diagnosed social ills that modern society suffered by relating them to the degradations that American Indians experienced, and then presented Indianness as a cure.

He particularly showed sympathy for the condition of children in civilization. It seemed that modern society, which pursued material comfort, was doing no good for them. Eastman explained: “White boys and girls can go through their entire lives without having their senses whetted to aid them in observation. They grow up artificially, they are dependent rather than reliant.”<sup>70</sup> Eastman believed that “primitive” Indianness would rescue children from such an effeminate state. “In the great laboratory of nature there are endless secrets yet to be discovered,” Eastman noted, suggesting that the Indian education in nature would nurture in children what modern society did not offer.<sup>71</sup> Particularly, he considered individuality and initiative as being more successfully developed in an Indian’s outdoor life.<sup>72</sup> Eastman thus evoked a common anxiety that his white audiences shared and then urged them to use Indian guides back into nature and to learn from Indian teachings.

His attempt can be seen in the summer camp activities he organized for children. In *Indian Scout Talks*, he called out to white readers, especially to boys, to get back in nature and “keep nature’s laws, develop a sound, wholesome body, and maintain an alert and critical mind.”<sup>73</sup> His camp, which was an “absolutely authentic, present[ation] [of] a remarkable illusion of aboriginal life,” was designed to help boys recover their

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<sup>69</sup> Charles A. Eastman, *Indian Scout Talks: A Guide for Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1914), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Charles A. Eastman, “Training American Girls as Indian,” *Boston Sunday Post*, 20 June 1915.

<sup>71</sup> Eastman, *Indian Scout Talks*, 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>73</sup> Eastman, *Indian Scout Talks*, 6. For the pictures of Eastman’s camp, see Figure 6, 7, and 8 in the appendix.

“masculine spirit.”<sup>74</sup> It suggested that, by participating in camp activities, they grew to “be true in thought, free in action, and clean in body, mind, and spirit.”<sup>75</sup> By learning “[t]he language of footprints and of gestures, Indian signals, making fire with rubbing sticks, building shelters, open air cookery, and many other secrets of the red man are imparted on the forest trails,” he wrote, the white children will “find himself, and [be] conscious of his relation to all life.”<sup>76</sup> In nature, “he develops a wholesome vigorous body and mind, to which all exertion seems play, rather than painful toil for possession’s sake.”<sup>77</sup> Offering “open-air education, patterned largely upon [his] own early training,” he suggested that white children would be able to regain “[t]he desire to be a man—the native spirit of the explorer and the hero.”<sup>78</sup>

Although Eastman did not write extensively about the heroic virtues of American Indian women, he acknowledged woman’s importance in creating a noble Indian community as well. Eastman thus stressed woman’s education in nature as equally indispensable.<sup>79</sup> As a “moral salvation of race,” women had an essential role as a “spiritual teacher of the child, as well as its tender nurse” in society. For Eastman, woman’s becoming a mother and nurturing children was “the real and most important business of her existence.”<sup>80</sup> “Before the Indian child is born the mother is instilling into it the love of Deity,” Eastman expressed his belief in the mother passing her faith to her child, and continued: “In the silence and the natural poetry of the glen or woods she

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<sup>74</sup> “OHIYESA (the Winners)—A Camp For Boys” (promotional brochure, 1917) Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Jones Library Special Collections, folder: Charles A. Eastman, JLSC, 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5; Eastman, *Indian Scout Talks*, 189.

<sup>77</sup> Eastman, *Indian Scout Talks*, 189.

<sup>78</sup> Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 193; Eastman, *Indian Scout Talks*, 7.

<sup>79</sup> Eastman, *Indian To-day*, 88-89.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

is feeling ever the brotherhood of creation. She lives alone in an environment of pure Nature, and she gives this love to the child to come.”<sup>81</sup> Partly because of his belief in woman’s vital role as a spiritual teacher to children, he prioritized organizing a summer camp for girls.<sup>82</sup> Eastman carefully designed the summer camp for girls to instruct white girls to be a vital contributor for saving civilization from its ruined state. He thus arranged his camp for white girls to engage in many activities that were the same as those of boys, but with an added emphasis on woman’s domestic roles.<sup>83</sup>

By participating in his camp, learning “Indian signaling, sign language, and fire-making” for example, girls were nurtured in skills necessary to life in modern society. Learning Indian methods, the article of *Boston Sunday Post* reported, girls would be able to “tell the directions when lost on a city street by examining the leaves of the first shade tree,” “make a baby stop crying at night,” or “cook a porterhouse steak without a skillet.”<sup>84</sup> Through that, Eastman made sure that girls would develop a strong mindset that had “no room for the clash of personalities, for undue self-consciousness, or unhealthy fancies” that prevented them from becoming the ideal mother.<sup>85</sup> Eastman taught white girls because he believed that when they became mothers later they could raise their children in the Indian method. Indians were, therefore, nurturing future American citizens.<sup>86</sup> Through educating girls, Eastman attempted to bring about “the

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<sup>81</sup> “The Indian as a Psychic,” *New York Herald*, April 26, 1914.

<sup>82</sup> Eastman organized the camp for girls first probably because Eastman’s eldest children were daughters – Dora Winona, Irene Taluta, and Virginia – and they could assist him in running the summer camp as well. With the success of the girl’s camp, Eastman started to call for boy’s participation in his camp the following year in 1916. He named the camp for girls Camp Oahe, and Camp Ohiyesa for the boys’ camp. For more details about how Eastman conducted his camp, see Wilson, *Ohiyesa*, 151-152.

<sup>83</sup> “School of the Woods” (promotional brochure, 1915) Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. JLSC.

<sup>84</sup> “Training American Girls as Indian,” *Boston Sunday Post*, 20 June 1915.

<sup>85</sup> “School of the Woods.” Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. JLSC.

<sup>86</sup> “Training American Girls as Indian,” *Boston Sunday Post*, 20 June 1915.



moral salvation of race” and leaving this responsibility to Indian women. They, not just white girls, could save civilization.<sup>87</sup> By showing woman’s significant role in helping the progress of the civilization as a mother figure, Eastman suggested Indianness would reaffirm the ideal gender roles for the further development of the nation.

By manipulating the Indianness of the past and teaching Indianness to white children, Eastman tried to visualize Indian contributions to the further progress of civilization. Eastman asserted passionately that “[w]e want the best in two races and civilizations in exchange for what we have lost.”<sup>88</sup> As a “civilized” Indian, he recognized his embrace of civilization that had brought him personal success. He knew that Indians would eventually need to adopt the culture of the more powerful whites to live as citizens in the United States. Yet Eastman also made sure his audience understood that Indians were “transforming but they were hardly disappearing.”<sup>89</sup> In fact, he argued that Indians had experienced the same problems as whites in the face of civilization, and their example could lead all back to a healthier state of mind and body. Indian virtues and training could recover moral and physical vitality, thus making Indians more than simply disappearing people. They held part of a joint solution that would rescue themselves and white Americans. In the form of free, masculine heroes and nurturing Indian women of the past, Indians would improve the conditions of society. Eastman therefore envisaged the future as an “Indianized” America, where his Indian would live in the thoughts of the nation, an ideal for the nation’s unified spiritual progress.

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<sup>87</sup> Eastman, *Indian To-day*, 88-89.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>89</sup> Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher*, 100.

#### IV. Conclusion

In the last passage of *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, Eastman revealed his vision for the further development of America as well as his own personal identity: “I am an Indian; and while I have learned much from civilization, for which I am grateful, I have never lost my Indian sense of right and justice. I am for development and progress along social and spiritual lines, rather than those of commerce, nationalism, or material efficiency. Nevertheless, so long as I live, I am an American.”<sup>90</sup> As his often-quoted narrative suggests, Eastman demonstrated that his embrace of “mainstream American life was not a simple choice between two evils – assimilation or extinction.”<sup>91</sup> Rather, Eastman consciously constructed himself as a model Indian and American, complicating this binary. He, exhibiting himself as the “first American” whose virtues were worthy of adoption by other Americans. He thus brought his Indianness to the center of American civilization.

Eastman was not the only American Indian in this era to perform and promote Indianness toward wider American audiences. As the establishment of SAI in 1911 suggests, there was an increasing number of American Indian intellectuals, including Arthur C. Parker, Carlos Montezuma, Gertrude Bonnin, or Angel De Cora, who began asserting the necessity of American Indian presence in discussing issues that concern American Indians, and by and large, America as a nation. They, as part of a Pan-Indian movement, attempted to bring individual and separate groups of American Indians to cooperate as an “Indian race,” and envisioned universal solutions for the problems that concerned American Indians overall. Most notably, in promoting citizenship for American Indians as Eastman did, they positively manipulated their expected

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<sup>90</sup> Eastman, *From the Deep Woods*, 195.

<sup>91</sup> Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher*, 6.

Indianness to potentially advocate for citizenship.

In 1917, a Seneca intellectual and editor, Arthur C. Parker, ran an article singling out Eastman in *American Indian Magazine*, the quarterly journal of SAI: “Dr. Eastman through all his books gives us a brand of philosophy that while critical is yet refreshing because it is so evidently true. As a great Sioux, history will write him down as a great American and a true philosopher.”<sup>92</sup> Although his career as a writer was relatively short, Eastman, utilizing his cross-cultural skills, strenuously worked to publicize his vision for American progress. As Parker’s comments on Eastman suggests, Eastman’s overly optimistic but realistic views of American Indians and white American civilization seemed to be appreciated by other SAI members. The Indianness that Eastman attempted to promote was maybe an “idealized, genetic, detribalized” image of American Indians that emerged from his knowledge of Dakota culture.<sup>93</sup> Through playing such a distorted representation, however, Eastman could attract a non-Indian audience and generate an increased understanding of issues that concerned American Indians and Americans both. More significantly, perhaps he contributed to opening a future path for American Indian citizenship. The enactment of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 was an achievement that Eastman hoped to realize. Eastman manipulated his Indianness not only to reimagine his own Indian identity, but also to reimagine a new “American” future led by the “first Americans.”

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<sup>92</sup> Arthur C. Parker, ed., “Men and Women Whose Lives Count for the Red Man’s Cause,” *American Indian Magazine* 5, no. 4 (Winter 1917): 270; Martinez, *Dakota Philosopher*, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Maddox, *Citizen Indians*, 134; Tova Cooper, “On Autobiography, Boy Scouts and Citizenship: Revisiting Charles Eastman’s *Deep Woods*,” *The Arizona Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (Winter 2009): 9.

## Chapter 2

### Indigenizing America through Music: Francis La Flesche Plays “Civilized” Indian to Talk Back to “Civilization”

#### I. Introduction

In the obituary of the Omaha ethnologist Francis La Flesche, Hartley B. Alexander, a philosopher and anthropologist at Scripps College praised La Flesche’s lifetime of work on Omaha and Osage Indians for “possess[ing] an especial value, not only as being the work of a racially native American, but also [...] the mind of the observer [...] gifted with an acuteness of understanding and a gift of imaginative sympathy which made him a leader among our interpreters of Indian thinking.”<sup>1</sup> Alexander’s description of La Flesche as “a leader among our interpreters of Indian thinking” seems supported by La Flesche’s self-portrait, which showed him wearing a buffalo robe over his naked chest (Appendix, Fig. 9). Alexander presumably wanted to enhance for readers La Flesche’s “primitive” Indianness, demonstrating how he was a “racially native American” who could tell authentic information about American Indian cultures.

Dead, La Flesche obviously could not control his own representation in his obituary. As a matter of fact, La Flesche’s obituary portrait was deliberately retouched to fit Alexander’s expectations about American Indians.<sup>2</sup> In the original picture, La Flesche had in fact posed in a suit with a bow tie, wearing a buffalo robe over his white dress shirt (Appendix, Fig. 10). Although Alexander erased the clothes indicative of Euro-

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<sup>1</sup> Hartley B. Alexander, “Francis La Flesche,” *American Anthropologist* New Series, 35, no. 2 (April- June 1933): 330.

<sup>2</sup> Garrick A. Bailey ed., *The Osage and the Invisible World: From the Works of Francis La Flesche* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 14; Sherry L. Smith, “Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters,” *American Indian Quarterly* 25, no.4 (Fall 2001): 598.

American civilization, La Flesche had worn “civilized” clothes underneath the buffalo robe, showing his whiteness and Indianness at the same time. The original portrait thus represents La Flesche’s ability not only to cross imaginary cultural boundaries between Euro-Americans and American Indians but also to complicate them. Furthermore, by wearing Indianness over whiteness, La Flesche’s picture demonstrates his ability to indigenize Euro-America while it also attempted to make him fit into the Euro-Americans’ expectation about American Indians at the turn of the twentieth century.

La Flesche’s ability to cross imaginary boundaries is largely the result of his background as a son of Omaha chief, who encouraged fellow Indians to adapt to Euro-American way of life as necessary for their survival. As an Omaha boy, La Flesche, spoke the Omaha language at home and attended Omaha rituals, and was planning to become a buffalo hunter.<sup>3</sup> However, in response to the changes of Omaha life, La Flesche followed his father’s wishes and went to the Presbyterian mission school to learn “English, Christianity, and the moral superiority of a clean life of honest labor.”<sup>4</sup> His bilingual skills of speaking and writing in both Omaha and English probably helped him to get a government job after his mission school education. In 1881 La Flesche was appointed as a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington DC, where he also studied and obtained a law degree at National University in 1893.<sup>5</sup> By then he was in close association with an American woman ethnologist named Alice C. Fletcher whose researches included Omaha Indians, and eventually they collaborated

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<sup>3</sup> Jarold Ramsey, “Francis LaFlesche’s ‘The Song of Flying Crow’ and the Limits of Ethnography,” *boundary 2* 19, no.3 (Autumn 1992): 181; Norma Kidd Green, *Iron Eye’s Family: The Children of Joseph LaFlesche* (Lincoln: Johnson Publishing Co., 1969), 196; Smith, “Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters,” 583.

<sup>4</sup> K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light: The Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 190.

together to publish *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* (1893) and *The Omaha Tribe* (1911). Whether or not their relationship helped him to get a position at the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1910, La Flesche utilized the access and knowledge he had as a son of an Omaha chief, and he eventually won distinction as one of the first American Indian ethnologists.<sup>6</sup> As a result of following his father's belief in civilization, La Flesche could interpret traditional and evolving Omaha culture and was also familiar with Euro-American lifestyles. As such a cross-cultural figure La Flesche is perhaps best represented by his funeral services that "included Omaha traditional feast and Masonic services."<sup>7</sup>

This background of learning and his seemingly preference for "white" ways over the traditional life of Omaha Indians, however, led some observers to claim that La Flesche was a passive "assimilationist" or was heavily injured by living between two worlds. Michael Coleman, for example, in his analysis of La Flesche's school life writes that "I was disappointed in La Flesche the pupil. He should have resisted the missionary contempt for the Omaha culture characteristic of these decades of assimilationist education."<sup>8</sup> The question here is not whether La Flesche could really challenge the education that missionaries imposed. Yet by considering La Flesche merely a passive receiver of an assimilationist education, Coleman misses the point that La Flesche, as a mature writer, skillfully played with the notion of civilization. In his autobiography of the life at the boarding school, *The Middle Five*, he "resisted" notions of Euro-American superiority. Sherry L. Smith, drawing from the comparison between La Flesche's

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 598.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993), ix, quoted in Ernest Stromberg ed., *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 101.

relationship to his Omaha family and his Euro-American acquaintances, concluded that La Flesche chose to live among white Americans to insist on the “essential humanity” of American Indians and the “value and complexities of their cultures” and to fight against assumptions about American Indian inferiority and Euro-American superiority.<sup>9</sup> Smith successfully reveals La Flesche’s strategy to communicate with mainstream Americans. However, by observing that La Flesche was “a man who was severely wounded by the difficulties inherent in living between two worlds,” Smith seems to make La Flesche the tragic victim of colonialism, which forced him to choose “white” ways and sever his relationship with his family.<sup>10</sup>

Rather than reducing La Flesche as a pro-assimilationist or a passive victim of colonialism, recent critics have reevaluated the rhetoric La Flesche used in his writings and sees him as one of the Native intellectuals who practiced a “rhetoric of survivance.” For example, Ernest Stromberg considers La Flesche a figure who actively negotiated the imaginary border between Euro-Americans and American Indians, embroidering his criticism in his irony, but without “offending and alienating a mainly white audience.”<sup>11</sup> Amelia V. Katanski also shows how La Flesche represented syncretic repertoires of identities that the Omaha schoolboys practiced in accordance to the situation and contexts they were in – at school and at home. In so doing, she reassesses La Flesche as a rhetorician who flexibly moves across the border, creating a middle ground in the boarding school narrative that was supposed to tell about Omaha children’s successful assimilation.<sup>12</sup> By revealing the rhetoric La Flesche employed in *The Middle Five*, both

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<sup>9</sup> Smith, “Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters,” 598.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 582.

<sup>11</sup> Stromberg, *Rhetoric of Survivance*, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Amelia V. Katanski, “Francis La Flesche and Zitkala-Sa Write the Middle Ground and the Educators Respond Repertoires of Representation in Boarding-School-Era Autobiography,” in *Learning to Write Indian: The Boarding-School Experience and American Indian Literature*

Stromberg and Katanski reconstruct La Flesche as a figure who actively countered Euro-American imposition of what it meant to be an Indian, reclaiming his version of Indianness through an autobiography in English that demonstrated a way to survive and resist in mainstream American society.

La Flesche's works, as one of the first American Indian ethnologist in his generation, were not limited to his boarding school narrative. Throughout his lifetime, he strenuously engaged in research on Omaha and Osage Indians, and especially collaborated with American composers who sought a new sound and vocabulary for American national music. Following the current reevaluation of La Flesche, this chapter thus revisits his writings in relation to his personal life and his career as an ethnologist, and delineates him as an active agent in complicating the cultural border between American Indians and Euro-Americans. I show the ways La Flesche crafted Indianness in response to dominant expectations of American Indians at the turn of the twentieth century, and argue that La Flesche played a "civilized" Indian to talk back to the majority, linking American Indians and mainstream Americans with a common humanity, and subtly challenging Euro-American "superiority." Furthermore, he demonstrated what contributions American Indians could make to American society. This chapter will especially highlight his contributions in the field of American music, in which La Flesche played with his collaborator's craving for "authenticity" and situated his Indians as a vital component of "American-ness." By providing American composers access to his knowledge and "authenticity" as an Indian ethnologist, La Flesche attempted to indigenize American music, thus placing American Indians at the center of American identity.

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(Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 95-113.



As decolonizing methodologies have received increasing attention, more studies now examine American Indian autonomy in their cultural productions, negotiating various forms of sovereignty in response to the world that has been changing since the era of colonial contact.<sup>13</sup> However, few have argued that these intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century were more than just culturally sovereign, but were also indigenizing American culture.<sup>14</sup> This study of La Flesche's appropriation of his Indianness and his attempt to situate his Indianness in music will reveal La Flesche's vital role in complicating the dominant perspective about American Indians and American music at the turn of the twentieth century.

## II. Playing "Civilized" Indian to Talk Back to Civilization

In order to understand La Flesche's ability to complicate the supposed cultural boundary, it is first necessary to learn how he grew up as an Omaha youth. La Flesche was born in 1857 on an Omaha reservation located in northern Nebraska, as the son of mixed-blood father Joseph La Flesche (E-sta-ma-za) and his Omaha wife, Ta-in-ne.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Decolonization is the way to question the "inevitability" of colonial authority over colonized people, and sees colonized people's agency in complicating the imperial perspective of colonizers. Linda Tuhiwai Smith is one of the pioneers on this subject. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999). For detailed explanations of various forms of American Indian sovereignty, see Steven Crum, "Native American Forms of Sovereignty: Political, Cultural, and Visual Sovereignty" (Presentation, 2013 Doshisha American Studies Summer Seminar, Doshisha University, Kyoto, July 27-31, 2013); Scott Lyons, "Rhetorical Sovereignty: What Do American Indians Want from Writing?" *College Composition and Communication* 51, no.3 (February 2000): 447-468.

<sup>14</sup> One of the important works that talks about the "indigenization" of Euro-America is Craig S. Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> Joseph La Flesche or E-sta-ma-za had a French father and Ponca mother, but he was later adopted by Omaha chief Big Elk, and spent most of his life as an Omaha. Francis La Flesche's mother, Ta-in-ne was the second wife of Joseph, and Sherry Smith observes that Joseph started to act distant from Ta-in-ne and their children after his conversion to Christianity because missionaries were against his polygamy. Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and World of Letters," 583.

La Flesche was born when Omaha Indians were gradually ceding their hunting grounds to the U.S. government, and beginning to adapt to white American ways of living.<sup>16</sup> His father, Joseph who later became a chief among the Omaha Indians, conformed to white civilization by “favor[ing] education, desir[ing] to adopt the customs of whites, and go[ing] to farming.”<sup>17</sup> Maintaining old ways, Joseph believed, the Omaha Indians would eventually be exterminated.<sup>18</sup> While some Omaha resisted his progressive idea, Joseph led half of his people to convert to Christianity, and build a new village with frame houses instead of earth lodges. They also plowed fenced fields instead of hunting buffaloes, and sent their children to the Omaha Reservation School run by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>19</sup> La Flesche entered this mission school when he reached five or six, and studied English and the Bible among other Omaha children to learn Euro-American ways of lives. It was also where he developed his skills to play with expectations about Indians, and he learned the rhetoric to survive and resist Euro-American dominance.

Living at the turn of the twentieth century and learning at the boarding school, La Flesche was aware of the stereotypes that mainstream Americans constructed about American Indians. Mainstream Americans thought that Indians were left with only two choices for the future: extinction or assimilation. The Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890 seemed to represent the possibility of extinction as the last of military conquest of American Indians. The Dawes Act of 1887 and the boarding schools built for Native

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<sup>16</sup> Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (1911; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 2: 622-625.

<sup>17</sup> “E-sta-ma-za, or Joseph LaFlesche” in Fannie Reed Giffen, *Oo-Mah-Ha Ta-Wa-Tha (Omaha City) 1858-1898* (Lincoln: Press of F.B. Festner, Omaha, 1898), 30.

<sup>18</sup> According to Giffen, Joseph La Flesche often said: “It is either civilization or extermination,” and the future existence of Omaha Indians depended on the choice. Joseph chose “civilization.” *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>19</sup> Smith, “Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters,” 583.

children, on the other hand, suggested possible assimilation, by Americanizing Indians under the instruction of the supposedly more “superior” whites.<sup>20</sup> Euro-Americans assumed Indians were “inferior” to white civilization, and that in the face of “superior” whites, Indians were doomed to vanish, whether through defeat or assimilation.

The turn of the twentieth century was also when mainstream Americans romanticized the Indian. Living in a rapidly modernizing society, Euro-Americans began idealizing Indianness as a “primitive” other who could provide “authentic reality” to their overcivilized urban lives.<sup>21</sup> A series of photographs taken by Edward Curtis or oil paintings by George Catlin, for example, portrayed those “vanishing” Indians in a fixed posture, beautifully staged to preserve “exotic” Indianness that was seemingly “vanishing” in the face of modernity.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, anthropologists like Alice Fletcher, Francis Densmore, and George Grinnell sought to collect these “raw” materials of American Indian cultures before they were gone. Fletcher, for example, collaborated with La Flesche and published an encyclopedic account of the culture and history of the Omaha Indians. Densmore, an ethnomusicologist, collected numbers of cylinder recordings of American Indians including American Indians of the Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Midwest and Southeast. Grinnell focused on the Plains Indians, including Blackfeet and Cheyenne Indians. While actual American Indians were expected to choose either the path of assimilation or extinction, these imaginary American Indians as a romantic representation of people’s bygone Western legacy, on the other hand,

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<sup>20</sup> John W. Troutman, *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879-1934* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 7; Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984; 2001), 210.

<sup>21</sup> Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 74; T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, *Shades of Hiawatha: Staging Indians, Making Americans, 1880-1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 13-16.

blossomed and captivated the minds of mainstream Americans at the turn of the twentieth century.

Having grown up in such a context, La Flesche first presented himself to mainstream audiences as a “civilized” Indian who successfully conformed to Euro-American ways of life because he knew the necessity of convincing his readers that his opinions were trustworthy. Believing that every human being, regardless of race, has a share in common human nature, he dedicated his autobiography to “the Universal Boy.”<sup>23</sup> However, to claim a common human nature, he knew that Indians needed to change their appearance to get a fair judgment from mainstream audiences. In his autobiography, La Flesche clearly states that “The paint, feathers, robes, and other articles that make up the dress of the Indian, are the marks of savagery to the European, and he who wears them [...] finds it difficult to lay claim to a share in common human nature.” He pointed out that American Indians’ different and “exotic” appearance in fact served as the marker of “savagery” and “inferiority.”<sup>24</sup> La Flesche thus suggests that wearing a school uniform would help Indian boys “to be judged, as are other boys, by what they say and do.”<sup>25</sup> As La Flesche indicated, wearing a school uniform did not necessarily change the character of American Indians, but disguised them with a “civilized” mask. La Flesche thought that through something as simple as school uniforms American Indians could establish their credibility to talk back by demonstrating their equality with the majority. In a picture inserted in *The Omaha Tribe*, he poses in a dark suit, white shirt with a tie and a pocket watch chain looped over his

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<sup>23</sup> Francis La Flesche, *The Middle Five: Indian Schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe* (1900; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), v.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

vest.<sup>26</sup> With his mustache and his hair neatly parted on the side, La Flesche's photo attracts his viewers with his gentility and civility as an upper middle-class gentleman (Appendix, Fig. 11). It appeared his conversion to Euro-American civilization was thus a success.

Yet wearing the school uniform or wearing "civilized" classy suits was not the only mask that La Flesche put on. He used school uniforms as a metaphor of the white man's education—knowledge and skills that children gain from the boarding school education. As La Flesche later claimed, getting a white man's education was a way for American Indians to have "skilled farmers, mechanics, doctors, and lawyers, as well as preachers, for the development of [Indians]."<sup>27</sup> By gaining skills and knowledge of mainstream America, La Flesche believed that American Indians would be able to stand equally with other races. La Flesche's boarding school education in fact led him to become one of the first American Indian ethnologists, a career which he later used to reclaim his authority over Indianness.

La Flesche did not begin his career as an ethnologist until he met Alice C. Fletcher, a white woman ethnologist and his mother by adoption. He met Fletcher while accompanying the famous lecture tour of Ponca chief Standing Bear in 1879-1880 as an interpreter.<sup>28</sup> This encounter with Fletcher possibly opened his career in Washington DC. In 1881 he was appointed to work in the Office of Indian Affairs and in 1910 he was transferred to the Bureau of American Ethnology.<sup>29</sup> He eventually served as a

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<sup>26</sup> Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe* (1911; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 1:31.

<sup>27</sup> Francis La Flesche to Richard Henry Pratt. June 29, 1887. Richard Henry Pratt papers. 1862-1972. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven, CT.

<sup>28</sup> Bailey, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> LaFlesche developed both a professional and personal relationship with Fletcher. He collaborated with her in ethnographic works, lived in Washington DC with her, and eventually

president of the Anthropological Society of Washington in 1922-23.

Not surprisingly, La Flesche's professional background and his strategic performance satisfied his white readers. Richard Henry Pratt, a founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School applauded La Flesche in his school paper, *Red Man and Helper*, where he reviewed La Flesche's autobiography as a celebratory narrative of American Indian assimilation. Pratt justified his philosophy by quoting a scene where a "crippled old woman of about seventy or eighty years" brought her "miserable, naked, little" grandson to school. The story, Pratt thought, showed how Indians should hand in their young to Euro-Americans since "old, withered, traditional" Indians can no longer take care of their children.<sup>30</sup> Through this narrative, Pratt confirmed his linear understanding about "the progress" of Indians, and celebrated La Flesche for seemingly agreeing with this belief. Jessie Cook, a writer of *The Outlook* magazine also celebrated La Flesche's book, claiming his life "reads like a romance."<sup>31</sup> She listed La Flesche's accomplishment such as becoming "a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science" and "render[ing] efficient service to the Royal Museum of Berlin, Germany, and [...being] an active member of societies engaged in researches among the aborigines of our country," and praised La Flesche as an outstanding Indian.<sup>32</sup> Like Pratt, Cook saw La Flesche as an ideal figure who had successfully moved forward in American society.

As Katanski observed, however, a more cautious reading of La Flesche's text might

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was adopted as her son.

<sup>30</sup> La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, 131-132; Katanski, *Learning to Write Indian*, 101.

<sup>31</sup> Jessie W. Cook, "The Representative Indian." *The Outlook* 65, no.1 (May 5, 1900), 82; Katanski, *Learning to Write Indian*, 95.

<sup>32</sup> Cook termed LaFlesche a "representative" Indian. By using the word "representative," Cook seems to indicate that LaFlesche was a leading figure among American Indians rather than an "average" Indian, which the word "representative" also means. Cook, "The Representative Indian," 82; Katanski, *Learning to Write Indian*, 95.

have disturbed Pratt, because La Flesche did not believe in complete assimilation.<sup>33</sup> La Flesche saw his boarding school education is a necessary tool for “survival,” but he was suspicious about the supposed superiority of Euro-American civilization. In his autobiography, La Flesche emphasizes the fact that Omaha boys were still Omaha even after they were educated, and the white man’s education did not successfully devalue their Omaha culture. During their school life, they talked in the forbidden Omaha language when their teachers were not around, and during bedtime they enjoyed stories passed down as Omaha oral traditions.<sup>34</sup> La Flesche also inserted a scene of how his classmates understood a Bible story by referring to their oral traditions.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, when La Flesche got a splinter in his toe, the woman whom La Flesche called Aunt laughed at the medical treatment of the school nurse, since all the treatment that he received was to put a bit of pig-fat and bandage on his toe for about four days without changing the bandage. In his autobiography, La Flesche makes Aunt exclaim “Bah! It’s nasty!,” and “thr[owing] the pig-fat away as she could,” and with “the shouts of laughter” saying: “Oh! This is funny! This is funny! [...] If this white woman takes as much care of the other children as she has of you,—I’m sorry for them. No children of mine should be placed under her care,—if I had any.”<sup>36</sup> Inserting this story, La Flesche clearly ridicules Euro-American civilization’s supposedly “superiority” over American Indians. Likewise, throughout his autobiography, La Flesche pointed out the absurdity of Euro-American civilization, critiquing the hypocrisy of Euro-American educators while he showed his pride as Omaha Indian.

By fabricating himself with his accomplishments, La Flesche talked back. La

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<sup>33</sup> Katanski, *Learning to Write Indian*, 99.

<sup>34</sup> La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, 29-31.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-64.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

Flesche's criticism first went to the prejudices that white Americans had about American Indians. He countered the mainstream idea that underestimated American Indians' "capab[ility] of thinking about themselves, [or] having sentiments like other human beings," and the fact that Indians were not "allowed a voice in the management of their personal affairs."<sup>37</sup> He especially noted the lack of understanding about the linguistic differences between Indian languages and English as a factor of negative perception about Indians.<sup>38</sup> He wrote in his autobiography that "no native American can ever cease to regret that utterances of his father have been constantly belittled when put into English, that their thoughts have frequently been travestied and their native dignity obscured."<sup>39</sup> He pointed out "the myths, the rituals, and the legends of [American Indians]" appear as "childish or foolish," losing "both its spirit and its form" when translated in English.<sup>40</sup> At the boarding school, Indian students were forbidden to speak in their native language, and they were whipped if they broke the rule. Therefore, as La Flesche illustrated, "the new-comer, however socially inclined, was obliged to go about like a little dummy until he had learned to express himself in English."<sup>41</sup>

La Flesche's criticism also went to the hypocrisy of white Americans. In his autobiography, La Flesche recalled one day when his school teacher, Gray-beard, became so vicious toward his student, and La Flesche observes that it was when he "created in [his] heart a hatred [toward white Americans] that was hard to conquer," and that "lasted many, many years."<sup>42</sup> It happened when his new classmate, Joe,

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<sup>37</sup> Francis La Flesche to George Vaux Jr., October 14, 1916. Fletcher and LaFlesche Papers, quoted in Bailey, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Francis La Flesche, *Who was the Medicine Man?* (1904; reprint, Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1905), 4-5.

<sup>39</sup> La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, xv.

<sup>40</sup> La Flesche, *Who was the Medicine Man?*, 4-5.

<sup>41</sup> La Flesche, *The Middle Five*, xvii.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 136, 138.



accidentally struck the teacher with a lump of earth thrown from his broken sling.

Although Joe did not intend to attack his teacher, Gray-beard grabbed him and whipped his little hands until they were swollen and Joe “writhed with pain, turned blue, and lost his breath.”<sup>43</sup> “It was a horrible sight,” La Flesche recalled, describing the scene of Gray-beard, who was supposed to teach Christian virtues to children, losing all his “self-control, gritting his teeth and breathing heavily” and hitting the poor innocent child without any mercy.<sup>44</sup> La Flesche also brings up another earlier scene when Joe’s old grandmother brought him to school. “The scene in the school-room when the naked little boy was first brought there by the old woman rose before me,” La Flesche wrote, “I heard the words of the grandmother as she gave [Joe] to Gray-beard, ‘I beg that he be kindly treated; that is all I ask!’ And she had told [Joe] that the White-chests would be kind to him. [...] I tried to reconcile the act of Gray-beard with the teachings of the Missionaries, but I could not do so from any point of view.”<sup>45</sup> By illustrating this terrible scene of his teacher’s excessive punishment, La Flesche reveals the hypocrisy of his white teacher and shows his disbelief in the superiority of white Americans.

Moreover, La Flesche critiqued mainstream Americans’ perception of Indians as a fixed image of the past. By becoming an ethnographer, he stepped in the conflicted field of ethnography, a product of colonialism where the vast majority of researchers were Europeans who collected, documented, filed, and fixed the image of Indians as the exotic “other.”<sup>46</sup> However, unlike other white ethnographers who wrote about American

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Bailey, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, xi. For more on impact of anthropology on constructing the image of American Indians, see Beatrice Medicine, “Anthropologists as the Indian’s Image-Maker” in *Learning to Be an Anthropologist & Remaining “Native,”* eds. Beatrice Medicine and Sue-Ellen Jacobs (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 289-294.

Indians as the “other,” La Flesche documented and wrote about the “self.”<sup>47</sup> La Flesche worked at the Smithsonian Institution, the national center of America’s ethnographic curiosity toward the American Indian “other” and as an ethnologist he also documented an enormous number of indigenous cultural artifacts including Omaha and Osage tribal rituals and songs.<sup>48</sup>

While working as an ethnologist which risked fixating the image of Indians as an “exotic” other, as an Omaha Indian himself, he knew from his experiences that American Indian life was rapidly changing, and they in fact needed to change to survive. In his published address entitled *Who was a Medicine Man?*, he addressed the present condition of American Indians somewhat pessimistically, playing upon his white audience’s expectations about “vanishing” Indian culture. “[M]any of the rites and ceremonies that kept alive [true religious ideas...] are being forgotten in the changes that are rapidly taking place in the life of the present generation,” La Flesche lamented, and he could never fully grasp the true meaning of the tribal rituals and ceremonies since they were already transforming as their encountered Euro-American civilization.<sup>49</sup> However, La Flesche simultaneously did not believe the complete extinction of American Indians’ religious ideas. Instead, he strongly predicted the continuity of elements of those ideas would be kept alive in a modern setting. He continued: “[At present day,] [t]he youths who might have carried on these teachings and perhaps further developed them, are accommodating their lives to new conditions and taking up the avocations of the race dominant in the land.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Smith, “Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters,” 581.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald Walcott, “Francis LaFlesche: American Indian Scholar,” Reproduced from *Folklife Center News* 4, no.1 (January 1981): 1, 10-11, accessed on May 1, 2014, <http://memory.loc.gov:8081/ammem/omhhtml/omhfcn1.html>.

<sup>49</sup> LaFlesche, *Who was the Medicine Man?*, 3.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

While “[t]he true religious ideas of the Indian will [thus] never be fully comprehended” because of adaptations, La Flesche instead pointed out that American Indians were not an unchanging object. They were capable of adjusting to new circumstances, refining their traditions in accordance with the conditions rapidly changing before them. Speaking before the statue of “the Medicine Man” by Cyrus Edwin Dallin, La Flesche stated: “The statue at once brings back vividly to my mind the scenes of my early youth, scenes that I shall never again see in their reality. This reopening of the past to me would never have been possible, had not your artist risen above the distorting influence of the prejudice one race is apt to feel toward another and been gifted with imagination to discern truth which underlies a strange exterior.”<sup>51</sup> While La Flesche praised the sculptor’s ability to comprehend “the character of the true Medicine Man,” he simultaneously criticized the dominant prejudice about American Indians as a static image of the past.

As a “civilized” Indian who lived in Washington DC in the early twentieth century, Francis La Flesche surely associated with some other so-called “progressive” Indians who also demonstrated the Indians’ capability of adapting to mainstream society and claim their citizenship. Therefore, it would not be so surprising that La Flesche played “civilized” Indian to show his ability to adjust to a new set of circumstances and thereby gained the means to critique preexisting stereotypes about American Indians. However, it seems that La Flesche wanted more from his performance. By playing “civilized” Indian, and taking Indian music as his venue, La Flesche wanted to promote American Indian contributions to American society.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

### III. “They must be Taught Music”

In his 1900 autobiography *The Middle Five*, La Flesche recalls a day when government inspectors visited the mission school he attended. They wanted to know what the Omaha children had learned, and one of them asked the children to sing an Indian song.<sup>52</sup> La Flesche depicted the scene like this:

There was some hesitancy, but suddenly a loud clear voice close to me broke into a Victory song; before a bar was sung another voice took up the song from the beginning, as is the custom among the Indians, then the whole school fell in, and we made the room ring. We understood the song, and knew the emotion of which it was the expression. We felt, as we sang, the patriotic thrill of a victorious people who had vanquished their enemies; but the men shook their heads, and one of them said, “That’s savage, that’s savage! They must be taught music.”<sup>53</sup>

Starting then, the boarding school teachers began teaching Omaha children Western songs every afternoon, and La Flesche stated with a sense of irony that “[w]e [...] enjoyed singing them *almost* as well as our own native melodies.”<sup>54</sup>

Then only a student, La Flesche could not do anything but learn Western songs. Later as an ethnologist, “civilized” La Flesche had a means to talk back, and demonstrate the contributions American Indians could make to American society.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, “savage” American Indian songs captured the attention of American classical music composers eagerly seeking an American musical personality. Antonin Dvořák, a Bohemian nationalist composer who came to the United States to work as the director of the National Conservatory of Music from 1892 to 1896 triggered this development of so-called “Americanism” in art music,

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<sup>52</sup> LaFlesche, *The Middle Five*, 100.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. [emphasis mine.]

the search for an American musical identity apart from predominantly European influences.<sup>55</sup> During his stay, Dvořák learned “compositions of Gottschalk and Stephen Foster and black and native American folk music,” and claimed that the American national character would come from home, “whether the inspiration for the coming folksongs of America is derived from the negro melodies, the songs of the creoles, the red man’s chant, or the plaintive ditties of the homesick German or Norwegian. Undoubtedly the germs for the best of music lie hidden among all the races that are commingled in this great country.”<sup>56</sup> Inspired by Dvořák, American composers began to look into African American and American Indian melodies, along with folk music of other ethnicities in the United States to find a new vocabulary and sound for American music. Among these composers, several so-called Indianist composers, like Arthur Farwell and Charles Wakefield Cadman, looked into American Indian melodies.<sup>57</sup> During the first two decades of the twentieth century, hundreds of Indian-themed “parlor songs [...] operas, symphonies, and string quartets” were written as a way to explore musical “American-ness.”<sup>58</sup>

Farwell founded the Wa-Wan Press in 1901 to provide a venue for young composers and himself to publish their Indian-inspired compositions. He also held a series of lecture-recitals to talk about the “Music and Myth of the American Indians and Its Relation to American Composers,” and perform his and others’ adaptations. They relied on ethnographic sound recordings and musical transcriptions, including those collected

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<sup>55</sup> Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers’ Search for Identity*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983), 17.

<sup>56</sup> Levy, *Musical Nationalism*, 17; Antonin Dvořák, “Music in America,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 90 (February 1898): 433; Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 195.

<sup>57</sup> Beth E. Levy, *Frontier Figures: American Music and the Mythology of the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 26.

<sup>58</sup> Tara Browner, “‘Breathing the Indian Spirit’: Thoughts on Musical Borrowing and the ‘Indianist’ Movement in American Music,” *American Music* 15, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 273.

by Alice Fletcher and Frances Densmore. His lectures (which he called “Indian Talks”) quickly earned “wide and favorable” reviews from the press all across the country, and Cadman and other Indianist composers soon imitated the format.<sup>59</sup>

Farwell never went to the field to record Indian songs, but he relied instead on *A Study of Omaha Indian Music* book written by Fletcher and La Flesche. La Flesche was therefore in part involved in Farwell’s musical experiments.<sup>60</sup> Yet La Flesche had a particularly close intellectual collaboration with Cadman. Cadman was an American-born composer whose wider experiments in borrowing melodies from a wide range of sources including those of African America, Japan, and Cuba. Cadman, however, mostly worked on composing sentimental songs from Western folklore with romantic overtones about “vanishing” Indians.<sup>61</sup> La Flesche met Cadman during his years at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As many anthropologists did at that time, La Flesche provided ethnographic information he had as an Omaha Indian to assist Cadman to collect Indian melodies and to transcribe musical scores.

Cadman also included La Flesche in his Indian Music Talk. During these talks, Cadman explained the significance of Indian melodies and compared them to the music of great European master composers.<sup>62</sup> “The voice of love, sorrow, and the tragedy was the same with the Indian as the white man,” Cadman claimed, and he showed it by comparing “an Omaha tribal melody with portions of the first movement in [a]

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<sup>59</sup> Farwell held his lecture-recitals in colleges, schools, churches, and clubs across the United States. Michael V. Pisani, *Imagining Native America in Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 177.

<sup>60</sup> Browner, ““Breathing the Indian Spirit””: 274-277.

<sup>61</sup> Some of the Orientalist compositions of Cadman are: *Four American Indian Songs*, *To a Vanishing Race*, *Sayonara*, *Dark Dancers of Mardi Gras*, and *The Belle of Havana* to name a few.

<sup>62</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Cadman Concert Very Enjoyable” LaFlesche Family Papers, Box 1 Series 3, Folder 2. Nebraska State Historical Society Archives (hereafter NSHS), Lincoln, NE.

Beethoven sonata” and another Indian song with Grieg’s “Death of Ase.”<sup>63</sup> A newspaper critic even praised the recital hall’s decorations displaying “many beautiful specimens of Indian basket weaving [...] with other examples of the art and craft of the Indians.”<sup>64</sup> Paul Kennedy Harper, a non-Indian vocalist, sang in the native tongue, with interpretation given by an Indian, who was possibly La Flesche.<sup>65</sup> During his talk Cadman also introduced Omaha tribal songs that La Flesche sang for him.<sup>66</sup>

Acknowledging the success and popularity of Cadman’s Indian Music Talk, La Flesche suggested Cadman compose an opera based on traditional Indian legends.<sup>67</sup> Cadman enthusiastically accepted La Flesche’s idea. They thus soon started to collect Indian melodies for the opera.<sup>68</sup> In the summer of 1909 at an Omaha reservation in Nebraska, La Flesche cooperated with Cadman to select and make recordings of Omaha songs.<sup>69</sup> He also worked on a libretto, collaborating with Nelle Richmond Eberhart, a Nebraska-born lyricist who had worked with Cadman and translated Cadman’s romantic Indianness into a musical text.

The story of their opera, called *Da-O-Ma*, was a romantic love story set in the early years of the nineteenth century, and involves two men in love with a daughter of a prominent man. La Flesche wrote the story based on the “legend of Omahas and the

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<sup>63</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Indian Melody Pleases Crowd.” LaFlesche Family Papers, Box 1 Series 3 Folder 2, NSHS.

<sup>64</sup> “Cadman Concert Very Enjoyable” LaFlesche Family Papers, Box 1 Series 3 Folder 2. NSHS.

<sup>65</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Indian Music To Be Interpreted” *The Pittsburgh Dispatch*. LaFlesche Family Papers, Box 1 Series 3 Folder 2, NSHS.

<sup>66</sup> The songs that LaFlesche sang were noted in the programs of Cadman’s Indian Music Talks often with the notes to thank the contributors. LaFlesche Family Papers, Box 1 Series 3 Folder 3. NSHS.

<sup>67</sup> Harry D. Perison, “The ‘Indian’ Operas of Charles Wakefield Cadman,” *College Music Symposium*, vol.22, no.2 (Fall 1982): 22.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Wakefield Cadman, “The ‘Idealization’ of Indian Music,” *The Musical Quarterly* vol.1, no.3 (July, 1915): 393.

Ponkas,” and Eberhart rearranged the story to conform his words to the music’s meter and accent.<sup>70</sup>

As Cadman stated in a letter, in making an opera, La Flesche had a role as “the furnisher of the story in prose form” while Cadman was the composer and Eberhart was “the furnisher of THE LIBRETTO [sic] or lyric version.”<sup>71</sup> Yet their letters suggest La Flesche did more than just furnish the story. Cadman often commented that ethnographic sound recordings were completely different from his idealized “Indian” composition. However, he still wanted to “make [the opera] as TRUE or ethnological as [I] can so that it will be truly Indian.”<sup>72</sup> While accompanying La Flesche in his research trip to Omaha, Cadman played some of the melodies on the piano and asked La Flesche if he liked the melodies, and if he thought using them for the opera would be appropriate. Among those melodies they collected, Cadman included sixty-five songs for his opera production.<sup>73</sup>

Eberhart also relied on La Flesche’s advice to make the libretto more “Indian.” When La Flesche suggested revisions to the libretto, Eberhart was fascinated. “You have finally done what I’ve been wishing you would do,” she wrote La Flesche, “given Indian expressions. I don’t know where to turn to find them. I wish you would look over all the opera and notice where an Indian expression may be substituted for mine.”<sup>74</sup> Moreover, when Cadman asked a theatrical designer to design a miniature stage and

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<sup>70</sup> Green, *Iron Eye’s Family*, 201.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Cadman to Francis LaFlesche. October 17. LaFlesche Family Papers 1859-1939 (undated), Box 1 Series 1 Folder 2, NSHS.

<sup>72</sup> Cadman to LaFlesche, December 29, 1917. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Series 1 Folder 1. NSHS. [emphasis in original.]

<sup>73</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Music of Indians Called Curiosity: Charles Wakefield Cadman Says Red Skin’s Melodies like Egyptians,” Box 1 Series 3 Folder 5, NSHS.

<sup>74</sup> Eberhart to LaFlesche. April 27, 1910. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Series 1 Folder 1, NSHS.



draw illustrations for costumes and stage settings, Cadman noted a book by La Flesche and Fletcher as essential for providing distinctive Omaha design features.<sup>75</sup>

Despite the enthusiasm of La Flesche and his collaborators, unfortunately *Da-O-Ma* was never produced. The failure of other Indian-themed operas such as Walter McClintock's *Poia*, prevented *Da-O-Ma* from going into production. Cadman submitted the opera to the Boston Opera Company, the Chicago Opera Company, and the Metropolitan Opera Company but all rejected the production.<sup>76</sup> La Flesche seemingly never wanted to give up and in 1922, almost eight years after they received the Metropolitan Opera's rejection, La Flesche enthusiastically wrote to Cadman, when he met the possible producer, Edouard Albion from the Washington National Opera Association: "Now! Charles Wakefield Cadman, Composer of the Four American Indian Songs, Opus No. 45, look at me. [...] in all seriousness, I think we had better accept Mr. Albion's offer to put the opera on the stage."<sup>77</sup> Yet *Da-O-Ma* was never produced.

Nevertheless, La Flesche continued to advise Cadman when the composer started working on a new opera, *Shanewis*. The story of *Shanewis* was based on the life of Tsianina Redfeather, the young Cherokee-Creek Indian soprano singer. Unlike *Da-O-Ma*, *Shanewis* dealt with a modern American Indian—Tsianina herself when American Indians had gradually adapted to Euro-American society.<sup>78</sup> Cadman and Eberhart sent a rough draft of *Shanewis* to La Flesche, asking for his advice.<sup>79</sup> Cadman also used La Flesche's recording of an Omaha ceremonial song directly for the Indian powwow

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<sup>75</sup> Cadman to LaFlesche. April 12, 19??. LaFlesche Family Papers 1859-1939 (undated), Box 1 Series 1 Folder 2, NSHS.

<sup>76</sup> Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 597.

<sup>77</sup> LaFlesche to Cadman. July 26, 1922. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Folder 1, NSHS.

<sup>78</sup> Perison, "The 'Indian' Operas of Charles Wakefield Cadman," 37.

<sup>79</sup> Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 191.

scene.<sup>80</sup> La Flesche also seems to have assisted in providing suitable costumes and instruments for the stage as well. “We will promise that the things presented will have a real semblance of THE POSSIBLE [sic],” Cadman once wrote to La Flesche asking “whether [he was] able to get for [Cadman] [...] at least two rattles that [could] be used by four singers on the stage in the ceremonial song.”<sup>81</sup>

With La Flesche’s assistance, it seems that Cadman tried to present Indians as authentically as possible also for his opera *Shanewis*. However, Cadman categorized it as an “American” opera instead of an Indian opera, because the opera treated a modern Indian who was, in his words, in transition, and “more than three-fourth of the compositions of the work [lay] within the boundaries of original creative effort [...]and most of it is not built on native tunes in any way.”<sup>82</sup> Cadman still thanked Fletcher and La Flesche among other experts on native music since their works were “suggestive of color and form, or which afforded a rhythmic and melodic foundation for certain episodes.”<sup>83</sup> However, throughout *Shanewis*, he put more emphasis on creating American-ness from “civilizing” Indians and his Indian-inspired harmony. Cadman explained to La Flesche that he tried “to have [*Shanewis*] appear as ‘natural’ as possible, yet in order to make it OPERA [sic] and OPERATIC [sic] it must be an extent idealized (just like some of the Indian music when the white man’s harmonies are put with it)” because “[i]f we took most operas as representative of everyday action and life it would be a ridiculous mess.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Native Shanewis and Place Congo Soon to be Seen—Cadman Calls His Work ‘American,’ Not Indian Opera.” Box 1 Series 3 Folder 2, NSHS.

<sup>81</sup> Cadman to LaFlesche, December 29, 1917. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Series 1 Folder 1. NSHS.

<sup>82</sup> “Native Shanewis and Place Congo Soon to be Seen,” LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Series 3 Folder 2, NSHS.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Cadman to LaFlesche, December 29, 1917. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Series 1 Folder

*Shanewis* treats the main character as an Indian maiden conforming to Euro-American civilization and thus most of the melodies were built upon Cadman's imagined Indianness. This made it by all means an "American" work for Cadman. He insisted that he worked hard on the opera "to have my opera put on AS I WANTED IT and as nearly American in appearance as the story and stage action called for" and he chose the actor "to give the American audience an idea of what THEY think OUGHT to be such a character."<sup>85</sup> Stage settings of a powwow scene with "Ford automobiles, red, white, and blue blunting, lemonade and ice cream" intermingled with Indian traditions already represented Cadman's faith in making American opera, and the audience reviewed the opera as uniquely American.<sup>86</sup> *Shanewis* was produced by the New York Metropolitan Opera for two consecutive years (1918 and 1919), being the first "American opera" the Met produced beyond one season.<sup>87</sup>

Cadman, as a white American, could not escape from supremacist beliefs that he was the one who had salvaged and translated American Indian songs into enjoyable melodies. Cadman claimed that "[v]ery often [American Indian songs] are not even melodies until after the adapter has given them form, symmetry, and rhythmical cohesion," and he continued that without his idealization of Indians, they would have remained in a "musty blanket."<sup>88</sup> La Flesche's work with composers like Cadman may have confirmed white Americans' racial superiority over American Indians. By providing "authentic" materials and his "authentic" opinions as an Indian, La Flesche was thus walking a thin line. While attempting to alter white Americans' misconceptions

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1. NSHS.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. [emphasis in original.]

<sup>86</sup> Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 185.

<sup>87</sup> Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 109; Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 184.

<sup>88</sup> Variations. *The Musical Courier*, 21. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Series 3 Folder 1. NSHS.

about Indians, at the same time he was actually enhancing those misconceptions.<sup>89</sup>

Nevertheless, Cadman recognized Indians as “a part of our national heritage and history” and saw “no reason why their simple folk utterances should not lend color to [American national music].”<sup>90</sup> Regardless of his belief as a savior of Indian melodies, Cadman regarded Indian music as essential to give “American” character to American national music.

Despite Cadman’s supposed superiority, La Flesche’s collaboration and support were essential for his Indianist compositions.<sup>91</sup> Because La Flesche was frequently noted in the newspapers as the son of an Omaha chief, his collaboration itself already provided Cadman’s music an authentic touch. When the newspaper articles covered Cadman’s Indian Talk, for example, they included La Flesche’s name and his tribal affiliation. In an article entitled “Crowd Hears Indian Music,” for instance, La Flesche was described as “an Indian, who has a government position in Washington. The Indian’s father is chief of the Omaha reservation.”<sup>92</sup> Also, the program of Cadman’s Indian Music Talk mentioned La Flesche giving “unqualified approval” as a son of Chief Joseph of the Omaha Indians to Harper’s performance of the “Omaha Tribal Prayer.”<sup>93</sup> These examples indicate that La Flesche’s assistance and his presence on the

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<sup>89</sup> Deloria, *Playing Indians*, 126; Maddox, *Citizen Indians*, 4.

<sup>90</sup> “Home Talent Gets Its Innings at Last,” *The New York Times*, March 17, 1918.

<sup>91</sup> As I have illustrated, Cadman needed LaFlesche’s assistance to record, transcribe, and select Omaha melodies. Also, while Cadman and LaFlesche did not collaborate much in their later years, Cadman needed Tsianina Redfeather to sing his songs, performing as an Indian princess to sell his songs, giving authenticity to his music. For description of Redfeather as an Indian princess, see this newspaper article for example: Newspaper Clipping. “Indian Princess to Sing at Spreckels Pavilion: Tsianina Redfeather to Give Recital of Charles Wakefield Cadman’s Melodies,” LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Folder 5 NSHS.

<sup>92</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Crowd Hears Indian Music: Melodies of the Redskin Enjoyed by Audience at Y. M. C. A.” LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Folder 5. NSHS.

<sup>93</sup> Cadman’s brochure preserved in Arthur Farwell Collection Scrapbook cited in Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 37.

stage itself confirmed the authenticity of Cadman's music, and this would attract more attention when Americans were craving some "real" experience in the midst of their modern, artificial urban lives.<sup>94</sup> Cadman thus needed La Flesche's knowledge and his "authentic" Indianness.

La Flesche himself also challenged Cadman's superiority, by hiring Cadman as his assistant to work on transcriptions for his Osage research.<sup>95</sup> Also, La Flesche boldly insisted on his authority over Cadman, when Cadman took all the credit in securing the song that La Flesche actually obtained with participant's consent.<sup>96</sup> When *The Christian Science Monitor* gave Cadman praise for securing Wa-Xo-be songs from Saucy Calf, La Flesche enclosed a clipping of the news article and demanded Cadman correct the misstatement. "Now Mr. Cadman, may I ask if this is your own statement or if you authorized it to be made?" La Flesche demanded. "If the statement is not true and was not in any way, authorized by you, should you not, in justice to yourself and the one who really did secure the songs, correct the misstatement?"<sup>97</sup> In response, Cadman defended himself, but he did write the editor asking for correction.<sup>98</sup> After this trouble, Cadman and La Flesche never worked together on fieldwork.<sup>99</sup> Yet La Flesche's employment of Cadman for his research on Osage Indians and his daring reclaiming of

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<sup>94</sup> I acknowledge Levy's observation that Cadman was reluctant to rely on La Flesche's and other ethnographers' instructions and recordings solely for his compositions. Since he knew that there was "a great gulf between creativity and anthropology," he was trying to balance out his idealization and authentic materials. However, my reading of newspaper articles on his Indian Talk leads me to conclude that regardless of Cadman's distress about this gap, his audience expected something "authentic" from his Indian Talk, and he needed LaFlesche and other ethnographer's cooperation to make his Talk trustworthy to his audience, including the newspaper reporters. Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 91.

<sup>95</sup> Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 191.

<sup>96</sup> Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 103.

<sup>97</sup> LaFlesche to Cadman, May 18, 1911. LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Folder 1, NSHS.

<sup>98</sup> Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and World of Letters," 596.

<sup>99</sup> Levy, *Frontier Figures*, 103.

his authority over the recording suggest that La Flesche transcended his status as Cadman's devoted assistant. Instead he challenged Cadman's superiority as a white American savior of Indian melodies by insisting on his own rights as an Indian ethnologist.

By collaborating with and assisting an American composer, La Flesche attempted to insert American Indian contributions to the making of American music. "We are told," La Flesche wrote, "that [Native America] has no contribution to the world's thought or the world's pleasure, nothing to articulate with [Old World] lines of culture, nothing to gladden the heart of man and cause it to thrill under the unifying touch of a common nature. Never-the-less [...] the folk were here, living their story and singing their song."<sup>100</sup> Until his death in 1932, La Flesche worked tirelessly to collect, research, and write about Omaha and Osage Indians. As a "civilized" Indian who was educated in the mission school, La Flesche gained the means to talk back to his white American collaborators. He played upon the expectations of Cadman and Eberhart and assisted them with his knowledge, actively participating in making their Indian operas, and finally gained authority over them as an authentic provider of indigenous musical knowledge. In so doing, La Flesche helped the Indianization of American music, thus placing American Indians at the center of American identity.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

On the occasion of La Flesche's visit to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for a conference with Cadman and Eberhart, one newspaper celebrated La Flesche as a "full-blood"

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<sup>100</sup> Bailey, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, xii.; on scrap paper in La Flesche's files. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers, National Anthropological Archives (hereafter NAA), Suitland, MD; Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and World of Letters," 597.

Indian who contributed to developing American Indian music: “Francis La Flesche, an Omaha Indian of pure extraction [...] who is famous as an ethnologist and as author of a very well-known story of reservation school [...] has done more for the advancement of Indian music than any member of his race in America.”<sup>101</sup> The newspaper continued to speak highly of La Flesche for “know[ing] and sing[ing] over 600 tribal melodies,” being “veritable storehouse of Indian facts and fancies,” and most of all, being “a most valued member of his tribe [...] [as] [t]he son of Estanza[sic] [...] logical successor to the office should he care to accept it.”<sup>102</sup> By describing La Flesche as a “full-blood” and “logical successor to his father,” this article is factually inaccurate. However, it clearly demonstrates La Flesche’s success in making his audience consider his opinions as a valuable source of authenticity. By playing the “civilized” Indian, La Flesche talked back, and negotiated with white American composers to navigate Americanness under his own terms.

Throughout his career as an ethnologist, La Flesche vigorously worked to counter dominant perceptions that saw American Indians as an “inferior” other. He successfully assimilated into the mainstream society. Moreover, by recording songs used in Omaha and Osage rituals and collaborating with a white American composer, La Flesche demonstrated that American Indians could provide the unique sound and identity for American music. This made them more than curiosities. La Flesche helped put Indians at the center of what it meant to be American.

Another obituary published in *The New York Times* depicted La Flesche as an

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<sup>101</sup> Newspaper Clipping. “Scholarly Indian Tells Of Tribe’s Music Wonders: Expert on Indian Affairs, Himself an Omaha Indian, Confers With Pittsburg Composers of Aboriginal Melodies—Knows Hundreds of Tribal Songs,” LaFlesche Family Papers. Box 1 Folder 5. NSHS.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

“Indian leader who played the white man’s game and won,” for winning “distinction as an ethnologist and recorder of the vanishing culture of his people.”<sup>103</sup> La Flesche, who lived the turn of the twentieth century carefully read what his audience expected of him, and manipulated this expectation. In so doing, La Flesche succeeded in taking control of American composers eager to learn about American Indians, and used that opportunity to reclaim their own version of Indianness and Americanness.

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<sup>103</sup> “Indian Feast Marks La Flesche Burial,” *The New York Times*, September 10, 1932.



## Chapter 3

### “To Become Indian Again”:

#### Angel De Cora’s Native Art Curriculum for Carlisle Indian Industrial School

##### I. Introduction

In 1916 the *Minneapolis Journal* invited their curious readers to the world of the “Indian craze”: “If you are tired of your art-nouveau drawing-room, ask Mrs. Angel De Cora Dietz to transform it to a wigwam.”<sup>1</sup> Following this catchy phrase, the article explained De Cora’s educational background. Born in a wigwam and educated in Euro-American institutions such as Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Smith College, and later studying art under the instruction of leading American artists like Howard Pyle, De Cora’s background surely appealed to their readers interested in collecting “exotic” artifacts for decorating their rooms (Appendix, Fig. 12). Next to the article, the editor inserted a portrait of Angel De Cora in traditional dress, assuring the curious audience that she would provide “authentic” Indian touches to their modern home. De Cora, being a renowned Winnebago woman artist and Native art teacher, was depicted as a great way for readers to satisfy their thirst for “exotic” artifacts.

The *Minneapolis Journal*’s invitation to Indianize room decorations was not the only example of fascination with American Indians and their artifacts. It was a part of a broader trend of appreciating preindustrial cultures. At the turn of the twentieth century, non-Indian Americans started to praise “primitive” cultures as a retreat from “overcivilized” urban industrial America. Post-civil war America saw the recovery of its international trade networks, which increased the number of imported, “exotic”

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<sup>1</sup> *Minneapolis Journal* June 11, 1916, Smith College Archives, Northampton, MA.

handicrafts.<sup>2</sup> These imported products included “Indian paisley shawls, Arabian carpets, and Japanese screens” for household furnishings to bring an “exotic,” “authentic” touch to middle-class homes, as an antidote to machine-made products from Western civilization.<sup>3</sup> Whether at local department stores, specialty shops, museums or World’s Fairs, curious middle-class and wealthy Americans were inspired to purchase imported items and turn their rooms or “cosey corners” into an Orientalist spectacle full of “exotic” home décor.<sup>4</sup>

American Indian art was among these “primitive” cultures that seemed the opposite of modern culture, and attracted anti-modernist Americans who sought more “physical, authentic, and direct” experiences that they felt modernization had taken from them.<sup>5</sup> Many mainstream Americans assumed “primitive” American Indians were doomed to extinction either by assimilation or military defeat, and with it would come the end of their “exotic” cultures, too. As the frontier “closed,” Indians’ “vanishing” arts and crafts thus stimulated people’s desire to possess them before they were completely gone. Using newly completed railroads, tourists and collectors gained access to a wide range of Native handicrafts. To attract tourists to the Southwest, for instance, the Santa Fe Railroad marketed American Indian handicrafts as souvenirs, helping to stimulate collecting of Native American items.<sup>6</sup> Railroads also opened up tourism and a venue for “Pueblo pottery, [...] Apache, Pima, and Yuma baskets, [...] and Navajo weavings and

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<sup>2</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumer’s Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze: Primitivism, Modernism, and Transculturation in American Art, 1890-1915* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 19.

<sup>4</sup> Hoganson, *Consumer’s Imperium*.

<sup>5</sup> Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Paivi Hoikkala, “The Hearts of Nations: American Indian Women in the Twentieth Century” in *Indians in American History: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. eds. Frederick E. Hoxie and Peter Iverson (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1998), 259.

silver jewelry.”<sup>7</sup> In a similar way, these products found their way back East, meaning curious middle class consumers did not even need to leave the city to find Indian goods.<sup>8</sup> Just like other “primitive” products, Native handicrafts were sold at local department stores and specialty shops and through mail order catalogues.<sup>9</sup> While some chose Oriental themes for their “cosey corners,” others decorated with Native art collections to bring an “exotic” touch that they seemed to have lost in the process of modernization. It was a trend historian Elizabeth Hutchinson calls the “Indian craze.”

As Hutchinson points out, this growing interest in American Indian arts and crafts eventually brought a change to federal Indian policy. At the turn of the twentieth century, the commissioner of Indian Affairs and the superintendent of Indian schools started to “tolerate” practicing Native arts and music at the boarding schools, which originally aimed to assimilate Indians into mainstream society by eliminating all possible Native characteristics out of their Indian children. Because Indian cultures were assumed to be disappearing, they thought tolerating the practice of a few Native traditions would not be an obstacle for their students’ assimilation as long as instruction remained under federal control. For example, in 1900, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, which had a government-sponsored Indian program, started teaching “Indian arts of beadwork, basketry, and pottery” to their American Indian students.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Estelle Reel, the superintendent of Indian schools, introduced basketry instruction as part of American Indian student’s curriculum.<sup>11</sup> Reel noted: “This business [basketry, weaving, reed work] has been carried on by various Indian

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 5.

<sup>11</sup> Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 5.

tribes from time immemorial and few civilized peoples have reached the perfection attained by the Indians in this industry. [...] It is, in fact, an art belonging to an ancient civilization, the last vestiges of which are passing away,” suggesting the need of federal intervention for the preservation of Native art.<sup>12</sup>

Francis Leupp, the commissioner of Indian Affairs also announced his support for the preservation of American Indian cultures. Proclaiming that “The Indian is a natural warrior, a natural logician, a natural artist,” Leupp pointed out that American Indians thus needed improvement, not transformation or assimilation, noting that “I like the Indian for what is Indian in him.”<sup>13</sup> Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where De Cora was hired as an art teacher, opened the Leupp Indian art studio in 1907 as a site of their students’ artistic production and exhibition.<sup>14</sup> The studio also sold “authentic” Native products from the reservations to those interested in Native art. For example, the school newspaper printed an advertisement in 1908 to sell “Pueblo pottery, beadwork, basket work, silver work, reed work, weaving and etc.”<sup>15</sup> The “Indian craze” therefore invited these federal officials to change their attitude toward American Indian education, allowing Native students to practice their traditions.

However, this shift in attitude toward American Indian education also demonstrates the racism of Reel, Leupp and of Indian policy generally. Believing that American

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<sup>12</sup> Estelle Reel papers from Arden Saliquist Collection. Folder: Exhibits: Dept. of Indian Education. “Marvelous handiwork on exhibition at Cadillac Hotel.” Folder: Reports to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1905 for January 21, 1905 report from Navajo Indian School, Fort Defiance, AZ, 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 (May 1996), accessed December 11, 2014, <http://jaie.asu.edu/v35/V35S3es.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> Jane E. Simonsen, *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860-1919* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), Kindle e-book, 76-77%.

<sup>15</sup> They sold pottery from 15c up, Navajo blankets from \$5.00 up, Baskets from \$1.00 up. For details, see *The Arrow* vol. 4, no. 38, Friday, May 22, 1908.

Indians were inherently inferior, they began to doubt whether American Indians were really capable of rapid assimilation. As Reel wrote in the newspaper: “Allowing for exceptional cases, the Indian child is of lower physical organization than the white child of corresponding age. His forearms are smaller and his fingers and hands less flexible; the very structure of his bones and muscles will not permit so wide a variety of manual movements as are customary among Caucasian children, and his very instincts and modes of thought are adjusted to this imperfect manual development.”<sup>16</sup> Native children were less intelligent and physically able than white children; therefore, they required more time for complete assimilation than federal officials formerly expected, and they should be educated to make way for themselves to an “appropriate place,” separate from those of white Americans, on the bottom of American society.<sup>17</sup>

This view drove the shift in educational policies for off-reservation boarding schools toward more practical education for Indian youth, which was designed to prepare them to become “menial laborers and domestics” at a lower rung of the society and make them “useful” in a highly industrialized society.<sup>18</sup> “Toleration” of Native art in Indian school thus reflected the racist perspective that underestimated the ability of American Indians’ assimilation. De Cora was hired as a Native art instructor in such circumstances, when federal officials redirected their educational strategy toward more paternalistic but pluralistic goal in civilizing Native children. However, as I will

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<sup>16</sup>Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima eds, *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879-2000* (Phoenix: The Heard Museum), 31; Lomawaima, “Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools.”

<sup>17</sup> 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), 44, 52, 56; 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), 331.

<sup>18</sup> Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*, 301-302, 331.

illustrate, ironically enough, it was this racism and “toleration” over the practice of Native art that created a venue for De Cora to play an active role as a teacher to revive her students’ artistic instincts at school.

In this chapter, I will examine how the Winnebago illustrator Angel De Cora took advantage of this “Indian craze,” and the change in federal policy as a teacher for Native children at the boarding school. Along with her work as an illustrator, De Cora was hired as an art teacher at Carlisle Indian Industrial School from 1906 to 1915. She was one of the few American Indian teachers who worked for the off-reservation boarding school, and the first Native art teacher at Carlisle, which Richard Henry Pratt originally founded to “Kill the Indian in him and Save the Man.”<sup>19</sup> At this very institution that aimed to assimilate American Indian children into mainstream society, De Cora helped found the curriculum for Native art. As I will illustrate, as an Indian teacher in a federally-funded educational program, she needed to deal with federal officials’ demands for her role as a teacher. However, far from being a subservient teacher who inculcated assimilationist doctrine, De Cora took advantage of a loophole to practice Native art in the name of “toleration.” That is, she used the assimilationist educational expectation to regenerate racial pride and create a way for Native Americans to survive in modern American society.

De Cora’s curriculum was unique in several ways. As I will explain more in detail later, she emphasized teaching distinctive tribal designs to counter dominant

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<sup>19</sup> A Lakota violinist, writer, and also another member of SAI, Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Sa) had worked as a music teacher at Carlisle several years before De Cora became a teacher. As Adams indicated, most of former female students at Carlisle and Hampton became housewives after they left the schools while a few became teachers, matrons, and seamstresses in Indian service. That makes De Cora unique as one of a few former female students who worked as a teacher. David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 289.

expectations that often failed to recognize diversity among Indians in languages, cultures, and traditions.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, in her classes she introduced and applied both new and traditional design techniques to respond to mainstream representations of Indians as static, unchanging relics of the past. In addition, believing in her students' inherent ability as an artist, she made her classroom a site of reciprocal teaching that developed both her and her students' craftsmanship. Moreover, she encouraged students to produce "useful" materials for modern society, and which they could sell to make a living.

At first glance, her educational goals mirrored those of federal officials who aimed to make American Indians "useful" workers for the modern setting under the pretext of preserving Native arts and crafts. De Cora, moreover, was a teacher appointed by Leupp and taught at a federally-funded boarding school. She thus had very limited financial resources and power to practice her own educational ideas.<sup>21</sup> However, as I will illustrate, even in such restricted circumstances, she made full use of her opportunity as a teacher to call on her students' racial pride, giving them cultural and financial means to survive and resist. In her classroom, she created a space for Native students who had various tribal heritages to explore what it means to be a "modern" Indian in contemporary American society. Through her teaching, De Cora thus reconstructed the meaning of Indianness, and helped her students to become "Indian" again. Furthermore, by instructing her students to produce designs for home décor, she placed Indians in the intimate domestic space of the private American household.

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<sup>20</sup> Anne Ruggles Gere, "An Art of Survivance: Angel DeCora at Carlisle," *The American Indian Quarterly* 28, no. 3&4 (Summer and Fall 2004): 663.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 652.

## II. “To Do Much Good among My People”

From her youth De Cora developed skills in mediating two seemingly different cultures. She was born in 1871 in a wigwam, as a granddaughter of a hereditary chief of the Winnebago Indians on a reservation near Thurston, Nebraska. By the time she was born, Winnebago Indians had already gone through significant changes in their lives. Before finally settling into their land in Nebraska in 1865, they needed to survive a series of forced removals across four states – Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Nebraska – from their original homeland that stretched over today’s Wisconsin and northern Illinois.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, what De Cora experienced as a child was probably only a glimpse of the traditions and customs that her tribe had managed to retain while surviving the removals. Yet De Cora’s autobiography vividly captures the lives of people who retained their traditional way of life, practicing agriculture and hunting, moving off and on the reservation seasonally to chase game, while adapting to new circumstances.<sup>23</sup> As a youth, she also attended traditional dance ceremonies and the healing or medicine ceremony for her sick sister.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as a granddaughter of the

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<sup>22</sup> Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) historian Amy Lonetree explains in detail about her ancestor’s experiences with forced removals, which were the results of the treaty of 1829, 1832, 1837, and 1855 that Ho-Chunk had to sign, and also the results from the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Although Winnebago Indians were not responsible for the War, Minnesota’s ethnic-cleansing policy forced them to move to Nebraska. Winnebago people who resided in Winnebago reservation in Nebraska were not the only people who survived these removals. As Lonetree indicated, some of the tribal people chose to flee as a “fugitives” during these removals to return to their original homelands. Amy Lonetree, “Visualizing Native Survivance: Encounters with my Ho-Chunk Ancestors in the Family Photographs of Charles Van Schaick,” in *People of the Big Voice: Photographs of Ho-Chunk Families by Charles Van Schaick, 1879-1942*, eds. Tom Jones, Michael Schmudlach, Matthew Daniel Mason, Amy Lonetree, and George A. Greendeer (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011), 15-20.

<sup>23</sup> Angel De Cora, “An Autobiography,” *The Red Man*, March 1911, 279.

<sup>24</sup> Sarah McAnulty, “Angel DeCora: American Artist and Educator,” *Nebraska History* 57, No. 2 (Summer 1976): 144-145; Angel De Cora, “The Sick Child,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 98 (February 1899): 446-448; Angel De Cora, “Grey Wolf’s Daughter,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 99 (November 1899): 860-862.

<sup>24</sup> De Cora, “An Autobiography,” 279.



hereditary chief she received training every day and night to become “a well-counselled child,” learning laws and customs that her ancestors had maintained for generations. Through this training, De Cora recalled in her autobiography that “a very promising career must have been laid out for me by my grandparents.”<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, De Cora’s peaceful life with her family was interrupted in 1883 when she was kidnapped by a white man, who seduced her to go ride in a steam train.<sup>26</sup> Her trip led her to Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia, one of the famous boarding schools that aimed to teach English and manual labor for American Indians to “civilize” them to fit to the standard of Euro-Americans. De Cora had a chance to return to the reservation in 1887, due to a government regulation that required Indian students to go back home after spending five years at off-reservation boarding schools. She stayed there over a year, and during her stay, she witnessed the death of her father and grandfather.<sup>27</sup> For De Cora, their death symbolized the end of her “old Indian life.” She thus decided to go back to Hampton, and pursued higher education, hoping her education would do good for her people.<sup>28</sup> She particularly found her interests in art. After her graduation from Hampton in 1891, she went to Miss Burnham’s Classical School for Girls in Northampton, Massachusetts and then studied with Dwight W. Tryon, a successful landscape painter at Smith College. She graduated from Smith in 1896, and moved to Philadelphia to study art and illustration at Drexel Institute under supervision of Howard Pyle, an American illustrator. Three years later, she decided to

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> According to an 1893 Hampton publication, De Cora was brought to Hampton by Julia St. Cyr on November 2, 1883 with three other kids from Winnebago reservation in Nebraska. *Twenty-Two Years’ Work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute at Hampton, Virginia: Records of Negro and Indian Graduates and ex-Students* (Hampton: Hampton Normal School Press, 1893), 403.

<sup>27</sup> McAnulty, “Angel DeCora,” 147.

<sup>28</sup> De Cora, “An Autobiography,” 280.

move to Boston to study at Cowles Art School with Joseph DeCamp until his resignation, and then with Frank Benson and Edmund C. Tarbell – both impressionist painters – at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School before she opened her studio in Boston and later in New York.<sup>29</sup>

The boarding school education that De Cora received after being kidnapped by the school recruiter was surely a very difficult time. De Cora did not leave any detailed records about her early days in Hampton. However, as many other students at off-reservation boarding schools experienced, De Cora, then at age of thirteen, should have suffered homesickness, while seeing all the usual bleakness of life at an Indian boarding school – “harsh punishments, isolation, dangerous diseases, and a continual assault on traditional cultures.”<sup>30</sup> Although she was willing to go study at the school on the reservation, De Cora never agreed to leave her family, nor did her mother give her permission.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, it was also through this education that she gained her knowledge and skills to not only defend Indian traditions, but to enhance their image among Euro-Americans. As with other educated Indians of her time, at this institution she learned how to speak and write in English, learned the hierarchical worldview that placed Euro-Americans at the top of the racial and social hierarchy, and the dominant expectations toward American Indians. The knowledge she got from her Hampton education even made her comment on her circumstances with a humor. As early as 1892, about a year after her graduation from Hampton, she wrote to her former teacher:

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<sup>29</sup> Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 657-658; McAnulty, “Angel DeCora,” 147.

<sup>30</sup> David Wallace Adams, “Beyond Bleakness: The Brighter Side of Indian Boarding Schools, 1870-1940,” in *Boarding School Blues*, eds. Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, 35.

<sup>31</sup> As Brudvig pointed out, bringing Native child without parental consent to an off-reservation boarding school was illegal. Jon L. Brudvig, “Make Haste Slowly’: The Experiences of American Indian Women at Hampton Institute, 1878-1923,” (paper presented at the Sixth Native American Symposium, Durant, OK, November 10-12, 2005), 7, accessed October 10, 2015, <http://www.se.edu/nas/files/2013/03/Proceedings-2005-Brudvig.pdf>.

“Do you think it is too much for an Injun to read Darwin?”<sup>32</sup> She found it funny to recall the scene of her learning Darwinism, despite the fact that she was a supposedly “primitive” Indian. This comment best illustrates her acknowledgement of mainstream expectation about American Indians, and the possibility of her use of its representation as a rhetorical tactic.

De Cora chose her career as an illustrator certainly due to her financial needs.<sup>33</sup> Yet her choice was made because she knew her illustration would be her best venue to talk back to wider public, and provoke deeper understanding about American Indians. “I feel that designing is the best channel in which to convey the native qualities of the Indian’s decorative talent,” De Cora noted.<sup>34</sup> Like many other educated Indians, she must have felt responsible to educate the American public about American Indians. Through her illustrations, she thus aimed to demonstrate her own artistic talent, enhance public fascination over American Indians, and simultaneously attempt to alter the stereotypes about American Indians.

De Cora lived in a period now known as “the Golden Age of American Illustration.” Development of the halftone plate and high-speed printing press in the late nineteenth century reinforced the mass production of variety of inexpensive weekly and monthly magazines, which became popular medium of public pastime. As a result, the proliferating numbers of magazines created unprecedented numbers of job opportunities for American illustrators.<sup>35</sup> Public fascination with American Indians also contributed to the growth in numbers of publications on American Indians as a subject matter.

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<sup>32</sup> Angel De Cora to Cora Mae Folsom, Nov. 27, 1892, Angel De Cora Student File. Hampton University Archives (hereafter HUA), Hampton, VA.

<sup>33</sup> McAnulty, “Angel DeCora,” 153.

<sup>34</sup> De Cora, “An Autobiography,” 285; McAnulty, “Angel DeCora,” 153.

<sup>35</sup> Helen Goodman, “Women Illustrators of the Golden Age of American Illustration,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 8, no.1 (Spring-Summer 1987): 13.

Furthermore, public demand for “authenticity” helped De Cora find outlets for her work as a renowned Indian artist. This development of print culture in the United States and the growing interests in American Indians thus provided the ground for De Cora to publicly present her works, play with mainstream expectations about Indians, and finally, to present to a wider American public her educational philosophy for Native children.

Throughout her career, De Cora produced cover designs and frontispiece illustrations for the books that dealt with American Indians as a subject. Among many, she designed the book cover, title pages and produced illustrations for Francis La Flesche’s *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School* (1900), Zitkala-Sa’s *Old Indian Legends* (1901), Natalie Curtis’s *The Indian’s Book* (1907), and Elaine Goodale Eastman’s *Yellow Star: A Story of East and West* (1911). De Cora, by providing “authentic” artwork for these books, manipulated Euro-Americans’ dominant expectations about American Indians. For example, the cover designs and the frontispiece illustration of *The Middle Five* not only represent De Cora’s mastery of Euro-American methods of drawing, but also show her cautious construction of Indianness. For the cover design of La Flesche’s autobiography she illustrated two tepees, decorated with simple, abstract designs of the firebird, crescent moons and zig-zag lines. As Hutchinson points out, the bow and arrows that constitutes the border of the cover and uneven, asymmetrical tepees perhaps represent De Cora’s mastery of Euro-American methods of drawing (Appendix, Fig. 13).<sup>36</sup> However, her illustration of nothing else but two tepees that stand on plains land under the blue sky, together with bows and arrows as a decorative border certainly enhances readers’ expectations for

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<sup>36</sup> Hutchinson, *The Indian Craze*, 196.

“primitive” Indianness. In contrast, her frontispiece illustration represents a totally different aspect of American Indians. There she depicts a scene in which an Omaha boy in traditional outfit is being comforted by another Indian boy in a school uniform (Appendix, Fig. 14). The posture of these two boys suggests as if the boy in the school uniform is trying to help the boy in the traditional outfit, seemingly representing the slogan of Captain Richard Henry Pratt. Although La Flesche did not support total elimination of tribal traditions and rather cast doubt on the supposed Euro-American necessity in civilizing American Indians, as one reviewer of *The Middle Five* observed, her frontispiece illustration effectively represented the entire story of La Flesche’s boarding school life.<sup>37</sup> Just as in La Flesche’s autobiography, where he dressed his Indian boys in school uniforms to show the universal equality of boyhood across racial lines, De Cora employs a Western style of painting. The only obviously “Indian” is the weeping boy. Her employment of two different styles of drawing for the cover and frontispiece of the same book suggest De Cora’s acknowledgement of what readers might expect from La Flesche’s autobiography and her skills in complicating that expectation. Partly because of her illustrations, another reviewer found *The Middle Five* “a bit disappointing” for a book “written by an Indian,” because it was not “a tale of aboriginal life [...] The little copper-colored ones are so much more interesting and picturesque in blanket and wigwams than they appear when dressed in blue jackets, seated on the benches at a mission school.”<sup>38</sup> This comment suggests that the reader who expected a “primitive” tale of American Indians from De Cora’s drawing of tipis on the book cover became perplexed about the story that they got from La Flesche.

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<sup>37</sup> Newspaper Clipping. *The Express* (Buffalo, New York), January 24, 1900. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers, NAA.

<sup>38</sup> Newspaper Clipping. [newspaper title unreadable] N.Y. New York November 3, 1900. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers, NAA.

Nevertheless, her frontispiece illustration of two Indian boys made another reviewer from *Girl's Friendly Magazine* note: "Her work has already attracted attention, and her name will undoubtedly be widely known in the near future."<sup>39</sup> Indeed, De Cora, starting from *The Middle Five* illustrations, started to gain her fame as "a native Indian artist of national reputation," a status that eventually led her to get a teaching position at Carlisle Indian Industrial School.<sup>40</sup>

### III. Native Art Teacher at Carlisle

Her skills in manipulating dominant expectations about American Indians were apparent in her act of building a Native art curriculum at Carlisle Indian Industrial School. In 1906, Francis Leupp, the commissioner of Indian affairs, appointed De Cora a teacher at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Considering the fact that there was a growing acceptance of American Indian cultures among the broader American public and "tolerance" in practicing Native traditions at the school, De Cora's involvement in creating a Native art curriculum does not seem so peculiar. However, it is noteworthy that De Cora did not immediately accept the offer, but took it instead under two conditions: that she "shall not be expected to teach in the white man's way" and that Leupp would give her "complete liberty to develop the art of [her] own race and to apply this, as far as possible, to various forms of art industries and crafts."<sup>41</sup> Her demands suggests that De Cora acknowledged Leupp's expectation to industrialize

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<sup>39</sup> Newspaper Clipping, *Girl's Friendly Magazine*, Oct. 1900. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers, NAA.

<sup>40</sup> Carlisle Indian Industrial School, *Information concerning the United States Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, Penna.: Containing a Brief Culture of What It is, and What It is Accomplishing 1879-29<sup>th</sup> year-1908* (Carlisle, Penn: Carlisle Indian Industrial School, 1908), 21.

<sup>41</sup> Linda M. Waggoner, *Fire Light: The Life of Angel De Cora, Winnebago Artist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 132.

Indian students through teaching American Indian arts, but she wanted to do it in her own way, taking complete liberty in constructing a Native art curriculum for her fellow students.

Taking the teaching position under these conditions, De Cora created an innovative school of American Indian design.<sup>42</sup> Before she became a teacher, Carlisle's art program ignored the cultural heritage of its students and just taught conventional methods of European art. Under such curriculum, fifth graders learned "designs of borders and surface patterns; light and shade; objects in natural science; illustrations; space divisions," which left "some of the names denoting clannish nomenclature" as "[t]he only trace of Indian" arts created by the students at Carlisle.<sup>43</sup> Like Eastman and La Flesche, De Cora was not a full advocate of American Indians' complete assimilation. "The method of educating the Indian in the past was to attempt to transform him into a brown Caucasian. [...] The Indian educators made every effort to convince the Indian [...] showed savagery and degradation," she claimed, and continued critiquing assimilationist education that strove to make American Indians "superficial and arrogant and denied his race, or [...] made them] dispirited and silent."<sup>44</sup> De Cora thus aimed to Indianize the curriculum, explaining "We do not study any of European classics in art," and under her instruction, "We take the old symbolic figures and forms which we find on beadwork, pottery, and baskets for the basis of our study."<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>43</sup> Carlisle Catalogue, 1902, no page, quoted in Gere, "An Art of Survivance," 665; Angel De Cora, "Native Indian Art," *Report of the Executive on the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians Held at the University of Ohio, Columbus, Ohio—October 12-17, 1911* (Washington D.C.: Society of American Indians, 1912), 84.

<sup>44</sup> Angel De Cora, "An Effort to Encourage Indian Art," *Couge's Interrational des Americanistes*, Vol.II (Quebec: Dussault and Proulx, 1907), 206.

<sup>45</sup> Mrs. William Dietz [Angel De Cora], "Native Indian Art," *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian and Other Dependent Peoples* (Mohonk Lake, NY: The Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian and Other

She believed that her Native students possessed inherent ability as an artist. De Cora told the Euro-American ethnologist Natalie Curtis, “My people are natural craftsmen [...] Each basket, each pottery urn shaped by the Indian woman is an individual art expression created by its maker. The imagination that prompts the symmetry and beauty of pattern, and the dexterity that gives the skill of perfect workmanship – these are inherent in every Indian. [...] We are a race of designers.”<sup>46</sup> Believing in her students’ innate artistic ability, she thus put importance on freehand drawing throughout her drawing course, in stark contrast to the Euro-centered curriculum that taught students step by step how to draw various fixed form or designs. “Most Indian pupils come to us with some pretty definite knowledge of drawing already fixed in their minds,” she wrote in the course description. Therefore, her mission as a teacher was to “standardize, perpetuate, and give to the world at large the priceless decorative designs peculiar to the race.”<sup>47</sup> De Cora thus studied her students’ freehanded drawings to come up with some “standardized” form for each tribe’s designs, and find a place where distinctive Native American art could contribute to modern American society.

Although she envisioned her responsibility as an Indian art teacher in her revised curriculum, in reality, De Cora found it difficult to teach students who were under the strong influence of enforced assimilation. Prohibitions against using their native tongue and maintaining tribal identities at the school prevented her students from being motivated to learn their traditions. As De Cora recalls, when she started teaching she had “a discouraging sensation that I was addressing members of an alien race.” “[They are] told that [their] native customs and crafts are no longer of any use because they are

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Dependent Peoples, 1908), 18.

<sup>46</sup> Natalie Curtis, “An American Indian Artist,” *The Outlook* (January 14, 1920): 64.

<sup>47</sup> Carlisle Catalogue, 1915, 35, quoted in Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 665.



the habits and pastimes of the crude man,” she observed, “[i]f he takes up his native crafts he does it with the sense that he has ‘gone back to barbarism.’”<sup>48</sup> One day a student told her, “We don’t know anything about Indian work and what good will it do us anyway.”<sup>49</sup> De Cora thus realized that her first challenge as a Native art teacher was to “impress upon the minds of [her] pupils that they were Indians, possessing native abilities that they had never been recognized in the curriculum of the Government schools.”<sup>50</sup> To “appeal to their race pride,” then, her first task was to call “on them in mass and individually for Indian history.”<sup>51</sup>

The history she insisted on was not the history that white historians wrote in books. She encouraged her students to recall the stories that they might have heard “from the Indian story-tellers by the light of the camp fire.”<sup>52</sup> De Cora observed that, because of the school’s earlier efforts, some of her students “lost all their Indian lore.”<sup>53</sup> However, she was still optimistic about her students’ potential ability to relearn their own traditions, because a few months of her teaching “proved to [her] that none of their Indian instincts have perished but have only lain dormant.”<sup>54</sup>

To regenerate their decorative instincts, she taught her students to study their tribal

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<sup>48</sup> De Cora’s claim in 1909, quoted in Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima eds., *Away from Home*, 89.

<sup>49</sup> Angel De Cora, “An Effort to Encourage Indian Art,” 207 cited in Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 668.

<sup>50</sup> De Cora’s claim in 1909, quoted in Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima eds., *Away from Home*, 89.

<sup>51</sup> Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 66, quoted in Elizabeth Hutchinson, “Native American Art: Angel DeCora’s Transcultural Aesthetics,” *The Art Bulletin* 83, no.4 (December 2001): 754.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Department of Interior, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), 65-67, quoted in Waggoner, *Fire Light*, 134.

<sup>54</sup> Angel De Cora, “Native Indian Art,” *The Indian School Journal* 7 (September 1907): 44.

characteristics from the Bureau of Ethnology reports, for example, to “call [their] minds back to old customs and lore.”<sup>55</sup> She also used the ethnological research of Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber for reference.<sup>56</sup> One day, she also invited the ethnologist Dr. Gordon B. Gordon to lecture her students about motifs and designs that Native people of Central America used in prehistoric times. As the school newspaper indicated, her purpose of bringing ethnologists was to make her students realize how these designs and patterns were directly carried out in their artworks today, and to inspire their artistic instincts to motivate their art.<sup>57</sup>

Her belief in teaching tribally distinctive designs can be seen in her decorative letterings on the title pages of *The Indian's Book*. The author Natalie Curtis organized groups of American Indians into Eastern, Plains, Lake, Northwestern, Southwestern, and Pueblo, while De Cora drew the letterings designed to suit the illustrations that each tribal artist drew to show “the lifestyle and values of their people.”<sup>58</sup> For example, for the title page of Kwakiutl people of the Pacific Northwest coast, De Cora employed specifically “Kwakiutl design [which consists of] the tail and fin of the whale, the hawk, and the eye-joint” for the lettering, which matches well with the grizzly bear and killer-whale drawn by Kwakiutl Indian Charles James Nowell (Appendix, Fig. 15).<sup>59</sup> Also for the Wabanaki section, which represented the Eastern regions, she created letterings consisting of a birch-bark design, which Wabanaki Indians used to build canoes (Appendix, Fig. 16). For the letterings of Southwestern Indians, De Cora drew zig-zag

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<sup>55</sup> Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior*, 1907, 65-67.

<sup>56</sup> The reason why De Cora used these ethnological research sources was in part because of limited budget and resources for her course. McNulty, “Angel DeCora,” 21.

<sup>57</sup> “Dr. Gordon’s Lecture,” *The Arrow*, vol. 3, no.30, Friday, March 22, 1907.

<sup>58</sup> Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 667.

<sup>59</sup> Natalie Curtis, *The Indian Book* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1907), 295.

lines that match top and bottom layers of drawings that represent “cloud [...] grains of corn [...] the young corn-shoots [...and a] corn stalk with its joints,” all of which were Pueblo pottery designs (Appendix, Fig. 17).<sup>60</sup> By drawing letters that matched illustrations of each tribal artist, De Cora carefully represented what is unique to each tribal culture, countering the dominant perspective that “mixed the different characteristics of the different tribes,” and eliminated tribal distinctions.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to preserving tribally distinctive designs, De Cora also showed her flexibility in adapting the methods of other ethnic cultures. As she wrote of one class, “Instruction is given in weaving—both by the Navajo and Hopi methods, and by the Persian method with the application of Indian designs.”<sup>62</sup> She believed that applying multiple influences would give her students more liberty in creating more intricate patterns, and she believed that the designs students produced were already similar to Persian art.<sup>63</sup> These instances indicate that De Cora believed that Native art was malleable and transformable rather than being a fixed tradition.

De Cora respected distinctive characteristics of art of each Native tribes, and was flexible in adaptation of artistic methods of other ethnic cultures. However, she could not escape from a paradox of preferring one design to another, and selecting the design that would be suitable for creating uniquely Native art. In particular, she discouraged using floral designs that can be seen in Ojibway beadwork, because, as she wrote, “Indian art seldom made any use of the details of plant forms, but typified nature in its broader aspects, using also animal forms and symbols of human life.”<sup>64</sup> While she put

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>61</sup> Charles A. Eastman’s comment on De Cora’s paper. De Cora, “Native Indian Art,” *Report of the Executive on the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference*, 88.

<sup>62</sup> Carlisle Catalogue, 1910, 58, quoted in Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 666.

<sup>63</sup> De Cora, “Native Indian Art,” *The Indian School Journal*, 45.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

an emphasis on teaching tribal characteristics, this instance suggests that De Cora had her own belief of selecting what should be preserved and practiced as Native art. She thus redefined what is appropriate or not for “artistic Indianness.”

De Cora had some educational strategies to regenerate her students’ decorative instincts. One of her strategies was “to let [her] students draw from [their] own mind, true to [their] own thought, and as much as possible, true to [their] own tribal method of symbolic design,” freeing her students from the restraint of her presence.<sup>65</sup> She claimed that “the best designs were made my artist pupils away from my supervision,” recalling one day when she left with assignments for her students to do some kind of weaving.<sup>66</sup> Each student was given a new knife to cut the ends of the threads for weaving, but when De Cora came back, she found out that “the looms were still untouched, not a pupil had done his work.” Instead, one of the students came up to her to show her his new knife “whose handle was beautifully incased [sic] in a woven hilt.”<sup>67</sup> Because it was a warm day, the students had found the handle of the new knives “uncomfortably slippery. So they had turned their ingenuity to the weaving of little bright-colored handle covers.”<sup>68</sup> Rather than reprimanding the students for not completing their weaving assignment, De Cora rather praised them for their skills and even asked them to teach her the stitch that they had invented to weave their knife handle.<sup>69</sup> By respecting her students’ creativity and artistic skills, De Cora evoked their confidence in their own abilities.<sup>70</sup>

Moreover, De Cora facilitated her students to embrace their own traditions, and she

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<sup>65</sup> De Cora, “An Effort to Encourage Indian Art,” 208; Natalie Curtis, “An American Indian Artist,” 65.

<sup>66</sup> De Cora, “Native Indian Art,” *The Indian School Journal*, 44. For the picture of De Cora’s weaving class, see Appendix, Figure 18.

<sup>67</sup> Curtis, “An American Indian Artist,” 65.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66; Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 671.

<sup>70</sup> Gere, “An Art of Survivance,” 671.

encouraged them to learn their origin if they had lost it completely. One day when she was working with a student from the Pacific Northwest who did not even know the name of his tribe, and she started going with him through some of the books written by Franz Boas.<sup>71</sup> When they came across the decorations and blankets of the Haida people, the student recognized them and started “drawing a border design using the killer whale as a theme.”<sup>72</sup> De Cora recalls that then “He told [her] with great pride that he belonged to the ‘black fish’ family and also to the beaver.”<sup>73</sup> De Cora’s method of teaching Native art thus appealed to the racial pride of her students who had been under the strong influence of assimilation, and her students could learn to be “Indian” through her classes.

Encouraging their confidence in artistic skills and generating their racial pride through holding Native art class surely was her way of making American Indian’s cultural “survance” possible during their boarding school education. However, De Cora’s works were not limited to American Indians’ cultural “survance.” By teaching Native art to her students, she aimed to make them able to live in a “modern” society, utilizing their artistic skills as a financial resource. Given the opportunity to study Native art and being able to exercise their artistic skills, “my pupils are only too glad to become Indians again,” she claimed, “and with just a little further work along these lines, I feel that we shall be ready to adapt our Indian talents to the daily needs and uses of modern life.”<sup>74</sup> De Cora knew in what context her students’ artistic skills could be useful. From her personal experience as an artist, she knew that Indian design was in demand, and if her students studied and understood those designs properly they could

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> De Cora, “An Effort to Encourage Indian Art,” 208.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 207-209.

make a living.<sup>75</sup> Sometime before the Christmas of 1914, De Cora wrote to her former teacher that she could make a lot of money painting china pins with Indian designs, including those from Zuni, Sioux, Navajo, Hopi and other tribes.<sup>76</sup> “Foolish things sell better always,” she told her teacher, recognizing the high commercial value of her Indian artistry to modern life.<sup>77</sup>

Thus she showed her students a variety of ways that they could make and sell their designs. Among them, she suggested making “stencil designs for the friezes and draperies, designs for rugs, embroideries, applique, wood carving, tiles and metal work.”<sup>78</sup> She also suggested that their Indian designs could be “used very effectively in brick and slate works, in parquet and mosaic floors, oilcloths, [and] carved wood furniture.”<sup>79</sup> These interior house decorations would satisfy people curious about collecting Indian artifacts. Training her students to create designs for “modern furnishings,” De Cora believed that her students would have secure artistic careers based on Indian designs, noting that “An Indian designer, professionally trained, would readily find employment where such work is in demand.”<sup>80</sup>

De Cora’s aim to use her students’ talents to support themselves mirrors the federal government’s intention to industrialize American Indians. As a teacher, De Cora was thus walking a thin line of spreading federal officials’ goal of making American Indians low-paying manual laborers or domestic workers.<sup>81</sup> As an Indian teaching Native

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<sup>75</sup> “Indian Art as Valuable Asset: Angel DeCora, Greatest of Redskin Painters, Tells of Commercial Value,” *The Inquirer*, February 2, 1913.

<sup>76</sup> Angel De Cora to Cora Mae Folsom, January 18, 1915, Angel De Cora Student File. HUA.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> De Cora, “Native Indian Art,” *Report of the Executive on the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference*, 86.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.; “Proceedings of the Anthropological Society of Washington,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series 10, no. 2 (April-June 1908): 294.

<sup>81</sup> Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 294.

craftsmanship, she thus risked taking part in a colonial project of producing “useful” Indians “who had been trained in subservience with minimal skills.”<sup>82</sup> Even so, De Cora never gave herself fully to that project. Within such a limited venue that she had as a teacher in a federally-funded program, she nevertheless taught her students to learn the necessary skills to survive in modern American society, whether they chose to make their living on or off the reservation after graduation. Moreover, she had a broader purpose in generating her students’ decorative instincts. By encouraging her students to develop their skills in manufacturing the tools and furnishings of the modern home, she hoped their productions would lead to American Indians’ financial and cultural “survivance.”

Moreover, her instruction of her students to work on modern furnishings had more meaning than just making them “useful” craftsmen. Through her Native art class, she wanted to revive American Indians’ artistic creativity, and perpetuate them by developing their skills in design that is applicable to modern use. As De Cora’s parents and relatives had already experienced, forced relocation and the pressure of assimilation made it difficult for American Indians to maintain their old traditions and customs. De Cora noted, “The Indian in his native dress is a thing of the past, but his art that is inborn shall endure,” pointing out that American Indians could never survive without adapting to new circumstances. Yet she also knew that there was an “Indianness” that even assimilation would not be able to deprive them of: their inherent artistry. She continued, “As all peoples have treasured the history of their wanderings in some form, so has the American Indian had his pictograph and symbolic records, and with the progress of time he has evolved it into a system of designing, drawing his inspiration

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<sup>82</sup> Lomawaima and McCarty, *To Remain an Indian*, 51.

from the whole breadth of his native land [...] with the survival of his latent abilities, he bravely offers the best productions of his mind and hand which shall be a permanent record of the race.”<sup>83</sup>

By manipulating the “Indian craze,” she thus instructed her students to embed Indianness in American households through decorations that residents would encounter daily. She encouraged her students to manufacture modern household furnishings, not only to enhance white sympathy and fascination toward American Indians, but also to preserve some Native artistic cultures. She thus helped Indians to revive their cultures in white homes. “We want to find a place for our art even as the Japanese have found a place for theirs, throughout the civilized world,” she claimed.<sup>84</sup> By directing her students to go into productions of household furnishings, she thus aimed to find a place for Native art in contemporary American culture.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In 1920, Natalie Curtis, an Euro-American ethnologist and author of *The Indian Book*, for which De Cora produced some of the graphics, spoke highly of De Cora in her obituary, lamenting De Cora’s death at the early age of forty-seven: “there is little tangible evidence that now can be shown of what Angel De Cora wrought, and above all, of what she dreamed, yet she did enough to prove abundantly that there is not only room but need for the American Indian in the art and in the industries of his own land [...] A people who are natural potters, weavers, designers, workers in metal and in textiles, should be recognized as such—particularly since they are absolutely the only

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<sup>83</sup> De Cora, “Native Indian Art,” *Report of the Executive on the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference*, 87.

<sup>84</sup> De Cora, “The Native Indian Art,” *The Indian School Journal*, 45.



people who can give us a decorative art of distinctive National character.”<sup>85</sup>

While Curtis could not point to many of De Cora’s obvious contributions to American society, De Cora’s actual contributions lay in some of her students’ success after graduating from Carlisle. For example, the Carlisle alumni and Chippewa Indian John Farr, class of 1908, studied architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, and eventually drew the design for a New York public library building. Her Navajo students also established themselves as silversmiths back in the Southwest. Another graduate from Carlisle, Samuel McLean, became an art teacher at a mission school in Omak, Washington.<sup>86</sup> These student success were few; the majority struggled to find work after graduation.<sup>87</sup> Yet these successes nevertheless suggest that De Cora’s goal to preserve the element of American Indian artistry partly succeeded. “The hand that first welcomed your ancestors is again extended and within it lies a latent talent,” De Cora claimed. “As every race has contributed its art to America, so this is the Indian’s contribution. [...] Indian art is distinctive, and should be preserved and developed as American art.”<sup>88</sup>

De Cora, as an Indian illustrator and teacher, utilized the opportunity she got from federal officials’ evolving “toleration” of Indian cultures to help regenerate her students’ Indian identity. Cultivating their artistic talent, she counteracted earlier attempts to obliterate Indian cultures through assimilation. She taught them skills to create art and craftworks that preserved and adapted Indian traditions for American households. In so doing, De Cora, as an Indian teacher, facilitated her students’ financial “survival” and

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<sup>85</sup> Curtis, “An American Indian Artist,” 66.

<sup>86</sup> Gere, “An Art of Survival,” 672; McAnulty, “Angel DeCora,” 186.

<sup>87</sup> Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 292-298; Lomawaima and McCarty, *To Remain an Indian*, 50.

<sup>88</sup> “Indian Art as Valuable Asset,” *The Inquirer*, February 2, 1913.

their cultural “survivance,” and regenerated their racial pride. Through her curriculum, she thus taught them to be proud again of being an “Indian” in modern American society. At the same time, by encouraging her students to produce designs useful for household furnishings and home décor, De Cora Indianized American home, turning it into what *Minneapolis Journal* called a “wigwam.”

## Conclusion

In 1900, Jessie Cook, a writer for *The Outlook* magazine wrote an article that picked out Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora, among a few others, as “The Representative Indian,” whose “new blood” “infuses a new and peculiar life into the field it selects” and “raises [their] race with [them].”<sup>89</sup> Describing these representative Indians as “truly Indians under the polish of college life and travel [... and] truly Americans as well, ready to become a part of our social, political, or literary life,” Cook celebrated the Euro-American education that made them both Indian and American. Cook suggests that they would set an example and inspire the future improvement of their own race – American Indians. Cook’s observation seems partly right.

As this study has demonstrated, Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora used their education to help American Indians survive in modern American society. However, as I have also pointed out, their contributions were not limited to the improvement of their own race. By manipulating mainstream expectations, they not only aimed to “raise” their race with them, but they also urged Euro-Americans to reconsider their attitudes and preconceptions about American Indians. By evoking mainstream curiosity and popular fascination toward Indians and showing the contributions that American Indians had made, they also made the case that they would continue making contributions to broader American society. Through a performance of self, Eastman, La Flesche, and De Cora thus redefined the meaning of Indianness and Americanness in their own terms, and crafted their identity and representation as an Indian who could play an active role in modern American society.

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<sup>89</sup> Jessie W. Cook, “The Representative Indian,” *The Outlook* 65, no. 1 (May 5, 1900), 83.

A Dakota physician and writer, Charles A. Eastman portrayed himself as a “primitive” Indian, taking advantage of popular romanticism about “Indian wisdom.” Through his writing, he critiqued modern industrialization and urbanization, which he claimed had morally and physically degraded Euro-American civilization. Evoking a shared concern that anti-modernist Americans had about their being “overcivilized,” Eastman, presenting himself as an “authentic” Indian who grew up with “primitive” Indian skills, urged Americans to learn from his Indian teachings. Through his summer camps, he thus encouraged white children to “go native” in nature, believing his instruction would help them develop into self-reliant American citizens. In doing so, he thus envisaged the future of America where Indians would live proudly as the “original” American whose wisdom would save America.

The Omaha ethnologist Francis La Flesche, on the other hand, disguised himself as a “civilized” Indian to counter mainstream stereotypes that saw American Indians as an “inferior” other. Instead, he used his status as an ethnologist to provide “authentic” resources to encourage musical composers to incorporate American Indian melodies. While his collaborators expected him to be a “primitive” Indian informant, La Flesche played upon that expectation and ultimately challenged it, by insisting on his authority. By playing a “civilized” Indian ethnologist, he provided the Indianist composer Charles Wakefield Cadman with “authentic” information, audio sources, and materials. In that way, Cadman’s musical “authenticity” depended on La Flesche. Utilizing his knowledge, ability and networks as an Omaha ethnologist, he thus stoked Cadman’s romanticism and eagerness to put American Indians at the center of American music, and therefore at the center of American identity.

Finally, the Winnebago illustrator and teacher Angel De Cora developed Native art

classes for Native students at Carlisle Indian Industrial School to make them learn to be “Indian” again. She took advantage of the “Indian craze” – the mainstream fascination with “primitive” Indian arts and crafts – to cultivate her students’ decorative skills in design for the use of American home furnishings. This, she thought, would not only give her students financial means to live after graduation, it would also preserve Indians’ artistic cultures. In addition, these student designs would enhance white sympathy and fascination toward American Indians by embedding Indianness in the most private spaces of American life. At the same time, De Cora seized upon the change in federal policy toward “tolerating” some traditional Indian practices to build a cultural space for her students to relearn their tribal traditions and refine their artistry to appeal to their racial pride, which had until recently been suppressed at the boarding school. De Cora, as a teacher at a federally-funded boarding school, risked taking part in the assimilationist project by making her Indian students “useful” workers at the lower rung of American society. However, she did not compromise. Rather, she used her boarding school classroom to revive American Indian artistic traditions and to make them relevant in modern American society.

While they each took a different path, Eastman, La Flesche and De Cora played Indian to convince their white audience of their credibility to talk about American Indians and to show that Indians had much to offer to broader American society. Living in a period when mainstream Americans saw Indians as vanishing, through their activism they eagerly created and contested the meaning of Indianness and Americanness. In so doing, they complicated the worldview that posited Euro-Americans at the top of the racial and social hierarchy.

The images of the “Indian” have been the product of Euro-American colonialism.

These distorted, overly-generalized images ignore the distinctive cultures and characteristics of diverse groups of American Indians. As my study has illustrated, however, it is also true that through performing these distorted images, American Indians at the turn of the twentieth century gained a means to enter national discussions about their political and cultural sovereignty and to reimagine the meaning of Indianness and Americanness on their own terms. Through playing Indian, they negotiated their identity and representations as both Indian and American. In doing so, they imagined an “Indianized” future for America, where Indians, far from vanishing, took their place as the “original” Americans who had vital contributions to the country’s past and its future.

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# Appendix

To Girls, their Parents and Friends!

## Doctor Charles A. Eastman

(Ohiyesa)



Author of  
 "INDIAN BOYHOOD"  
 "INDIAN SCOUT TALKS"  
 "THE SOUL OF THE INDIAN"  
 Etc.

DIRECTOR OF THE  
 WASHINGTON  
 AND BALTIMORE  
 BOY SCOUT CAMP  
 For the Season of 1914.

LECTURER ON  
 Indian Life and History,  
 Scoutcraft, Woodcraft,  
 and Nature Lore

will open a

## SCHOOL OF THE WOODS

At Granite Lake, New Hampshire

JULY 1, 1915

Figure 1. Portrait of Charles A. Eastman. Brochure. "School of the Woods"  
 Source: Goodell/Goodale Family papers. Jones Library Special Collection, Amherst, MA.

**A Doctor Among the Indians—Experiences of Dr Charles A. Eastman at Pine Ridge**

**DOCTORING THE SIOUX**  
 originally Dakota chief! An old-father, were new to me and not especially 1854 to 1857. Blue Horse had been  
 found box were the only ones appointed. After supper, as I had  
 for living on the premises, and the above in my dinner quarters (having  
 first duty I performed was to repair the first paupers of homesickness, an  
 I built a roaring fire in the stove, and Indian softly opened the door and to cross the creek with Buffalo Bill,  
 sat down for a few minutes to take stepped in without knocking, in char- The old man wanted nothing so much

**THE "MESSIAH" COMES**  
 set on his feet, through which my  
 professors had been wont to deal  
 and I  
 patients standing in line, and put a  
 sign outside the door telling them to  
 in, so  
 success  
 people

**FOUNDED KNEE MASSACRE**  
 I was  
 suggest  
 July 11

**Visit of Mercy to the Village of Dead Three Days After the Fight**

**Written by Dr CHARLES A. EASTMAN**  
 (of the Pine Ridge Reservation)  
 The Pine Ridge Indian agency was  
 a desolate and gloomy looking place  
 a house there, more especially in a  
 November atmosphere such as that in  
 which I arrived from Boston to take  
 charge of the medical work of the reser-  
 vation. In 1890 a "winter wonder"  
 too many an Indian was suffering  
 of a novelty, and I was alter-  
 nately informed that there were many  
 of diverse opinions as to the  
 of an epidemic of "diphtheria" in this new  
 life, but at the time I was unac-  
 quainted with the disease. I was 22 years  
 of age, but appeared much younger,  
 slender and vigorous, and after with  
 my bag and outfit. After the  
 visit to the Indian agent. I was  
 taken to my quarters, which consisted  
 of a bedroom, sitting room, of-  
 fice and dispensary all in one com-  
 mon barrack with the police quar-  
 ters and the agent's office. This bar-  
 rack was a fairly extensive affair  
 of warped cottonwood lumber,  
 of the side which were mounted  
 usually toward the center. There  
 in no carpets, no furniture, save  
 a plain desk and a couple of hard  
 wooden chairs, and everything was  
 laid with a quarter of an inch or so  
 of dirt. This did not dis-  
 comfort me, however, as I carried my

**WOUNDED KNEE ON THE MORNING AFTER THE BATTLE**  
 (From a photograph in the Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of ethnology)

An inventory of the situation and my  
 professional prospects.  
 I had not yet thought seriously of  
 making a life contract with any young  
 woman, and accordingly my place was  
 at the agency where the com-  
 manded supplies that they mean-  
 I read that the cook at that time  
 was a German, and the incident  
 was a German and the incident  
 was a German and the incident

as an addi- tion, and the tale of his  
 father was old Blue Horse, chief emer-  
 itus of the Leader band, of which  
 Blue Horse had formerly been a chief  
 in an army of Minnibets, and I was soon  
 afterwards promoted to the position  
 of an army surgeon.  
 Next morning I lunched up an In-  
 dian woman to assist in a general  
 cleaning and overhauling of the mes-  
 sages. My first official act was to clean  
 up the "hole in the wall" that a Min-  
 netonka had made in the wall of the  
 agent's window, through which my  
 patients had been wont to deal  
 and I  
 patients standing in line, and put a  
 sign outside the door telling them to  
 in, so  
 success  
 people

"Big Game" Day  
 It so happened that this was the  
 day of the "big game" on which thou-  
 sands of Indians scattered over a reser-  
 vation 100 miles long by 50 wide,  
 came to the agency for a weekly or  
 fortnightly supply of religion, and it  
 was a veritable "CROWD" affair  
 that greeted my astonished eyes. The  
 streets and squares were alive with a  
 motley crowd in picturesque garb, for  
 all wore their best on these occa-  
 sions. Every road leading to the  
 agency was filled with white-topped  
 lumber wagons, with here and there  
 a more primitive travois, and young  
 men and women on ponies, hawks  
 were gait carving over the hills. The  
 Sioux left of that period was arrayed  
 in grass-green or bright purple robes,  
 headed down with beads and bangles,  
 and cut across a spotted ponies, load-  
 ing over her gony uncovered breast  
 and vermilion-tinted cheeks a garb  
 colored all persons. Forward noon the  
 whole population moved out two or  
 three miles to a large covered in the  
 middle of a broad prairie, where a herd  
 of beef cattle was laid to rest by  
 the agency cowboys. An Indian  
 with stentorian voice, roared out on  
 post, announced the names of the  
 group whose steer was to be killed  
 today. Next moment the flying nar-  
 row was pursued by two or three  
 swift riders with rifles across their  
 good imitation of the old-time In-  
 dian hunt. The milking, long-  
 tailed steers were chased rapidly in  
 every direction, amid yells and whoops,  
 the drug of guns and clouds of yellow  
 dust, with here and there a part  
 of smoke and a dull report as one  
 animal and fell.

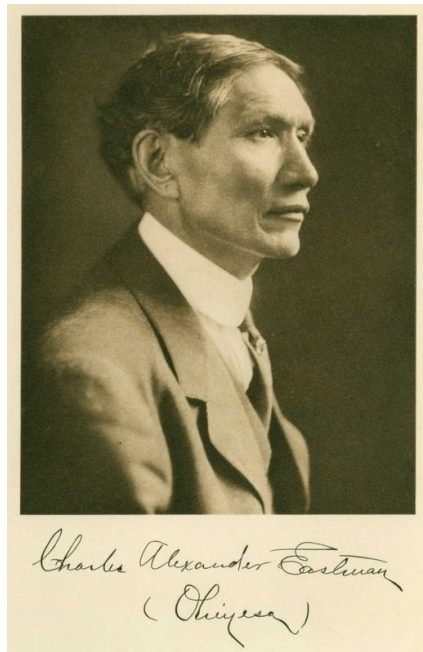
The settlement was soon over, and

Figure 2. Picture of the Wounded Knee massacre.  
 Source: Newspaper Clipping. Goodell/Goodale Family papers. Jones Library Special Collection, Amherst, MA.

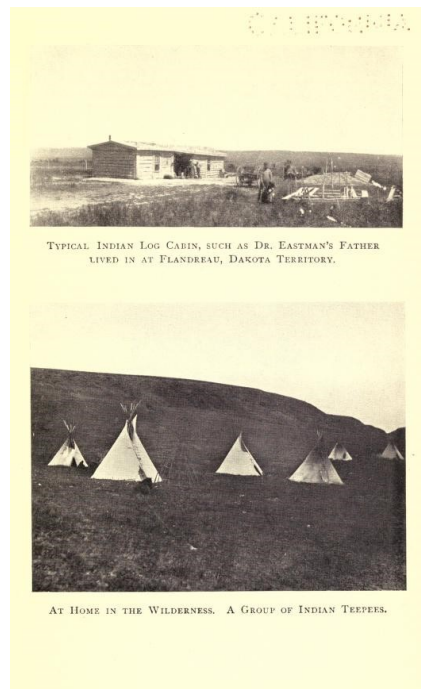


THE VISION

**Figure 3.** Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa). Frontispiece in Photogravure.  
Source: Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa), *The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1911).



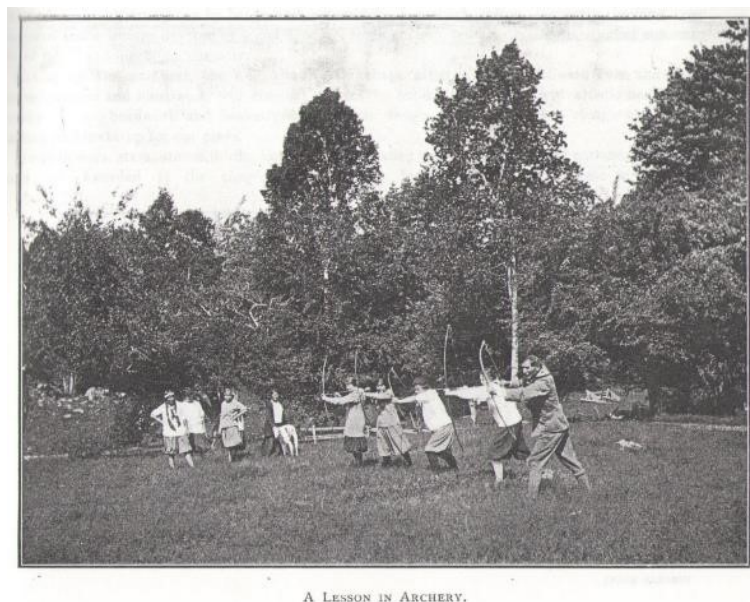
**Figure 4.** Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), Frontispiece in Photogravure.  
Source: Charles A. Eastman. *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1916). From: Newberry Library. Frontier to Heartland, <http://publications.newberry.org/frontiertoheartland/items/show/199> (Accessed November 15, 2015).



**Figure 5.** Picture of an Indian log cabin and Indian teepees.

Source: Charles A. Eastman. *From the Deep Woods to Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1916), 16.

From: California Digital Library, <https://archive.org/details/deepwoodsto00eastrich> (Accessed November 15, 2015).



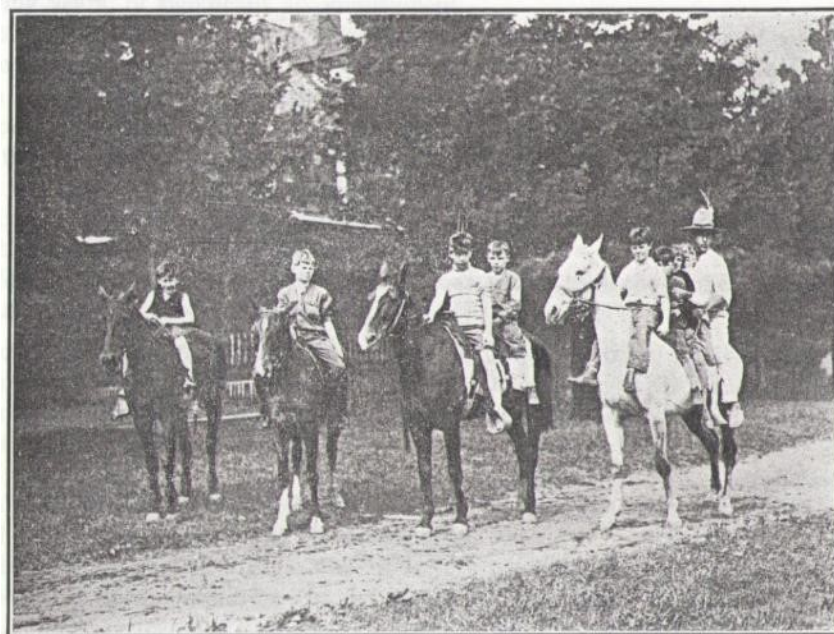
**Figure 6.** Eastman teaching archery to girls at Camp Oahe

Source: "OAHE (The Hill of Vision)—A Camp for Girls" (promotional brochure, 1916) Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. Jones Library Special Collections, Amherst, MA.



INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS.

**Figure 7** Indian Arts and Crafts instruction at Camp Oahe  
Source: “OAHE (The Hill of Vision)—A Camp for Girls” (promotional brochure, 1916)  
Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. Jones Library Special Collections, Amherst, MA.



BRINGING UP THE HORSES.

**Figure 8.** Eastman and boys at Camp Ohiyesa  
Source: “OHIYESA (the Winners)—A Camp For Boys” (promotional brochure, 1917)  
Goodell/Goodale Family Papers, Charles A. Eastman folder. Jones Library Special Collections, Amherst, MA.



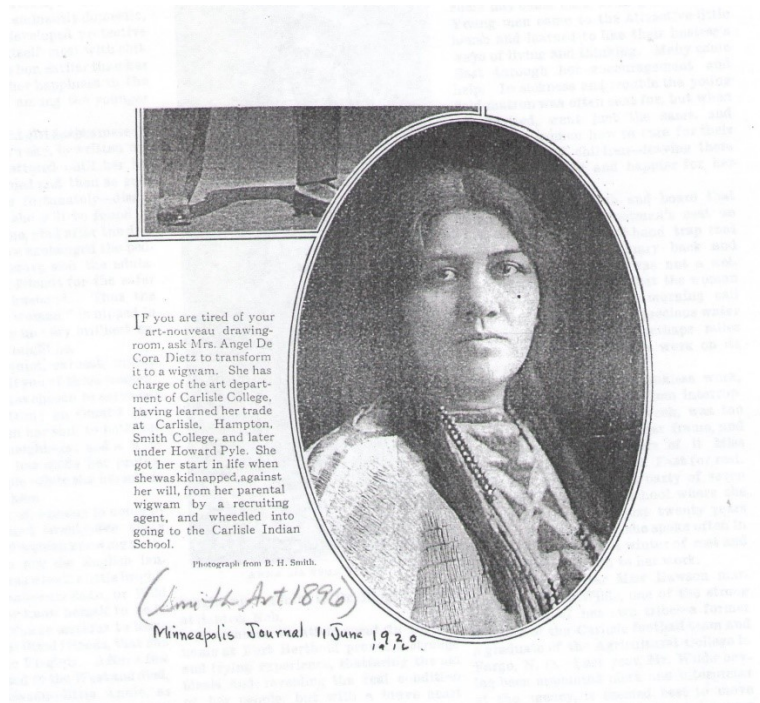
**Figure 9.** Omaha Man, Francis La Flesche. n.d.  
Picture inserted in “Francis La Flesche” by Hartley B. Alexander.  
Source: Negative 3939 B 2, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



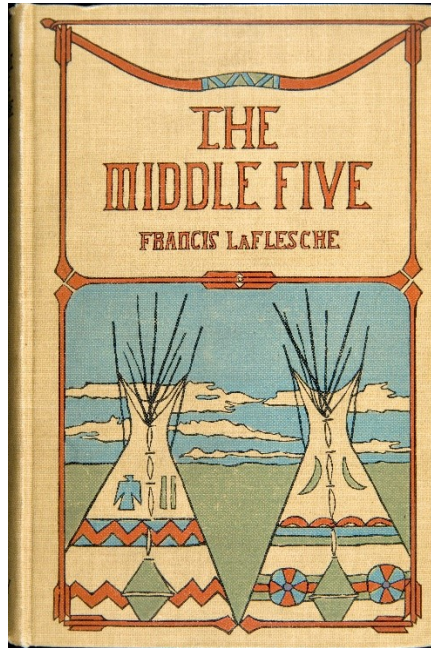
**Figure 10.** Francis La Flesche. n.d.  
Source: BAE GN 3939 B1, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



**Figure 11.** Portrait of Francis La Flesche. n.d.  
 Source: SPC Plains Omaha BAE 4558 La Flesche & Family 00688600, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.



**Figure 12.** Article on Angel De Cora  
*Minneapolis Journal* June 11, 1916. Source: Smith College Archives.



**Figure 13.** Cover. Francis La Flesche. *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1900).

Source: Newberry Call Number: Ayer 439 L16 1900. Newberry Digital Collections for the Classroom, <http://dcc.newberry.org/items/the-middle-five-indian-boys-at-school> (Accessed on November 15, 2015).

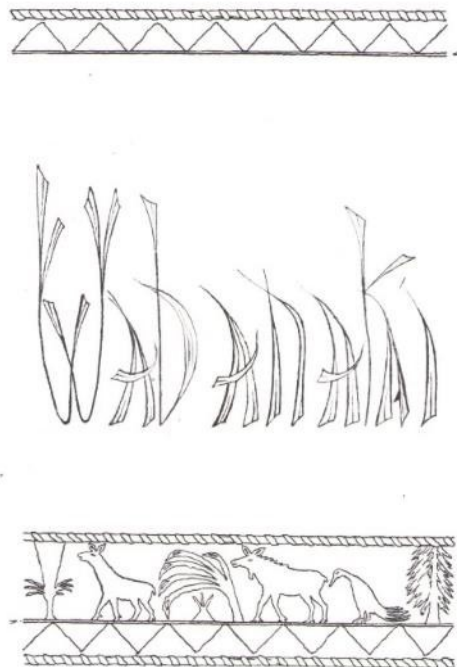


**Figure 14.** Frontispiece. Francis La Flesche. *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1900).

Source: Newberry Call Number: Ayer 439 L16 1900. Newberry Digital Collections for the Classroom, <http://dcc.newberry.org/items/the-middle-five-indian-boys-at-school> (Accessed on November 15, 2015).

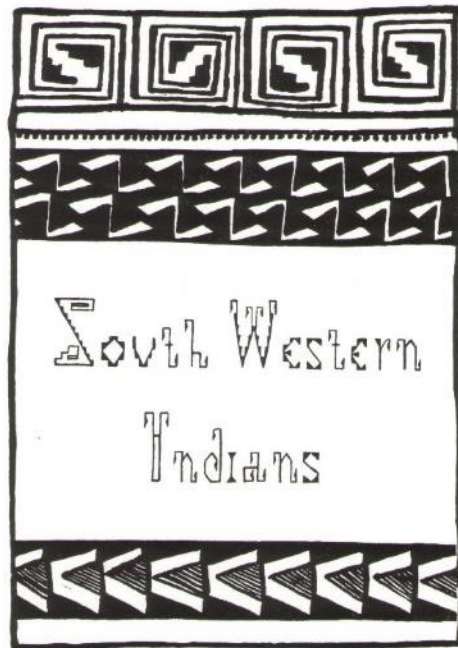


**Figure 15.** Title Page of Kwakiutl Indian.  
Source: Natalie Curtis. *The Indian's Book* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1907).

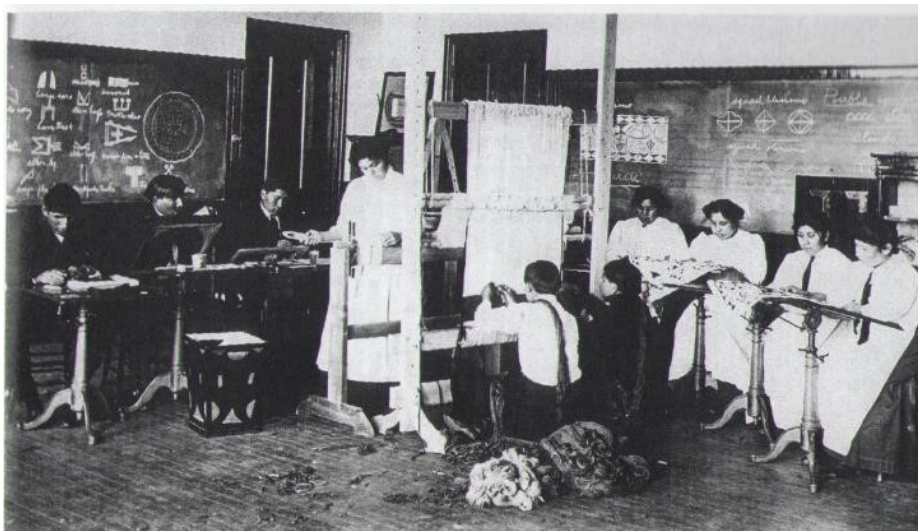


**Figure 16.** Title Page of Wabanaki Indian.  
Source: Natalie Curtis. *The Indian's Book* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1907).





**Figure 17.** Title Page of South Western Indians.  
Source: Natalie Curtis. *The Indian's Book* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1907).



**Figure 18.** De Cora's Native Art Classroom (Weaving Class)  
Source: Linda F. Witmer. *The Indian Industrial School, Carlisle Pennsylvania, 1879-1918* (Carlisle: Cumberland County Historical Society), 79.