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Lonna M. Malmsheimer

Historians, even cultural historians, have been reluctant to use photographs for the purposes of historical research. Only within the last twenty-five years has research in photographic history itself begun to reach a sophisticated state; with some exceptions, to other historians it remains an interesting but relatively unimportant subfield of the larger discipline (Borchert 1980:269–275). Materials usually reserved for photographic or art history, however, often appear when historians emerge from their own subfields to write textbooks whose publishers insist on or themselves develop elaborate illustrative apparatuses because they know that their audiences will not tolerate long, unrelieved bodies of print. That in itself is an indication of the social and cultural transformation that has occurred since the introduction of reproduced photographs into public discourse. Nevertheless, the use of photographs in textbooks remains largely decorative. Even when accompanied by identifying captions, photographs, unlike quotations, are seldom commented on in a substantially interpretive way or integrated within the flow of other historical description and analysis.

However, recent general interest in material culture may serve to correct this verbal bias. Such a correction could have considerable consequence, for, at least since the late nineteenth century, photographs have been an integral part of the cultural discourses that historians analyze and explain. At the most basic level, photographs are visual artifacts of a single historical event—a photographer “takes” a photograph of an object, his subject. In other words, the making of a photograph, at least of another person, is itself a social interaction that, however motivated, has consequences both large and small (Byers 1966:27–31). At a second level, photographs, like verbal documents, are expressive forms constructed by actors for various purposes and used by those actors in a conversation concerning themselves and others to record, illustrate, interpret, understand, persuade—indeed, in a semiotic sense, to take possession of—their social and cultural worlds. Moreover, the photographer both takes and later makes a photograph within the context of variously understood codes, both visual and verbal, without which the photograph has no meaning whatsoever for others. As Allan Sekula has argued:

Photography . . . is not an independent or autonomous language system, but depends on larger discursive conditions, invariably including those established by the system of verbal-written language. Photographic meaning is always a hybrid construction, the outcome of an interplay of iconic, graphic and narrative conventions. The photograph is invariably accompanied by and situated within an overt or covert text. [Sekula 1981:16]

Many photographs were made precisely because they were usable within a given communications situation, and others were used for purposes quite beyond those conceived by their makers. Because this is so, a genuinely historical interpretation of photographs requires that full attention be given to the communications contexts in which they were taken, made, and actually used. Moreover, where photographs have been important to a given historical discourse, they must be seen, in turn, as providing the context for the verbal documents that are more often the center of analytic attention. Not only, then, do words provide the necessary context for the interpretation of photographs, but photographs provide an essential and hitherto neglected visual context for the complete historical understanding of words. From this point of view, photographs are not so much reflections of a past material actuality as they are, like words, examples of a past symbolic reality.

The photographs that document the Carlisle Indian Industrial Training School number perhaps as many as 2,500, but only about 600 of them, taken by three different photographers, can be seen as integral to an understanding of the school in the sense outlined above; most of the others are head shots or small group portraits of students, and while they are of interest to those seeking knowledge of certain individuals, they contribute little to the social history of the school as an institution. Among the most relevant 600, a smaller number take on heightened symbolic importance by virtue of their repeated use, over time, for persuasive purposes. These particular photographs, taken by the local photographer J. N. Choate and used as before-and-after pairs, are iconic representations of the cultural transformation that was the central aim of the school. Their historical meanings can be determined only by reference to the larger persuasive discourse in which they were embedded; more important, understood within the context of the photographs, the full import of the verbal discourse becomes clearer. The aim of this article, therefore, is to include these photographs in formulating a historical understanding of a particular institution over a particular time and, by example, to suggest that such inclusion has methodological and substantive implications for the conclusions historians have reached about this particular institution.

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Richard Henry Pratt and Carlisle

The Indian Industrial Training School, known to tribal people simply as "Carlisle," was founded in 1879 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, by Richard Henry Pratt, a career military officer and zealous reformer. As a young army officer in Indian territory, where he had worked with Plains Indians, Pratt had become convinced that tribal peoples could and should be assimilated into the territorially advancing white civilization. For him, assimilation was a matter of moral rectitude, social justice, and civil rights as well as a practical solution to a situation of conflict. He believed further that the destruction of the reservation system that materially supported tribal society was essential to the effort, and, as early as 1880, he argued for the immediate establishment of 500 schools, similar to Carlisle, which he believed would be needed for only one generation. Central to his thinking about assimilation was his insistence that such schools be located at a considerable distance from the reservations. As Pratt often stated: "To civilize the Indian, get him into civilization. To keep him civilized, keep him there." Likewise, he summarized his program for acculturation in his own blunt, unsentimental way: "The Indian must die as an Indian and live as a man."

For Pratt, then, to "live as a man" was to move "from barbarism into civilization," a phrase that became one of the school's often-repeated mottos. Like many of his time—though none were more energetic or more certain—Pratt had a very clear idea of the character of "barbarism." In spite of contrary, if conflicting, opinion among both contemporary missionaries and ethnologists (for whom he often expressed considerable contempt), he typically used the following adjectives in describing all tribal societies: "savage," "communistic," "nomadic," "crude," "indolent," "disorderly," "dirty," "peace destroying," "ignorant," "imprudent," and "wild." Although his portrait of barbarism exhibits most of the assumptions of contemporary negative stereotypes of "the Indian" (he regarded the positive stereotype of the noble savage as "sentimental"), Pratt was equivocal when discussing the sources of those characteristics. At times, especially when called upon to explain and defend his own methods of assimilation, he spoke of barbarism as totally the product of environment. At other times, when a "retrogression" was noted in his ex-students who had returned to the reservation, he spoke of a combination of "heredity and environment." While Pratt never permitted an argument of race in the strictest biological sense to inform his thinking about the potential for "civilization" of tribal peoples, his use of the term "heredity" is problematic. Like other hereditarian thinking of the period and lacking an explicit theory of culture, Pratt's ideas exhibit an irresolvable ambiguity. His ultimate aim may well have been a

complete amalgamation of races, for at times he pointed out that, if tribal populations were dispersed throughout the country, each county would have very few Indians. Yet it would have been imprudent at best to press such an argument publicly, raising as it did the spectre of miscegenation. Whatever his projections of the eventual integration of tribal and white societies, his ultimate faith in his program of education for "civilization" never wavered, even though the difficulties and uncertainties of such education had to have become clearer to him as he gained experience at the school.

For Pratt, the entire civilizing process needed to be carried out in a way that brought his Indian students into daily and relatively intimate contact with whites. Because it tended to segregate the students, he saw even the school as a compromise in this respect and developed a program called the Outing System to facilitate acculturation processes. In this program, students who had acquired adequate English language training (generally requiring about three years) lived for varying lengths of time with white (mostly Quaker) families, attending local public schools and otherwise participating in community activities. While Pratt did not espouse an explicit cultural theory, then, his program exhibited commitment to what would now be a commonplace of cross-cultural education: that cultural immersion, though difficult, especially for the unwilling student, is the best route to cultural knowledge.

If Pratt was certain about the barbaric qualities of tribal life, he was equally certain about the character of civilization: "competitive," "virile," "gentlemanly," "peaceable," "serviceable," "industrious," "productive," "thrifty," "prudent," "self-supporting," "Christian," "individualistic," and, as he paradoxically put it, "obedient," "marching in line with America" (Pratt 1964 and 1979). Like many others of his time, he never doubted that such qualities were wholly desirable in all human beings; he differed from many of his contemporaries in his belief that tribal peoples were fully capable of both appreciating the superiority of those qualities and acquiring them. From the beginning, then, the Carlisle Indian School and its founder were highly controversial, and Pratt's efforts at acculturation were constantly challenged from various and conflicting points of view. Simply to establish and maintain Carlisle required continued persuasive activity directed at various agencies outside the school. In many of these activities Pratt made use of accompanying sets of photographs, for even before the founding of Carlisle he had learned that photographs could provide an important demonstration of the efficacy of his "final solution" to the "Indian problem."

Figure 1 Plains Indian Prisoners, Fort Marion (before). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Early Photographs

Pratt's first use of before-and-after photographs as visual documentation of cultural transformation was made at Fort Marion, Florida, where he had experimented with the teaching of English to the Plains Indian prisoners that the army had placed in his charge (see Figures 1, 2). These stereographs were circulated not only among the reformers already concerned with the condition of tribal groups, but also in the more general commercial networks of the period. For at least one contemporary observer, Helen W. Ludlow of the Indian Rights Association, the meanings of this pair were very clear:

Before me, as I write, are two photographs. The Indians as they went into, and the same Indians as they came out of Fort Marion. Looking at these pictures, I am disposed to agree with the warriors that the old fort was their tomb. These half-naked, crouching forms with blankets dropping from their gauntness; with savage locks streaming over their eyes, and down to their knees; with barbaric ornaments of huge brass hoops in their ears and on their thin arms; with fierce and sullen faces; these are not even the bodies "that should be" when God should recreate the abject souls and give them bodies as it pleased Him—straight, erect, manly, with smiling, earnest faces, and hopeful, on-looking eyes, as here they stand on resurrection day, with their prison gates behind them. [Ludlow 1886:3]

Ludlow's commentary on the photographs reiterates the code of Pratt's own descriptions of barbarism and civilization and establishes the interpretive context of these visual documents. Transformation of the body stands for transformation of the soul; transformation of dress and demeanor, for transformation of identity. Christian resurrection provides the underlying metaphor: released from their prison (tomb) by God and civilization, the Indians, no longer half-naked, crouching, gaunt, savage, barbaric, fierce, and sullen, stand straight, erect, manly, smiling, earnest, hopeful, and on-looking. Given the power of the photograph as a

medium in 1880s America, before the flood of imagery characteristic of twentieth-century American culture, these photographs must have been quite arresting as persuasive devices.

Certainly Pratt thought them useful, for between 1878 and 1885 he saw to it that potential "before" photographs were made at the beginning of some student careers. In November 1878, when he brought a group of Plains Indians to Hampton Institute where they were to become trial students, he and General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Hampton's supervisor, commissioned "before" portraits. Fourteen months later, after Pratt had moved on to establish his own school, the "after" versions followed. That the central and preconceived aim of these photographs was the eventual documentation of transformation is clear from the fact that only those who arrived in "reservation dress" were photographed.

Initiation

By the time Pratt brought the first group of (mostly Sioux) students to an unused army barracks at Carlisle, the making of potential "before" portraits had become a primary order of business: J. N. Choate, eventually to become the "official Indian School photographer," took a number of group portraits on October 5, 1879, the very day of the new students' arrival (see Figures 3, 4). These particular students were greeted earlier that day by a large group of townspeople who had been led by the local newspaper to expect that the new students would arrive in "reservation attire" (*Valley Sentinel*, Sept. 19, 1879:5).

Reaction to the group was reported in the *Valley Sentinel*: About twelve o'clock on Sunday night Captain Pratt arrived at the junction with eighty-six Sioux children . . . varying in age from ten to seventeen. Their dress was curious, made of different cheap material and representing all the shades and colors. Cheap jewelry was worn by the girls. Their moccasins are covered with fancy bead work.

Figure 2 Plains Indian Prisoners, Fort Marion (after). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

They carry heavy blankets and shawls with them and their appearance would not suggest that their toilet was a matter of care. Some of them were very pretty while others are extremely homely. All possessing the large black eye, beautiful pearl white teeth, the high cheek bone, straight-cut mouth and peculiar nose. The school is made up of 63 boys and 23 girls. The reason that there were more boys than girls is that the girls command a ready sale in their tribes at all times, while no value is attached to the boys. About 3000 savages assembled at the agency the night previous to the departure of the party and kept up a constant howling throughout the night. On the cars and here they have been very orderly and quiet. . . . The majority of the party are made up of the sons and daughters of chiefs. . . . The boys will be uniformed in gray material similar to that worn by the two Indians and instructors who have been here for some time. The girls will wear soft woolen dresses. [*Valley Sentinel*, Oct. 10, 1879:5]

The events at the railroad junction, like the preceding long boat and railroad trip and the following photographic session, were part of the student's initiation into civilization. So, too, the school required change in both dress and demeanor, since for eastern whites native dress was an essential symbol of the "wild tribes." Indeed, the phrase "blanket Indian" became an epithet, and a return to tribal ways was referred to as "going back to the blanket." A *Valley Sentinel* editorialist later commented on the transformation to come:

The work in which Capt. Pratt and his assistants are engaged would seem to an outside observer as both difficult and tedious, not to say unpleasant, but the experiment seems to have been successful at Hampton College, as we now have several of the students of that institution at the [Carlisle] Barracks, who seem to be clothed and in their right mind. [*Valley Sentinel*, Oct. 17, 1879:5]

"Citizen's clothes" and "right mind" are regarded as corollaries, and both are seen as indexical to the long-term goal of cultural assimilation. But the immediate interest of eastern whites, many of whom were more than a little skeptical of Pratt's plans, was to see a "real live Indian" in "native garb." A week later, a large number of people who assembled to greet them "were disappointed" when a second group of students (see Figure 5), who seem not to have been photographed by Choate, arrived "already dressed in citizens dress" (*Valley Sentinel*, Oct. 31, 1879:5). By mid-November, the newspaper commented positively on the "quite changed appearance" (*Valley Sentinel*, Nov. 14, 1879:5) of the earlier students in their new clothes.

Student reactions to these typical first stages of initiation into a total institution were not so uniformly positive. Luther Standing Bear, among the first and eventually (by Pratt's standards) one of the most successful of Carlisle's students, has described the reactions of the young male Sioux to the process of transformation. He reports that the school was ill prepared for its first students and, when they arrived, they spent the first few days without sufficient food (at least once eating only bread and water) and sleeping on cold floors. Nonetheless, classroom instruction in English was begun. As part of this early instruction, sometime during the first few weeks, each student selected a white man's name for himself by "pointing with a stick" to one written on a blackboard. Standing Bear notes that "none of the names were read or explained to us, so of course we did not know the sound or meaning of any of them." The boys were uncertain about whether it was "right" to choose a white man's name; Standing Bear himself chose "Luther" in the same way that he might have counted coups, acting "as if I were about to touch an enemy" (Standing Bear 1975:137). Some of the names chosen later caused considerable "merriment" when called out at

Figure 3 First Student Group, Boys (before). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 4 First Student Group, Girls (before). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

a public meeting attended by townspeople. The *Valley Sentinel* reported that "General Grant was there, as was also Abe Lincoln and Dan Tucker" (Jan. 2, 1880:5).

Choosing a new name and learning it was less traumatic for Standing Bear, who wanted to please his nice teacher, than the next initiation rite—the cutting of the young men's hair. An interpreter's announcement that all students would have their hair cut precipitated a spontaneous evening council of the Sioux in which the boys generally assented to the position taken by Kakpa Kesela (Robert American Horse): "If I am to learn the ways of the white people, I can do it just as well with my hair on." However, resistance was easily overcome when the boys were taken one by one from the classroom by the barber, each returning with short hair. Standing Bear, as he saw an increasing number of his peers shorn, "began to feel anxious to be 'in style,' . . . but when [his] hair was cut short, it hurt [his] feelings to such an extent that the tears came to [his] eyes." Years later Standing Bear explained at length:

Right here I must explain how this hair-cutting affected me in various ways. I have recounted that I always wanted to please my father in every way possible. All his instructions to me had been along this line: "Son, be brave and get killed." This expression had been molded into my brain to such an extent that I knew nothing else. But my father had made a big mistake. He should have told me, upon leaving home, to go and learn all I could of the white man's ways, and be like them. That would have given a new idea from a different slant; but Father did not

advise me along that line. I had come away from home with the intention of never returning alive unless I had done something very brave. Now, after having my hair cut, a new thought came into my head. I felt that I was no more Indian, but would be an imitation of a white man. And we are still imitations of white men, and the white men are imitations of the Americans. [Standing Bear 1975:141]

At least two of the older Sioux boys resisted hair cutting. Pratt reports that, in his absence from the school later in the evening, one then cut his own hair (among the traditional Sioux, done in grief or self-abnegation) and began what Pratt called a "discordant wailing" (a traditional expression of grief) on the parade ground of the school. Other students then joined in, alarming Mrs. Pratt. She quieted them, stating that if they did not stop the townspeople might come and "something dreadful might happen." Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that "soon all was quiet again" (Pratt 1964:232).

Hair cutting seems to have represented the nadir of group resistance and expressed emotion during these early stages of transformation. Standing Bear found the change from native dress to the military-style uniforms worn during class hours, and especially the citizen's clothing worn otherwise, an adventure, even buying additional items of clothing not provided by the school. Ernest White Thunder, on the other hand, wrote bitterly to his father, for whom a portrait photograph was then made (see Figure 6), that "we all look like soldiers now" (Eadle Keatah Toh, April 1880:2). When discovered by a group of visiting

Figure 5 First Student Group, Boys, Lower Ranks (after). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Sioux leaders later that year, the military uniform, as well as the drill that became a part of Pratt's disciplinary regimen, caused considerable controversy. The training of his sons "as soldiers," along with their Christianizing, led prominent Sioux leader Spotted Tail to withdraw his children from the school.¹ Although some students, like Standing Bear, eventually judged the transformation, on balance, as positive, others continued to resist. White Thunder died at the school in the spring of 1880, refusing to accept both food and medical treatment that he did not trust. For students and their tribal parents, as for Eastern whites, then, transformation of appearance and demeanor both stood for and were part of transformation of identity and culture.

Within two months of the founding of the school, appearance cues to the tribal status of its students were apparent only when parents and tribal officials visited the school, in Mrs. Pratt's growing collection of tribal artifacts, and in the downtown studio of J.N. Choate, who put an increasing number of photographs on sale. Progress in compiling his Indian School series, which totaled more than a hundred photographs by August 19, 1881, was reported in newspapers and various school publications. In addition to large group photographs, often made on the school grounds, Choate made before-and-after studio portraits of individuals and small tribal groups (see Figures 7, 8). Whether full length or head shot (often both were made from the same negative), the photographs conform fully to the white portrait conventions of the time. Some tendency toward less formal pos-

ing, indeed probably for the photographer to have given less instruction in appropriate portrait demeanor, is evident in some of the "before" versions, especially those done outdoors rather than in the studio. Still, most of these portraits, especially the "after" versions, conform to patterns of self-presentation in the period portraits of middle-class whites. The subject, in most instances, faces the camera directly; the posture is taut and controlled; variation in gaze or position in the group photographs is controlled by the photographer; facial expression is serene and impassive, self-contained rather than interactive (see Figures 9, 10). Any interaction between the subjects clearly is engineered by the photographer, and the props are routine for the studios of the period. The portraits express an ideology of propriety and complete bodily control. The teaching of such matters was quite explicit at the school, as is often the case in an institution primarily aimed at socialization, and Pratt noted the changes that new students, especially males, underwent:

When dressed and in line for marching the new pupils are generally easily distinguished from the older ones, at least among the boys, for their shuffling gate [sic], the way the hat is worn and the hang of the hands . . . But it is remarkable how soon these peculiarities disappear and they learn the martial tread and to tip the hat as they meet their friends. [Eadle Keatah Toh, 1882:2]

Figure 6 Ernest White Thunder. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 7 Navajo Group (before). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 8 Navajo Group (after). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 9 Mary Perry, John Chaves, Ben Thomas, and Pueblo (before). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 10 Mary Perry, John Chaves, and Ben Thomas (after). U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 11 Apache on Arrival. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 12 Apache Four Months Later. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Photographs tend to elicit narrative interpretation whenever two or more are placed together. Considered as pairs, these portraits take advantage of this inherent property. Captions, identifying students by native name in the "before" versions and anglicized name in the "after," reinforced this narrative property. The photographs' basic and obvious theme is change. But the change they suggest within the contemporary context, a period in which assimilation became the policy of the federal government, is far more profound than the actual change that could have occurred during the period of time (between two months and two years) that normally ensued between the making of the two portraits.

Propaganda

Pratt made extensive use of these photographs in his indefatigable efforts at what he called propaganda (Pratt 1964:282).² Especially early in the school's history, repeated references to enclosed photographs pepper his voluminous correspondence. He sent prints to the parents of children in attempts to alleviate their anxieties. He sent them to reservation agents who in turn often helped him in his recruiting efforts, in part because they had noticed that the children's absence to Carlisle had the beneficial secondary effect of making their parents more cooperative than others on the reservation. He sent them to benefactors and potential benefactors of the school and included prints in his lobbying correspondence with local, state, and national political and administrative officials who had the power to either aid or hinder him in his work. He sent full sets of photographs as illustrations of his annual reports to the federal agencies related to the school. Moreover, Pratt undoubtedly carried copies of the photographs, either as cabinet

cards or lantern slides, on his extensive travels to recruit new students and to present his views on the school, Indian education in general, and the political aspects of the "Indian problem." As he explained to others, he was conducting a twofold educational program:

We have two objects in view in starting the Carlisle School—one is to educate the Indians—the other is to educate the people of the country . . . to understand that the Indians can be educated. [*Daily Evening Sentinel*, June 4, 1891:2]

In other forms, these photographs received an even wider distribution. J. N. Choate early recognized the commercial value of his relationship to the school, and the availability of the photographs for public purchase was advertised widely in area newspapers, on broadsides, and on the backs of Choate-made cabinet cards. In the form of stereographs, some were also made available to the larger, developing commercial networks of the period, which catered to a growing popular taste for such items as souvenirs, educational aids, and parlor entertainment. During the

first school year, having acquired a printing press from a private benefactor, Pratt instituted a monthly publication, *Eadle Keatah Toh*, or *The Morning Star*, which was printed by Indian apprentices and circulated at a modest subscription rate.³ Drawings made from the photographs and, later, when technically possible, halftone reproductions were printed here and in the local newspapers as well as in the national magazines of the time.

Figure 13 Tom Torlino, 1882. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Three Pairs

Three particular pairs of photographs were selected repeatedly to represent the theme of transformation. Before 1886, probably the most widely circulated pair were of an Apache group who arrived at the school in 1884 (see Figures 11, 12). These particular photographs were used not only in publications, but also as a complimentary gift to each contributor who donated enough money to "pay for one brick" in a new dormitory at the school. Upon arrival in Carlisle, this group of students was described as being

as dirty a crowd as one would wish to see. They were half-clad, some with only a blanket, dirty, greasy, and all wore a scared look. If all the people who observed them in this condition, could only see them after they go

through the "civilizing process" at the school all prejudice, if any exists, against Indian schools would vanish. It is wonderful the transformation that is made. Take the filthy children and after being . . . scrubbed, hair cut and clad in clean garments, no one would recognize them as the same beings. These children are the sons and daughters of Indians who were a short time ago waging war against the whites. [*Daily Evening Sentinel*, Feb. 2, 1884:4]

Four months later, when these Apache were "on exhibition at the Academy of Music, Philadelphia . . . along with Capt. Pratt's civilized Indians," presumably in the "after" state portrayed in the second photograph (taken at about the same time) a reporter stated that "they are just as they came from the plains, and look and act very wild" (*Daily Evening*

Figure 14 Tom Torlino, 1884. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Sentinel, May 20, 1884:1). In this instance, then, seeing is confirming belief. It is also significant in this context that the reporter failed to note that these Apache arrived not from their tribal environments, but from a government prison at Fort Marion, Florida.

Tom Torlino, the son of an important Navajo head man who came to the school in 1882 at the age of 22, was the subject of the most widely circulated of the three pairs after 1886 (see Figures 13, 14). Recruited from Fort Defiance, he was part of a group of seventeen others, including three sons of Chief Manuelito, two of whom were also photographed as potential "befores." The death of Manuelito Chou shortly after his return to the reservation in 1883, and the subsequent return of Manuelito Choquito to the reservation by order of his father, who demanded the return of all the Navajo boys, prevented completion of

the "after" versions.⁴ Torlino, however, remained at the school, and his "after" portrait, made in 1884, was put to widespread use in a circulation campaign for the *Morning Star*:

Standing Offer

For one new subscriber to the *Morning Star* we will send you a photographic group of our printer boys, size 8 x 5 inches. For TWO new subscribers we give two photographs, one showing a group of Pueblos [see Figures 10 and 11] as they arrived in wild dress, and another of the same pupils three years after; or for TWO names we give two photographs, one showing a Navajoe in his still wilder native dress, and the other after two years in school, and as he looks at present. [*Morning Star*, 1886:3]

Figure 15 Wounded Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear, Timber Yellow Robe, Sioux (before). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Torlino's portraits, then, were seen to present the fullest contrast between the "before" and "after" states symbolized, and, to this day, they are singled out whenever the school is represented iconographically.

The third most prominent before-and after pair, made in 1883 and 1885, were of a Sioux threesome, Chauncey Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear (a brother of the memoirist), and Richard Yellow Robe (see Figures 15, 16). Selection of all three of these pairs was probably in part the result of aesthetic considerations: variety is ensured both by type of portrait (larger group, small group, and individual) and by three different styles of native dress. More important, perhaps, were the particular tribes presented. The Sioux, the Navajo, and the Apache were prominent groups, all regarded by contemporary whites as particularly recalcitrant, isolated, or hostile. But these three pairs of photographs have visual commonalities which suggest that selection was also made to exaggerate the contrast between the two states typified, a criterion made somewhat explicit in the earlier cited subscription campaign advertisement for the Torlino pair. In each case, the "before" versions include little

or no indication of prior acculturation; any items of "citizen's dress" that appear, for example, have been modified by standards of individual or tribal taste. Facial expressions in the "after" versions are, as one contemporary observer put it, "more intelligent," or pleasanter by white standards. This is demonstrable in Torlino's case because selection of the "after" version was made from at least two different portraits. Finally, in the prints of all three pairs there is a marked contrast in skin color: in the original prints these particular students appear literally to be getting whiter.⁵

Figure 16 Chauncey Yellow Robe, Henry Standing Bear, Richard Yellow Robe, Sioux (after). Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Exhibitions

As photodocumentation of the school increased and became more sophisticated, these three pairs continued to appear in fully developed photographic catalogues, like the contemporary Hampton Album, and in substantial exhibits sent to various local, county, and state fairs, museums, exhibit halls, and the well-known major expositions of the period. Reaction to one exhibit was reported in the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* in 1885:

The careful inspector will first be struck by a number of photographs showing the Indian pupils on arriving, and again at later periods in their course. The difference is striking not in the mere change of clothing and improved carriage, but the development of intelligence shown by the faces will impress the observer. [Quoted in *Daily Evening Sentinel*, Feb. 17, 1885:1]

After 1886, Chauncey Yellow Robe, one of the relatively few students who remained at Carlisle long enough to graduate in 1895, increasingly became the center of attention as a typification of Carlisle's accomplishments. Photographs of Yellow Robe appeared in publications and exhibits, and he was

featured on the cover of the most elaborate of Carlisle's photographic catalogues to appear before 1902 (see Figure 17). In framing the photographs with drawings, this cover explicitly completes the iconography of cultural transformation. By the time it was printed, in about 1895, Yellow Robe had likely become accustomed to representing the school, for Pratt reports that as "a fine specimen of gentlemanly young manhood, [he] was part of the [World Columbian Exposition] exhibit as a sample and to assist in giving information" (Pratt 1964:307).

Carlisle's Chicago exhibit issued from a bitter controversy between Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas J. Morgan and Pratt about the Interior Department's plans for the Exposition. Morgan had approached Pratt to supervise a demonstration school intended as part of a larger exhibit also presenting a variety of tribal groups in their daily lives. Pratt refused to be a part of that exhibit, arguing that "anything like aboriginal or wild west feature" should not be presented to the public. For Pratt, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show (also part of the Exposition) and the displays of the Bureau of American Ethnology amounted to the same thing, namely "exhausting [sic]

Indianisms" and keeping "the nation's attention and the Indian's energies fixed upon his valueless past." In addition, Pratt did not want to give the impression that Carlisle was in any way similar to reservation day and boarding schools, which he believed promoted "tribal cohesion," and he was offended by the fact that supervision of the complete exhibit would be in the hands of the ethnologists and Carlisle would thus be "subordinated" to "the most insidious and active enemies of Carlisle's purposes." Carlisle's exhibit, from Pratt's point of view, "aimed and showed how to make productive citizens out of [the Indian]" and how he could "learn to march in line with America as a very part of it, head up, eyes front, where he could see his glorious future of manly competition in citizenship and be on equality as an individual." Pratt therefore arranged, through "influential and official friends in the exposition management," to present an exhibit of Carlisle's work in the industrial education section of the Exposition (Pratt 1964:303–305; see Figure 18).

Pratt was at least indicating a newfound punctiliousness here, since Carlisle's own exhibits often included tribal artifacts and photographic references to the tribal past of his students. During the first decade of the school, moreover, he had routinely orchestrated dramatic live exhibits of his own students as a strategy for fundraising and the education of eastern whites. Such displays were common experience for a constant stream of visitors to Carlisle, and from time

to time virtually the entire student body was taken on road shows to Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Among other things, these demonstrations included live before-and-after tableaux and presented the debating society demonstrating its skill at "civilized" argument. On at least one such circuit, in 1887, the resolution considered was "that Indians be exterminated." Clearly sensationalism was not the issue.

Such punctiliousness was short-lived as well, for the 1895 catalog, published by Choate, included both before-and-after pairs and a very peculiar "before" photograph, which was sold with the Choate series both in town and at the school (see Figure 19). This photograph is not a photograph at all, but a photocopy of a George Catlin drawing. The sketch was made from observations of tribal life and portrays a male dancer taking part in a Mandan ritual; in this ritual, the dancer portrays O-kee-pa, the Mandan spirit of evil. As sold by Choate, the photocopy was originally captioned:

The first Indian boy who applied to Captain Pratt—Ft. Berthold, D.T., September 19, 1878—for education at Hampton, Virginia, was called out of the medicine lodge painted and decorated as seen in this picture.

Figure 17 Cover of 1895 School Catalogue. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 18 Carlisle Exhibit, ► World Columbian Exhibition, 1893. Chauncey Yellow Robe Standing in Rear. Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

Later prints and the reproduction that appeared in the catalogue merely captioned it "First Boy Recruited." Even though Pratt recruited among many different tribal groups (only once among the few remaining Mandan), he represented tribal life in general by a white-made image of Mandan ritual. Moreover, the image chosen would have been seen by the Mandan themselves as the personification of evil.

Pratt, then, opposed public reference to aspects of tribal culture only when its purposes differed from his own. When such references served to emphasize, through appeal to ambiguous racial stereotypes, the total transformation that he insisted Carlisle could deliver, he did not hesitate to make use of artifacts or photographic references, nor to display his students as "examples" or objects. As their self-designated "school father," he did so for what he was certain were higher purposes. A somewhat different pair of before-and-afters, judged by Choate as commercially valuable enough to copyright, make this attitude quite clear. Appealing as they do to the "vanishing race" myth of the period with a new solution (Dippie 1982:107–138), Choate's composites explicitly state the underlying paternalistic ideology: "Noted Indian Chiefs" will be replaced generationally by "Our Boys and Girls" (see Figures 20, 21). Paternal possession will result in nihilation by incorporation. But all such before-and-after photographs were deceptive in many

ways, for the transformation typified was, of course, far more complex than any photograph might embrace.

Pratt himself made the process somewhat more explicit in his introduction to one of the later and most elaborate photographic catalogues of the school:

Indians from more than seventy tribes have been brought together and come to live in utmost harmony, although many of them were hereditary enemies. Just as they have become one with each other through association in the School, so by going out to live among them they have become one with the white race, and thus ended the differences and solved their own problems. [Catalogue 1902:4]

Always the optimist in his own terms, Pratt states here that his twenty-three years at Carlisle actually produced the results envisaged—at best a dubious claim. More important, this description of the ideal reveals that education at Carlisle involved more than the single transformation implied by the photographs. It involved first of all an education in white racial consciousness: the children of culturally diverse tribes had to learn that they were Indians, the very same kind of people as their "hereditary enemies." Concurrently they learned that by white standards they were an inferior race, which led in turn to the cultivation of race pride to spur competition with whites.

Figure 19 First Boy
Recruited. U.S. Army
Military History Institute/
Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 20 Noted Indian Chiefs. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Figure 21 Our Boys and Girls. Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution.

One of Pratt's most important reasons for the development of Carlisle's famous athletic program was to prove that Indians were not inferior. Finally, they learned that the ideal white man's Indian would "become one with the white race . . . solving their own individual problems." That such problems may have required Indians to become far more individualistic than any of their middle-class white contemporaries never seems to have occurred to Pratt.

Yet Pratt's description of the process is also an oversimplification, for even individualists require a sense of themselves as historical and cultural beings. That such was the case became clear fairly early in the school's history, when advanced students confronted their United States history classes. Apparently, textbooks commonly used in white classrooms presented some problems. Pratt wrote in 1883:

Mr. Joseph W. Leeds of Philadelphia has written . . . a history of our country, as a textbook for schools, in which details of our wars, and particularly our wars with the Indians, are made to occupy a less prominent place than usual in such books. Our advanced pupils who have studied other histories have been keenly active in noting the parts detailing our dealings with the red man, and we have found it injurious to them and to us that such prominence is given these matters. Mr. Leeds has given us a book especially well adapted to Indian Schools. [*Morning Star*, August 1883:3]

Before the printing of the next *Morning Star*, Susan Longstreth of Philadelphia, a long-term benefactor of the school, had donated three dozen copies. By 1890, the bureau of Indian Affairs had developed a general policy: "The Indian heroes of the campfire need not be disparaged, but gradually the heroes of American homes and history may be substituted as models and ideals" (Prucha 1979:198).

Figure 22 Class by Frances Benjamin Johnston. U.S. Army Military History Institute/Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Imitation White Men

The final stage of transformation is best represented by a classroom photograph done not by Choate, but by documentary photographer Frances Benjamin Johnston (see Figure 22). Well known for her portraits of eminent politicians, her documentary series on the Washington public schools, and her series on Hampton Institute, Johnston had been sent to Carlisle in 1901 by the Bureau of Education to prepare a series of photographs, eventually numbering about 130, for the upcoming Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. She was to "show in part what is being done by the United States Government for the Indians in one of its largest training schools" (*Red Man and Helper*, April 19, 1901:3). Pratt regarded her work as "excelling anything we have ever had before" (*Red Man and Helper*, April 5, 1901) and eventually purchased both a full series of prints and the negatives for use in the most elaborate photographic catalogue of the school, published in 1902, just two years prior to Pratt's retirement. In this pseudo-candid shot (Johnston was working with half-minute exposure times), a group of advanced students, under the watchful eye of the "Father of Our Country," is taught by a white woman whom they were encouraged to call Mother. They are surrounded by artifacts from various tribal cultures, on display as if in a natural history museum. Chalk drawings on the blackboard further suggest that together these artifacts represent "Indian culture," which indeed they do from a white

perspective. Dried and mounted plants for the teaching of natural history border the room, implying a similarity of approach to these two subjects. The class, however, is preoccupied with books, and one student, standing in the center, is either reading aloud or reciting in response to the questions and topics chalked on the blackboard. They read:

Hiawatha's Childhood

Nokomis

Who was she?

Why was she called daughter of the moon?

Gitchee Gumee

Describe the home by the Big Sea Water

Stories told by Nokomis

Legend of the Moon

Rainbow

The photograph is an allegorical presentation of the "vanishing race" in the very act of disappearing. In this visual version of assimilation, the children of tribal parents, now advanced into civilization, repossess their tribal history and culture from a different perspective. They learn to accept the "white man's Indian" as the socially legitimized view of their past (Berkhofer 1978:171). Through the romantic reduction and distortion of the Boston Brahmin poet Henry

Wadsworth Longfellow, the students are led to reduce, stereotype, and objectify their former identities and cultures. It is important to recognize that, as a historical event, the creation of this photograph required that the students portray themselves as typifications of their transformed state. At this first interactional level, they are called upon by the government-sponsored photographer to assume the posture of genteel and polite, even scientific, contemplation of their own cultural nilation. The underlying message, partly because of the nature of photography as a multisemic form, is that the students are no more individuals in their transformed state than they were in savagery. Instead, they are specimens and samples of "civilized Indians" or, as Luther Standing Bear states, "imitation white men." Carlisle, however, under what can only be seen as well-intentioned but naive leadership, was not preparing students to face this particular cultural double bind.

Double Bind

In the decade following graduation from Carlisle, Chauncey Yellow Robe went on to become a disciplinarian at government Indian schools. Until its closing in 1918, he maintained intermittent contact with Carlisle. Looking back on his school experience in 1910 he wrote:

I entered Carlisle as a student in the fall of 1883—wore long hair, feathers, blanket and painted face [*sic*] and above all not knowing a word of English—You probably have seen one of my photos. It may be there yet on the wall for a curiosity. I do not regret having been transformed from savagery to an independent American citizen. [Letter to Superintendent, Feb. 9, 1917]

More than Luther Standing Bear, Chauncey Yellow Robe saw his own transformation in very much the same terms as Pratt. He remained a lifelong supporter of Carlisle; and when, in 1916, a changed administration developed a liberalized policy in its publications, he wrote to the *Red Man* to object to the "publishing [of] Indian history, tribal customs and traditions." The letter indicates that Yellow Robe is fully aware of the complex relationship between these publications and two very different audiences:

What the new generation of the Indian race today wants to know is twentieth century progress. Publishing and teaching the Indian children their own people's history and customs in this present age means they will always be Indians in mind. We will never forget the history of our forefathers. On the other hand the white man reads the *Red Man* and other similar publications on Indian history, customs, traditions. Also witnesses the Wild West Indian Shows and the moving pictures and firmly fixed his opin-

ion on the red man as a savage and good for nothing but a show Indian. Commercializing the Indian is demoralizing and degrading. [Letter to *Red Man*, Mar. 3, 1916]

The dilemmas of cross-cultural education are made quite clear. There is the dilemma of a commitment to "never forget the history of our forefathers" and at the same time make certain that Indian children cease to be "Indians in mind." There is the dilemma of educating whites who turn all knowledge of tribal custom to their generalized and racist interpretive and commercial ends, which is "demoralizing and degrading." Yellow Robe's education in white racial consciousness is complete, as is the cross-cultural double bind he is trying to break by communicating with the *Red Man* about the interpretive context of cross-cultural communication. Yellow Robe's dilemmas remain because of the persistence of the racial thinking of whites. Race pride and race degradation are culturally linked in assimilation, because race and culture are reduced to equivalents in white thinking. Chauncey Yellow Robe was a sophisticated observer of this context and persisted lifelong in his efforts to counter white stereotypes, yet he seems unaware that his own description of his school before-and-after photographs embraces those stereotypes. For full assimilation required a transformation not only of fundamental cultural identity but also of one's attitude toward one's past. It required that the children of tribal people at one and the same time both value and devalue their culture and history. Because of the multisemic nature of photographs, "before" portraits manage to embrace these double meanings simultaneously, but people who must live with that doubleness have a difficult time, for identity requires more consistency than iconographic propaganda. In his fully transformed state, Chauncey Yellow Robe can view his "before" portrait as a "curiosity" only because he has so fully deracinated. Others, like Luther Standing Bear, who remained closer to their cultural roots, found themselves in various states of vacillation between separate versions of the white man's Indian and their understanding of their tribal past (Dippie 1982:263–264).

As part of a continuing education for eastern whites, however, the before-and-after portraits were far more than curiosities. Read within the contemporary contexts, both overt and covert, they largely reaffirmed the racial stereotypes of the period. Again, an understanding of the nature of photographs is central to understanding their function as ideological devices. Precisely because photographs have no meaning in their own right, the before-and-after photographs permitted viewers to supply their own interpretations, their own "stories," some of which have been discussed above. They allowed white viewers to draw upon particular aspects of the complex and

contradictory social discourse that informs them but to avoid focusing on those deep contradictions. Floating above that discourse, the photographs become transvaluative structures. They do so, however, in a way quite peculiar to photographs, providing an illusion of simple facticity. As Roland Barthes (1972) observed, they "innocent themselves." The before-and-after photographs, within the overt and covert texts of the period, imply both spectacular transformation and ease and serenity in the change (see especially Figures 14 and 15). In doing so, they helped the white "friends of the Indian" to continue to maintain the fiction that all would be one in the end, and that that end was agreeable to all.

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Notes

- 1 Pratt later insisted that Spotted Tail's reason for the withdrawal of his children was that he had refused to increase the pay of Spotted Tail's son-in-law, then acting as an interpreter at the school. Probably Spotted Tail's actions were as overly determined as Pratt's explanation was reductionist. Some credence is given Pratt's explanation, however, by the fact that at least one of Spotted Tail's children, Hugh, later returned to Carlisle.
- 2 The term was probably far less connotatively loaded than it is today. Nonetheless, it emphasizes the ideological nature of the use of these photographs.
- 3 In the earliest years Carlisle published two monthly publications, *Eadle Keatah Toh*, or *The Morning Star*, and *School News*, a publication devoted entirely to student writing. In 1886 *Eadle Keatah Toh* became simply *The Morning Star*; in 1888 *The Morning Star* became *The Red Man*; and in 1900 *The Red Man and Helper* replaced two earlier periodicals. Issues were sent routinely to all members of Congress; Indian agencies, including reservations and military posts; selected Pennsylvania officials; most prominent American newspapers; and all independent subscribers.
- 4 There remains considerable confusion about how many of Manuelito's and Torlino's sons attended the school and about how many died either at the school or shortly after returning to the reservation. However, there is evidence that Tom Torlino was living in New Mexico in 1910.
- 5 Indeed, they may well have been getting whiter, since they arrived at Carlisle in the early fall and thereafter spent few hours in the sun. Other photographs indicate that they began to adopt contemporary white habits of protecting themselves from the sun as well.

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