

## Contents

List of Illustrations	<i>viii</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>ix</i>
Introduction	<i>xi</i>
Prologue: Prisoners Made Pupils	<i>1</i>
<b>Part One. The Development of an Indian Educational System</b>	
1. White Theories: Can the Indian be Educated?	<i>31</i>
2. Native Views: "A New Road for All the Indians"	<i>48</i>
3. Mission Schools in the West: Precursors of a System	<i>67</i>
<b>Part Two. Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute</b>	
4. Samuel Chapman Armstrong: Educator of Backward Races	<i>103</i>
5. Thomas Wildcat Alford: Shawnee Educated in Two Worlds	<i>136</i>
<b>Part Three. Carlisle Indian Industrial School</b>	
6. Richard Henry Pratt: National Universalist	<i>159</i>
7. Carlisle Campus: Landscape of Race and Erasure	<i>184</i>
8. Man-on-the-Bandstand: Surveillance, Concealment, and Resistance	<i>206</i>
9. Indian School Cemetery: Telling Remains	<i>231</i>
<b>Part Four. Modes of Cultural Survival</b>	
10. Kesetta: Memory and Recovery	<i>255</i>
11. Susie Rayos Marmon: Storytelling and Teaching	<i>283</i>
Epilogue: Cultural Survival as Performance, Powwow 2000	<i>299</i>
Notes	<i>313</i>
Bibliography	<i>361</i>
Index	<i>385</i>

## Introduction

There was a feeling among our people that some of our young men should be educated so that they could read and write and understand what was written in the treaties and old documents in our possession. . . . Or, as one chief put it, "it would enable us to use the club of white man's wisdom against him in defense of our customs and our Mee-saw-mi as given us by the Great Spirit.

—Thomas Wildcat Alford, *Civilization*

THIS OLD SHAWNEE CHIEF, optimistic about the advantages to be gained from white schooling, uses "club" unambiguously. For him it is a weapon, a means to power he would like his people to acquire. Today, the reader of "white man's club" inevitably perceives it as a racial enclave, with implications of self-definition and self-assertion gained through restricted access and privilege. Nor is it inappropriate to read these implications back into the nineteenth century, where they serve as synecdochic representations of larger, national concerns; the 'club' extends to a society and a culture and access appears as acculturation with its own agendas and prohibitions while exclusion carries singular penalties.

In the final quarter of the nineteenth century, the federal government enrolled thousands of Native American children in white-run schools in a campaign to eradicate native cultures and communities and incorporate all Indians, as individuals, into the United States. This book explores how these schools, supposedly established to educate native children for citizenship, became arenas where whites debated the terms of that citizenship and where native peoples, struggling in this convoluted context against the total erasure of their cultures, claimed, adapted, or

xii *Introduction*

deflected the “white man’s club” and in the process, realigned and redefined tribal and Indian identities.

American nation building necessitated and justified Indian territorial and also cultural dispossession. The United States was by now technologically and demographically dominant and well positioned forcibly to incorporate Indian lands. Asymmetries of power underpinned all aspects of Indian-white relations—military, economic, legal, social, cultural, and linguistic. Reluctant to embark on an open policy of genocide, white Americans instead organized to incorporate the surviving remnants of Indian tribes into the nation through cultural reeducation. For contemporaries, the ethnocidal task of the schools was sanitized by being narrated within the ideological frame of national expansion or “manifest destiny.” The process was not always cold-blooded or undertaken at a deliberate, conscious level, but neither does it have to have been. As Foucault makes clear, any analysis of power relations “should not concern itself with power at the level of conscious intention or decision”; rather, “what is needed is a study of power at its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application . . . that is to say—where it installs itself and produces its real effects.”<sup>1</sup> The construction of American nationality involved the destruction—geographical, legal, political, and cultural—of Indian nationalities. But the prospect of an Indian U.S. citizenry raised thorny problems. For whites, it meant contending with the issue of Indian difference and the place Indians could and could not occupy in the American nation. The school was the institution recruited to accomplish this task. For Indians, it meant positioning themselves, both as individuals and communities, where they could best ensure that inclusion did not entail obliteration. Schools inevitably had a powerful impact on native lives and also purloined a place in native agendas.

White-run schools for Indians were institutions where American history and Indian histories converged. Monuments to the white educational campaign they spearheaded, they embroiled Indians and whites in two separate yet interlocking dialogues driven by very different motivations and supported by unequal power. The strands of this asymmetric interaction provide a frame for this book, enabling me both to

interrogate the overt and covert agendas of white educators and to uncover some of the actions and reactions of the Indians who were made the targets of these programs.

Today, the blinkered ethnocentrism of white educators and the corrosive long-term legacy of the schools are generally acknowledged.<sup>2</sup> But the complexity of their professed goal—to rapidly assimilate Indians and absorb them into the mainstream—and its engagement with issues centering on race has not been fully unpacked. The issue of race lies at the core of this study, which considers the different discourses of race that have not yet been fully integrated into scholarly analyses of Indian schooling to argue that from the start, an upbeat rhetoric of Indian inclusion and assimilation cloaked a fierce dispute about racial ability. The rhetoric of Indian schooling pointed to an ideology of universalism, which in this context derives from an Enlightenment ideal. It is the Enlightenment claim for universal human capacities that feeds into the familiar egalitarianism of the Constitution.<sup>3</sup> Although this was an eighteenth-century concept, it was still potent in nineteenth-century debate, even if by then it was accompanied by a distinctively different set of ideas: those surrounding the concept of evolutionary development and the application of this biological theory to social development.<sup>4</sup>

The Indian school system was built during an era of intense racial debate. The United States was struggling to find a way to replace the brutal rules and laws of slavery, which had controlled political and social relations between two socially constructed and defined races since colonial times and become embedded in the institutions and psyche of the new nation. Thousands of immigrants, streaming into the United States from countries as diverse as China and Italy, were joining the work force and yet, to varying degrees, were being classified as nonwhite. Definitions of race in the late nineteenth century were fluid, changing, and associated with amorphous ideas that blended notions of blood, culture, and peoplehood in what George M. Fredrickson has termed “romantic racialism.” The range of nineteenth-century racial ideologies was, as Peggy Pascoe reminds us, “much broader than scientific racism,” but increasingly, race would become tied to strict scientific categories that measured, categorized, and separated one group from another.<sup>5</sup>

At issue was a contest between two different sets of ideas and attitudes,

xiv *Introduction*

both central to western thought and both powerfully influential on American society and culture. Many white Americans were never able to concede full equality to Indians and progressively situated them within the developing discourse of scientific racism. So from the outset, opposing racial discourses about Indians interwove and became incarnated in the structures and practices of education. When interrogated, these reveal the conflicted racial agenda of the schooling campaign and challenge the hinged interpretation of Indian education, first marked out by Frederick Hoxie, whereby the late nineteenth century is regarded as optimistically assimilationist and the early twentieth century is identified as the time when a more pessimistic judgment of Indian capacity became established.<sup>6</sup> Recent studies of individual schools have focused almost exclusively on the last few years of the nineteenth century and the beginning decades of the twentieth. They provide substantiating evidence of Indian educational programs founded on an assumption of Indian intellectual inferiority.<sup>7</sup> By the turn of the century, the school system was fully fledged, the doctrine of social evolution well entrenched, and a restricted vision of what Indian schools could and should aim to achieve had been institutionalized in the government's prescribed *Course of Study for the Indian Schools* (1901). Indisputably, the white assumption that Indian children's racial inheritance was limited shaped twentieth-century schooling programs, but *White Man's Club* explores and reveals how this restricted view of Indian capacity was already evident in the formative years of the schooling system and inseparable from the drive to educate Indian children.

Scholarship on Indian schools focusing on the work of Christian reformers has sometimes contributed to the distortion of the broader picture. Nineteenth-century Indian educators shared a united front and their forceful profile and committed, upbeat rhetoric served to mask darker, more pessimistic views about Indians.<sup>8</sup> As the acceptable face of U.S. nation building, schools formed part of a master narrative of optimism, individual possibility, and progress. *White Man's Club* investigates the shadow narrative, in which, from the beginning, Indian schools are integral not only to a story of land theft, ethnocide, and cultural erasure but also to a pattern of progressive racialization as yet unexplored in scholarship on Indian schools.<sup>9</sup>

Recent research on race has outlined for us the social construction of racial ideologies and also demonstrated the extent to which the hierarchies of scientific racism ended up being imposed on all aspects of social life.<sup>10</sup> Historians focusing on “people of color” and studying America’s racial history have developed a paradigm that argues racial categories are neither biologically determined nor static but historically constructed; although often seen as immutable, they are always in a state of flux. These scholars’ work opens the possibility of looking beyond the Indian school as a component in a political program to view it as a site where whites, influenced by their historical experience of dealing with other racialized groups—Chinese, Italian, and Jewish immigrants and, most notably and enduringly, African Americans—debated and enacted not only Indian education but also racial formation.<sup>11</sup>

Including Indians in the United States necessitated counteracting America’s own intellectual, historical, and political past.<sup>12</sup> The proposition that all native peoples should become citizens was a radical departure: it contravened the very fabric of the Constitution, which had specifically located Indians outside its purview and categorized them as separate and “other.” Once co-opted into the nation, time-honored strategies for designating Indian difference and separateness became redundant. Americans instead progressively included and enmeshed Indians in discourses and practices derived from the nation’s racial past and lexicon. No longer separate and outside American society, they were steadily constructed as separate inside the nation, and the extent and nature of their differences were fiercely debated. From its foundation, I argue, the Indian school system was both the location of this debate and the institutionalization of its outcome.

I am indebted to scholarship published over the last thirty years, but this study does not pretend to be a comprehensive analysis of the Indian school system.<sup>13</sup> Looking at the history of an educational debate by concentrating on a single narrative line or an abstract theoretical analysis would be restrictive, so while consistently privileging racial concerns, my aim is twofold: to interrogate the overt and covert agendas of white education programs and to probe the actions and reactions of Indians who struggled to resist as well as claim the power of white schooling. There are four areas I consider in addressing these concerns. First, the

problematic and thorny questions associated with conflicting white notions of savagery and race, inflected by the wider racial debate. Second, the white-managed restricted environments where the projected transformation of Indians was to take place: principally schools, both on and off the reservation, but secondarily, by extension, the reservation itself, with its defined borders, administrative links to Washington, and nearby military back-up. Third, the input and response of Indian people to the workings of a system dedicated to their transformation and geared to altering their worldview and their loyalties, in a context where survival and resistance often necessitated borrowing the weapons of the enemy. And fourth, the shift from a series of atomized missionary ventures with Christian conversion at their core, to a centralized, federal, educational endeavor driven by a national Americanizing agenda that forefronted the English language.<sup>14</sup>

Macrobiographies of key representational figures, white and Indian, are used in this study to explore the diversity and detail of the educational project. Microbiographies of Indians provide snatches of individual lives to illustrate particular points, often when fragmentary evidence is all that has survived. This is a study of a school system that touched thousands of young Indian lives, so stories of individual Indians shape the narrative and, in the final section, carry it into the twenty-first century.<sup>15</sup> In the years leading up to 1900, the first generation was taken from homes mostly untouched by American culture and channeled through the schools with no one ahead to lead the way. The majority left behind no record of their experiences. Some of their stories were never told.<sup>16</sup> Others were recounted privately and then passed down from generation to generation, carried in the living memory of Native American communities. Many have been lost or buried. But traces of some have been preserved within the written record and can be unearthed from the archives and pieced together to create etiolated, firsthand accounts of individual children's responses to their schooling.<sup>17</sup> The stories assembled here stand in for the many others that have been effaced, lost, or forgotten. The schools were organized specifically to transform identities and dislocate loyalties and so these fragmentary life studies are often contextualized to privilege issues of identity and allegiance, endorsing Simon Jenkins's observation that "social identity is never unilateral."<sup>18</sup> Exca-

vated from a larger record, which consistently privileges the booming tones of white authority, they enable us momentarily to hear the whisper of some Indian voices and to perceive that sometimes, although threatening cultural annihilation, the “club” of white education could be grasped as a weapon with which to confront the new asymmetries of power and actively shape the meaning and structure of what it meant to be Indian in the United States.

The paucity of sources inevitably frustrates and preoccupies any historian of Indian education. It is not only that Indian cultures were oral or that whites produced most of the written record; it is also that without doubt, Indian people concealed their activities and clouded or obscured their opinions in ways common to many subordinate and threatened groups.<sup>19</sup> So the challenge to detect and interpret Indian voices and views in the official archival record, and sometimes even to infer them when absent, is qualified always by the awareness that the evidence thus provided is always partial and curtailed. Despite this constraint, the letters received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and those sent back from the reservations to Carlisle and Hampton offer a source for gaining understanding of some of the attitudes and experience of members of the first generation of white-educated children. Moreover, school newspapers, and particularly Carlisle's *Indian Helper*, provide rich information about school life. Articles in them often represent the “hidden transcripts” to which James C. Scott has alerted us and can be interrogated to reveal evidence of the children's responses to their schooling experience.

The official written record—reports of commissioners, superintendents, inspectors, agents, teachers—inevitably exerts a strong centripetal pull on interpretation and encourages us to take at face value the stated intentions of white educators and overlook the muted voices of Indians. In an effort to correct this imbalance and unveil the “hidden transcript of white rule that could not be openly avowed” as well as the Indian “critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant,” I analyze the white-managed built environment of schools (Santee Training School and most notably the Carlisle Indian School) using techniques and concepts borrowed from landscape historians and human geographers, as well as those more familiar to historians.<sup>20</sup> Archi-

xviii *Introduction*

val photographs, maps and charts, school buildings, structures and circulation elements (roads, paths, fences, entrances, and exits) are treated here as primary sources for spatial analysis.<sup>21</sup>

My analysis of all aspects of Indian lives that are hidden and of the posturing and self-dramatization on the part of dominant whites is indebted to the work of James C. Scott.<sup>22</sup> His studies of dissident subcultures and the politics of disguise, although never explicitly engaging Native American educational history, offer a theoretical frame for scrutinizing forms of domination that share family resemblances and for understanding the related responses of subordinate groups. Like any other historian concerned with issues of power, my thinking has been massively shaped by the work of Michel Foucault, and for close-up study of boarding schools, *Discipline and Punish* has been indispensable. Michel-Rolph Trouillot's work on history and power has also played an important role in alerting me to how power operates in the processes of making and recording of history and how overlapping historical narratives often mean that those produced by the least powerful can easily be obscured by evidentiary silence.<sup>23</sup> Over the years, my ideas have developed through my engagement with Benedict Anderson's brilliant classic study of nationalism; his book is an important foundation stone of this work. Anderson's comment that "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined," and his observations on patriotism and racism, have afforded me ways of understanding how racist strands in American nationalism impeded many whites' capacity to imagine Indians as members of their own limited, sovereign community and prevented them from including native peoples in the "deep, horizontal comradeship" that underpins a nation.<sup>24</sup> Anderson's clarification of how language and the printed text are intrinsic to the forging of modern "imagined communities" extends beyond the realm of nations to elucidate our understanding of bonds established within the white-created community of educated Indians. It also throws into much larger perspective the determined efforts of individual Indians, like Harry Hand, a Dakota from Crow Creek Agency, to establish and maintain their own small, local newspapers.

Structurally, *White Man's Club* reflects the book's focus on the foundation years of the Indian school system, 1875–1900, starting with the

organization of the first nonmission school, with prisoner-pupils in Fort Marion, Florida, and ending with the publication of a standard, common curriculum for an extensive national system of Indian schools and the simultaneous cessation of government funding for mission education. As a study of institutions and events that carry a powerful and enduring legacy that cannot be consigned to the resolved past, the biographical studies in the last section and the epilogue carry the story into the twenty-first century.

While many white-educated children survived their experience and found ways to use their schooling, many more were culturally maimed and psychologically scarred. As an English woman, I come from a nation that in the nineteenth century built a system of boarding schools to educate a ruling class who would go out to administer and control a worldwide empire. These schools taught values and beliefs shared by ambitious, high-class parents and gave a privileged education to a juvenile social elite. Yet today, it is recognized that they also caused crippling emotional harm to boys and young men separated from the love and support of family. These findings alert us to the proportionally greater crushing impact of Indian schools on children of a racial minority already politically, socially, and culturally undermined. The extent of the damage inflicted by these schools is beginning to be openly acknowledged and in Canada, the legal testimony of survivors and the resulting reparations have brought into the public domain the enduring and painful legacy of the schools.<sup>25</sup> Nineteenth-century American Indian children who attended militaristic, boarding institutions far from home where they forewent contact with their families over several years, were an extremely vulnerable group and totally dependent on the compassion, kindness, and morality of their white carers; we know that frequently these virtues were not forthcoming. It is not my purpose in this study to explore or expose this abuse, yet it inevitably haunts the analysis and cannot be forgotten.

The prologue starts with a defining historical event: the capture, deportation east, imprisonment, and schooling of the group of Plains Indians who were made the first federal school pupils. Organized to prefigure some of the questions and issues to be examined in the book, the

prologue outlines the historical context of the schools' organization, for both Native nations and the United States.

The first part of *White Man's Club* considers white theories about Indian education alongside Native views and responses. One tradition of white thought deemed Indians capable of achieving equality with whites; a second condemned them to a permanently inferior status. Chapter 1 briefly describes this debate, analyzes the universalist/evolutionary frame that surrounded it by the late nineteenth century, and locates the major white educators within this, arguing that a shared ideological commitment to American nation building enabled them all to work together for the cause of Indian education, despite their different judgments of Indian capacity and projected place she or he should find in American society. Chapter 2 focuses on the native peoples who were made the subjects of this program of Americanization. Far from composing a single entity, native communities enjoyed separate histories, cultures, and languages, which they passed down to younger generations through stories, ceremonials, and day-to-day events. Inseparable from daily life, these educational practices were distinct and unique and few tribes willingly gave them up. White-run schools were therefore involved in an extensive program of reeducation. This chapter sketches but does not survey the complex patterns of traditional education that white schools sought to displace. Framed within the new asymmetries of power, it demonstrates how Indian ambivalence and hostility toward white values was often balanced by acknowledgment of a pressing need to learn white skills and become knowledgeable about the white man's world. Indian peoples across the United States were all subjected to identical offensives of land theft and cultural obliteration. This often fostered shared critiques and cultural survival strategies that they used to defend their own identities and resources

Chapter 3 examines the missionary foundations on which the federal school system was built, revealing how, in the short term, the Christian doctrine of the unity of mankind was able to intersect with the new secular ideology of national universalism. Using the Dakota Mission and the Santee Normal Training school as examples, it charts the gradual shift from mission-centered schooling to a centralized federal educational endeavor with its secular curriculum forefronting individ-

ualism, practical skills, and the English language. It also explores how the seemingly parochial contest over the use of the Dakota language as a medium of instruction was embedded in a much more fundamental and far-reaching dispute about the true nature of the Indian, the best means to bring him or her to civilization, and his or her future status in the American nation.

The second part of the book directs attention to the first two off-reservation schools established in the East: Hampton and Carlisle. Hampton Institute in Virginia, founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong to educate freed slaves, hosted the first formal Indian schooling program. Chapter 4 examines Hampton's Christian, national, social evolutionary philosophy and the curriculum Armstrong developed to educate what he called America's "despised races." It investigates the long-term impact of the theory and practices of this race school on the developing Indian school system. In chapter 5, the biographical study of a Hampton-educated Shawnee Indian shows how white schooling changed his life and forced realignments in his Indian identity.

The next four chapters focus on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, which lies at the hub of this study. A living experiment watched closely by officials in Washington, Carlisle marked the transfer from mission to federal control of Indian schooling. The first government boarding school, set up in the buildings of a disused barracks far from Indian Country, this militaristic institution supplied the blueprint for the dozens of government schools that, by the turn of the century, dotted the western territories. Although never the main focus of any academic publication, scholars in the field all acknowledge Carlisle's key role in the Indian school movement.<sup>26</sup> Analyzing this prototypical institution will help us understand the broader federal education program. Chapter 6 examines the philosophy and pedagogy of the school's founder, Richard Henry Pratt, in conjunction with the national universalist mission to which he dedicated his school and his bold prediction that a Carlisle education and total separation from tribal communities would Americanize native children in a single generation. In order to look behind Pratt's assimilationist rhetoric, in chapter 7 the built environment of the Carlisle campus is enlisted as a primary source. I look at maps and photographs, alongside more traditional sources, to disclose pat-

terns of racial separation and segregation that contradict Carlisle's acclaimed universalist mission. Chapter 8 interweaves close study of the spatial layout of the built environment with scrutiny of the school newspaper, the *Indian Helper*. Analysis of the editorial practices of the man-on-the-bandstand, the paper's invented editor, not only exposes the intense surveillance to which the children were subjected but also reveals some of the ploys and tactics the children used to undermine and resist the school's purpose. To go one step further in exploring an aspect of Carlisle's history that was shielded from public view, chapter 9 focuses on the school cemetery. Never photographed and only fleetingly mentioned in archival sources, the cemetery's creation, expansion, removal, and reconstruction are read here as an allegory of the school's purpose and history. It is the surviving physical manifestation of a white discourse about race and dispossession that also supplies evidence of Carlisle's compromised mission.

Part 4 engages with the legacy of Carlisle and, by extension, the federal school system. Two quite different life studies are presented as examples of how native histories and cultures have survived into the twenty-first century despite the campaign to expunge them. In chapter 10, I piece together the story of a Carlisle student who left behind no written record using archival sources, photographs, newspapers, interviews, and internet searches. Kesetta's life embodied the educational campaign at its most absolute and brutal, but it also stands as evidence of the endurance of a native community and the power of its oral traditions to sustain memory when surrounded by silence. Chapter 11 looks at the life of Susie Rayos Marmon, who returned to her pueblo home and used her white education in ways never anticipated by Carlisle. She merged her dedication to book learning with her determination to help her people preserve elements of their culture and independence in more traditional ways. Teaching Pueblo children their own heritage by telling stories passed down through the generations was, for Marmon, as vital as instructing them to read and write in order to navigate their way in the white world. Recovered from archival material, newspapers, and stories of family members, Aunt Susie's story is not uncontested and reengages with the complex issue of English language usage (examined in chapter 3). It is reconstructed here as the life of an individual equally

committed to Pueblo and white educational methods yet unswervingly loyal to her Laguna community.

Finally, the epilogue returns to Carlisle and Powwow 2000: remembering the Carlisle Indian School. At this event, descendants of children sent away to Carlisle returned for the first time to reclaim the grounds of the old school. Dancing, singing, drumming, speeches, ceremonies, and give aways reflected the vibrancy of powwow—the fastest growing intertribal phenomenon in Indian Country today—and confirmed the survival of tribal cultures Carlisle had worked to destroy. Funded by the local white community and attended by Indian people from across the United States, this memorial event is presented as reflecting a mounting awareness among both groups of the need to acknowledge and understand the legacy of Indian schools.