INTRODUCTION

*The Head, the Heart, and the Hands: Hampton, Carlisle, and Hilo Industrial Schools in/as Circuits of Transpacific Empire, 1819-1887*

The topic of federal American Indian Industrial boarding schools has inspired one of the most abundant historiographies in American Indian History. Yet, as my dissertation demonstrates, a wide and critical gap exists in the framing and historicization of this profoundly influential chapter of indigenous history, federal policy, and U.S. settler-colonialism. The established narrative of Indian boarding schools situates their origin at an abandoned Army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1879. This dissertation re-establishes new spatial, temporal, and political connections that existed at the formation of the federal Indian boarding school project. What has not been developed are the ways in which the experiences and traditions of these prisoners, particularly a handful of Cheyenne, profoundly influenced what would become of them—and all Indian communities after that. In some ways the Southern Plains tribes would prove to be at the mercy of a western U.S. Army determined to secure tribal submission by any means necessary. Less understood are the ways in which settler violence opened new semiotic space for new purposing of Indian bodies, and specifically how the Army’s adoption of captivity informed the eventual establishment and approach of Indian boarding schools. Understanding the establishment of Indian boarding schools from within these larger histories moors a more Native-centered analysis. It also helps to articulate the violence of
and within federal boarding schools as a continuation of coloniality to which Carlisle Indian Industrial School was a late arrival.

This dissertation disrupts disciplinary bounding and locates Indian boarding schools in particularly charged intersections of Pacific Island and American Indian histories. Understanding them as such creates space for scholarship that interrogates American Indian boarding schools with a broader, more accurate, and more forceful critique. This manuscript aims to shift the theorizing of the federal Indian boarding school system. By focusing on captivity, encounter, and trans-Pacificality, the violent dispossession of Indian families is understood as core in the creation story of the federal industrial boarding school project.

Such an approach also brings to the fore the under-examined role and experiences of Cheyenne and white missionary women. The purposing of Indian women captives during the Washita Massacre of 1868, the erasure of Indian women during captive encounter at Fort Marion, and the subsequent parlaying of white feminine supremacy all deserve fuller credit for their role in the creation story of federal Indian Industrial boarding schools. Cheyenne women in Black Kettle’s band played a particularly pivotal role in the development of ideologies and methodologies that manifested in federal schools that emerged directly from settler-colonial violence and acquisitional lust for indigenous resources. At Washita in 1868, General Philip Sheridan commanded the Missouri Division during the Indian Wars, at the close of the Civil War. As it had in the Shenandoah Valley and other Confederate strongholds, Sheridan’s zealous pursuit of total war proved devastating. In 1868, Sheridan recognized the utility of adding
Cheyenne captivity practices into his aggressive pursuit of tribal submission to reservations. He ordered banished Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer out of suspension to lead a daring and vicious campaign against tribes wintering along the Washita River. Sheridan’s tactic of capturing Indian women and children as a negotiating ploy for tribal surrender worked, and by 1872 the strategy was an established practice of the Department of the Missouri under Sheridan, with the blessing of his nation. This shift, while significant militarily, must be understood as emerging from Indian captivity norms that dominated the region’s political economy and influenced the U.S. War Department. While the literature is exceptionally thin on the topic of Cheyenne captivity norms, significant studies of neighboring tribes with whom the Cheyenne were trading, raiding, warring, and partnering in this era help shed light on interconnected practices of tribal captive economies and customs regionally. Situating U.S. federal Indian policy within a more complexified Cheyenne-Army stratagem also opens analytic space in which to consider subsequent colonial projects enacted by U.S. federal agencies. This is particularly so with the assimilative programs that emerged quite directly from conflicts between Plains tribes and the practices and personnel of the Army’s Missouri Department, which swept these same individuals into strange new expressions of violence and captivity.

Historian James Brooks identifies captivity as a practice of violent and strategic exchange of female bodies that existed between tribes on the Southern Plains and Southwest. ¹ Captivity norms followed “obligations of reciprocity (that were) established

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between kindreds, bands, and societies, serving both to reinforce male dominance and to extend the reproductive (social and biological) vigor of communities.”

Brooks’ work focuses on the Comanche people, but their historic links to the Southern Cheyenne included common experiences with war and imprisonment under Sheridan’s command in the 1870s. During the Indian Wars, claims Brooks, “vigorous” Comanche captive raiding satisfied both “status competition and the need to replace a population ravaged by warfare and epidemic disease.”

The U.S. Army adapted tribal captivity norms in an improvisational lurch to suppress, once and for all, the resistance of tribal populations to the systematic decimation of the buffalo herds, the blatant abrogation of treaties, and the deadly conditions within containment on reservations. The captivity of non-combatants by Custer and others on the Southern Plains led to captive encounter of seventy-two “hostile” “ringleaders” in a faraway Florida fort. The new form of captive encounter exposed the warriors as human beings, and drew the prisoners into a powerful female reformist clique that utterly remade what was possible for this generation of waning abolitionists and Indian youth under their tutelage. In a similarly wavelike fashion, these prisoners-turned-students at Hampton Institute were dragged into an industrial school experiment that began during Indian Removal, when missionaries from Eastern seminaries established themselves in Hawaii to bring the gospel to Kanaka Maoli, but

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instead systematically dispossessed them of their resource assets and turned them into wage laborers on their own lands.

Despite this abundance of archival and oral historical resources, perhaps the most insidious consequence of schools that attempt to economically marginalize and culturally shame children is the silence that can develop in its wake. A decade after Carlisle school opened, captivity and interment of Indian children was established Army practice and industrial schools were a part of established encounter zone of Indian captives and American captors of all stripes. In 1890, one of the Apache boys imprisoned for the misdeeds of Geronimo was asked to shake the hand of the general who claimed to kill his father. School grounds had become a site used to elide U.S. savagery and create a national narrative of settler-colonial amnesia. In less than a generation, the War Department and its nation began to realize a more insidious and obfuscational opportunity in Indian boarding schools. With indigenous children held in a new kind of captivity, a new creation story about Indians and U.S. expansionism could emerge defiant of fact or consequence.

**Methods and Sources**

As with so much in my life, my understanding and approach are deeply informed by the generous teachings of Indian elders. In this case, a story told by Ojibwe elder and author Basil Johnston guided and empowered my commitment to privilege oral history
within this project. Johnston gave a lecture at the University of Michigan in 2000.

Johnston was discussing particularities within Ojibwe epistemologies, and used as an example a story from his years as an Ojibwemowin/Ojibwe language translator for the Ontario court system. Johnston was called in to translate the testimony of an Ojibwe elder who did not speak English. Johnston instructed him to place his hand on a Bible and translated that he was being asked to swear he would “tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God.” “Kaawiin,” the elder responded, shaking his head no. Johnston repeated the request. “Kaawiin,” the elder repeated. He then explained that he could not make such a promise; he could only relate what he himself had seen, and his personal perspective on it.3

Inherent in that story is a teaching I received from multiple Ojibwe elders, in diverse situations, about the complexity of human experience and the highly subjective nature of perception; each person relates their truth as they understand it. Johnston’s teaching has proven to be true as I’ve worked through both written archival and oral historical sources. Both pools offered treasures and inconsistencies. Military, missionary, federal, and settler agents massaged their narration of events to suit their agendas, as did tribal and tribally supportive individuals. In the often-rough conditions in which these stories took place, omissions of fact, date, and provenance were common throughout the written and oral archives. Pratt and Armstrong were no less likely to finesse the facts than a settler looking to be compensated for the loss of cattle in an Indian raid or a warrior facing execution.

3 From the lecture “I Always Wanted to be an Indian,” for Native American Heritage Month at the University of Michigan, 27 November 2000. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NatNews/message/4628>
My participation in and work with my tribe and other tribal communities further encouraged my commitment to privileging Indian perspectives. In one lucky research season, in June of 2012, I returned from the National Archives in Chicago to attend the Saginaw-Chippewa Indian Tribe’s annual “Honoring, Healing, & Remembering” event at Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School. I had spent days combing through the Student Case Files of Mt. Pleasant school, looking particularly for the records of children who died there. School records indicated only two students walked on at the school from 1893 to 1934. Tribal researchers at the Ziibiwing Research Center found local records for more than 150 student deaths. At the National Archives, the student files were missing for all but two of the deceased students. Further, the Mt. Pleasant archives contain no known records or written protocols for the school’s notoriously cruel punitive practices. Yet my own oral historical research, as well as presenters at the 2012 event, offered moving and thematically consistent recountings of the harsh disciplinary methods of school personnel. I left this event with a deep conviction that the most important narratives about the federal boarding school system are with the people who lived it—the students and their families who preserve the stories with care.

Despite the extensive historiography about the Southern Plains warriors incarcerated at Fort Marion, tribal oral histories about the Cheyenne warriors appear sparsely. The Southern Plains artists imprisoned at Ft. Marion from 1875-78 literally drew their personhood into American popular consciousness. The Technicolor horses, feathered men, and decorated tipis that dance across their autograph books and ledgers captured American popular imagination. Many of the Plains POWs quite literally made a
name for themselves with their ability to respond compellingly to the invasive and curious demands of their captors. In November of 2012, I traveled to Oklahoma to meet with several of the tribal historians and culture keepers of the Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribe. All were directly descended from the Fort Marion POWs, and all spoke of boarding school experiences within their families. I found these individuals amazingly accessible and generous with their time and precious stories; I left Oklahoma grateful for my enhanced appreciation, and also perplexed as to why Cheyenne people are not consulted and quoted much more.

The Southern Cheyenne boast many serious, academically and culturally credentialed historians and cultural keepers. Many of them are the great-grandchildren of the survivors of the events in this manuscript. The research and oral histories of several of them profoundly shaped this project. In no particular order, this manuscript benefitted from the informational and interpretive gifts of the following Cheyenne intellectuals: historian Dr. Henrietta Mann; Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Margaret Anquoe; artist, Cheyenne language teacher, and Sundancer Gordon Yellowman; tribal education leader Clinton Roman Nose; lodge-keeper Larry Roman Nose; and culture keeper and professor Dr. Dee BigFoot, widow of John L. Sipes, Jr. Anquoe offered a counter-narrative to the oft-written story of the escape attempt of her great-grandfather, Grey Beard. Prof. Mann’s poignant story of her grandmother’s enduring fear after Sand Creek was a Northern star in reminding me to foreground the individual human stories. Prof. BigFoot and Gordon Yellowman opened important windows into parts of Cheyenne culture that changed utterly my understanding of things.
like gender and sacred aesthetics. The under-utilized intellectual resources that exist within the hearts and memories of the Cheyenne people will be the focus of my research in the coming year.

Tribally run archives reflect a serious commitment to sovereignty and cultural sustainability and history. They also create a culturally centered space in which to contextualize research material. Tribal archives of the Bay Mills Indian Community’s History Department offered rigorously managed documents and images, and the impeccable and heartfelt oral histories associated with these objects immeasurably increased their research value. The collection at the National Archives cannot be read the same after the contributions of the dedicated and resolute team at the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinaabe Culture & Lifeways Research Center. Their scholarly and investigative zeal has insisted upon the importance of oral histories, and pursued the untold story typical to many children in federal Indian boarding school.

The remarkable interdisciplinarity of the Department of American Culture at the University of Michigan opportuned and demanded casting a wide research net. Only through the training here, I believe, could I have begun to locate Indian boarding schools in particularly charged intersections of Pacific Island and American Indian histories. Federal military, Indian, and departmental archives comprised a significant portion of my source research. The Richard Henry Pratt Collection at Yale’s Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library provided incredible resources, particularly the drawings of the Fort Marion POWs and Pratt’s correspondence with the broad range of individuals involved in events from Fort Sill to Carlisle. A week spent in Pratt’s papers helped me understand
why so many of the books that grapple with the legacy of this story tell the story in similar terms; the story told in Pratt’s papers is an abundant and compelling one, but enlarging it was one of the primary aims of this project. The considerable holdings of the Oklahoma Historical Society are unrivaled for information about the Southern Plains communities who populated the first foundational experiments that led to the creation of the federal Indian boarding school system. Comprehensive reservation, agency, and bureau records offer an ocean of information. Collaboration with tribal historians and other culture keepers there contributed treasures not found in federal documents, such as meticulous genealogies and Cheyenne language translations by John L. Sipes, Jr. An institutional commitment to tribal collaboration has enriched the interpretation and holdings of this collection. The Library of Congress and Smithsonian Institutional Archives also answered several key questions about missionary and anthropological engagement with Fort Marion prisoners.

Missionary archives also proved useful to understanding the logics and ideologies behind this highly influential population to the Indian boarding school project. The Amistad Research Center at Tulane University houses the archives for the American Missionary Association (AMA), the primary private funder of the founding days of Hampton Institute and Carlisle Indian Industrial School. While the AMA archives contained startlingly little about the Fort Marion POWs, given the role of its teachers, information there helped me understand better the influence of the St. Augustine Freedmen’s school system and its teachers—particularly the incredibly influential Eastern supporters behind the AMA and its works. Similarly, Hampton University
Archives proved a treasure trove of little-cited correspondence between Pratt and Hampton personnel, as well as administrative impressions of the “Florida boys.” Also illuminating were the personal musings of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, which offered a more complex voice compared to his published works. Reading within this more private space revealed that Armstrong had his doubts about Americans, among which he did not feel he belonged, and that he most certainly never stopped missing what he considered his island home. The deep and substantive Samuel Chapman Armstrong Collection at the Williams College Archives and Special Collections could alone power its own dissertation, and should. Here abound the personal and familial accounts of the administering of mission work from one of Hawaii’s most influential missionary families. Scholars of Pacific Island Studies and Hawaiian history would find much of considerable worth in this collection.

Regional and institutional archives also contributed finer grained information about the everyday lives of my subjects, and the localized effects of these events with great poignancy and narrative impact. The St. Augustine Historical Society Collection carries the only substantive information on the women’s teacher corps who introduced an educational component to captivity at Fort Marion. The local newspaper clipping collection at Central Michigan’s Clarke Historical Library also offered critical information about Mt. Pleasant school that helped embolden claims about the colonial nature of federal boarding schools.
Chapter Summary

Chapter One, “Sleeping in Her Moccasins: The Federal Indian Boarding School Creation Story in Captivity, Total War, and the Fight for Survival on the Southern Plains” situates the creation of federal Indian boarding schools within violence and war on the Southern Plains. The chapter identifies dispossession and captivity as the proper starting point for an understanding of the historic, theoretical, and ideological beginnings of the Indian boarding school system. The Army and settler groups pursued genocidal slaughter of Black Kettle’s band of Southern Cheyenne in 1864 at Sand Creek, itself part of a broader landscape of demented corporeal destruction on the Plains during the Civil War. At the Washita Massacre in 1868, the Army’s experimental taking of women and children captives from Custer’s attack on Black Kettle’s band proved strategically successful. The Army used them as human shields to narrowly escape a river heavily populated with tribal encampments. Tribal leaders quickly returned to reservations as a condition of the safe return of their women, children, and elders.

Still, the Army’s sparsely located and staffed frontier outposts could not effect decisive containment of tribes to reservations. Cheyenne protocols of violence and captivity changed the U.S. Army’s strategy against them from within intensely contested claims to resources. Only when Sheridan ordered Custer to take hostage Cheyenne women and children did their warriors suspend aggression and the band agreed to stay on reserved lands. These Cheyenne warriors were the first Indian boarding school students, at Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The presence of Indian young people at faraway
federal Indian boarding schools, and indeed the schools themselves, resulted directly from this complex Southern Plains milieu; the ideology and approach of such schools must be understood within a more robustly historicized narrative of annihilation and captivity.

Largely absent or unexamined in the historiography of this period are the Cheyenne and American women who played complex and pivotal roles in these events. Chapter Two, “Eating the Hearts of Enemies”: Mochis, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Richard Pratt & Encounter in St. Augustine, Florida, 1875-1878,” posits a fuller analysis. In 1875, tribal resistance to American expansionism, treaty violations, and the War Department’s systematic slaughter of the buffalo reached a boiling point with the Red River War. Some seventy-two warriors from five tribes surrendered or were captured and exiled to a remote fort in Florida. Fort Marion jailor Lieutenant Richard Pratt pushed for the assimilation of the warriors into the U.S. soldier corps. Through captive encounter, the POWs soon piqued the imagination of a nation anxious to incorporate Indian assets, if not Indian people on their own terms.

The historiography largely credits Pratt and the Army with conceiving of Indian boarding schools. In fact, as the second chapter details, female educators in St. Augustine’s flourishing Freedmen’s school system initiated and enacted the little fort school and the federal industrial school system that emerged from it. Harriet Beecher Stowe and her ideological sisters in St. Augustine seized the opportunity of captive Indian education to stabilize their waning social power and intellectual authority at a time when more radical women were demanding greater equality. The highly vocalized and
visible advocacy of these reformist women plays against the American cultural erasure of Mochis, a Cheyenne woman warrior and Fort Marion POW. Despite the ability of the male prisoners to use art and testimony to draw attention to their individual humanity, the progressive women directing the discourse at the fort literally lack the language to describe Cheyenne warrior womanhood.

Chapter Three, “Re-Membering Mo’olelo: Opukiah, the Armstrongs, and Education in Trans-Pacific Empire and Hawaiian Dispossession,” reveals the foundational links between the federal Indian boarding school project with similar schools for Kanaka Maoli in Hawaii. This trans-Pacific, multi-generational missionary effort linked indigenous and Black populations in massive land and cultural dispossession for a century or more. After the Army authorized the release of the Southern Plains POWs in the spring of 1878, the only school that agreed to continue their Western education was Hampton Institute, a school established for Freedmen in Virginia. At its helm was former Hawaiian missionary, Samuel Chapman Armstrong. In April, the War Department authorized the Indian Bureau to assume responsibility for fifteen POWs to attend school at Hampton. Pratt was ordered to accompany his prisoners from St. Augustine to Hampton.

Armstrong’s father, Richard, came to Hawaii in the third wave of missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. The story of “Henry Obookiah,” a Hawaiian cabin boy who served on a New England trade ship and converted to Christianity in New Haven, served as a sort of creation story for the emerging ABCFM. Richard left his mission to serve as Minister of Public Instruction
under the Hawaiian monarchy from 1836-1860, and he was instrumental in the creation of an industrial boarding school for Kanaka Maoli commoners. Growing up, Samuel served as his father’s assistant and credited that with teaching him get along “gloriously with savages.” Conversely, Richard felt he failed by not bringing to an end the “structural” corruption of Kanaka culture.

Chapter Four illuminates the profound connections between Hampton Institute and the founding ideals and methods of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The schools shared private and federal funding sources, teachers, students, and curricula. They both supported and accelerated white settler-colonial political economies and indigenous and Black land disposessions. From within the framework of Reconstruction-era ideas of white supremacy, Armstrong understood his work with Freedmen to be initiating a centuries-long uplift of African-Americans. With the arrival of Indians to Hampton, Samuel saw an opportunity to fulfill his father’s incomplete mission. From within this history, Lieutenant Pratt created the first federal Indian Industrial boarding school. Pratt spent a year on the Hampton campus, or traveling to recruit new Indian students for Hampton. The senior school matron from Fort Marion accompanied him to the Northern Plains, and helped map a new form of extraction from tribal communities; now Indian children became a resource by which U. S. expansionism may intensify. By late 1879, Pratt convinced the War Department and the Department of Interior of the need to open a similar school solely for Indian students at an unused barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In crucial ways, Carlisle Indian Industrial School was the material and ideological progeny of Hampton Institute. A more inclusive narrative helps further enlighten the
fundamental, tri-racial connections between Reconstruction-era Freedmen, Indians, and Hawaiians, and the missionary-led programs that dispossessed them all of lands, resources, and opportunity at the service of the development of white-controlled commercial development and the fostering of American empire.

The Conclusion, “‘I ready go guard house. I stay there thousand years, never shake hands wid him’: Captivity as Praxis of Obedience, Obfuscation, and Resistance” looks forward a decade to examples of how industrial education affected individual and collective outcomes for indigenes on both sides of the Pacific. The amnesiac and exploitive logics of white supremacy gained real power in the decade after the founding of Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Armstrong returned to Hawaii in 1880 to create Kamehameha School, a new facility for Kanaka Maoli youth that more forcefully furthered the goals developed at Hampton and Carlisle. The children of the Fort Marion POWs followed their parents to Carlisle, and the use of school as captivity fully realized with the Chiricahua Apache youth imprisoned at Carlisle in punishment for the resistance of Geronimo and others in 1886. As the story of one Apache boy illustrated, though, the resistance of Indian peoples was never snuffed out completely. At the end of his life, Fort Marion POW Medicine Water wore his war shirt until the day he died. He refused to shut the livestock gates that artificially divided the lands he knew belonged to his people. He seized the respect he deserved as a Cheyenne warrior, and rode his horse down the middle of the street in Clinton, Oklahoma well into his 90s. The stories told by Medicine Water’s great-grandchildren, and the other descendants of the Fort Marion POWs, are
further testimony to the dignity, profound intelligence, and determined commitment of the Southern Plains peoples to their sacred ways. We owe them much.
CHAPTER ONE

Sleeping in Her Moccasins: Indian Boarding School Creation Story in Captivity, and Total War on the Southern Plains, 1864-1875

A soldier girl could not be married without consent of the whole society and her marriage was always a great ceremony with the whole society taking part.

—Cheyenne elder John Stands in Timber

Cheyenne Memories

Even at sixteen the memory and fear of having to flee were too real for security. She therefore kept her moccasins on all the times, even sleeping in them....

—Henrietta Mann, of her great-great-grandmother who survived the Sand Creek Massacre in Cheyenne and Arapaho Education

When the Howitzer fire began, Mochis did not have time to flee her teepee. The attack happened quick and hot. A twelve-pound Howitzer on the south bank of Sand Creek roared in the direction of Cheyenne men, women, children, and old people scrambling away into the flat Colorado landscape. There were few places to hide. The screaming of humans and horses surely ricocheted across the November landscape, as did the high whine of bullets tracing their flight. The efforts to kill and to live also locked Indians and Americans in the darkest intimacy. A soldier entered Mochis’ teepee, a space of home, family, and safety for the young woman, and shot her mother in the forehead.


When the soldier clamored after Mochis and started to attack, her hand somehow found her father’s rifle. It may have been the only firearm inside the teepee; most of the men in Black Kettle’s band were out hunting.

There had been a distinct absence of fear in the encampment that morning. The Cheyenne and Arapaho families that set up on Sand Creek on November 28, 1864 did so at the urging of Major Scott Anthony at nearby Fort Lyons. The families had fallen asleep under Black Kettle’s American flag, secure in the promise of peace from the Colorado soldiers. What they did not know was that two Colorado cavalry units, some 800 soldiers under the command of Colonel John Chivington, had been trailing them since their departure from the Fort. As the Cheyenne and Arapaho families unfurled their teepees, unpacked their bedding and fed their children, a well-developed plan to slaughter them at daylight was well underway.

Most of the able-bodied men arose before the sun, and left in search of game. The rest of Black Kettle’s band faced the Colorado militia unprotected, in a surprise attack designed to inflict maximum loss of life. Mochis was not part of the mad scramble to the river; she fought for her life in this closest of spaces. As her mother lay dying nearby, Mochis fought off the Colorado soldier and, somehow, made contact with her father’s gun and killed the man who would surely have left her dead.

Rocky Mountain PBS interviewed survivor families for its 1996 documentary *Tears in the Sand*, revealing much about that day that remained in the oral history of Cheyenne families. As mounted soldiers chased down panicked families, many individuals survived by fleeing to the sand banks along the river and digging quick pits,
or they jumped into small trenches already established there. Mochis ran up the creek and somehow avoided the deadly shooting gallery between its banks. When the soldiers retreated, some Cheyenne returned to the scene to try and locate and help loved ones, only to find many of their bodies dismembered, beheaded, or mutilated in the most grotesque ways imaginable. As a young person who had escaped injury, perhaps Mochis was among the searchers. For miles along the winter ground, from the campsite into the undulating landscape, Mochis would have found much of her family, young and old, and her husband.  

The events at Sand Creek Massacre cannot be understood discretely; they were informed by expressions of violence occurring regionally during the Civil War and by a much older greed for Indian lands that found new urgency in this era. Yet intense violence between Southern Plains tribes, settlers, and the U.S. Army led the War Department to radically change its approach by the time of the Washita Massacre four years later. Hostage-taking of non-combatants, a practice used by tribes against invading American settlers, was adopted by an Army frustrated by an inability to continue to enact genocide. Cheyenne people changed the U.S. Army’s strategy against them from within intensely contested claims to resources and the protocols of violence developed during the concurrent American Civil War. The response of Mochis and other Cheyenne women proved emblematic of Cheyenne epistemologies about women in warfare. It also enacted

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a profound influence on the formative logics of the War Department’s post-submission experiment, the Indian industrial school system that the wars begot.

Prior historical treatments begin the creation story of the U.S. federal Indian boarding school project with the Army’s imprisonment of seventy-two Southern Plains warriors at a Florida fort in 1875. What has not been developed are the ways in which the experiences and traditions of these prisoners, particularly a handful of Cheyenne, profoundly influenced what would become of them. In some ways the Southern Plains tribes would prove to be at the mercy of a western U.S. Army determined to secure tribal submission by any means necessary. Less understood are the ways in which settler violence opened new semiotic space for new purposing of Indian bodies. Understanding the establishment of Indian boarding schools from within these larger histories moors a more Native-centered historicization. It also helps to articulate the violence of and within federal boarding schools as a continuation of coloniality to which Carlisle Indian Industrial School was a late-arrival.

Cheyenne women in Black Kettle’s band played a particularly pivotal role in the development of ideologies and methodologies that manifested in federal schools that emerged directly from settler-colonial violence and acquisitional lust for indigenous resources. No individual Cheyenne woman exemplified this more than Mochis, or Buffalo Calf. Mochis was born in 1844 in Wyoming’s “Yellowstone country” according to oral and archival genealogies conducted by John Sipes, Jr., her great-great-grandson and a noted Cheyenne elder and historian.⁷ Sipes conducted extensive oral and archival

research on the history of his community before his passing in 2007, only some of which appeared in his work with regional newspapers and magazines, Rocky Mountain PBS, and the Oklahoma Historical Society. At the time of Mochis’ birth, Southern Cheyenne lifeways followed ceremonial cycles such as Sun Dance and the intensely dynamic demands of an equestrian buffalo-hunting political economy. The Treaty of Ft. Laramie in 1851 accomplished little within its own terms, and the discovery of gold at Pike’s Peak seven years later caused a flood of American settlement into treaty-protected Cheyenne homelands. Inclined towards peace, Black Kettle emerged as a leader adept at negotiating between Cheyenne bands and with increasingly emboldened U.S. federal agents and military leaders setting a thin trap line of forts along the far western reach of American territoriality.

Mi-huh-heu-i-mup, or Medicine Water, was a contemporary of Mochis’ in Black Kettle’s band and also was born in Wyoming in 1835. Medicine Water married Big Shield and they had at least two children by 1864: a son and a baby daughter named Tahnea, or Measure Woman. Medicine Water’s father was a leader in the Bowstring Warrior Society, part of the warrior system established in Cheyenne culture by the prophet Sweet Medicine. According to contemporary Cheyenne historian and educator Henrietta Mann, the keeper of the Sacred Arrows carried “an awesome responsibility because the arrows symbolize the life of Cheyennes as a tribe.” Complex epistemologies accompanied each of the four sacred arrows and their caretakers, including associations with natural elements, colors, and specialized warrior societies.

http://www.rmpbs.org/content/index.cfm/fuseaction/showContent/contentID/250/navID/239.htm
There is no tribal or military archival record of Mochis and Medicine Water being anything more or less than young parents in Black Kettle’s peaceful band before the Army’s attack at Sand Creek. Mochis and her new husband had no children and lived very close to her parents, if not with them, in the custom of young Cheyenne couples. Though Medicine Water’s father was a principal in the Bowstring Society, it does not appear the young father held any significant role in any of the Cheyenne warrior societies by the winter of 1864. Mochis appears to have been a typical young Cheyenne wife. Although, according to oral historical accounts gathered by John Sipes, Mochis’ name prophesized a storied future for the young woman:

The Cheyenne had a prophet named Sweet Medicine, and his wife was named Calf Woman. And so the old folks say that was how they came about to name her was when they went to the sacred mountain and they brought out the Sacred Arrows to the Cheyenne, she was part of one of the holy persons involved. That's how they say that (Mochis) got her name. And she kept that name all through her life; it never did change” as many names did through the rituals of warrior society initiations and experiences. “But she kept that name all through her life.”

Like many tribal prophets continentally, Sweet Medicine foresaw the arrival of foreigners and the devastating effects of that contact. Mann’s 1998 Cheyenne-Arapaho Education, 1879-1982 is one of the few Cheyenne-authored texts available. In it, Mann reveals that Sweet Medicine predicted “education would become the means of assimilating Cheyenne children into the white people’s society. He assured the tribe, however, that if they kept their four sacred arrows and remembered him and his

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teachings, they would maintain forever their unique identity as Cheyennes.”

Black Kettle and other Cheyenne leaders faced astounding challenges to fulfill Sweet Medicine’s directive in a time of intensely contested and violent Indian-white encounter. The discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858 intensified protecting American expansion into the region. As historian Pekka Hamalainen’s in-depth study identified, by the 1840s Southern Cheyennes needed to strike a delicate balance between two highly dynamic and reliant economies:

The southern Plains tribes were balancing between two economies—a trade economy demanding large numbers of surplus horses and a subsistence economy demanding large numbers of bison—and the balancing act created a perennial dilemma…Cheyennes became hunter-pastoralists who lived on their horses’ terms. They geared their movement patterns, annual cycle of subsistence activities, and labor organization—all long determined by the habits of the bison—around the foraging requirements of their horses.11

Equine grazing and water demands determined seasonal settlement, and bison hunts became more sporadic and episodic. Women undoubtedly had to adjust to a more feast-or-famine cycle of food and buffalo-derived resources, as well as the introduction of ever-more trade items into the traditional Cheyenne domestic space. Cheyenne success within the horse trade also facilitated settler and American military expansionism into Indian homelands, which exacerbated the extreme stress foreign livestock placed on vulnerable prairie grass and soil integrity.12 As early as 1841, Henrietta Mann reminded, emigrants in covered wagons and their stock cut a swath through tribal hunting grounds

that was so wide that buffalo “refused to cross the barren areas, causing a shift in traditional grazing grounds.”

New and diverse trade encounters severed and inscribed meaning onto a rich new assortment of goods. Medicine Water’s father, who also carried that name, made an impression with one such object in the mid-1830s. A group of Arapaho returned from a trade trip to Mexico with a Spanish coat of armor, bartered for a fetching American mule. The armor caught the eye of the elder Medicine Water, who premiered his new war regalia at a battle with other southern Plains tribes in 1838, according to William Bent biographer, George E. Hyde:

> When the council decided to fight, Medicine Water told his son to go back to camp and put on the coat of mail, and (his son) went at once…put on the mailed shirt and wrapped a scarlet blanket over it, completely hiding the armor…then sweeping around in a broad circle, he rushed along the (enemy) line so close that it seemed impossible to miss him. As he swept past the trappers all fired at him, but the bullets fell harmless off his armor; then…the signal was given, and like a flash the Cheyenne and Sioux warriors charged….Most of the (enemy) were killed with the ramrods sticking from the muzzles of their rifles, the bullets rammed halfway down the barrels.

As other tribes in emergent from new Indian-settler trade economies before them, Cheyenne people repurposed, recontextualized, and re-ritualized commodity goods and assets. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Cheyenne communities defined new trade resources within their own cultural contexts in ways similar to Medicine Water’s

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repurposing of conquistador mail. Booty from trade and raids on settler and freight wagons and Army units also invited new interpretations of material culture and expressions of self. To Hyde, Bent recalled mid-nineteenth-century Cheyenne camps “full of plunder,” with warriors “driving captured herds of horses and mules” and teepees with “fine silks heaped up on the ground…groceries of all kinds…. Old Indian men were going around wearing ladies’ bonnets and veils, and most of the young warriors were wearing fine silk shirts of colors and stripes which the women had made out of captured bolts of silk.”¹⁶ Cheyenne traditional use of colors in body and horse paint, and the meanings assigned via Medicine Arrow traditions, found new and vivid expressions in settler material culture.

Other foreign influences more resolutely imposed their own terms on Cheyenne culture, as described by military historian Brad Lookingbill: “Liquor, guns, and ammo flowed throughout Indian Territory. Moreover, local outlaws rustled Native stock. With the sentinels of the U.S. Army watching, (treaty) rations disappeared or ran short. Whatever the intentions of the military, the buffalo-hunting nations found few reasons to trust them.”¹⁷

While much of scholarship has configured the lead-in to events at Sand Creek, and the violence contextualizing it, as a binary narrative of Indian-white conflict, the Southern Plains were a space of exceeding and fractious brutality during the Civil War. Violence became a force in itself that was nearly voluptuary in nature in Kansas and Colorado, as dominance became increasingly inscribed corporeally in a complex web of predation across the Civil War-era landscape. American soldiers in this era were subject to, and commanded to co-create, a world if the most chaotic and intimate annihilation. Combatants on all sides lined up and riddled with bullets men already dead from hanging. Union soldiers whittled secessionist guerilla corpses as if they were talismans, inscribing into them something beyond death. The pathological nature and scope of the Sand Creek attack should not be understated. Nothing could justify the slaughter and mutilation of Indian innocents by state and federal troops. But its sadistic horrors must be understood within a context of how the Civil War played out on human bodies more broadly.

Overland travel to the Oregon and California gold fields relied heavily on the riverine routes along the North Platte and Sweetwater Rivers in southern Wyoming. This more hospitable terrain allowed for easier passage between the Southern and Central Rocky Mountains, but took Americans into the heart of treaty-protected tribal territories. Dog Soldiers and other warrior groups resisted such settler invasions, which increasingly stressed natural resources upon which the tribal communities relied, as well as fostered armed conflict over territory.

As detailed by Michael Fellman’s study of frontier violence during the Civil War, encounters between small bands of soldiers and militarized farmers littered wagon trails
with white bodies and kept the scattered prairie trees decorated with American corpses.

Large-scale killing was uncommon, but no less spectacularly gruesome than the Indian-cavalry battles. In Kansas, for example, farmers formed guerilla units to combat the Union invasion while staying close to home, family, and assets. In August of 1863, American guerillas based out of Lawrence, Kansas, murdered and scalped 150 male settlers, both men and boys. A year later, the same Kansan crew dragged as many mostly unarmed Union soldiers off a train and “killed, mutilated, and scalped” them.18

Such local settler guerilla groups “set the tempo of the (Civil) war and specified much more precisely than could the Union forces the objects to be attacked.”19 The taking and exchanging of male hostages and roadside executions of male combatants proliferated among the federal troops as much as the local guerilla units in an ever-deepening and more intimate spiral of white-on-white brutality. According to Fellman, Union and Confederate units “gradually lost most of their ability to discriminate between guerilla and civilian targets, and they themselves began to adopt guerilla tactics. They learned that they could not engage the enemy in an open or conclusive battle and realized that to survive they would have to fight a dirty hit-and-run war in the manner of the enemy.”20

“Jayhawking” or poaching resources from locals is the stuff of any war, but the

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poorly provisioned Union cavalry engaged in these practices to the extreme in Kansas and Missouri. At best, civilian farmers and merchants appeared replete with food and livestock to Midwestern soldiers living on hardtack and coffee far from home. At worst, secessionist or “secesh” families populated, fed, and/or protected local guerilla bands attacking Northern troops with near constancy. Union officers ordered men in their command to confiscate massive resources from local populations as a means to supplement food stores and personal wealth. Kansas Cavalry pulled apart miles of settler fencing to use as fuel, releasing livestock critical to local economies and civilian survival. The animals that didn't wander off frequently devastated food crops as they grazed freel$. Confiscated horses, furniture, and livestock mysteriously appeared at market in the North. In the worst cases, Union raids were followed by arson, or such extreme poaching that settler families were left wholly unprovisioned for winter, further militarizing locals.

Tribal warrior societies such as the Dog Soldiers and Medicine Arrow societies participated in this milieu, and their retaliatory acts reveal much about individual and Cheyenne responses to settler coloniality in the region during this era. In his 1967 book *Cheyenne Memories*, Cheyenne elder John Stands in Timber related teachings and memories of his people, including the sacred dreams and ceremonies that brought the society of Dog Men into being.

The Dog Men became one of the most fearless of the Cheyenne military societies. Many of them took the suicide vow, or as they called it, “the old men’s charm,” and when they paraded around camp before battle the old men would go on either side of them and the criers would call out, “Look
at these men for the last time they will be alive; they have thrown their lives away.”

Stands in Timber praised the renowned fierceness of the Dog Men, but was quick to point out the multiplicity of warrior societies that protected his people during the intensified violence of the Gold Rush and the American Civil War. Militarized societies such as the Dog Soldiers pressured “peace chiefs” like Black Kettle and Stone Calf to abandon diplomatic solutions to the aggressive encroachment of settlers and federal agents onto Cheyenne lands. Storied Cheyenne raids on wagon trains, farms, corrals, and federal agents of every stripe inflicted no more destruction to life and property than Union units or the local guerilla bushwackers who fought them.

In the newly established town of Denver, located in the heart of pan-tribal homelands, the diverse Civil War-era pressures reached a breaking point in the months leading up to the Sand Creek massacre in 1864. Early Sand Creek chronicler Stan Hoig reminded that in early May, Cherry Creek flooded the town and “washed away a sizeable portion of Denver during the night, and a grasshopper plague of that summer…swept across Colorado like a storm front, devastating crops. To many Coloradans it looked as though even nature had allied herself against the whites.” A hotly contested push for statehood created a favorable discursive space for more excoriating viewpoints. Colonel John Chivington was a former Methodist minister and prominent citizen. His anti-Indian campaigning made him a leading candidate for the House of Representatives. Throughout 1864, Chivington sounded alarm bells with Territorial Governor John Evans on two fronts: an invasion of Confederate troops


on the southeastern border of the Territory of Colorado, and the threat of Indian attacks on agents of American expansionism. In June, four Arapahoes attacked a settlement just outside of Denver city limits. The warriors burned ranch buildings to the ground and drove off livestock. The mutilated bodies of caretaker Ward Hungate and his family were discovered near their burning residence. Local outcry invested particular focus in the forensics of Ward’s wife and young daughters.  

Denver residents immediately displayed the Hungate bodies in a shed in the center of town. The infant and toddler girls were laid between their parents in a display of gruesome sentimentalism, and the townspeople reacted with commensurate rage and fear. Rumors of an organized pan-tribal alliance to break Colorado settlements ripped through Denver, and two days later settlers galloped through Denver screaming about Indians on the warpath. Denver women and children were hustled into the second floor of the Commissary building and the town mint. Men slammed shut the iron shutters of the Commissary, and bolted the doors. Below “two men were stationed with axes to cut the stairs away on the first sight of the red devils.”

Though it proved to be a false alarm, the high theatrics of this moment were emblematic of much larger settler ideals. The attack on white women, according to Fellman, signaled something altogether different and more threatening in a landscape already drenched in violence.

Everything was done to obliterate the maleness of the enemy fighter. Conversely, there was a concomitant, rigorously observed ban on raping.

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killing, or mutilating white women…(keeping) alive for the killer and the
mutilator a sense that he was still sound and honorable morally, that the
still served absolutely a high and abstract moral principle—the ideal of
home with pure womanhood standing on a pedestal in the center. As the
fighters destroyed and debased the maleness of other men, their need to
enshrine women increased. 25

Chivington, Evans, and the War Department debated the severity of the Indian
threat and the wisdom of diverting regional militia troops from their Union-Confederate
border details. But the Hungate murders provided a narrative by which their desire to
attack could be justified. Governor Evans devised a plan to at least appear to separate
peaceable bands from “hostiles,” and on June 27, 1864 issued a proclamation that
“friendly” tribal bands should report to Fort Lyon for protection and provisions. Evans
directed Fort Laramie treaty funds to the fort, and instructed officers to be ready to feed
their compliant visitors. Angered that tribal communities did not pack up and
immediately report to the fort, Evans issued a second directive on August 11 authorizing
“all citizens of Colorado, either individually or in such parties as they may organize, to
go in pursuit of all hostile Indians on the plains.” 26

Black Kettle and others had only received word about a promise of food, an
enticing offer as the Cheyenne prepared for winter with compromised food stores. Dog
Soldiers and Bowstring Society warriors rejected Evans’ edict, but on November 28,
Black Kettle overrode his warriors’ wishes and led the band to Fort Lyon. Mochis,
Medicine Water, and their families. The memory of the horror remained strong among
John Stands In Timber’s community, as he related in his memoir Cheyenne Memories a

25 Fellman, Michael. Inside War: The Guerilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War. New
century later. Black Kettle called out to the soldiers and raised an American flag up on a pole, waving it back and forth in an attempt to stop the siege. “Old man Three Fingers’ mother put her baby on her back and grabbed Three Fingers’ hand—he was just a little boy—and ran for the creek. The soldiers kept firing at her and one hit her in the shoulder, but she made it down below a bank to a safe place. Then she took the baby off her back and it was dead, shot through the body.”

Stands in Timber also shared Gray Blanket’s oral historical account of Lieutenant Harry Richmond’s murderous acts:

Gray Blanket told later how some (Cheyenne) grabbed three children and took them back to some officers, the oldest eight and the youngest four or five, and a lieutenant said, “Orders are to kill small and big. And he shot one in the head with his pistol and then the other two, though they cried and begged for mercy. He said his own little boy came out of a tepee crying, and one officer aimed and missed him twice but another set his gun on his knee and knocked him over at the second shot.

Gray Blanket was John Smith, an American married into the Southern Cheyennes and a long-established trader and translator in the region. He served as the Fort Lyon interpreter, and was known by many of the soldiers. Though there is some dispute as to which little boy was murdered as he exited the teepee, despite Smith’s relationship with the Army, even he was not able to protect the Cheyenne children in his care.

The Colorado settlers demonstrated a commitment to total annihilation of the people whose land they occupied. How does any community, in any time, come to understand the slaughter of its children, its old people and pregnant women? The carving up of their bodies, and the display of their most intimate parts, cannot be separated from

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the individuals and the good and loving things they did with those bodies. More than a century later, John Sipes, Jr. seemed to struggle to articulate his community’s understanding of Sand Creek within Cheyenne epistemologies in *Tears in the Sand*.

I’ve heard (Chivington) called a different thing besides the devil, which in terms of the Cheyenne language would be...the evil person (that Chivington) was to represent in the Cheyenne circle of life of how we deal with the evil and goodness of our people…. I had an old great uncle tell me that the Cheyenne never had evilness in the medicine aspects of our ways. He said the Cheyenne had "big medicine", he would say, "and it was good medicine and they used it in a good way." …So there's no way the Cheyenne could even start to think of him as a person, a human being… I come from a very, very strong traditional Tsis Tsis Tas family and all my great uncles were headsmen and chiefs and ceremonial people and priests in different areas of our, how shall I say, the traditional circle of my extended kinship. … Sand Creek, number one, had to do with land.29

The brutality of American soldiers at Sand Creek eventually became the subject of a national media scandal and military investigation. Still, such interrogation then and now remain incomplete; the crushing of Cheyenne babies, the parsing of Cheyenne genitalia, the execution of Cheyenne elders holding American flags, must be understood within a context of a nation that had disintegrated into fiendish brutality with itself. The grotesque mutilation of Cheyenne bodies at Sand Creek was part of a continuum that very much included the destruction of enemy white combatants, which occurred with perhaps even more frequency than Indian-white massacres on some Southern Plains battle lines.

Killing was insufficient; one had to complete the dehumanization, “de-face” the enemy, reduce him to mere flesh and bones, obliterate his beauty and the container of his soul. Some groups of fighters wished to push on to some final place of total destruction, some land where “we” in all our force are all and “they” are made nothing at all”…combatants sought

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release in the annihilation of the face of the Other.\textsuperscript{30}

The display of the bodies of Laura Hungate and her daughters in downtown Denver marked a shift in consciousness. The fantastical frontier tales of captive and scalped pioneer women became real in that shed, like a gruesome diorama of frontier domesticity and femininity destroyed. The very virtue against which male wartime savagery rendered itself was threatened. Without women and all they signified, frontier experiences of civil war were nothing more than unbearable nihilism.

Perhaps only the desecration of Indian women could restore the semiotic balm of white womanhood, for state and federal troops fulfilled Colonel Chivington’s directive to kill women and children. Could mere racial hatred explain the nine gunshot wounds suffered by Black Kettle’s wife, Medicine Woman? White Necklace discovered her niece, headless, on the battlefield. White Necklace repeated this mutilation on the body of the next soldier she saw.\textsuperscript{31} The horrible tableau of Civil War, and encounters with a third indigenous foe that also could not quite be understood, released for settler men an expression of horror far more obtuse, assertive, and profanely symbolic than ever before. As in the white-on-white skirmishes, the mutilation of Cheyenne corpses signaled something beyond hatred at Sand Creek that was both unique and miserably commonplace during the Civil War in the region.

Still, it should not be ignored that the intimate brutality enacted on Indian bodies, violence nearly sexual in its concerns and ravishment, did signal something distinct and new. Women’s genitalia proved a site of particular focus. Soldiers who understood their


violence as noble and protective of white femininity stretched Indian genitalia across their saddle horns and sliced them into hatbands. “Returning to Denver, the Sand Creek heroes paraded through the streets, to the cheers of throngs,” wrote museum studies scholar David Hurst Thomas. “Theatergoers applauded an intermission display of Cheyenne scalps and women’s pubic hair, strung triumphantly across the state.” In the aftermath of the Sand Creek massacre, Indian bodies also became the object of another new form of collection and display. The War Department ordered the collection of Cheyenne corpses, which were to be beheaded and the skulls and bones “defleshed and carefully crated for shipment eastward to the new Army Medical College and Museum in the nation’s capitol.” The gathering up of Indian bodies in new ways had begun.

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The proper strategy consists in the first place in inflicting as telling blows as possible upon the enemy’s army, and then in causing the inhabitants so much suffering that they must long for peace, and force their Government to demand it. The people must be left nothing but their eyes to weep with over the war.

—General Philip Sheridan advising the King of Prussian in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War

Each moment the objects became more distinct, until finally Colonel Cook, who was studying them intently through the glass, pronounced the simple word, “Indians!”

—Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, *My Life on the Plains*

The arrival of General Philip Sheridan to the command of the Army’s Western posts was perhaps the most fatal development for tribal families struggling to survive. At the end of the Civil War, Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman deployed what Sherman called “hard war.” Sheridan’s aggressive pursuit of Confederate prisoners and destructive, scorched-earth tactics in the Shenandoah Valley garnered him support in high places. As Sheridan explained in his memoir: “Death is popularly considered the maximum punishment in war,” he wrote, “but it is not; reduction to poverty brings prayers for peace more surely and more quickly than does the destruction of human

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Despite two military and one Congressional investigation into the Sand Creek affair, the Army failed to punish those charged. With the annihilative precedent set by the Sand Creek massacre as a grim backdrop, the War Department tapped Sheridan to command the Missouri division in 1868 and the entire Military Division of the Missouri a year later. The scorched earth tactics that ended the Civil War served as his blueprint.

Yet the Western campaign against the Southern Cheyenne did not follow the War Department’s plans. In no small measure, this disruption must be credited to the extraordinarily resourceful responses of Cheyenne women who brokered a fragile safety for themselves and their children from behind enemy lines. Complex Cheyenne epistemologies about captivity clearly informed their advocacy, although nothing has been published on that subject. Still, reading against the grain in accounts given by their Army captors suggests much about these women’s ability to deploy Cheyenne captivity norms to broker a fragile amnesty for their people from the very core of an Army determined to wipe them out. At Sand Creek, Cheyenne women’s body parts were used as the harshest signifiers of settler conquest over living—and future—Cheyenne people.

From within an American plan for total war against them, the horrific abuse of Cheyenne women also demonstrated that the captivity of Indian women and children posed new opportunities for achieving the dispossession and containment of Indian communities.

Sheridan’s troops fought 619 “engagements” with Western tribes from 1867-1884.\(^{38}\) Sheridan reportedly maintained a concubinage with a Chinook woman during his

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first deployment after West Point, but his hatred of Indians never wavered; he understood his mission as the “overthrow of savagery by civilization”.\textsuperscript{39} Key among the Army’s concerns over uncontained tribes were their destruction of the tracks of the Kansas Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, which mobilized commodities and facilitated Euro-American settlement continentally. Sheridan and others viewed the completion of transcontinental rail lines the answer to their “Indian problem.” According to Hutton, Sheridan used his military and political power to “actively promote the movement of hunters, stockmen, miners, farmers, and railroaders” into the region.\textsuperscript{40} Once in commander of the Missouri division, Sheridan declared futile any attempts to distinguish militarized and compliant factions within the tribes. He demanded that withholding treaty pay-outs and military force be applied to coercing all Southern Plains tribes onto reservations in Indian Territory.

By the summer of 1868, the families under Black Kettle faced a state of near-starvation and destitution. An elderly Black Kettle, beset within his community and without by intensely conflicting pressures, agreed to leave lands in Kansas and Colorado and settle in Indian Territory while militarized and confrontational tribal factions continued to raid the invading foreigners. Pleas by Indian agents and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for treaty-guaranteed pay-outs fell on deaf ears in Washington. The Southern Cheyenne had no choice but to spread out across their homelands again in an attempt to secure food and territoriality that the treaty-makers would not. Cheyenne

chiefs and their warriors, sometimes in concert, other times in opposition, attempted to protect the best buffalo lands. Desperate and outraged tribal men enacted raids on freight wagons and livestock in American settlements along the borderlands, straining the limits of Indian and Army diplomacy. Bloodshed, destruction, and captive taking proliferated.

Sometime between Sand Creek and the fall of 1868, Mochis and Medicine Water joined the warrior ranks. Their protection of their people and lands provides a narrative thread by which the follow a fuller precursor to internment at Fort Marion and Indian education policy. Sipes’ oral historical accounts and research offer the most complete record of the life of Mochis, and her responses to the challenges faced by her people:

(Mochis) picked up a rifle that her father had. The Old Ones say that he saved a couple of trappers from dying of the cold, the snow, and starvation, oh, two or three winters before that. How long (Mochis) carried the rifle, I, no one knows anymore. But she used that rifle to ride with her new husband, Medicine Water…. She knew that such destruction at Sand Creek was totally uncalled for. There was no need for the soldiers to have done the things they did to the people.  

John Sipes, Jr. co-authored a profile of Mochis, or “Mo-chi” with reporter Linda Wommack, which appeared in *Wild West* magazine shortly after his death in 2007. Here Sipes related Cheyenne oral historical accounts of Mochis accompanying men on raids of Plains forts and cantonments. Mochis joined other warriors on raids of ranches and stagecoaches in 1865, “destroying some 70 miles of telegraph wire,” the article reported. “The route to Denver was practically shut down.” When the men drew the Army soldiers from their forts into the open plains, the women often snuck in behind them and loaded

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confiscated Army mounts with foodstuffs, ammunition and other crucial goods before escaping back onto the Plains. Only a small number of women proved themselves capable of such courageous acts, Sipes explained. These exceptional women were responsible for the domestic and childbearing duties of Cheyenne womanhood alongside the demands of being women warriors.42

In September of 1868, Sheridan’s field report to the War Department advocated troops be authorized to make sure the Cheyenne were “soundly whipped, and the ringleaders in the present trouble hung, their ponies killed, and such destruction of their property as will make them very poor.”43 What Sheridan did not anticipate was how much the Cheyenne women he hunted would come to permanently shift Army strategies for the next three generations.

Sheridan devised what he termed an “experimental” strategy for a scorched-earth winter campaign designed to force Cheyenne families, already hungry from treaty neglect and bison predation, back to more of the same on a reservation in Indian Territory. To lead this deployment, Sheridan chose an officer with shared characteristics as an outsider and a bit of a wild card, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer. The Army suspended Custer for making an unauthorized furlough to see his wife, but Sheridan recalled the officer from his Michigan home to lead the Seventh Cavalry against the Cheyenne.

Both officers knew tribes were exceedingly vulnerable and immobile this time of year. The trick was finding them, claimed Custer in his 1874 serialized memoir, *My Life on the Plains*.

Except during seasons of the most perfect peace…the localities selected for the winter resorts are remote from the military posts and frontier settlement, and the knowledge which might lead to them carefully withheld from every white man. Even during a moderate winter season, it is barely possible for the Indians to obtain sufficient food for their ponies to keep the latter in anything above a starving condition…(the ponies require) several weeks of good grazing in the spring to fit them for service—particularly such service as is required from the war ponies.\textsuperscript{44}

Implied, but not articulated in Custer’s passage was the knowledge that a surprise attack would render many survivors without sufficient clothing or shelter to survive even one night on the winter landscape. Scorched-earth tactics increased the likelihood that tribal families would have no other choice but to move to subprime lands in Indian Territory or face certain death for their children and elders.

The Seventh Cavalry had their plan, and a man they felt confident would implement it. On November 23, 1868, Custer gathered 800 troops and a dozen supply trains and embarked on his mission. A storm had already dumped a foot of snow in their path. By the time the soldiers got underway, horses had to plow through drifts so dense and blinding that the men couldn’t use their stirrups from the saddle. Custer drove the Seventh Cavalry hard, from six in the morning until well after midnight on some days.

He was not certain which of the tribes he was trailing, but hoped to find Cheyenne. In

\textsuperscript{44} Custer, George Armstrong. *My Life on the Plains: or, Personal experiences with Indians*. New York: Sheldon & Co., 1876. 139.
many senses of the word, like the Dog Soldiers, the Seventh Cavalry risked a suicide mission.

As Custer and his troops began their incredibly risky campaign far from any fort or other Army outpost, they enjoyed three crucial advantages: exceptionally skilled Indian scouts, sufficient food, and fresh horses. Two Osage men, Little Beaver and Hard Rope, had been hired to help the Seventh Cavalry. Hostile Cheyenne had attacked their Osage reservation the previous summer, and the men wanted revenge. The company marched through territory marked by endlessly undulating hills, but very infrequent landmarks. The trails were buried in heavy snowfall that filled tracks almost immediately, and branched out into smaller tracks as family groups set out from the main band like spokes in a wheel. At night, the men had to shovel four feet of snow off the prairie before they could stake their tents, which would collapse by morning under the weight of new accumulation. The soldiers of the Seventh were never completely certain they were not lost. The expertise of Little Beaver and Hard Rope proved invaluable as the Seventh attempted to forge an unfamiliar and unpredictable winter landscape, following clues invisible to their employers.

After three days in such conditions, Little Beaver and Hard Rope spotted a large Indian encampment along the Washita River. Custer and his Osage helpers crawled on their bellies, across crusted snow, to the edge of a bluff overlooking the valley. “One of the scouts announced he could smell smoke,” wrote Blackfeet author James Welch in his counter-history, *Killing Custer*. “The other heard a dog bark. Custer could not see
anything, and he did not smell smoke or hear the dog. But in the quiet moments of
listening, he heard a baby cry. He had found his Indians.”

Without any confirmation of which tribe or band lay below, that evening Custer
broke his company into four units and surrounded the camp. At dawn on November 27,
1868, gunfire and strains of the song “Garry Owen” alerted the Cheyenne families with
Black Kettle that U.S. soldiers were again attacking them. Soldiers were nearly on top of
the teepees before panicked Cheyenne families burst out into the snow, many wearing
little to no clothing in the frigid morning air. Some two hundred soldiers were assigned to
pull down the lodges, and heap bedding, clothing, buffalo robes, food stores, and personal
objects into enormous piles. On Custer’s cue, the soldiers set the mounds ablaze. The
experience remained vivid in Custer memoir six years later: “The Indians were driven at
every point and forced to abandon the field to us, yet they would go no further than they
were actually driven” even though “all that was left of the village were a few heaps of
blackened ashes.”

Columns of soldiers swarmed into the inner spaces of the Washita River camp,
their bullets whizzing through teepee walls. Mounted soldiers again chased down women,
children, old people and young men. Pandemonium erupted as screaming adults grabbed
the youngest and eldest members of their communities and ran for a safety that could not
exist. Fleeing Cheyenne people faced mounted, firing soldiers circling in every direction.
Custer claimed he issued orders to avoid “non-combatants,” but that directive proved

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difficult in the extreme on the ground.\textsuperscript{47} Many Cheyenne women and teenagers fought back with guns and bows and arrows. Men were mixed in among women and children trying to escape. Black Kettle and his wife, Medicine Woman, attempted to flee up the river on the back of a pony. Instead of trying to separate one from the other, soldiers shot them both in the back. They and their horse died in the river. One officer reported a group of elderly women dragging children by the arms, babies on their back. A pregnant woman was killed not far from camp and eviscerated, according to contemporary investigations\textsuperscript{48} and Cheyenne oral histories.\textsuperscript{49} Men ordered to hunt down men and boys tore after a group of women and children “killing them without mercy,” according to hired scout Ben Clark. Those unlucky enough to be discovered wounded were, as a matter of Army policy, killed where they lay, regardless of gender.\textsuperscript{50}

Mochis and Medicine Water were married at the time of the Washita massacre. Sipes 2008 account in \textit{Wild West} magazine placed Mochis and Medicine Water at many of the major battles during this crucial era. This time Mochis and Medicine Water faced their foes with their children nearby.\textsuperscript{51} Chivington’s men murdered Medicine Water’s first wife at Sand Creek. Their daughter Tahnea, or Measure Woman, was an infant at Sand Creek and five years old the winter of 1868. Mochis had taken the child into her heart as her own. Somehow, Tahnea got separated from her family in the desperate

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\item \textsuperscript{47} Custer, George Armstrong. \textit{My Life on the Plains: or, Personal experiences with Indians}. Sheldon & Co., 1876. 164.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Wommack, Linda and John L. Sipes, Jr. “Mo-chi, First Female Cheyenne Warrior.” \textit{Wild West} Apr 2008: 20, 6; ProQuest Research Library pg. 40.
\end{itemize}
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scramble, according to a 2003 interview of Sipes by historian Peter Harrison. “Probably in a panic, (Tahnea) scampered after other villagers towards the river and watched them plunge into the icy waters,” Sipes related. “Too young to swim herself she paused timorously at the river’s edge long enough for one of the sharpshooters opposite to draw a bead and shoot her in the hip.” Sipes’ account coalesces with multiple Army recountings of this steep bank, and frantic Cheyenne attempting to scramble down it to the river. Tahnea’s experience could not have devastated Mochis and Medicine Water any less than any parent who learns their five-year-old was shot. Sipes’ 2008 article in *Wild West* magazine places Mochis and Medicine Water with their daughter when she was injured.

Scout Ben Clark found Custer and alerted him to the killing of women and children. Custer ordered Clark to cease such activity, and direct the soldiers to corral the women and children in a teepee he designated for that purpose. While Clark related this to Sheridan’s orders, it doesn’t appear this was his only motivation. An alarmed Custer had just received word that hundreds of Kiowa, Arapaho, and Cheyenne lodges dotted the river for miles, and large groupings of mounted warriors were galloping towards Black Kettle’s encampment. The captives quickly confirmed the existence of sizeable Indian villages very close by, wrote Greene, “and the colonel quickly realized that, despite his troops’ success in seizing the Cheyenne camp, his position was by no means secure….he anxiously watched through an eyeglass the mounting numbers of armed, war-bonneted

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figures perched on ponies atop the hills bordering the valley floor…believing that an attack was all but inevitable.”

The unexpected presence of some 6,000 Indians three miles down the river, as well as the arrival of new warriors to the scene, clearly rattled the colonel. Custer did what he did best; he improvised, ordering men to create a holding area for captured Cheyenne women and children. The Seventh Cavalry had barely survived the bold and risky trip out to the Washita. Custer knew his troops and freight wagons loaded with provisions now had a dramatically diminishing chance of making it out of the area. Custer could not allow night fall on himself and his company as warriors accumulated on the ridges surrounding the grisly scene. “By late in the day,” according to Greene, “the extrication of Custer’s command from what appeared to be a steadily worsening threat from the Indians of the downriver camps now became paramount.” Waiting out the night on the Washita was out of the question.

Some survivors of Black Kettle’s people, along with warriors from surrounding encampments, watched the band’s entire cache of winter food, warm clothing, and shelter smolder in enormous piles. Besides the lodges containing the captives, only one teepee was intact, one of the most beautiful. It was roped to an Army supply wagon. Colonel Custer ordered it set aside as his personal war booty. Officers picked the best ponies from Black Kettle’s herd for themselves, and the able-bodied captives were ordered atop others.

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As the company prepared to pull out, Custer ordered the rest of the band’s more than 800 ponies and mules to be herded against a bluff and systematically shot. As warriors lining the horizon looked on, the Seventh Cavalry put the captive and wounded women and children onto wagons. A few of the warriors made motions to take off after their mothers, wives, sisters, and children or attempted to stampede Army mules. Custer ran small units of the Seventh up the hillsides, creating skirmish lines the company followed out of the valley. Soldiers placed captives in protective squads around the soldiers and supply wagons, human shields for the narrow escape of the Seventh Cavalry from what was still most resolutely Indian Country.

The long column of women, children, and animals briskly disappeared into the snowy twilight. Little Tahnea appeared among the captives. Someone, either a soldier or a survivor in her community, had picked the bleeding child from the riverbank and handed her over to the female captives. Did Mochis and Medicine Water see their daughter rolling away with the murderous soldiers? The women captured were mostly of childbearing age, Mochis’ contemporaries, and she almost certainly counted kin among the prisoners. Did this help ease her mind, or did she even know Tahnea survived?

Descendent Shermann Goose related his feelings about the event for Rocky Mountain PBS’s *Tears in the Sand*. His feelings may not have been so different from those of his grandparents, who survived the event.

(Washita River) was no battle at all. It was a surprise massacre, massacre of an unarmed and unsuspecting victim. The Indian thought he was living just like the way he was supposed to with the United States, backed by the treaty of Black Kettle, the chief. …The intention was to kill all of them. Decimate them to the point of complete extinction. One can easily imagine
nowadays, 1996, how it would sound to kill a race plum out…. The things that were inflicted on them are, we wouldn’t do to a dog today.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{Were it not for the accidental discovery of Lt. Godfrey}, the Washita River massacre could have been Custer’s major defeat, eight years before the Battle of Little Bighorn. One day out from the Washita, but still two days from safety in Indian Territory, Custer conveyed the questionable bravado that came to define him. He jotted a note to Sheridan and sent it ahead with a messenger. “We destroyed everything of value to the Indians, and have now in our possession, as prisoners of war, fifty-three squaws and their children.”\textsuperscript{57} The company was exceedingly vulnerable to counter attack and Custer knew it. The fate of the Seventh Cavalry was largely in the hands of two Osage scouts, who were not at all sure the company would protect them against their Cheyenne enemies if the time came.\textsuperscript{58} Would Little Beaver and Hard Rope see the company back to its destination, or split off for home? Any separation from the supply wagons, either through accident or battle, would prove deadly for the men and their prisoners on a landscape that had become more dangerous since the massacre, not less. The Cheyenne women and children, many wounded, undoubtedly slowed the retreat, though the Seventh pushed on into the snow until the early hours. Though they protected the cavalry’s escape, the women and children would certainly draw some sort of Indian engagement to a makeshift

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cantonment that had been created for the Seventh, two long days from the site of the
battle. As they trudged into the late night, the women sang mourning “dirges.” The next
day, according to Greene’s research, one young woman urged her guard to allow her to
leave the group temporarily, and galloped into view a while later with a new infant in her
arms. The captives must have exacted an emotional toll on at least some of the soldiers.

These women and children had seen and survived unimaginable horrors on the
Washita, on the Big Sandy River, and in other places over the past four years. Custer
reported destroying fifty-one lodges at the Washita River that November day, and
capturing fifty-three women and children; each family group likely lost at least one
woman or child to death or captivity Southern Cheyenne culture required women and
children to secure and manage food and fuel during, and to gather enough cottonwood
bark to feed large, grass-starved herds of ponies, a crucial resource. Women endowed
with specialized pharmacopia skills healed the sick and wounded. We know the women
were able to both physically and emotionally manage these demands enough to continue
to love; their babies alerted Custer to the homes these women worked so hard to create
into places of nurturing and safety. Women brought to the communities and were trained
to execute the demanding and complex duties to sustain it. Removing such a large body
of labor, love, and expertise from Black Kettle’s band could not have been anything less
than devastating in every way. But these were not women and children trained in
frivolity. They were not strangers to the treachery of captivity; most had been on either

59 Greene, Jerome A. Washita: The U.S. Army and the Southern Cheyennes, 1867-1869. Norman:
60 Hamalainen, Pekka. “The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures.” The Journal of American
History; Dec 2003; Vol. 90, Issue 3: pp. 841-42.
end of it. Those who wielded power in the Seventh Cavalry were about to discover some of the subtle and generative forms of violence and captivity that had been developed by Plains tribal peoples for at least the past two centuries.⁶¹

These women, as much as any captive can, also came to change and manipulate their jailors in ways the soldiers could not have anticipated and perhaps never fully understood. More simply, the Seventh Cavalry had with them fifty-three souls infinitely more capable of surviving on the Plains than they. Mochis did not appear among the list of incarcerated women and children, though Tahnea did. It is possible Mochis proffered another name, but her descendants have published no stories of the woman warriors’ captivity that winter. Estimates of the Cheyenne death toll vary widely, from as few as thirty to Custer’s boastful estimate of 300. Scholarship seems to have settled on approximately sixty Indian deaths at the scene, many being women, children, and elders. More were injured, and the stories of those who helped them survive until Spring remain with the Cheyenne people. Cheyenne historian Henrietta Mann has supplemented more familiar military histories with stories from her descendant community, including the memories of her great grandmother, White Buffalo Woman:

…even at sixteen the memory and fear of having to flee were too real for security. She therefore kept her moccasins on all the time, even sleeping in them…Little Rock was also dead. He had been shot in the forehead while defending some children and two of his sisters, one of whom was White Buffalo Woman. Her aged mother, who could not climb the steep banks of the Washita, was captured, as was her beautiful niece, Little Rock's

daughter (Mo-nah-see-tah). They were among the fifty-three prisoners of war marched to Camp Supply. By the time the Seventh Cavalry and its prisoners reached the supply outpost, Custer had Sheridan’s congratulatory note in hand. The mission was a bold one; Custer went farther, in worse weather, than perhaps any other commander before him. Black Kettle was dead, as was his only remaining council chief, Little Rock. A scorched earth agenda had been achieved with the destruction of the lodges and all material necessary to sustain life in the harsh winter environment. To honor the Seventh Cavalry’s achievement, Sheridan ordered the company to make a formal entry into the outpost, where the general would be waiting to review the troops. The Osage and American scouts were first in to the camp, followed by the prisoners. The band blared “Garry Owen,” the Seventh’s signature song, leading the platoons past General Sheridan. After Grant was elected president in 1869, he promoted Sheridan to command of the entire Division of the Missouri.

While Custer and Sheridan wrote and performed victory, the glory of their situation warranted a bit more modesty by the estimation of military historian Jerome Greene. First and foremost, “in accordance with the Medicine Lodge treaty, the Indians had a right to be along the Washita, south of their prescribed reservation. That Custer ironically stumbled onto Black Kettle’s village—detached as it was from the downriver camps—was pure chance….” That they had violated a treaty seemed to have escaped their knowledge or concern. The contingency of the Seventh’s claim to space could not

have escaped the seasoned officers. “Camp Supply” was little more than a rude log 
cantonment. It had been thrown together earlier that month by the Third Infantry, itself 
having only recently been formed by Kansas volunteers eager to fight Indians they felt 
were to blame for the summer’s border violence. Camp Supply was so minimally 
 provisioned that the Seventh relocated the captives to Fort Hays, Kansas, a primitive log 
stockade in central Kansas some 185 miles away.

Two days back from the Washita battle, Custer and Sheridan began discussing 
next steps. They knew time was of the essence. The officers knew they must secure their 
objectives before the grass started to green, wrote Custer, and the Cheyenne ponies again 
facilitated mobility. Wrote Custer:

The same spirit who, in the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864, had so 
successfully inaugurated the “whirling” movement, was not present, and it 
was determined that upon a slightly modified principle, reinforced by the 
biting frosts of winter, we should continue to “press things” until our 
savage enemies should not only be completely humbled, but be forced by 
the combined perils for war and winter to beg for peace, and settle quietly 
down within the limits of their reservation.  

64 The “whirling” American imaginary proved potent but short-lived. Almost immediately, 
the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Nathaniel Taylor, the Senate Committee on Indian 
Affairs, and principal negotiators of the Medicine Lodge Treaty began speaking against 
the Washita incident and its controversial commander. Some voiced concerns that, far 
from forcing the “hostiles” onto reservations, Sheridan’s “total war” approach would 
incite all-out war come spring. Custer and Sheridan, among others, found themselves

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being asked to substantiate the claim that hostiles were indeed a part of Black Kettle’s notoriously peaceful, but endlessly fluid, band membership.

Among the captives were two women with high value in the dark social currency of captive-taking: Little Rock’s teenaged daughter and Black Kettle’s niece, Mo-nah-see-tah; and Black Kettle’s middle-aged sister, Mah-wis-sa. Their actions, and the cultural norms these women brought to the Seventh Cavalry, defined in key ways what was possible for the United States as well the Cheyenne. Through an examination of the changing treatment of Southern Cheyenne women during battle, and their responses to their experiences, new questions can be asked about how the United States shifted from a posture of annihilation to a tentative experiment to conquer through new forms of settler violence and captivity.

Custer was grateful for what he could glean from the women, via his interpreter. “I gathered much—in fact, the first reliable information as to what band we had attacked at daylight, which chiefs commanded, and many interesting scraps of information.”65 From within terror, Mah-wis-sa assumed her role as a senior woman within the band’s leading family. Just before the captives were to be led away by the Seventh Cavalry soldiers, Mah-wis-sa stepped forward and asked the interpreter if she could speak directly to the colonel on behalf of herself and the other women.

Though her village smoldered behind her, and the enemy surrounded on all sides, Mah-wis-sa began with an expression of cultural protocol and authority. She identified herself “not as a squaw, but as the sister of the head chief of her band.”66 Custer noted her “easy, natural, but impassioned delivery.”67 Though he could not have understood the finer contours of what was being said and experienced from a Cheyenne perspective, Custer understood the major notes. Mah-wis-sa was clearly a head woman adept in skills of public discourse so crucial in oral historical cultures. According to Custer, Mah-wis-sa then launched into a lengthy and heated excoriation of Black Kettle and the other leading men who stayed on the Washita against her advice. She claimed all the village warriors were dead, and “in the bitterest terms” claimed the men “brought this fate upon themselves and their families by their unprovoked attacks upon the white man.” Perhaps Mah-wis-sa’s purpose for this renouncement, if that is indeed what she said, served to reassure the murderous soldiers that no further violence was warranted. If Custer can be taken at his word, he appears to have accepted the discourse at face value.68

The head woman then turned to her captor and, through the interpreter, said, “you are the big chief. If this be true and you are what (the interpreter) claims, show that you can act like a great chief and secure for us that treatment which the helpless are entitled to.”69 Mah-wis-sa, with very little material power available to her, and from within her own state of captivity, was doing something at once brave and utterly normative; Mah-

69 Ibid.
wis-sa demanded Custer adhere to Cheyenne protocols of captivity. Custer scarcely ruminated on Mah-wis-sa’s complex strategy in My Life on the Plains. The women who had allowed Black Kettle’s sister to speak for them uttered their approval. This was a social play and a commerce as old as Indian-white contact, expressed across the continent in forms as varied as the cultures seeking middle ground.70

Custer does detail what, for him, was the most salient and promising moment of his first contact with the Cheyenne women. Once Mah-wis-sa completed her address to the colonel, she turned and “earnestly” scanned the faces of the Cheyenne women around her. Mah-wis-sa must have thought of the family connections, stories, and history of each woman as her gaze traveled from one to the other. She very likely was thinking strategically as well, from within her culture’s paradigms of captivity norms. The older woman, by Custer’s recounting, “approached a young Indian girl—probably seventeen years of age—and taking her by the hand conducted her to where I was standing.” Custer had no way of knowing Mah-wis-sa offered her own niece, nor what the significance was from a Cheyenne perspective. Was Mah-wis-sa inviting her enemy to join her own kinship circles, and thus remediate the now repeated destruction of her family and band? Mah-wis-sa offered the “big chief” something almost universally understood to be potent: a beautiful young female captive. That the moment held import was not lost on the colonel. Custer clasped the girl’s fingers in his own.71

Little Rock’s daughter (was) an exceedingly comely squaw, possessing a bright, cheery face, a countenance beaming with intelligence, and a disposition more inclined to be merry than one usually finds among the Indians. She was probably rather under than over twenty years of age. Added to bright, laughing eyes, a set of pearly teeth, and a rich complexion, her well-shaped head was crowned with a luxuriant growth of the most beautiful silken tresses, rivaling in color the blackness of the raven, and extending, when allowed to fall loosely over her shoulders, to below her waist. Her name…(when) anglicized, means “The young grass that shoots in the spring.”

The delight that Custer takes in describing his captive and the details of her teen-aged beauty pour forth in his memoir, serialized in nineteenth-century magazine *The Galaxy* from 1872-74. Custer’s admiration for Mo-nah-see-tah’s physical features was nearly matched by his preoccupation with her social standing. He identifies her as the daughter of council chief Little Rock at every opportunity, and thus “justly considered as belonging to the cream of the aristocracy, if not to royalty itself.” Though nothing has been published on Cheyenne captivity norms, Mah-wis-sa appears to offer the girl to the “big chief” on Cheyenne terms. Using the Cheyenne women and children as human shields to get the Army out of the Washita River Valley proved successful, but Mah-wis-sa asked the head man to engage in something more complex: to behave as a Southern Plains war chief, and take the girl under wing. This expectation could not be more different from Chivington’s orders to kill Indian innocents, and opportunistic Custer accepted the girl on terms much closer to Mah-wis-sah’s than Sheridan’s.

Custer’s memoir, however, interprets his connection with Mo-nah-see-tah within norms appropriate for his nineteenth-century American cultural perspective. Using the

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language of European empire, Custer framed the girl’s value more as a princess
exchanged between rival empires to foster alliance. Custer characterized Mo-nah-see-tah
as someone representative of an imagined Indian royal line, a status quite a bit better than
Sand Creek’s justification of the slaughter of Southern Cheyenne women, Chivington’s
infamous logic of “nits make lice.” Such conceptual hybridity, perhaps more neatly
narrated after the fact than how it was lived, does help illuminate what followed. For
Custer can be credited with fomenting a shift within the Missouri Division; he recognized
the standing of these two leading Cheyenne women, and the strategic usefulness of them
as cross-cultural negotiators akin to translator Raphael Romero. In fact, Custer deployed
a strategy used by American “squaw men”—traders and other entrepreneurs, mostly—
who had been using sexual relationships with Indian women to gain access to tribal trade
and territorial opportunities continentally for at least two centuries. 74 Further, Custer
portrayed Mo-nah-see-tah in terms quite different from those applied to Euro-American
women. White femininity was something to be barricaded and protected from inter-racial
counter in the Missouri Division at this time. Through Custer’s purposing of the
opportunities of captivity, the Indian feminine was no longer just a site of annihilation for
the Missouri Division and a U.S. War Department committed to Western conquest at any
cost.

74 To name only a few books addressing the coupling of Indian women and Euro-American men: Hyde,
Sleeper-Smith, Susan. Indian Women And French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter In the Western
Slavery, Kinship, And Community In the Southwest Borderlands. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina
Also undoubtedly significant to Custer and his reading audience, the body of Mo-nah-see-tah could not meet the constraints of white feminine virtue; she was Indian, and formerly married, not a maiden by any standards. Like the teepee Custer confiscated, Indian women’s bodies were assigned a new appeal as sites of collection and repurposing by the Army. Just as My Life in the Plains invested surprising interest in interpreting tribal pipe ceremonies, gender roles, and dress and lodging styles, so Custer similarly focused on detailing Cheyenne courtship customs, particularly the romantic history of Mo-nah-see-tah.

Some kind of mutual intimacy appears to have existed. Scout Ben Clark, Seventh Cavalry Troop Commander Frederick Benteen, and several Cheyenne oral historians independently claimed a sexual component existed between Custer and his young captive during the winter of 1869. Would Mo-nah-see-tah and Mo-wis-sah offer an interpretation of such a relationship that differed from the soldiers’ more scathing characterizations of the nature of the sexual relationship between Mo-nah-see-tah and Custer? Such questions are not meant to refute or dull the horror of sexual violence and hostage-taking, but rather to invite more consideration into what settler captivity experiences with the Cheyenne could reveal about Cheyenne captivity norms in that era. Survivors of Custer’s massacre at the Washita later took white female captives, which included forced sexual encounters with Cheyenne men.

Cheyenne oral history claims Mo-nah-see-tah gave birth in January of 1869, six weeks after being captured. Perhaps she miscarried an exceedingly premature baby, or Custer failed to include her late-term pregnancy in his memoir’s lingering, admiring description of the girl. Custer was interested enough in this woman to share her details with his readers, some who must have felt more than a little curiosity themselves. Custer gained much in the body of Mo-nah-see-tah. He and Sheridan almost immediately acknowledged their need for continued Indian intermediaries. Upon their arrival to Fort Hays, Custer summoned Mo-nah-see-tah and Mah-wis-sa to his tent. With the assistance of translator Romero, Custer proposed the women help him locate the “hostile villages” of their people. “To my surprise,” related Custer, “they evince great delight at the idea,” explaining they would rather go in search of their community than remain in a faraway Kansas stockade. Custer asked if Mo-nah-see-tah, Mah-wis-sa, and a third woman could leave Fort Hays and travel with him “with a view to rendering their services available in establishing communication with the hostile villages, if at any time this should become a desirable object.”

Mah-wis-sa was sent ahead to find her people, and within a few weeks Custer, Mo-nah-see-tah, Osage scouts and a small cavalry unit struck out after her to express the “desire of the Government to establish peace with their people and with the Arapahoes.” It was early March, and Custer knew the impending greening of the prairie would dramatically shift his strategic advantage with the highly mobile bands.

The journey again proved perilous. Mo-nah-see-tah proved a skilled tracker, able
to discern much from the age of ashes in a fire pit or condition of the marrow in discarded
bones around the campfire. At the outer edge of human and equine endurance, and
much too far from any Army outpost, the party finally encountered a band of Southern
Cheyenne led by Chiefs Medicine Arrow and Stone or Rock Forehead. Custer’s
“negotiations” had every possibility of failure with these leaders of the Sacred Medicine
Arrow society, who had been camped just upriver from Black Kettle’s band during the
Washita massacre. Custer’s exhausted entourage couldn’t even offer provisions to the
negotiations; fresh memories of “total war” and the interventions of Mo-nah-see-tah and
Romero perhaps served as his only advantages. Custer quickly called a meeting with
Medicine Arrows and two other chiefs. Once gathered, Custer put them under Army
guard before the Cheyenne warriors realized what was happening. Two tense days
ensued, and Custer knew well that he and his men were prime targets for captivity, too.
Custer called on Mo-nah-see-tah and Romero to assist in reassuring the village warriors
of his intentions to parlay an agreement.

This difficulty I removed by offering to escort her safely through the line
of pickets, and there await her return. Starting at once in the darkness, she
clinging to my hand with the natural timidity of a girl, we proceeded to the
picket station nearest to the point from which the sound of voices had
come…then, bidding Mo-nah-see-tah to proceed on her mission, I halted
to await her return.⁷⁹

Custer was struck by Mo-nah-see-tah’s willingness to return to his side after
successfully crossing back into Cheyenne space. He had no way of knowing what she

said to the Cheyenne warriors, but imagined it thus: “she believed she would in due time be given up to her own people, and that until then she would receive kind treatment at our hands and be exposed to less personal danger and suffering during hostilities than if with her village.” Whatever the girl said, it helped convince the Cheyenne men to join their chiefs and Custer in the council lodge. In the 1960s, Cheyenne elder John Stands in Timber related the pipe ceremony between Custer and the Medicine Arrow chiefs, in which Custer committed to peace with the Cheyenne. Less considered by the historiography was that Mo-nah-see-tah had done something quietly profound. She helped broker a ceasefire between her people and the Army, as well as inspired her captor to recognize the humanity of a Cheyenne woman, though this consciousness would prove more fragile than their peace. A deal was struck: Custer promised to leave if the chiefs would agree to move to reservations and release two captive settler women in their possession. Custer demanded the chiefs accompany him back to Fort Hays to insure his safe return. Mo-nah-see-tah also left her kin and accompanied Custer back to the fort, signaling her importance. The exact terms of her status with the colonel and as a captive remain unclear.

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Custer returned to his post believing he had single-handedly forced the submission of the Southern Cheyenne. However, no records exist of his feelings about his less decisive sexual situation the spring of 1869, when wife Libbie arrived at Fort Hays. In Libbie Custer’s 1890 memoir, *Following the Guidon*, she describes the fifteen-foot tall log stockade behind which the Cheyenne prisoners spent the winter and early spring of 1868-69. Wrote Libbie, “It was an unprecedented event to have sixty Indians from warlike tribes on whom we could safely look, or with whom we could actually visit.” The colonel’s wife often escorted visitors from the east, traveling on the new railroads, to observe the Indians from the stockade’s elevated sentinel’s walk. Soldiers filled visitors’ fertile imagination with stories of encounters with Indians. One told of “an old squaw cease for an instant stirring her soup, snatch her knife from her belt, plunge it into a soldier who was unsuspicous of a woman as a warrior, resume her soup-stirring perfectly imperturbed, not even looking at the dead soldier at her side.”

Libbie gained notoriety for joining her husband during most of his deployments, implying the militarized space innovatively used by Mo-nah-see-tah was not typically nor similarly occupied by Army wives. As the “old squaw” story illustrated, even an invading soldier assumed Cheyenne women could not engage actively in war.

*Guidon* made much of the abuses and neglect of the settler girls captured by Black Kettle’s band or relatives, but Colonel Custer’s wife invested no ink contemplating the context of imprisonment experienced by Cheyenne females at Fort Hays. The material differences in the women’s clothing and bodily appearance captured the focus of her

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writings, a curiosity shared by the Cheyenne women and children inside the stockade. Using the translator services of an officer versed in Southern Plains sign language, Libbie and the Cheyenne women communicated in a way that was both curious and strategic for both. According to Libbie, it was the role of older Cheyenne women to approach an outsider, and they “put their hands on my shoulder, smoothing and caressing me…the oldest, most withered and wizened of them laid their cheeks against mine, after the manner of their kissing.” The elder women did the same to the officer who was translating, surrounding him and separating him from Libbie.\footnote{Custer, Elizabeth B. \textit{Following the Guidon}. New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square. 1890. 86.} Libbie felt repulsed by the tough hands, thin hair, and “cunning and crafty looks of the antique ones,” imaging they would pull knives from their skirts at any moment. The Cheyenne women fingered Libbie’s hair, comparing it admiringly to their own. They admired the bird in her hat, the shiny buttons on her cloak, and her buttery gloves.\footnote{Custer, Elizabeth B. \textit{Following the Guidon}. New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square. 1890. 87.} Wrote Libbie:

> Even my feet were not neglected, and comparisons ensued; but they disapproved of my shoes, thinking their soft, pliable moccasins preferable. After all this careful inspection they turned to general Outers and gave their opinion of me, which amused him hugely; but I was denied a translation of their verdict.\footnote{Custer, Elizabeth B. \textit{Following the Guidon}. New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square. 1890. 89.}

Though we cannot know the comment that elicited laughter from the general overseeing their captivity, it is clear Cheyenne women held onto their cultural views on their lands, even with a stockade constructed around them. Like the soup-maker who stabbed the Army soldier, the captive Cheyenne women attempted to strategically enhance their outcomes via this woman of influence. When the Americans came to ogle
the Cheyenne women attempted to communicate their experiences to their captors. One always held up her blanket and pointed to the bullet holes punctuating its weave, making the “ping! ping!” sounds of gunfire. On one visit, the chiefs who were captured at Washita, Fat Bear, Dull Knife and Big Head, convened with Army officers. As the men negotiated the release of settler and Cheyenne captives, the women gathered in the stockade yard. One approached Libbie with her two “strippling” sons, and asked Ouster to translate her appeal to Custer’s wife. Perhaps she assumed Libbie was a mother herself.  

(S)he asked General Ouster to tell us (the boys) had lost their father in the fight. The tears ran down her cheeks as she talked on with eager fingers, and though answering tears rose in mine, I could not but look at the promise of athletic strength in the children, and wish with all my soul that instead of these embryo warriors she might have had daughters….  

But Libbie was childless that spring, and twenty-six years old. Perhaps this influenced her more unabashed admiration of Cheyenne babies gazing out from their beaded carriers. That such carriers undoubtedly helped families transport the infants to safety from her husband’s attack escaped Libbie’s commentary. One “cunning little bundle of brown velvet” attracted the most attention from the wife of the Army chief, the infant child of Mo-nah-see-tah, born at Fort Hays. Libbie wrote of feeling “anxious” to meet this child born in captivity and his illustrious mother, daughter of a chief. Like her husband, Libbie commented extensively on Mo-nah-see-tah’s beauty and charm. Had Libbie caught wind of the rumor and innuendo about a sexual relationship with her husband?

87 Ibid.
Mo-nah-see-tah clearly understood the meeting as important. According to
*Guidon*, she dropped her gray Army-issue blanket and ran into a tent to grab a good red wrap. “(She came) forward to us shyly, and modestly hanging her head,” wrote Libbie, “Mo-nah-see-tah let the blanket fall from her glossy hair, her white, even teeth gleamed as she smiled, and the expression transfigured her, and made us forget her features.”

If the story of Custer’s infidelity is to be believed, or Libbie’s interpretation of the girl’s body language, much can be imagined about Mo-nah-see-tah’s behavior. Coming from a polygamous society where headmen in particular took multiple wives, Mo-nah-see-tah’s charm could be interpreted as seeking approval from a higher-status first wife. Still, if she had a sexual relationship with Custer, it cannot be assumed as consensual. Mo-nah-see-tah was almost certainly influenced by the exceedingly affectionate approach of her female elders toward their captors, and the strategy behind it. As Ma-wis-sah challenged Libbie’s husband earlier that winter, Custer was expected to conform to Cheyenne captivity norms, to “show that you can act like a great chief and secure for us that treatment which the helpless are entitled to.” Could not the same expectations and performativity be attached to Mo-nah-see-tah and Libbie in the stockade? With many Army personnel, Indian, and Americans observing, Fort Hays’ spaces of captivity and encounter must be understood as important and predictive, if not influential, to future experiences of war and confinement for these very Cheyenne and Army individuals.

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89 Custer, Elizabeth B. *Following the Guidon*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square. 1890. 95.
That summer, Custer and his small corps exchanged fifty-three Cheyenne women and children for the Southern Cheyenne promise to move to Indian Territory. The return of two white female captives with the Medicine Arrows band was a secondary term of the exchange. When Custer escorted the young Kansas women back to his troops, many soldiers in the Seventh Cavalry shed tears at the restoration of the white women and all they represented. For the Cheyenne, the restoration of their women and children also elicited joy, but the Cheyenne knew their ponies could not sustain flight or another fight after a long winter on cottonwood bark.

The emotions felt by Tahnea’s parents cannot be guessed. She came home with a severe limp, a significant impairment for the physically demanding lifestyle of her people, particularly for a small child whose parents were no longer an everyday presence in camp. Mochis and Medicine Water came to play central roles in some of the period’s most memorable clashes between Cheyenne warriors and Americans, catapulting them into the national consciousness during the heat of the Red River War in 1874. But it drew them away from the daily care of a little girl who must surely have needed her mother and father, as well as their other two children who had been born into war. According to Tahnea’s daughter, John Sipes, Jr.’s great-grandmother, Mochis “didn’t even get to see the little ones. My great-grandmother used to tell my mother, they never saw her.”

What Chivington and Evans could not change in Black Kettle’s loyalists, Custer and Sheridan did. The waning ranks of Dog Soldiers and the Bowstring Society warriors swelled with new initiates the winter of 1869. White Buffalo Woman told her

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granddaughter, future historian Henrietta Mann: “Those who sought to avenge the murder of relatives and friends went north, carrying the sacred arrows with them.”

Cheyenne resistance brought its own magnifying glass upon an America soaked in the gore of more than a decade of war within. The War Department, the railroad companies wielding the full support of the United States federal apparatus, the settlers, miners, freighters, prospectors, ranchers, and map-makers did not succeed in putting down the Cheyenne. The attacks on the Southern Cheyenne stayed with the United States like the scar on Custer’s young bugle boy, whose skull was pierced by a spur-tipped arrow at the Washita. Though nearly snow blind from the horrible storm preceding the battle, the company surgeon managed to remove the arrowhead. As the massacre drew to a close, Custer encountered his bugle boy, face masked in blood, resting atop a pile of buffalo robes. When Custer asked if he saw the Indian who hurt him, the boy showed his commanding officer his revolver. The boy then reached into a pocket and withdrew a fresh, black-haired scalp. “If anybody think I didn’t see him, I want them to take a look at that.”

By the time Libbie Custer joined her husband at Fort Hays in the spring of 1869, Mo-nah-see-tah likely was pregnant. After the Cheyenne captives had been returned, the Custers and the Seventh Cavalry rested along Kansas’ Big Creek. Following the Guidon describes the Sibley tents lining the river, and rising among them an intricately decorated

tepee Custer said he “brought from an abandoned Indian village.” Was this the teepee Custer spirited away as personal war booty at the Washita massacre? What did the soldiers of the Seventh, and their commander intend to signal in their display of the teepee—a signifier of dominance, an uncontainable curiosity, or perhaps even an appreciation for the deep ingenuity and artistry of the people they had attempted to destroy? Mo-nah-see-tah would soon be the mother of Custer’s son, according to Cheyenne oral history and the researched claims of members of the Seventh Cavalry. What did, what could, Mo-nah-see-tah tell her child? Are these denouements? If so, who is the captor, and who is the captive?

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Julia rode behind an Indian who shot a buffalo in the neck. As he got close enough to reach the arrow with his foot, he pressed it farther into his victim’s neck and as he raced past the animal, Julia’s foot touched the buffalo. This made such an impression that she holds it in memory to this day.  

—Grace Meredith, *Girl Captives of the Cheyenne*

The strategically successful use of women and children captives at Washita in 1868, by 1872 had become an established praxis of the Department of the Missouri under Sheridan, and with the blessing of his nation. This shift, while significant militarily, must be understood as emerging from Indian captivity norms that dominated the region’s political economy and influenced the U.S. War Department. While the literature is exceptionally thin on the topic of Cheyenne captivity norms, significant studies of neighboring tribes with whom the Cheyenne were trading, raiding, warring, and partnering in this era help shed light on interconnected practices of tribal captive economies and customs regionally. Situating U.S. federal Indian policy within a more complexified Cheyenne-Army strategem also opens analytic space in which to consider subsequent colonial projects enacted by U.S. federal agencies. This is particularly so with the assimilative programs that emerged quite directly from conflicts between Plains tribes and the practices and personnel of the Army’s Missouri Department, which swept these same individuals into strange new expressions of violence and captivity.

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Historian James Brooks identifies captivity as a particularly potent point of “mutually intelligible” exchange in his lengthy studies of Southwest Borderlands. The violent and strategic exchange of female bodies existed long before U.S. settler-colonialism, and a broad historiography links them to Pawnee, Cheyenne, Sioux, and Navajo-infused “obligations of reciprocity (that were) established between kindreds, bands, and societies, serving both to reinforce male dominance and to extend the reproductive (social and biological) vigor of communities.” 97 Brooks’ work focuses on the Comanche people, but their historic links to the Southern Cheyenne included common experiences with the troops under Sheridan’s command in the 1870s. During the Indian Wars, claims Brooks, “vigorous” Comanche captive raiding satisfied both “status competition and the need to replace a population ravaged by warfare and epidemic disease.”

Captives were assigned specific roles within Comanche and Kiowa societies, and it appears in Cheyenne village life; from tending horse herds to ceremonial duties in the Sun Dance, tribal societies developed detailed and dynamic epistemologies for their stolen citizens. 98 Male captives, while fewer, could elevate their status via warfare or services as trans-lingual and -cultural translators during a time of intense change. Brooks also examined the ways in which female captivity took on new urgency as colonial trade opportunities shifted during this period.

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The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw dramatic shifts in the status and work of Plains Indian women as peoples like the Commanches, Kiowas, and Cheyennes began participating in the European fur and hide trade. With the horse and gun, one Indian man could procure fifty to sixty buffalo hides per season, twice as many as one Indian woman could tan for use or exchange. An increase in polygamy, and raiding for captive women, served to counteract this labor shortage.99

Environmental historian Pekka Hamalainen similarly identifies the mid-nineteenth century as a time of dramatic shifts in expansion and constriction on the Southern Plains. Tribal raiding and trading for commodities and captives proved the dominant practice to which Euro-American settlers had to adapt in the early nineteenth century. During a time of clear Comanche dominance in the early nineteenth century, Comanche raiding in New Mexico and Texas rarely resulted in massacre. Settlers were left with enough livestock to continue human, agricultural, and livestock productivity; perhaps Comanche raiders had their eyes on fostering growth for future raids. Large-scale stock and captivity raiding “debilitated” post-Civil War Texas. “And then it ended, not because large biohistorical dynamics had suddenly turned against them but because a new player entered the scene,” according to Hamalainen. “(I)n 1871, the U.S. Army launched a total war in Comancheria, targeting horses, bison, and food caches as much as people.100

Military historians have characterized Sheridan’s command of the Military Division of the Missouri with a more monolithic and inflexible response to a region with

astounding ecological and cultural diversity, including the purposing of captivity and other economies. In the estimation of Sheridan biographer and historian Paul Hutton, Sheridan, who during the Civil War had proven to be quite original in his approach to military problems, failed for the most part to provide innovative or imaginative leadership for the frontier army. The long shadow cast by the Civil War was part of the problem. Instead of looking to the future, Sheridan and many other army officers were far more captivated by the glorious past.¹⁰¹

Such critiques don’t fully consider the ways in which Sheridan and his officers adapted tactically to one of the primary modes of inter- and intra-tribal warfare: the capture and negotiative use of non-combatant female hostages. Such a methodological shift in the Missouri division could be connected to the considerable condemnation faced in the aftermath of massacre. Chivington and the troops under his command endured two military and one Congressional investigation after Sand Creek. The Washita massacre whipped up public condemnation from prominent Eastern reformers and missionaries such as Wendell Phillips, George Whipple, and Henry Ward Beecher, some quite pointedly directed at Sheridan specifically.¹⁰²

Still, much distinguishes Chivington’s more localized and annihilative mission at Sand Creek in 1864, and the Seventh Cavalry’s raid upon Black Kettle’s band four years later. Though prospectors and other settlers easily attained territorial status for Colorado in 1861, by the time of the Sand Creek massacre, Confederate aspirations for access to mineral wealth and elusive statehood status created insecurity for settlers during the Civil

War. At Sand Creek, the mutilated and displayed bodies of women and children served to signify a crude conquest by local militias in liminal American territories. A less annihilative use of female Indian bodies at Washita, and with gathering momentum elsewhere on the Southern Plains into the mid-1870s, similarly marks a consolidation and expansion of a federalized U.S. dominance. Conquest need not be marked on Indian female bodies by 1872, but could be marked by Indian female bodies displayed in captivity in the Missouri division’s thin but effective thread of forts at the edge of the remaining tribal territories. The War Department’s biggest proponents of “total war” expanded their approach; the tribes’ more complexified notions and uses of hostages were now at the heart of the methodology of the Military Division of the Missouri.

In the spring of 1872, Sheridan set about planning to crush Indian raids on teamsters supplying forts and other settler outposts, as well as comancheros conducting a robust trade in stolen American and Mexican cattle along the Mexican-U.S. borderlands. It looked much like Custer’s raid at Washita, and Sheridan chose another trusted Gettysberg officer to lead: Colonel Ranald Mackenzie. Mackenzie distinguished himself as an aggressive officer at Gettysburg under Sheridan’s command, and quickly gained notoriety for impulsivity and reckless courage during the Indian Wars. On September 28, 1872, Mackenzie and the Fourth Cavalry attacked Kai-wotche’s village along the Red River, in the Texas Panhandle. Mackenzie captured 120-130 women and children, destroyed 262 lodges, and seized the Commanche herd. The surviving men unsuccessfully attempted to rescue their families and horses, but Mackenzie marched the
captives back to Fort Concho in central Texas. There he displayed them in the fort’s livestock corral, in plain view of any who doubted the Army’s commitment to Indian submission. “Soon, husbands and relatives of the corralled Comanche ceased their raiding,” wrote military historian Brad Lookingbill in *War Dance at Fort Marion*, an authoritative history of the conflicts leading into the Red River War of 1875. “In effect, the military detained the families as a bond for the good behavior of their kinsmen.”

The women and children were held for a year until the Army felt confident the Kai-wotche’s band would leave Texas and not rise up again. The War Department rewarded Mackenzie with command of other high-level situations, with captivity an enduring strategy of submission of tribes refusing to settle on reservations. Most notorious was an attack of Kickapoo settled in Mexico, an illegal raid President Grant personally assigned to Mackenzie. The officer expressed his hesitance to Sheridan, according to Mackenzie biographer Michael Pierce.

At some point in the discussions, the impatient and impetuous Sheridan gave vent to his feelings. Stressing that Mackenzie had been especially selected to bring an end to the cross-border raids, Sheridan continued, “I want you to control and hold down the situation, and to do it in your own way…when you begin, let it be a campaign of annihilation, obliteration and complete destruction…I think you understand what I want done, and the way you should employ your force.”

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A May, 1873 attack on a Kickapoo and Lipan village well south of the Rio Grande rendered approximately forty captive women and children and a principal chief. As the outcomes of the Ft. Concho captivity “amply demonstrated,” claimed Pierce, “destroying lodges and supplies and taking hostages was as effective a blow to the Indians as killing warriors.”\(^\text{108}\) In July, Kickapoo leaders agreed to settle in Indian Territory under Army threat of never seeing their families again.

**By 1874, the pressure on Cheyenne lands in Kansas** had reached a breaking point. According to historian Lonnie J. White, “no other part of the West attracted immigrants in the volume that came to Kansas between 1865 and 1880” as the Homestead Act, Union veteran benefits, and new railroad towns poured Americans and other immigrants into the territory.\(^\text{109}\) Federally commissioned buffalo hunters had all-but devastated the herds upon which the tribes depended for their very existence and Summer’s drought exacerbated the effects of food shortages.\(^\text{110}\) With Black Kettle and his last council chief, Little Rock, long dead, there were fewer conflict-averse Cheyenne leaders to offset the warrior societies. The gross and systematic violation of treaty terms by settlers and the War Department further militarized Southern Plains tribes. What the Plains warriors could not accomplish in scale, they would attain in impact. Small groups of inter-tribal


warriors, male and female, patrolled the rolling hills surrounding wagon trails along the borderlands of Texas, Kansas, and Indian Territory. The Indian combatants focused their efforts on smaller travelling parties, and those facilitating the decimation of the few remaining buffalo herds. These escalating skirmishes resolutely ended President Grant’s shaky “Peace Policy” and unleashed the War Department’s plan to encircle tribal communities in an ever-tightening noose until they surrendered. The scattered series of deadly skirmishes known as the Red River War began.

Despite abundant academic and pop cultural examinations of the Dog Soldiers and other Southern Plains warrior societies on the front lines of the Red River War, very little has been published about the highly trained and ritualized Cheyenne woman warrior’s societies. The information shared by John Sipes, Jr. in his *Tears in the Sand* interview is some of the only publicly available information about his great-grandmother’s society, although this does not mean the traditions are lost or forgotten within current-day Cheyenne communities. As with other things Cheyenne, horses were at the center of the women’s warrior society. War horses dedicated, decorated and ritualized to the task were kept separately from the herd, just as the Dog Soldiers and other warriors camped a distance from the domestic groupings. Mochis tied her horse’s tail, and perhaps adorned it with eagle feathers, to mark it as special. If she painted the animal, they were pigments of her own making and design. Even the harnesses were unique to the duties and status of warhorses. Like all Cheyenne, Mochis learned to ride from the youngest age possible, and her endurance in the saddle was astounding. “Her
stamina and will to be able to ride and fight for the people is just amazing.” According to Sipes, only a “chosen few” were allowed to belong to this society.\footnote{111}

\begin{quote}
It was just not get on a horse, let’s go fight, situation….They looked at your life….her motherhood, the structure of her family, ways of life. She would have to let it be known that she wanted to play this role in her tribe, as one to go fight. And they would get her and start to train her. It was a big training…. The Old Ones say that the warrior women had their own guild, had their own songs, their own medicines, war shields…. she had her own medicine that was given to her by a medicine woman that worked in that guild of the warrior women. But she would have had her own type of preparation. … And her shield decorations would have been things that she would have done herself. That would have been her own technique of her preparation.\footnote{112}
\end{quote}

Through trauma and injury, Mochi, Medicine Water, their children and families suffered much. As children of warriors, Tahnea and her siblings paid a very high price in another way. Mochis’ new role within the warrior society demanded her absence from her parenthood, as did Medicine Water’s role in the Bowstring Society, according to Sipes.

These stories that the Old Ones tell me, it’s kind of unique that (Mochis) was able to play all these roles: mother, keeper of the lodge, able to cook and feed, and, then if it came time to fight, she went to fight. And the Old Ones say that she probably had, and I’d have to agree, she probably had her own feelings of maybe never coming back but she had the commitment after Sand Creek to do all this… And I think her life at that time was, she didn't even get to see the little ones. My great grandmother used to tell my mother, they never saw her.\footnote{113}

What choice did Tahnea’s parents have, as their children and families faced winter’s starvation. On July 3, 1874, Mochis, Medicine Water and other warriors

\footnote{113} Ibid.
attacked a freight wagon train headed out from Wichita. They tied the foreman to the wheels of his wagon, setting him and it ablaze. On August 24, 1874, Mochis, Medicine Water, and seventeen other members of their warrior societies encountered a United States surveying party on the border between central Kansas and Indian Country. Led by Captain Oliver Short, the federal team was in the process of plotting some 1,055 miles of Kansas prairie in what would become Meade County. Kansas historian Addie Haver Petefish reported that two of the surveyors brought their teenaged sons to help, and the party of six made its way through Section 4, Township 33 with some trepidation. Several days prior, they crossed paths with a detail of 300 soldiers headed for the border to “drive back the Indians to their reservations.”

It was late afternoon when Mochis, Medicine Water, and the other Cheyenne popped up out of a ravine and ambushed the surveyors as they attempted to escape on their ox wagon. The accomplished equestrian warriors appeared to have made quick work of the invaders in what became known as the Lone Tree Massacre. They laid the bodies of the Americans one beside the next on the ground, including the body of their dog, then butchered the hindquarters from the oxen and fled into the settling twilight. When the surveyors were discovered two days later, a large brass compass smashed into the crushed skull of Oliver Short punctuated the grisly tableau. Mochis, Medicine Water, and the other Cheyenne patrolling the border had experienced so much. With this resolute act, written as surely on white bodies as the depredations against the slaughtered at Sand Creek, these Cheyenne signaled their comprehension of the violence inherent in the project of mapping and claiming the territory the Cheyenne still considered their own.

Two weeks later, on September 10, 1874, Mochis and Medicine Water decisively entered the American consciousness as individual actors when they exacted elegant, if not terribly specific, revenge on the John German family.

John German, a Confederate veteran, wife Lydia and their five children were headed to new opportunities in Colorado from northern Georgia. The couple descended from some of the early Euro-American settlers in Georgia’s northern mountains in the immediate aftermath of Cherokee Removal; they now hoped to take advantage of tribal displacement in Colorado country. John, Lydia and their five children had been slowly migrating west, stopping along the way for periods of time to work when funds ran low, including a stint with an uncle who settled in Missouri after escorting the Cherokee to Indian Country in 1838-39. As the family crossed Missouri into Kansas, John German picked up the Smoky Hill Trail, an old stagecoach route to Denver. The family knew of the increasing skirmishes that had been erupting between tribes, the Army, and settlers that summer. With five children to protect, ages five to twenty, John and nineteen-year-old Stephen slept little and kept their muzzle-loaded rifles close at hand as they progressed through the contested space.

When evening approached, the family stopped along Six Mile Creek, just east of current-day Russell Springs, Kansas, and made camp. The cows were milked then left to wander and graze. John dug for easy water under the sand, and daughter Sophia spread

grain in the chicken coop. Catherine, who later worked with her niece to write a book of the family’s experiences, soon came to treasure the memory of this simple last supper with her family: “how we enjoyed the sweet, warm milk along with the supper mother had prepared!” A fat ochre sun soon sank below the prairie horizon, and the uneasy family found solace in knowing they were but one long day from Ft. Wallace and white settlement.\footnote{Meredith. Grace E. \textit{Girl Captives of the Cheyennes: A True Story of the Capture and Rescue of Four Pioneer Girls, 1874.} Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004. 16.}

It is not known if Mochis’ and Medicine Water’s party scouted the family that night, though the Germans’ fire would have been seen for miles on the open plains. At dawn, Lydia and John broke camp with the younger children while Stephen and seventeen-year-old Catherine fetched the cows from a nearby hollow. As they drove the animals towards the wagon, a dozen antelope burst over a nearby ridge, startled and scrambling. Stephen broke into a run, hoping to get a decent shot, but the band of Cheyenne warriors emerged close behind the fleeing animals, bearing down on the Germans at a full gallop. “Just then I heard the most terrible yells,” Catherine recalled. “We looked again and saw many forms dashing down upon our wagon. Stephen exclaimed, “Indians! Indians!” I heard several dreadful groans.”\footnote{Meredith. Grace E. \textit{Girl Captives of the Cheyennes: A True Story of the Capture and Rescue of Four Pioneer Girls, 1874.} Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004. 16.} Catherine saw Stephen fall. She ran towards him when an arrow pierced her upper thigh. A Cheyenne Dog soldier, perhaps a Northern Cheyenne named Kicking Horse, bore down on Catherine from his large bay horse. He yanked the arrow from Catherine’s thigh, kicked her a few times then hoisted the young woman on his horse. Mochis had been the first to
strike, killing John with a single axe blow to the head. As Lydia ran towards her husband, Mochis raised her weapon again. In a jarring evocation of her own mother’s murder, Mochis brought the axe down into Lydia German’s forehead, killing her instantly.

With their families undergoing severe food shortages, the Cheyenne warrior party swiftly butchered some of the livestock and captured the rest, grabbed what goods could be easily carried from the wagon, and then set it ablaze. The warriors knew their children and community desperately needed the meat, food staples, and other supplies brought back from settler raids. Mochis and the men scooped up Catherine, her four surviving sisters, and sped from the scene and Ft. Wallace beyond. As Sophia would tell an interviewer late in her life, “I still remember looking back over my shoulder to where the others were scattered upon the prairie, and me pounding against the back of a galloping Indian pony.”\(^\text{120}\)

The mutilated bodies of the German family lay on the ground, where they were found two weeks later by Kansas hunters. The family Bible lay in the grass nearby, and its record of births, along with one of the young girl’s tiny shoes, told the Americans that all were not accounted for. Captives had almost certainly been taken.

The similarities between the massacre of the Germans and the families at Sand Creek startle. Both occurred at dawn, when the victims were far from home and isolated. Both lodged in public discourse and imagination for their swift and certain ferocity. The fate of the German sisters found fertile curiosity in the American imagination. Telegrams and letters from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency and Western newspapers excited troops and settlers. Mochis found brutally elegant revenge for her mother’s death when

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she executed Lydia German. Just like Tahnea, Catherine German was injured as she attempted to flee her attackers. Catherine’s displacement, as Tahnea’s, would prove to change the course of her life and that of her family. For the Cheyenne, revealed Sipes, the capture and killing of the German family members signified and satisfied something different.

…at the time, the Old Ones say, (Mochis) probably saw no kind of difference in the swords being used on the Cheyenne and her family at Sand Creek. The way they cut up and they mutilated their bodies at Sand Creek. And that probably was still on her mind, the way that occurred at Sand Creek. And that was time of war, I mean, and people die in war and she was at war. She declared war along with all the other members of the family.¹²¹

As the German girls entered captivity with the Cheyenne, they experienced the hardship of their captors, as well as participated in Cheyenne captivity norms they could not have fully understood. In 1927, Catherine’s niece Grace E. Meredith released the family’s memoir, *Girl Captives of the Cheyennes: A True Story of the Capture and Rescue of Four Pioneer Girls, 1874*. It offered an intimate window into the everyday human experience of a dark trade in militarized female bodies. The Cheyenne and their prisoners rode mostly at night at first, and quickly as if being chased. Catherine describes her ricocheting emotions, from fear to crushing grief and deadened hopelessness. The girls were placed upon untamed mules, a rough ride at best, and endured constant threats and indignities from Mochis and the men. It took the party two weeks of hard riding to get close to the Cheyenne encampment, and as they crossed a river Catherine’s rage

began to rise. “I noticed the sand quiver under the weight of the ponies and horses carrying our captors. I wished that the earth would open and swallow them all.”

When the teepees were in sight, Catherine’s captor put her behind him on the big bay horse. The warriors rode into their community encampment loaded down with foodstuffs, cloth, and other valuables from the German’s wagon. Catherine’s captor spurred the bay horse into a gallop, surely in anticipation of the ceremonial greeting and captive claiming that awaited them. Women from all over the village came running on foot and on ponies. They grabbed at Catherine’s hair and clothing, until finally a woman named Wasati managed to snatch Catherine onto her mount. A new family claimed Catherine as its own. Instead of isolating the girls from the activity of daily life, as was the practice of U.S. soldiers with its captives, the Cheyenne community immediately began the process of acculturating the Georgia girls into tribal familial and gender structures. *Girl Captives* speaks of the brutal sexual abuse of the German girls, as well as early periods of ritual torture. Such was consistent with other tribal norms, according to Brooks: “If (captives were) not killed in vengeance satisfaction, the captive invariably suffered a period of harsh and terrifying ritual abuse. This “taming” process probably formed the first phase in adoption ritual” followed by “induction into the captor’s clan.”

By snowfall, Catherine understood this process enough to call Wasati “Indian mother.” Wasati immediately put Catherine into moccasins, “because the Indians were

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afraid that the soldiers would notice our shoe tracks.”

Wasati replaced Catherine’s now-tattered dress with Cheyenne attire, and provided the girl with buffalo-fur bedding. At the hands of “Indian mother,” Catherine had been made Cheyenne, or at least Cheyenne-like. Tension between the two women ran high. The teenager had no intention of eating raw meat, and her stamina for hauling the wood and water required to sustain her own life, let alone that of her foster family, left much to be desired. According to Catherine, the Cheyenne were adapting to the war that had plagued them for much of the last ten years: “While these aborigines of American were not fearing pursuers they seemed to have a good time visiting and eating. I believe that they could eat more food or, if necessary, they could fast longer than any other human being I have ever known.”

In other ways, war had taken its toll. Indian children “seemed afraid of me, for they screamed as through they would have fits whenever I came near them, while others wanted to be friendly.”

Like Mochis, war and grief drove Catherine into a state of rage. The memoir rarely mentions Mochis by name, even though she played such an explosive role in the murder and capture of the German family. When the woman Catherine calls “Big Squaw” appeared she was a frightening character who “seemed delighted to see us tortured or frightened. Once when I was roasting a piece of liver over the camp fire, Big Squaw

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snatched it from the stick which held it and ate it just before I had finished cooking it.”

“I felt a great dislike for that large squaw, almost equal to what I felt toward the brutal buck who captured and claimed me.”

Two generations of massive cultural, political, environmental, and economic decline finally crippled the Southern Cheyenne, who were in a state of having all-but “lost the ability to feed and defend themselves” by Hamalainen’s estimation. Life for this Cheyenne village ricocheted wildly from busy domesticity to utter panic and flight, as sentinels and warriors warned them of U.S. troops nearby. During the winter of 1874-75, the Army relentlessly drove the Southern Cheyenne to the Staked Plains, arid mesa country where Indian Territory intersected with northeastern New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle. Water and provisions were scarce. Historian Paul Hutton reminds that notions of white female purity inscribed within the Western front of the Civil War proved potent motivation for soldiers still fighting during the Indian Wars. “No story was…more effective in rallying support to the western army than the plight of captive frontier women,” wrote Hutton, since their “pollution” could undo the social fabric of the race and frontier gender and sexual norms. By midwinter, according to Catherine’s captivity narrative, this band of Cheyenne and their captives were eating their dogs and horses. In March of 1875, the pressures on the militant warriors reached a breaking point.

The Missouri division’s tireless hunt at a time of famine could not be overcome. By

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February of 1875, the Army’s scorched earth tactics meant there simply weren’t enough available calories to fuel continued escape. The energy required to flee could mean the difference between life and death for the weaker members of the Cheyenne community.

Mochis and Medicine Water camped with the keeper of the Sacred Arrows, and Sipes’s elders told him that the warriors were instructed that they “had to get the arrows out of there.”

And here's what I can't figure out. How Mochis once again rode from the Staked Plains, to the Smoky Hill River, which is way in the extreme part of northwest Kansas. They got the arrow keeper there and 18 warriors. Then Medicine Water sent 18 warriors on with the arrows and the arrow keeper to Yellowstone Country out of the way of the soldiers. They got back to the Staked Plains and literally their ponies were dropping. They couldn't go on any more. They couldn't fight any more.\(^\text{131}\)

When they arrived back to the Staked Plains, Medicine Water sent in his mother, Old Yellow Hair Woman, and his younger brother, Man on Cloud, into the Darlington Agency in central Indian Territory to try to gather information. They were told by some of the Cheyenne women that they overheard soldiers talking that “when they got hold of Medicine Water and Mochis and the war party that would not come in, they were going to hang them.”\(^\text{132}\)

Sheridan’s massive deployment of limited troops signaled much larger territorial and military objectives. As he had done at Washita, Sheridan again “employ(ed) winter as an ally,” though deeply brutal, the strategy worked. In Hutton’s estimation, “(The


tribes) were defeated by starvation, exposure, stock and property losses, and constant insecurity. (Such) campaigns reaffirmed the effectiveness of Sheridan’s philosophy of total war, for it was a concern over the suffering of their families that brought the warriors in to the reservations to surrender.”

According to the oral history of the Standing Bird family, Medicine Water’s brother-in-law and sister traveled from the Staked Plains to Fort Reno, near the Darlington Agency in central Indian Territory, to surrender. They heard the same rumors. The family group escaped from the soldiers by night and traveled back to the Staked Plains, some 200 miles out, to warn Medicine Water and Mochis. The warrior couple continued to fight until March 5, 1875. “Oral history has it that Medicine Water thought, “Well, better come in because they were to the point that they couldn't fight,” said Sipes. “So he sent a runner in and told (Darlington Agency soldiers) that he's coming in.” A detachment of soldiers met the Cheyenne two miles out of the fort and led them in chains back to the fort.134

The Cheyenne prisoners were soon transported to Fort Leavenworth, on the far eastern border of Kansas. There, shackled prisoners were displayed in the stockade. Many were exceptionally thin, having survived the winter in near-starvation and constant flight. They were silent and sullen, according to military historian Brad Lookingbill’s detailed study of these prisoners and their experiences. But when soldiers brought the elder German sisters to the holding pen to identify their captors, (Mochis) “rose up and looked at them eagerly, almost wildly, as though some chord in her heart had been

touched, but said nothing, and after a little time sat down in silence.”

What was Mochis feeling and thinking? If anyone asked, her answer does not survive.

In all, seventy-four prisoners from four Southern Plains tribes were imprisoned at Leavenworth as combatants in what became known the Red River War, a series of independent and fractious skirmishes. In total, thirty-three Cheyennes were selected for long-term imprisonment, mostly through gossip, hearsay, and unsubstantiated accusations. Some, like Howling Wolf and Gray Beard, were fingered not for a combatant legacy, but because chiefs were assumed to be warlike ringleaders, according to George Bent biographer George Hyde. Far from illustrating the United States’ dominance over the Southern Plains tribes, the handling of the Red River prisoners more sharply rendered the contingency and liminality of American authority in what was still, overwhelmingly, Indian land.

The first hurdle proved to be legal; how, exactly, could the Southern Plains warriors be punished? Just four years earlier, in July of 1871, Mackenzie was ordered to find and imprison Kiowa chiefs Satanta, Satank, and Big Tree for similar “crimes” in Texas. The affair proved a fiasco for the Missouri division and the War Department. The Kiowa leaders were vigorously defended in Texas district court by two American attorneys, who argued for the merits of Kiowa defense of their treaty-protected homelands. The Bureau of Indian Affairs supported this premise against the pressures of

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the War Department, adding that the Kiowa were in a state of war with the United States and thus should not be tried for murder in local courts. General Sherman ordered the trial to continue, and the Kiowa men became the first American Indians to be tried in U.S. Courts. Yet the jury’s conviction put President Grant in a legal and publicity bind; Grant ultimately decided to commute the death sentences to life in prison.

A similar debate erupted in 1875 over the Kiowa, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors of the Red River War imprisoned at Fort Leavenworth. Their freedom, and the nation’s ad hoc plan for Cheyenne captivity, revealed as much about American contingency as conquest. After a spirited debate between the War Department, the Department of Justice, and Grant’s White House, it was determined the prisoners could not be prosecuted in a U.S. court of law because they were not citizens. Nor could they be tried as prisoners or war, given the Supreme Court’s imaginative declaration of a guardian-ward status between the United States and Indian tribes in 1832 in *Worcester v. Georgia*. The sovereignty of tribes must be recognized, Marshall’s court ruled, but “they are in a state of pupilage”¹³⁷ and their rights and assets would be thus managed and advocated for by U.S. federal agencies. Grant’s Attorney General reminded the president that only a state of war could trigger the creation of a military commission, and “a state of war could not exist between a nation and its wards.”¹³⁸ Eventually, the War Department settled on interring the Southern Plains

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prisoners in the fort farthest from, and most foreign to, their homelands, a re-
commissioned fifteenth-century Spanish fort in St. Augustine, Florida called Fort Marion.

But how to get them there? The nearest railroad was 165 miles away, and there
were hostile bands between Fort Leavenworth and the train station. Their primary jailor,
an undistinguished lieutenant named Richard Henry Pratt, had worked productively with
Indian scouts and African-American soldiers for his company, the Tenth U.S. Cavalry.
Pratt helped load the shackled prisoners into eight Army wagons. With twenty miles
being the outer limit for a day’s travel under such conditions, the prisoners were staged to
endure many days in irons across rough terrain. When they left, the Army still had not
found a final contract for their transportation to Florida. As the grim party pulled away
from Fort Leavenworth, a boy ran madly after them. It was the little brother of another
prisoner. The soldiers tried to chase him back to the fort, remembered Pratt in his
autobiography, *Battlefield and Classroom*, but the child was so persistent they let him
join his fate to the prisoners’.¹³⁹ Henrietta Mann offers a Cheyenne perspective on the
warriors’ understanding of their fate.

Viewed from the Cheyenne perspective, this exile was a disaster; banishment or isolation was the sentence for intra-tribal murder, the most extreme of behavior in their social structure. Thus, symbolically, this separation sundered their very social fabric. The men and the woman had committed no crime in their cultural context to warrant such harsh punishment. As their prophets had predicted, the strange white man had even stranger concepts that were an anathema to The People’s way of life.¹⁴⁰

In unexpected ways, the War Department was unsuccessful in removing or controlling the specter of the Cheyenne people from the imagination of the settlers who benefitted from Cheyenne destruction. At the close of *Girl Captives of the Cheyennes*, an elderly Catherine still marveled at an incident that occurred years after her release from her “Indian mother.” Catherine settled in Leavenworth, Kansas, not far from the fort. She and her sisters were living and attending school with money the Army diverted from Cheyenne treaty payouts, in compensation for their suffering. One day, a stranger knocked on her door. It was the widow of Oliver Short, and she wanted to learn more about the people who killed her husband from their captive. After visiting for a while, the two women realized they shared another coincidence. “(Mrs. Oliver) described her husband’s large bay horse and when she told of a peculiar shaped white mark in his forehead, I felt sure he was the same animal ridden by the Indian who captured me. I thought this rather a peculiar circumstance that I should become acquainted with the woman whose husband’s horse had carried me into captivity.”

Differing histories tell of a boy named Yellow Bird or Yellow Swallow, Mo-nah-see-tah’s son, who was nearly eight years old when he visited the Northern Cheyenne in 1876 with his mother. They had the astonishing fate of being with their Northern kin for the Battle of Little Bighorn. Cheyenne oral history says Mo-nah-see-tah, Yellow Bird, and an elder woman found Custer’s body on the killing field. The women came across the

141 Catharine And Sophia Germain. *Letter From the Secretary of the Interior, Presenting a Further Communication From the War Department Upon the Subject of the Destitute Condition of Catharine And Sophia Germain, Two Cheyenne Captives.* Washington: [s.n.], 1876.

body just as Oglala warrior Cow Bull was about to sever a finger from the corpse as a trophy. The women stopped Cow Bull, saying, “He is our relative.” Then the older woman pulled a sewing awl from her bag and pierced Custer’s ears, ‘so that he could hear better in the afterlife.’

The cost to Southern Cheyenne people was much more material than literary. Though Tahnea and her parents survived the Washita massacre in 1868, Mochis would struggle to be a proper mother to Tahnea and her siblings, although Mochis was far from done fighting for them. Of the many stories of the captivity of the Plains warriors at Fort Marion, Mochis appears almost not at all. If she picked up colored pencils and ledger paper, the drawings do not appear in the archives. If she learned to read and write from the women missionaries who came to teach them in their garrison, no record of it remains. Less than ten sentences survive about what Mochis did and said during her three-year captivity.

By the time the Ft. Marion Prisoners, as they became known, arrived in Florida, the effects of the campaign they launched with such semiotic and militarized force had sputtered out on the Southern Plains. In 1875, reminds Hamalainen, the “last, half-starved (Comanche) bands move to Indian Territory,” as did the Cheyenne and Arapaho people. That year, the Texas state legislature wrote a bill aimed at protecting the few remaining buffalo in the state. “Instead of outlawing the slaughter,” wrote historian Paul Hutton, “Sheridan declared the legislature should strike a bronze medal with a dead


buffalo on one side and a discouraged Indian on the other and bestow it on the hunters.”

Custer revealed himself to be a largely incompetent and foolish man, but he endured largely for his ability to reflect back the desires and imaginings of the times in which he lived. As he prepared to re-engage the Cheyenne again the spring of 1869, Custer ruminated over how he would approach the remaining Cheyenne leaders who refused to permanently relocate to reservations in Indian Territory. He wrote of wishing he could “take an olive brand in one hand, the plan of a school-house in the other” and persuade them to acquiesce. Inaccurate and ineffective in so many ways, in this idea Custer proved not so much prophetic as emblematic of an idea that was forming among Army officers even in the midst of slaughter. In 1880, Sheridan told his childhood friend, “That is what made us superior to the South; the little white schoolhouse of the North gave us a great advantage. Education is invincible.” Late in his life, Sheridan recalled with admiration his own teacher, in a one-room schoolhouse in Ohio. He was a “drunken brute who believed that education could be beaten into students.”

By the time Tahnea reached puberty, the United States Army would have its school in a decommissioned Army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Cheyenne jailor Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt, whose Tenth Cavalry played a supporting role in the

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massacre at the Washita River, served as the school’s founder and superintendent. Tahnea
would be among the first students at Carlisle Indian Industrial School. But only the
increased pressures of Sheridan’s “total war” could wrest the children from the parents
who sacrificed so much.
CHAPTER TWO
Eating the Hearts of Enemies: Mochis, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Richard Pratt & Encounter in Florida, 1875-1878

“The white columns of the cypress-trunks, the silver-embroidered crowns of the maples, the green-and-white of the lilies along the edges of the stream,—these all come in a continuous apparition out of the bosom of the darkness and retire again: it is endless creation succeeded by endless oblivion. Startled birds suddenly flutter into the light, and after an instant of illuminated flight melt into the darkness. From the perfect silence of these short flights one derives a certain sense of awe. Mystery appears to be about to utter herself in these suddenly-illuminated forms, and then to change her mind and die back into mystery.” 148

— Sidney Lanier, Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, And History… J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875

Coming In: Cheyenne Captivity and an American Creation Story in St. Augustine

When the train pulled into Indianapolis’ Union Depot on May 18, 1875, the crowd awaiting its arrival spilled over onto the tracks and blocked the train’s approach. The onlookers wanted a glimpse of what they understood to be some of the most notorious Indians on the continent. Inside the train, iron shackles rubbed raw the ankles of the Southern Plains prisoners, who had been incarcerated for the last ten weeks by a nation that anticipated, but did seem quite prepared for, their captivity. Local townsfolk flooded the Indianapolis station to get a look. The crush of spectators forced Army

Lieutenant Richard Pratt to divert the train into a nearby stockyard until the crowd dispersed. As the prison train finally approached the station, the car’s windows were shuttered and the Indians were not allowed to disembark. Local rail agents boarded once the train pulled into a quiet berth, and they persuaded Pratt to allow a few Indianapolis ladies aboard for a look at Medicine Water, Mochis, and their fellow prisoners.149

The American women stepped aboard, and found individuals at once strange and fascinating to them. The long braids confused the gentlewomen, who couldn’t confidently affix gender to the warriors. No specific mention was made of Mochis, despite her renown within the frontier press. The Indiana women did remark upon the prisoners’ hybridized attire, noticing bits of Army uniforms that had been appropriated by the Indians along with earrings, red body paint, and traditional Plains tribal dress. The women were astonished when the Native men greeted them with courtesy and, through their translator, agreed to requests for autographs. As had Mo-nah-see-tah and Mah-wissa, and other kin imprisoned by the Army since the Washita Massacre in 1868, the warriors behaved with courtesy within American captivity. This “urbanity of the inmates” moved the American women most of all, inspiring them to do something somewhat remarkable. The women reached out their gloved hands and touched the “savages” before them.150

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149 “Bad Indians,” Indianapolis Sentinel, 19 May 1875; Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, 111.
As the Southern Plains prisoners of war traveled farther east, across massive rivers and through American cities, something new began to unfold; this more aggressive and spatialized form of American captivity changed captured and captors in ways more complex than massacre could. Yet such confident containment did not terminate complexity as the Army hoped. As the encounter between the POWs and the Indianapolis women illustrated, this new form of captivity fomented an undisciplined and discursive space for encounter. It also heightened a more public visibility for the subjectivity of marginalized historical agents; Victorian women and Indian individuals shaped and voiced their individual experiences to a national audience with newfound interest in them.

The prisoners’ wholly evident personhood struck their jailor, too. The historiography often links Pratt’s oversight of Native scouts in Indian Territory with his orders to guard the Red River War prisoners. Pratt’s participation was actually connected to a more engaged, militarized continuum. Pratt and his company, the Tenth Cavalry, played a part in many of the events that determined the fate of Pratt’s Cheyenne and Kiowa prisoners. The lieutenant and his Tenth Cavalry established a temporary stockade on a branch of the Washita River to support Custer’s 1868 attack on Black Kettle’s band.151 A fortnight later, the Tenth welcomed Custer and Sheridan to Fort Cobb. Pratt assisted with reprovisioning Custer’s “exhausted command,”152 whose escape from the

battlefield Pratt characterized as “a miracle.” Kiowa raiding on settler and Army parties helped precipitate the Red River War, and in 1871 Pratt witnessed the fatal escape attempt of Satank and two other Kiowa chiefs imprisoned at Fort Sill. Pratt also captured a member of Mochis and Medicine Water’s party soon after the murder of the German family in September of 1874. Three months later, on December 14, Pratt received a confidential memo from his commanding general ordering the lieutenant to compile a dossier on area Indians believed or rumored to be guilty of murder, theft, and behavior characterized as “turbulent, insolent, disobedient, agitators and stirrers up of bad feeling, and otherwise troublesome.” With “(s)everal hundred” of such suspects already imprisoned at Fort Sill, the lieutenant’s secret detail kept him busy.

When the Missouri Division agencies gathered the seventy-two Southern Plains warriors at Fort Sill in April of 1875, Mackenzie and Sheridan tapped Pratt to escort the prisoners into “banishment” in the east. In a militarized zone noted for its sparsely manned and under-resourced outposts, officers who could execute the larger objectives within a paradigm closer to serendipity than strategy had higher value. Understanding such illuminates the imperial, but also highly improvisational, nature of Pratt’s approach to his wardship.

Lieutenant Pratt’s wife and three children had been authorized to relocate to Florida, and Pratt’s family joined the caravan in Indianapolis, too. Once the train got

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underway again, Pratt walked six-year-old daughter, Nana, through the prison car. When father and daughter reached Gray Beard, the chief stopped the officer. “(Gray Beard) said he had only one child and that was a little girl just about my daughter’s age,” Pratt later related in his memoir, *Battlefield and Classroom*. “He asked me how I could like to have chains on my legs as he had and to be taken a long distance from my home, my wife, and little girl, as he was, and his voice trembled with deepest emotion. It was a hard question.”

Like the Indiana women who wanted to encounter the ‘murderous savages,’ and were themselves touched by the prisoners’ humanity, the Tenth Cavalry soldier found himself similarly unsettled, as did his nation. The imprisonment of Mochis, Medicine Water, and seventy other souls represented so much more than the end of conflicts in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. It also signified a stabilization of U.S. expansionism at a particularly vulnerable time. These tribal warriors disrupted the human and capital migration so crucial for western settlement, and highly symbolic violence such as embedding a compass into a surveyor’s forehead challenged the means and claims of Euro-American presence on the Southern Plains. When they pried loose Kansas and Union Pacific railroad track from prairie sod during the Red River clashes in 1874 and 1875, the warriors’ protest of American encroachment was felt far beyond burgeoning settler towns. The Plains, its railroads, and access to Western resources were critical to

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the recovery of the U.S. economic collapse of 1873. In the assessment of historian Richard White’s study of Gilded Age railroading, runaway rail development fostered by federal bodies, and the commensurate bond debt, brought the national economy to its knees in 1873: “(Railroad) failure triggered the Panic of 1873, which led to the depression that paralyzed the economy.” Though American settlement and commercial development of the tribal homelands in the Southern Plains had not attained peak levels by 1875, it was clear such would prove crucial to the economic survival of the railroads and a nation deeply intertwined with their success. As White explains:

Railroads poured non-indigenous settlers into a vast region that nation-states had earlier merely claimed. They did not do this in response to a popular demand for development of these lands; instead, they created the demand through vast promotions unlike anything seen until that time. Having promoted new settlement, they helped integrate these settlers into an expanding world economy so that wheat, silver, gold, timber, coal, corn, and livestock poured out of it.”

Six weeks after their surrender at Southern Plains Army outposts, Mochis, Medicine Water and the other captive Indian warriors rode the rail lines upon which so much depended. Imprisoning “resistant” Indians in a highly public and dramatic fashion—spiriting them away on the very rails used to effect their displacement—served as a highly charged act on this fragile edge of U.S. empire. The War Department’s experimental tactic of exile transposed Indian captives against a Southern space of more decisive American territoriality. Speaking to an uneasy readership in May of 1875, the

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Wichita Eagle newspaper attempted to calm settlers: “By separating resistance leaders from their homeland, (the) scheme for regime change ostensibly would end the hostilities.” By implementing their captivity in a faraway Spanish fort, the Army signaled a new strategy in a larger American project of dispossessing and displacing Indian people and resources. Beginning with the Southern Plains prisoners headed for Florida, the War Department began hatching a larger plan to effect highly visible Indian captivity and exile, but within spaces that were more definitively territorialized by the United States than the remaining Cheyenne and homelands. Leading generals began identifying appropriate garrisons in remote locales such as the Tortuga Islands, Minnesota’s Fort Snelling, and—for the Southern Plains warriors—a seventeenth-century Spanish fort in St. Augustine, Florida.

When Mochis and Medicine Water surrendered at Fort Reno in March of 1875, they effectuated not only military surrender, but also their export into more resolutely American territory. Cheyenne captivity after the Washita massacre signaled only a temporary conquest of a comparatively small population. The U.S. Army’s primitive and sparsely staffed cantonments and forts such as Camp Supply and Fort Hays silhouetted meekly against the backdrop of vast tribal lands and populations on the Southern Plains. Mochis and Medicine Water could not have understood themselves as hostiles, but as indigenous people protecting homelands from foreign invasion. Cheyenne oral traditions

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and Medicine Arrow teachings reinforced and enhanced their claims to place and space. As tribal resistance to settler displacement and military takeover illustrated, the Cheyenne’s sprawling Southern Plains homelands were not, and had never been, America.

The next leg of the journey, from Indianapolis to Jacksonville, illustrated the immediacy with which captivity and encounter began to remap. But first these prisoners needed to be understood as beings that were human by the man who would most fully narrate their experiences for the U.S. The academic historiography has relied heavily on Pratt’s recollections in *Battlefield and Classroom*. Through Pratt’s recounting—both in his book and during his many public speeches—Indians came into focus as individual historical actors with emotions and experiences that could be read alongside those of non-natives. The final moments of Gray Beard’s captivity proved a potent starting point for such, as the prison train chugged southward from Indianapolis and reached the Georgia-Florida border late the following evening.

According to Pratt, the moon shined down on the broad palmetto leaves bordering the tracks, illuminating the jungle-like density of the North Florida flora. The dramatic difference from Indian Territory’s spare plains could not have been lost on the prisoners. Gray Beard’s heart remained heavy; he had already attempted suicide during his imprisonment at Fort Leavenworth three weeks prior. Perhaps that desperate impulse rose again as the train sped through the cloudless night. Around midnight, an Army

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guard noticed Gray Beard’s seat was empty and his blanket and bundle missing. Pratt pulled the alarm cord, and the conductor slowly backed the train to search out the escapee. They eventually came across Gray Beard’s abandoned blanket alongside the tracks, and “guards, trainmen, and passengers searched diligently thereabouts through the low big-leafed palmetto.” Eventually, the engineer warned further delay would mean there would not be enough water to power the steam engine to the next filling station. As they train pulled away, a soldier spotted Gray Beard sprinting across the tracks and shot him. The soldiers pulled Gray Beard back on the train, where Pratt allowed Manimic and other Cheyennes to speak with their leader before he passed away. “The interpreter stood by and told me what they said,” remembered Pratt in his memoir. “Among other things Gray Beard said he had wanted to die ever since being chained and taken from home. He told Manimic what to tell his wife and daughter and soon died.”¹⁶⁵

Displacement surely affected the Cheyenne warrior, as did his torturous separation from his family. Nor was the increasingly different climate, flora, fauna, and built landscape lost on the prisoners; many of them later made drawings illustrating their keen attention to such. Art historians have published extensive and excellent examinations of drawings made by these prisoners during their captivity at Fort Marion. However, none of the published scholarship¹⁶⁶ includes substantive engagement with oral- or

¹⁶⁶ The historiography is quite large about the Fort Marion POW artists and their involvement in the founding of Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School. Following are a few of the more seminal works.
ethnohistorical perspectives of living Southern Cheyennes, even though many of the
direct descendants of the Cheyenne prisoners are easily located and willing to share
familial and community stories from the POWs. Historian Henrietta Mann, a citizen of
the Cheyenne & Arapaho nation and a descendant of the survivors of Sand Creek and
Washita massacres, supplements this historiographic paucity in her scholarship and in-
person interviews. According to Mann, within the Southern Cheyenne belief system, one
must cross four great rivers before reaching the afterlife.167 As the POWs rode the rails
from Indian Territory to Florida, they crossed the Arkansas, Mississippi and Ohio rivers,
each easily fitting the description of a mighty waterway. Perhaps their captors told them
of the great body of water where Fort Marion was located, at the edge of the Atlantic
Ocean; if so, the Cheyenne prisoners might have associated it with the fourth river they
were soon to cross.168 “The POWs thought they were going to die,” explained Mann.
“Each river they crossed on the way to Florida brought them one step closer to the final
journey into the afterlife. They were preparing themselves to die for their people.”169

Lindsey, Donal F. Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923. University of Illinois Press, 1995;
Lookingbill, Brad D. War Dance At Fort Marion: Plains Indian War Prisoners. Norman: University of
Oklahoma Press, 2006; Szabo, Joyce M. Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art. Albuquerque:
University of New Mexico Press. 1994; Adams, David Wallace. Education forExtinction: American

167 Author interview with Dr. Henrietta Mann, November 8, 2012, in the collection of the author. Mendoza,
Patrick M., Ann Strange Owl-Raben, and Nico Strange Owl. Four Great Rivers to Cross: Cheyenne
Rocky Mountain PBS. 1996.
<http://www.rmpbs.org/content/index.cfm/fuseaction/showContent/contentID/195/navID/184.htm>
168 Author interview with Dr. Henrietta Mann, November 8, 2012, in the collection of the author. Mendoza,
Patrick M., Ann Strange Owl-Raben, and Nico Strange Owl. Four Great Rivers to Cross: Cheyenne
Rocky Mountain PBS. 1996.
http://www.rmpbs.org/content/index.cfm/fuseaction/showContent/contentID/250/navID/239.htm
169 Author interview with Dr. Henrietta Mann, November 8, 2012, in the collection of the author.
A letter from Pratt to Cheyenne Indian Agent John D. Miles shortly before the Cheyenne prisoners’ departure confirms Mann’s interpretation. Said Pratt, Gray Beard and another prisoner wanted Miles to tell their people they “may never return.”[170] Gray Beard, Mochis, Medicine Water, and the other prisoners had many dark memories upon which to ruminate. For most of their adult lives, the warriors had been hunted by a genocidal Army unconcerned with the political alliances of its tribal targets. The effects of the Army’s push for total war, according to military historian Brad Lookingbill, devastated Southern Plains tribes and exacted an especially heavy toll on leaders such as Gray Beard. “The Buffalo War brought an end to the world as the Plains Indians knew it… In a smashing and sweeping blow, the U.S. Army tried to decapitate the leadership of the buffalo-hunting nations.”[171] For more than a decade, the warriors had witnessed the slaughter and mutilation of their parents, children, and spouses. Gray Beard, Mochis, and Medicine Water, and others among them had committed violent and highly symbolic executions of federal agents and white settlers. They returned from such raids and altercations to find grandparents doling out a single scrap of meat to children starving for the treaty rations due them.

It was the love of, and longing for, family that kept Gray Beard going, according to Margaret Anquoe. Her great-grandmother was Gray Beard’s daughter, the little girl he evoked in his discussion with Pratt as he walked his own little girl through the prison train. Anquoe, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Cheyenne & Arapaho

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[170] Richard Henry Pratt to John Miles, May 9, 1875, Cheyenne-Arapaho Indian Prisoners Vertical File, Section X, Oklahoma Historical Society.
Tribe, reveals her family does not believe the Army’s report of Gray Beard’s escape attempt. “Other accounts say that (Gray Beard) asked to use the restroom while the train was stopped,” Anquoe shared in email correspondence, “and as he walked away from the train, the soldiers shot him in the back. The Army said it was a certain suicidal attempt but Gray Beard was looking forward to one day returning home because of his family.”

Mochis and Medicine Water almost certainly travelled with heavy hearts, too. These warrior parents often had to sacrifice time with their children and families to conduct their protective patrols and raids. It could not have been easy for Mochis and Medicine Water to leave their daughters behind in the care of others at Darlington Agency, in Indian Territory, and depart into captivity and the anticipation of death. Had the sacred Medicine Arrows and their carriers arrived safely to the Northern Plains, thus insuring the continuation of Cheyenne spiritual well-being? Were there repercussions for family who came in to the agency, particularly Yellow Hair Woman and Man-on-Cloud, who risked much to warn Medicine Water of the Army’s plans to hang him?

The death of Gray Beard, linked in Pratt’s narrative to the Cheyenne chief’s inability to cope with his rapidly changing world, starkly demarcated the emergence of something profoundly impactful as captivity moved into Florida. Life, land, and death were intractably linked for the Cheyenne POWs. About this, Pratt was correct when he contemplated Gray Beard’s end. Cheyenne historian John Sipes, Jr. related that his great-

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172 Margaret Anquoe to author via email, May 28, 2013, in the collection of the author.
grandfather Medicine Water wanted to “die in his homeland fighting and let the wolves scatter his bones about Mother Earth as a Cheyenne warrior was supposed to die.” For the Army, location also played a role; Fort Marion’s considerable distance and difference from Indian Territory were key determiners for staging exile there. By some dark luck, St. Augustine also proved a place of particular semiotic fertility; the city’s wholly unique and originary sense of place, as a site of first Spanish “discovery” and now a Reconstruction-ed New World, heightened outcomes created by this highly improvised mission of captivity.

The year Mochis and Medicine Water arrived at Fort Marion, celebrated Confederate veteran, journalist, and poet Sidney Lanier penned a small travelogue of Florida, noting how the presence of “shuffling chains and strange tongues and barbaric gestures, have frightened the timid swallow of romance out of the sweetest nest that he ever built in America.” The effect of the captives on the growing nostalgia attached to St. Augustine, as Lanier noted, was only part of a larger, ephemeral, but undeniable foment along the St. Johns:

If just before crystallization the particles of a substance should become a little uncertain as to the precise forms in which to arrange themselves, they would accurately represent a certain moment of lull which occurs in the formation of popular judgments a little while after the shock of the beginning, and which lasts until some authentic resume of the facts spreads itself about and organizes a definite average opinion. Such a moment—what one might call the moment of molecular indecisions—would seem to have now arrived in the course of formation of an

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174 Sipes, John L., Jr. “Cheyenne POWs’ experiences told…” *Watonga Republican*. n.d.: n.p. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.

intelligent opinion upon that singular Florida which by its very peninsular
curve whimsically terminates the United States in an interrogation-
point.176

From the “interrogation” of Indian exile and captivity emerged a novel and more
modern form of captivity. The prisoners’ midnight journey into Florida was, in fact, the
beginning of something new. Indian criminals and savages, to use the logic of the day,
became individual human beings within the encounter zone of the train to St. Augustine,
and the prison fort that awaited them. The opportunity of conversation and physical
contact created by the Army’s captivity of the warriors, and the particular form of
philanthropy already thriving among the city’s local and Eastern elites, deeply altered the
course of Indian-U.S. relations and Indian families for generations. Pratt’s willingness to
take a new approach to Indian captivity at Fort Marion, from creating an Indian platoon
and classrooms, changed much beyond the city. It defined Pratt’s life’s work and changed
Indian communities at their core. Yet despite the lieutenant’s renown as the founder of
the federal Indian boarding school system, by his own recounting, Pratt did not plant the
first seeds.

Entirely neglected in the historiography is the pivotal role played by St.
Augustine’s female corps of former abolitionists, and the city’s well-developed
Freedmen’s school system. By 1875, the public discursive spaces related to abolition and
suffrage had closed or become exceedingly complicated platforms for women’s
empowerment. While missionary men involved themselves with matters of federal

176 Lanier, Sidney. Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, And History, With an Account of Charleston, Savannah,
Augusta, And Aiken, And a Chapter for Consumptives, Being a Complete Hand-book And Guide.
Reconstruction and Indian policy, and the financial opportunities of Indian resource dispossession and industrial labor exploitation, missionaries’ daughters and wives found empowerment teaching the dispossessed and disempowered. Education for Freedmen and Indians took hold in St. Augustine. Stowe and the other women creating and teaching in Freedmen’s schools there founded a rejuvenated space in which to define the terms of race, gender, and national subjectivity.

Stowe and her reformist sisters also shaped what was appropriate for Mochis during her captivity at Fort Marion in 1875. Four years later, Pratt and his collaborators from the St. Augustine teachers’ corps founded Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Ideologies rooted in the pressing personal experiences and causes of Stowe and other women in St. Augustine proved foundational for a new form of captivity expressed via a nationalized Indian boarding school system. As with all captives, the Fort Marion POWs also profoundly affected those who wielded physical and spatial dominance over them.

Reimagining: A Southern New World to Manifest Domesticity, Race, and Gender

To look down these lovely vistas is like looking down the dreams of some pure young girl's soul; and the gray moss-bearded trees gravely lean over them in contemplative attitudes, as if they were studying—in the way strong men should study—the mysteries and sacrednesses and tender depths of some visible reverie of maidenhood. The fire advances up these dark sinuosities like a brilliant god that for his mere whimsical pleasure calls the black impenetrable chaos ahead into instantaneous definite forms as he floats along the river-curves.177

— Sidney Lanier. Florida: Its Scenery, Climate, And History... J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1875

St. Augustine did not come into its own as an American space until Harriet Beecher Stowe identified it as the site of transformation with the 1873 publication of *Palmetto-leaves*. The *Christian Union*, a popular national newspaper owned by Harriet’s brother, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, serialized *Palmetto*. The boosteristic essays introduced the St. Johns River plateau to a nation hungry for healing, retreat, and racial denouement. The endorsement of Stowe and one of the nation’s most infamous religious leaders certainly enhanced credibility and curiosity. Tourism had begun to take hold from Jacksonville to St. Augustine by the time Pratt and his prisoners arrived at Fort Marion, but many towns still had not fully recovered from the war. Yet mountains of blackened bricks, charred and splintered trees, and paved streets churned to sand by Union wagons still marred Jacksonville. In nearby Palatka, a common stop on the way to St. Augustine, “Desolation and ruin seem to be the order that prevails…There are two or there stores, besides some few candy shop looking affairs, one of which displayed upon an open

window shutter, in chalk letters, ‘Flour, salt and sirrip sold here.’” The first telegram cable connecting St. Augustine to the rest of the world wasn’t strung across the St. Johns until 1867. Two years later, the town’s first grand hotel opened its doors.

The amnesiac discourse of pleasure and adventure often had to overlook the leavings of war. Dramatically varied reports from local and national press and political agents jockeyed for control of the discourse and the resources, according to historian Reiko Hillyer: “Boosters promoted southern cities such as Jacksonville and Atlanta as a *tabulae rasae* that embraced northern-style bustle, cosmopolitanism and modernity.”

As Stowe had helped America imagine a nation without slavery, her *Palmetto essays* articulated a Southern New World that would, if not solve, at least provide a discursive salve for, an embattled national soul. While *Harper’s Weekly* was reporting ravaging, bloody “Ku-Klux outrages” in 1873, Stowe used a competing Christian newspaper to posit Northern Florida as an edenic retreat nearly emptied of people, war, and race-based violence. Stowe and other Northern writers “were released from their obligations to criticize southern ways and institutions and became free to praise the South and to capitalize upon its variety and exoticism.”

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Detailing the complex journey required to reach St. Augustine from New England proved a particularly effective narrative trope in *Palmetto*, heightening a notion of escape and adventure. From New York City, travelers took a boat to Savannah, a train from Savannah to Jacksonville, and then a steamboat up the St. Johns River to the tiny riverfront towns. The crude route did little to dissuade tourists who were “pouring in unbroken daily streams. In the height of the season, when the cars were crowded, four hours were said to be consumed in performing this fifteen miles” from the river to St. Augustine.\(^{183}\) While such backwardness was openly criticized by Northern media, reminds Hillyer, those determined to transform St. Augustine into a hub of nationalizing pleasure found the city’s isolation particularly useful: “St. Augustine depended heavily on its history as the nation’s oldest city to attract tourists…(its developers) expunged the history that was politically contentious, portrayed white Floridians as the descendants of nation-builders, and, by casting St. Augustine as the birthplace of the United States, claimed a heritage of patriotism rather than one of treason.”\(^{184}\)

In *Palmetto*, Stowe made a cursory nod to St. Augustine’s dramatic history, cast with buccaneers, Conquistadors, French Huguenots, and Sir Francis Drake, and a fort and beaches littered with their bones. Stowe instead promised that a journey into this imagined space would be richly rewarded, not by history or intellectual awareness, but by something much more fundamental: the experience of a blessed land whose raw and heavenly beauty flowed from Stowe’s pen like poetry. Magnolia, honeysuckle, manrundia and calla-lilies adorned the city’s narrow Spanish-colonial-era streets, and the


garden courtyards of the town’s elite delighted the writer as much as the riverbanks dense with Palmettos, Spanish moss, and groves of orange trees in bloom. These, in particular, moved Stowe to rapture: “It is the fairest, the noblest, the most generous, it is the most upspringing and abundant of all trees which the Lord God caused to grow eastward in Eden….Truly we may call them trees of the Lord, full of sap and greenness; full of lessons of perseverance to us who get frosted down and cut off, time and time again, in our lives.”

In her telling, the St. Johns plateau was nothing short of a spiritual fountain of restoration. Stowe filled pages with description of the bounty and pleasure of St. Johns River life. She ate tomatoes straight off the vine and radishes and lettuce barely wiped of soil, while the constant commerce of steamboats loaded down with peaches and pomegranates headed for market plied “miles of molten silver in the shape of the St. Johns River.”

*Palmetto* sang the praises of the Florida “air” for restoring consumptives and those afflicted with malarial “gases.” The climate, she claimed, brought her own flu-prone husband to health. Less narrated was the primary reason for buying the home and orange grove on the St. Johns River, just five miles upstream from St. Augustine: her son, Fred, was wounded at Gettysburg and suffered from severe alcoholism and suicidal tendencies. Stowe wrote of her hope that “this beautiful country is being laid open, and made accessible and inhabitable as a home and refuge for those who need it…The tropical forests of Florida contain visions and wonders of growth and glory never yet

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revealed to the eye of the common traveler, and which he who sees must risk much to
explore.”

This Southern “new” world also proved a crucial refuge for the writer and women
like her. Stowe and her family again found themselves a point of heated focus as the
nation struggled to define who should have access to the full rights of citizenship; Stowe
and her sisters, leaders in effecting Emancipation, became embroiled in the messy tug-of-
war between agitating for the Black vote and the vigorous activism of suffragists
demanding similar rights. After the Fourteenth Amendment failed to include a
referendum of full legal rights for women in 1868, the ideological grappling between
conservative suffragists and their progressive sisters had turned into an all-out war. The
primary strategy of several highly empowered radical suffragists was to defeat the
conservatism of old-guard abolitionists populating traditional women’s rights groups by
bringing down the Beechers.  

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton broke from the American Equal Rights
Association and immediately formed the National Woman Suffrage Association
(NWSA). The ballooning effort to secure marriage- and divorce-law reform and
advocacy for “Free Love” further challenged Stowe and her old-line sisters, who began to
seem like elite dowagers next to the likes of Victoria Woodhull. Nearly a generation

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Victorian America*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1982. 10,12.
younger than Stowe, Woodhull garnered the allegiance of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony with her breathtaking proposal that marriage was sexual slavery and love was the only necessary and godly justification for erotic expression. Woodhull forcefully and consistently published manifestos demanding, “A new sexual system in which mutual consent, entirely free from money or any inducement other than love, shall be the governing law, individuals being left to make their own regulations…” Such ideas pulled Stowe into the discursive ring, argued historian Joan Hedrick: “If marriage were truly like slavery, there would be no more point in reforming it than there would be in reforming slavery. …Victoria Woodhull rushed to this precipice and threw herself over the edge, attempting to take with her the unwary women, like Stowe, who had invoked the metaphor of slavery without thinking through the implications.”

Stowe biographer Joan Hedrick argued that in their “attempted takeover of woman’s rights… their first citadel to be stormed, (was) Beecherism itself.” Harriet’s younger half-sister, Isabella Beecher Hooker became “Mrs. Woodhull’s most ardent convert.” In 1871, Isabella arranged a meeting between Woodhull and her conservative eldest sister, Catharine, an influential writer in her own right. Catharine’s seminal *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: for the Use of Young Ladies At Home, and At School* in 1842 furthered a then-radical notion that women’s education contributed to the

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betterment of American society as a whole: “The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman and the interests of a whole family are secured. If this be so, as none will deny, the to American women, more than any others on earth, is committed the exalted privilege of extending over the world those blessed influences”\textsuperscript{193} of educated white womanhood. Raised on such ideas, the younger generation of suffragists wanted more.

Woodhull tried to discuss with Catharine the increasingly public romantic wanderings of her brother, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, and the way his indiscretions actually made an argument for her belief in sexual expression free of Protestant moral codes and norms. “You speak of Free Love with derision,” Woodhull reportedly said to Catharine, “while your own brother, Henry Ward Beecher, the most powerful preacher in America, openly practices it. I do not condemn him, I applaud him. Would that he had the courage to join me in preaching what he practices.”\textsuperscript{194} Woodhull and her ilk had gone much too far. Catharine used her considerable social influence to launch a public attack against suffrage the summer of 1871, while Isabella ever-more publicly aligned herself with the more radical voices in the women’s rights movement. When cornered, Stowe aligned with Catharine, who had been a maternal figure, and supported the ideology that the domestic spheres of motherhood and matrimony offered the best opportunity for women’s empowerment.

\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Woodhull & Claflin’s Weekly}, 2 Feb. 1872.
The outing of Henry also delivered a direct hit to Harriet. Henry’s mistress was reportedly the wife of Theodore Tilton, Stowe’s managing editor at The Independent newspaper. *Independent* assignments provided much-needed income for the Stowes’ dual-household expenses. In mortally wounding the reputation of “The Most Famous Man in America,” Woodhull simultaneously compromised Stowe’s access to a forcefully politicized discourse on issues of women’s rights while exposing a tricky conflict with financial consequences.

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Beecher and Tilton launched a cover-up. Stowe satirized Woodhull as Audacia Dangereyes in her novel, *My Wife and I*, serialized in under the *Christian Union* masthead later that year. Stowe and her sisters also applied considerable pressure in the religious, media, and political circles that mattered. By the summer of 1871, rumors swirled that Mrs. Tilton was pregnant with Beecher’s child, and Mr. Tilton was openly bedding Victoria Woodhull. He published a fawning biography of her that September, and two months later she presented “And the Truth shall make you Free” at New York’s Steinway Hall. At a time when women rarely lectured publicly, or published beyond the prescribed spheres carved out by the Beecher sisters and suffragists, Woodhull’s speech before a packed house was nothing short of revolutionary. She made full use of her moment before the podium, embedding in a conflicted nation ideas that would reinforce the notion that gender was a crucial site that must be conquered.

**In January of 1872, Stowe and members of her immediate family** abandoned New England for respite along the St. Johns River in Florida. A resolute agenda for women’s rights could not be forged in New England, but the lifelong reformer soon attached herself to a new mission disciplining gender and domesticity in a space that was understood to be wild and ripe for new opportunity. “Postbellum Florida,” writes historian Susan Eacker, “was still a frontier, untamed by civilization and thus a space
where gender conventions had yet to be fully inscribed.”

While some scholars characterized Florida as a “borderland separating the staid gender conventions of the North from a New South that permitted the reconstruction of a new female identity,”

Stowe and many of her key abolitionist peers seemed to only embrace such fluidity and reinvention for white middle-class women, and alongside the disciplining of non-white femininity. As Women’s Studies scholar Amy Kaplan reminds, Stowe, Catharine Beecher and contemporaneous missionary women used their social positions to further an “imperial domesticity” that entail(ed) conquering and taming the wild, the natural, and the alien. Domestic in this sense is related to the imperial project of civilizing, and the conditions of domesticity often become markers that distinguish civilization from savagery….

Harriet spearheaded the 1869 revision of Treatise that, in Kaplan’s analysis, undertook a more aggressive emphasis on “domesticity’s outward reach” consistent with the Reconstruction era: “The rhetorics of Manifest Destiny and domesticity share a vocabulary that turns imperial conquest into spiritual regeneration in order to efface internal conflict or external resistance in visions of geopolitical domination as global harmony.” Harriet’s revision placed women, not soldiers, at the heart of such work, serving as “a blueprint for colonizing the world in the name of the ‘family state’ under

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the leadership of Christian women.” In Kaplan’s estimation, such repurposing also helped narrow the white gender divide by rendering non-white individuals as foreigners, which proved particularly potent in the St. Johns River valley. Such ideas, especially those penned by such influential hands, proved profoundly influential for the fate of Freedmen, and the Southern Plains prisoners who arrived into this ideological and racialized milieu.

Five years after the re-release of Stowe’s update interpretation of *Treatise*, her *Palmetto* exerts considerable commentary on the behavior of non-white women living and working nearby. Describing free Black women within a vigilantly policed domestic sphere in *Palmetto* reassured her white New England readers that the complex project of race, gender and domesticity were, if not well in hand, at least being dutifully noted. According to Stowe, properly domesticated Black women proved hard to find, and in great demand, in Northern Florida. She lamented the loss of a maid skilled in the domestic arts, who accepted better employment at a nearby hotel. This meant Stowe’s considerable household freight arrived at the beginning of the winter season without a suitable Black labor pool to assist with setting up house in Mandarin. “As the first white ladies upon the ground,” Stowe and her friend “had the task of organizing this barbaric household, and of bringing it into the forms of civilized life.” For Stowe and her class of white women, civilization itself was dependent upon, and achieved, via the labor of properly “trained” Black women.

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Women too defiant or unskilled in the gentler trades faced similarly passionate excoriation. One day, Stowe helped a friend unload a boatload of furniture, trunks, and guests near her cottage. Black field hands came in from the crops to help: “they seemed blacker, stronger, and more dismal, than any thing we had ever seen. The women wore men’s hats and boots, and had the gait and stride of men; but now and then an old hooped petticoat, or some cast-off, thin bedraggled garment that had once been find, told the tale of sex, and had a woefully funny effect.”204 This “field hand” class of Black women inspired loathing in Stowe and her fellow vacationers; the perceived crudeness in appearance—as well as gendered skills such as cooking and sewing—proved a point of particular scorn. Worst of all was Minnah, who Stowe described as “bred to the fields;”205 Minnah’s marginal cooking skills, poor dress, and “tongue that never hesitated to speak her mind to high or low.”206 Within the context of emancipated labor, Minnah’s spirited approach to a day’s work charmed Stowe not at all. She was allowed to rejoin the men at the plow, but not without a withering characterization in the pages of The Christian Union.

In Stowe’s telling, the promise of the salvation of emancipation needed to be furthered via education, and the interventions of white Northern women. The American Missionary Association, stalwart promoters of abolition since the Amistad mutiny in 1841, turned a focus to distributing books and other printed educational materials to St. Augustine schools and makeshift classrooms along the St. Johns River. Stowe devoted a portion of her Mandarin property for a Freedmen’s school and in Palmetto sang the

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praises of a “common school” curriculum with an industrial focus, as found at Virginia’s Hampton Institute. Industrial schools such as Hampton trained Freedmen for highly gendered manual labor. According to Stowe, Florida Freedmen “eagerly accepted, and treasured with a sort of superstitious veneration” the curriculum bestowed upon them. In the writer’s telling, the most intense efforts must be made with Black women lacking in the protocols and skills of white domesticity. “The untrained plantation hands and their children are and will be just what education may make them…. In some respects they are better. As a class they are more obedient, better natured, more joyous, and easily satisfied.”

The stability of white community, and by association the nation, depended upon the adherence and disciplining of the free Black population. “No community that properly and carefully educates the negro children now growing up need complain of having an idle, thriftless, dishonest population about them.”

Of course, Northern Florida in the early 1870s was not a racially binary place. St. Augustine had been a highly visible space of poly-raciality since Spain set up a fortified encampment there in 1565. Fort Marion was the storied site of the captivity of bi-racial Seminole chief Osceola in 1837, who led warriors of inter-tribal, Black- and Spanish-Indian ancestry during the Second Seminole War. In Civil War Florida, Indianness was everywhere, and yet nowhere, at once. Florida Indian communities existed largely on the margins of non-Native settlement, particularly in the center of the state. An 1875 travelogue of Florida explained: “As the rich agricultural capabilities of the State began

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more and more to invite immigration, the demand now became more and more urgent for the Indians to be removed, so that the lands might be worked in peace. These Indians, the Miccosukies and Seminoles, occupied some of the best portions of the State.  

But for American writers along the St. Johns, indigeneity remained something as obscure as Blackness was vivid; something present but “out there” and distant. Indians, when fleetingly visible, appeared entwined in the land itself. The perceived wildness of both intrigued these early writers, and Indians in the St. Augustine area seemed only semi-visible: mysterious and exotic, but ultimately gorgeous and thrilling.

Confederate soldier Andrew Anderson would come to play a major role in Freedmen aid societies in Florida. Although Anderson encountered Indians in his wartime travels, his published travelogue ignored them, helping to create a literary tradition followed by subsequent scribes who posited Indians as absent or, at best, not-quite reachable, present but unknowable. Anderson wrote of the “desolate” areas where Indians appeared to live. “We saw several fires on the shore which were said to have been made by Indians there being no white men in that region,” he wrote of Tiger Tail Island, named for a leader in the Second Seminole War.  

Anderson’s travelogue instead configured St. Augustine as a promising site for adventure and entertainment that omitted Indians, but included “(a) wonderful narrative of the dangers and hairbreadth escapes, by land and by sea; …from Spaniards and negroes; from mosquitoes and fleas; Federals and

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Confederates, of the world renowned and ever to be remembered historian, traveler, soldier and sailor Don Quioxote.”

While the antebellum gender ideas of Harriet Beecher Stowe and her suffragist sisters faced intense and compelling critique in New England at the hands of Isabella Beecher and Victoria Woodhull, in Stowe’s imagined Southern New World, the opportunity to inscribe her ideas onto a remote locale unknown to most Eastern readers must have enhanced Stowe’s pleasure. Stowe called life in Mandarin “a sort of tumble-down, wild, picnicky kind of life.” Imagining Florida as a woman, Stowe rendered her portrait as “a brunette, dark but comely, with gorgeous tissues, a general disarray and dazzle, and a sort of jolly untidiness, free, easy, and joyous.”

Such dark beauties were vividly imagined, but never quite seen by the Stowe family on their Florida adventures. One pleasure sail revealed a “rude hut” by the riverbed, where the Stowes hoped to find a fisherman willing to sell his catch. Nearby, a dark boy relaxed in his boat. The Stowes called out to the lad, asking if he had any fish to sell. The child rowed towards them “with the graceful deliberation which marks the movements of the native population.” The Stowes struck a deal and the Indian boy “departs with fifty cents in his pocket. What he can want of fifty cents in a hut on the other side of Doctor’s Lake is a question. Can he trade with alligators?” Is the native boy so a part of nature that he can barter with deadly reptiles? Another passenger reminds the

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group that he could easily take his boat and make his way to civilization where modernity awaits in the form of “whiskey, pork, and flour.”

Stowe reassures readers that a laundry line and a string of clean clothing adorns the yard. Apparently an Indian mother is in residence, and she understands the basic, if crudely expressed, needs of a proper domestic space and her gendered obligation to it. Even a primitive and rude “new” country such as Florida, however lush its charms, must be disciplined. With the popularity of Stowe generally, and Palmetto specifically, such literary tropes would come to dominate the narration of St. Augustine. It would also create a context into with Mochis and her fellow prisoners would be imprisoned, encountered, and rendered; a space that writes, and also fails to see, race and womanhood within an imperializing nation. With the bodies of indigenous warriors firmly dis-placed from their traditional homelands, the alien-ating power of imperial domesticity could be put powerfully to work in the newly reimagined South.

Exchange: Feminized, Racialized, and Domesticated Captivity in St. Augustine

Gloomy, scowling, dressed in wild and savage habiliments, painted in weird colors, their hair adorned with scalp-locks torn from the heads of former victims, they seemed more like grim goblins than human beings.\textsuperscript{215}

—Harriet Beecher Stowe in \textit{The Christian Union}  
April 18, 1877

He would point to the scars and say, “This is what the government did to us to get control of our land, buffalo, ways of life as people and…our freedom as Cheyennes.”\textsuperscript{216}

—Medicine Water’s comments about his shackle scars, as told to Pete Bird Chief and passed down to Medicine Water’s great-grandson, John Sipes, Jr.

On May 21, 1875, the rail line terminated near Jacksonville and a steamship carried the prisoners down the St. Johns River, directly past Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Mandarin home.\textsuperscript{217} The Plains prisoners entered an environment intensely foreign to them; the humid air, heavily forested waterways, and thick palmetto jungles could not have connoted leisure, health, and adventure as it did for the Americans who lined docks and waterways to ogle the Indians. At approximately 5:00 p.m., the prisoners arrived via wagons into the St. Augustine central plaza. The prisoners and the brutal events that got them there remained illegible to the Americans who watched the wagons pull into St. Augustine’s town square. One local recounting called the prisoners “the worst

specimens of the wild, cruel Indians of the far west” and claimed their eyes were “glittering with hate. Chained hand and foot, like so many wild beasts, and expecting immediate execution…(a)t the depot they refused to be moved, and were loaded by main force in wagons to be conveyed to the fort.”\textsuperscript{218} Another report in the \textit{Philadelphia Evening Bulletin} breathlessly reported one of the female POWs—presumably Mochis—had “killed a white woman and \textit{eaten her heart}\textsuperscript{219} (emphasis original).

Despite her image as a bloodthirsty warrior, Mochis could not have cut an imposing figure. She stood approximately 5’ 4” and was quite thin. Her imprisoned likeness did not match her fierce reputation; stereoscopes of the POWs early days at Fort Marion showed a woman with hollowed-out cheeks and chiseled wrists (fig. 2).

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\textsuperscript{218} Steele, J. Dorman. “The Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion.” n.p., n.d. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
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\textsuperscript{219} H.W.L. (Helen Wilhelmena Ludlow?). “From Virginia: An Indian Raid on Hampton Institute.” \textit{Philadelphia Evening Bulletin}. n.d. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
\end{flushright}
Photographs taken upon their arrival show disheveled, gaunt, and frightened individuals. The Indians’ bodies offered a visual testimony to the brutality of Sheridan’s strategy to chase and starve the Cheyenne into surrender and captivity. There is no record of the fact that the Army’s iron shackles, affixed by the Black blacksmith at Fort

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Leavenworth weeks before, still constrained the prisoners and had rubbed their ankles raw. The POWs were only one in a long tradition of imprisoned captives who had arrived in the St. Augustine plaza, beginning with captive Africans brought in by Spanish slaveholders three centuries prior. The sight of shackled bodies of the sort found in abolitionist literature could not have been lost on Stowe and friends, the local Freedmen population, or the city’s former slaveholders. Perhaps this influenced what happened next. A group of bystanders approached the prisoners to get a better look. As had the white women in Indianapolis earlier in the journey, the Florida locals overcame their fear and ignorance; several reached out and touched the thin bodies of these latest arrivals from afar. The prisoners shuffled like a chain gang through the crowd.

Journalist Lanier responded to the humanity of the prisoners more than some. “I saw seventy-two big Indians yesterday, proper men … weary and greatly worn; but as they stepped out of the train cars and folded their ample blankets around them, there was a large dignity and majestic sweep about their movements that made me much desire to salute their grave excellencies.”

With this encounter, in very material ways the focus of this new form of captivity shifted decisively. St. Augustine’s private citizens and visitors very quickly took over for an Army that quickly lost interest in these Southern Plains individuals. Over the next three years, Lieutenant Pratt, the private citizens of St. Augustine, and the individual prisoners—not the War Department—largely determined the nature of captivity for these seventy-two individuals. In so doing, they also set in motion the idea and the

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methodology for a much larger federal project to contain and transform Indian people. After Sheridan’s expensive and aggressive military campaign to conquer and contain the Southern Plains tribes and these very warriors, the Army’s execution of captivity at Fort Marion was anti-climactic at best. In 1875, a travelogue on St. Augustine described the fort as a place “where strife long ago gave way to quiet warmths of sunlight, and where the wheels of the cannon have become trellises for peaceful vines,” the “pyramids of cannon-balls were only like pleasant reminders of the beauty of peace,” and its entryway “Love's own trysting-place. It speaks of love, love only.” The War Department only nominally reinvigorated Fort Marion for its new role as an Indian prison. Pathways around the fort were barricaded to prohibit freedom of movement, doors and windows were blocked, and casemates received new flooring for better sanitation. Still, moss and ferns sprouted from the humid stone walls of the cells and prisoners were expected to sleep on the slatted wood floors.

At the Darlington Agency, Cheyenne and Arapaho Agent John D. Miles complained of massive shortages of food and medicine, which flaunted treaty terms. Hunger and sickness served as a primary source of the hostilities between the tribes and the Army. In Miles assessment, contractors short-changed the Department of the Interior, which administered provisions; Congress failed to appropriate proper funds needed to fulfill the terms of the treaties; and the Army and the Department of the Interior bickered.

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over who would administer Indian affairs.\textsuperscript{224} A similar neglect faced Pratt when he arrived at Fort Marion.

Perhaps more intimate and interactive opportunities softened the head warden. Gray Beard’s story of his daughter clearly touched the young father. In his memoir, Pratt also credited his command of Indian scouts on the Plains with giving him “confidence in their good qualities, particularly when pledged to obedience.”\textsuperscript{225} Pratt exploited the Army’s waning fervor to implement less strident practices at the fort, and set about making modifications to the Army’s vision for Indian interment. At first, the prisoners’ shackles remained on their bloodied ankles and they were marched daily at gunpoint in the courtyard. They slept on the floors of their moldy casemates.\textsuperscript{226} Pratt and the prisoners found the few soldiers stationed at Fort Marion to be overly harsh in their policing of the POWs.\textsuperscript{227} The officer persuaded a reluctant War Department for authorization to remove the prisoners’ shackles and send the local troops to their home garrison a mile down the road. Confinement to the fort’s dank cells exacerbated the deadly effects of the radically different Florida climate on the undernourished and traumatized warriors, and several died quickly. Pratt, the prisoners, and their guards erected a large sleeping shed across the fort’s uppermost promenade. Rude board frames

\textsuperscript{225} Pratt, Richard H. \textit{Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904}. Edited by Robert Utley. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964. 119.
and grass-filled ticks comprised new beds, and the fresh ocean breezes stabilized
prisoners’ health issues.

On July 11, 1875, two months after arriving in St. Augustine, Pratt advocated for
the banished Indians with a War Department not inclined towards sympathy. Pratt sent up
the chain of command a request from his Kiowa and Comanche prisoners’ to have their
families sent to the fort. The jailor explained that the prisoners did not want to return to
the hardships endemic to the reservations, and they longed to be reunited with their
families. General Philip Sheridan passed the plea on to the Interior Department with a
curt note, calling the prisoners “unmitigated murderers of men, women, and children
without a single particle of provocation,” adding “I have heard the Indian talk made to
Lieut. Pratt. It is mere twaddle. I have heard the same in about the same language at least
100 times.”

Despite Sherman’s strong rejection of a softer form of captivity at Fort Marion,
Pratt gambled on his notion of a limited humanity for his charges. The specifics of the
location also cannot be overlooked. Pratt’s outspoken nature marked his entire career.

About his new command, Pratt also expressed strong opinions:

Florida, from its earliest settlement, antedating almost every other section
of our domain, was from the beginning among the foremost in harshness
to her natives. Not only this, but St. Augustine, its oldest settlement, was
established through horrible massacre of one European settlement by
another, inspired thereto by desire for conquest and by religious and race
hatred. Such were the examples of our alleged Christian civilization to the
natives.

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Far away from the more strident oversight of posts such as Fort Sill, Pratt further pushed for a new form of captivity to evolve. Pratt allowed locals to return to the fort that had been the site of tourist entertainment. Especially during the “rush” of Eastern tourists during the winter, “crowds visit them daily”\textsuperscript{230} to observe the prisoners from the upper promenade, creating a sort of living diorama or human zoo in the fort’s central yard below. The jailor felt it was “best to get (the prisoners) out of the curio class by cutting their hair and having them wear the clothing of the white man.”\textsuperscript{231} Like any Army corps, prisoners also performed a daily exercise regimen, cooked their meals, and by all accounts kept the fort quite spiffy.\textsuperscript{232} Pratt used Army tactics to secure the obedience he sought from his charges. He secured old and surplus uniforms for the prisoners, and instructed the warriors to abandon their traditional garb. He bobbed the Indians’ long hair and issued each a uniform. As they had on the Plains, some of the POWs tore apart the wool trousers and reassembled the pieces into traditional Plains leggings.\textsuperscript{233} Though undoubtedly more comfortable in Florida’s summer sun, Pratt’s considerable ire convinced the prisoners to leave their next set of pants unaltered. Mochis joined the fifty youngest soldiers in learning how to drill using decommissioned guns.\textsuperscript{234} It “became the

\textsuperscript{230} R. H. Pratt to C.R. Agnew, 23 February 1876, R. H. Pratt Folder, St. Augustine Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
\textsuperscript{231} Pratt, Richard H. \textit{Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904}. Edited by Robert Utley. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964. 119.
\textsuperscript{232} “Our Indian Wards” \textit{N.Y. World}. n.d. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
\textsuperscript{233} Pratt, Richard H. \textit{Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904}. Edited by Robert Utley. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964. 118.
favorite period for visitors, attracting attention and favorable comment from distinguished citizens and army officers”\textsuperscript{235} who came to call. Once the officer felt confident of his prisoners’ compliance, the terms and boundaries for interment loosened and Pratt allowed the warriors to guard themselves and go into St. Augustine.

**Thirteen months after the POWs’ arrival to St. Augustine**, in June of 1876, the Battle of Little Big Horn shook a nation in the midst of its centennial celebrations. With Custer’s defeat as a backdrop, the visual impact of male Plains warriors clad in Army stripes proved potent to a nation attempting to reunify, and with Western expansion a violent and militarized endeavor. The sight of warriors dressed as soldiers reassured an intensely curious nation of the possibility that even the most extremely oppositional forces to the nation might be gathered within it. Within the terms of Pratt’s experiment, captivity became a domesticating force; in refashioning soldiers from warriors, the fort now gave the appearance of functioning as a post instead of a prison. General N. H. Davis of the Army’s Division of the Atlantic, which oversaw Fort Marion, inspected the goings on. When interviewed by the *N. Y. World* newspaper about his findings, Davis described Fort Marion as an “Indian colony,” a “little settlement” that set a promising example for the policy of the War Department moving forward: “Certainly this

\textsuperscript{235} Pratt, Richard H. *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*. Edited by Robert Utley. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964. 120.
method…is applicable to all the Indians on the plains.” Harriet Beecher Stowe expressed similar confidence in the incorporative influence of this newly domesticated form of captivity for readers of *The Christian Union*: “We found now no savages. A dark complexioned orderly, with the high cheekbones and black eyes and hair of the Indian race, and dressed in the United States uniform, was pacing to and fro on guard” at Fort Marion.

Yet as with Custer’s captives from the Washita massacre, who were seized from the same population as the Cheyenne POWs, captivity actually creates a much more complex give and take of power and ideas. Custer’s female captives from the Washita massacre, blood relatives of Pratt’s prisoner corps, also demonstrated deep flexibility and performativity from within interment. American writers in this era and beyond interpreted the adoption of white clothing and participation in the St. Augustine economy as a sign of the Indians’ cultural conversion to a racially superior way of life. Yet adopting the dress, domestic rituals, and language of the captor was a basic practice within Cheyenne captivity norms. The experiences of the German sisters with “Indian mother,” who dressed them as Cheyenne girls, offers insight into tribal understanding of cross-cultural costuming. The prisoners’ behavior should be understood from within what is known of their own captivity expectations and strategies. (The purported assimilation of the Indian children who would follow the POWs into federal Indian boarding schools must be understood similarly.)

236 “Our Indian Wards.” *N.Y. World*. n.d. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
The War Department and its nation eagerly embraced another interpretation. In General Davis’ assessment, Fort Marion had evolved from a holding pen for savage combatants to a peaceful “colony” of conquest and domesticity. The permitted activities of the POWs further emphasize this idea. Pratt rewarded the POWs’ docility by encouraging the men to make trinkets to sell to area whites and visiting tourists. The crafts included polished sea beans, painted fans and pottery, toy bows and arrows, and autograph books filled with drawings. Such goods generated income for the men, and involved them in the cash economy of St. Augustine. Perhaps more importantly, the prisoners’ artistic creations also situated their labor within the feminized domestic sphere; all of these products were frivolous adornments for the home or nursery. In January of 1876, Pratt used the prisoner drawings to drum up support for his project and sent General William Tecumseh Sherman a collection of them. Sherman firmly situated the works within the feminized domestic space of the nursery. “(W)hat please my children most was the book of Indian Paintings. It is very curious…and I have no doubt it will prove a source of profit.”

The assimilative and militarized appearance of the male POWs helped calm the frayed nerves of their captors. The artwork of the male prisoners also helped bring their individual stories and subjectivity into vivid focus. The drawings offer many clues to the interior experiences of the Fort Marion prisoners. The considerable historiography within art history in particular posits a rich voicing of selfhood, culture, and captivity for these “ledger drawings.” Mochis did not leave any artwork behind. Such rendering traditionally

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238 W. T. Sherman to R. H. Pratt, 10 January 1876, Box 8, Folder 281, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
served as a storytelling medium for Southern Cheyenne men, so perhaps she chose not to put pencil to paper. Mochis’ life left few material traces behind. Such are the “special difficulties” of attempting to understand the experiences of Indian women in history, according to Women’s Studies scholar Rosemary Agonito. She has attempted to salvage the story of Buffalo Calf Road, a Southern Cheyenne woman warrior who escaped to the Northern Plains after the Red River War. Despite their notorious deeds in battle during this era, very little is known of these extraordinary women in comparison to their male counterparts.

Perhaps the exclusion of female Indian warriors and other non-compliant Native women from the public record reflects the high stakes of their non-obedience. “If domesticity plays a key role in imagining the nation as home,” Kaplan posits, “then women, positioned at the center of the home, play a major role in defining the contours of the nation and its shifting borders with the foreign.” For Mochis, the gender disciplining of Stowe and women of her ilk during this era contributed to the limited way in which Cheyenne womanhood and warrior identity were visualized by whites. In the beginning, Pratt attired Mochis in uniform and marched her with the other warriors during drill duty. But white visitors to the fort relentlessly heckled her, and eventually Pratt pulled her from public drilling. In all the existing Florida Club stereoscopes, Mochis is not seen in uniform but in a simple cloth blouse and blanket. St. Augustine’s Florida

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Club produced stereoscopes of local attractions, including the fort and its prisoners dressed in their traditional garb. Such images were sold at the fort to visiting tourists. In one of these images, titled “Southern Gems,” Mochis, Medicine Water, and other prisoners sit atop a pile of cannon muzzles (fig. 3). A label on the back of the image identifies the individuals as “3 of the most celebrated Indian Chiefs and the 2 women” prisoners of war. Mochis is further identified as “Mrs. Medicine Water.” The captors reinforced Mochis’ role as wife further by allowing her to stay with her husband in a canvas tent in the courtyard.

(fig. 3) Mochis is in the back row, far left.

Photographer: O. Pierre Haven.
Title: “Southern Gems.”
By: The Florida Club

In ways both material and representational, Victorian norms inscribed upon her narrowed her identity as they stripped Mochis of her name and her status as a (reportedly flesh-eating) warrior. For the Beecher sisters and their ideological allies in the St. Johns River valley, their efforts to manage and discipline women of color was a civic duty of white femininity every bit as important as the duty of (white) Army soldiers manning area forts. Imperial domesticity, explains Kaplan, “imagines the nation as a home delimited by race and propels the nation outward through the imperial reach of female influence.”

The considerable knowledge and research of Mochis’ and Medicine Water’s great-grandson, John Sipes, Jr., offers a critical intervention to the shortcomings of the non-native archives. Sipes’ research within the oral history of his family revealed Mochis “learned to bake bread and sold it and her beadwork to buy presents to send money back to her children” being cared for by relatives on the Cheyenne & Arapaho reservation. Having surrendered to the Army under extreme duress, it is highly unlikely Mochis carried a large cache of beads with her into captivity. Perhaps she joined the men on the beach behind the fort, where they were allowed to gather raw materials from nature for crafting tourist items to sell. In 1877, the *N. Y. World* newspaper reported that as the POWs “became more and more docile, a greater degree of freedom was allowed them.”

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They were permitted to go down to the beach, where they gathered shells and colored stones, out of which they fashioned beads and other ornaments.” The items they made “command(ed) a ready sale.”

Regardless of how she secured her materials, Mochis made the most of customary skills considered appropriate for a woman by Victorian Americans. There is no mention of her showing off her horsemanship or dancing skills, which her male counterparts did at pageants late in their captivity. Mochis’ willingness to reach across a cultural and power divide and appeal to Americans determined her ability to send money and subsistence items to her children. Such an exchange also must be understood within this highly adaptive period when Southern Cheyenne participated in a constantly shifting political economy with other tribes and American traders, freighters, and settlers. Mochis’ production of beadwork and foodstuffs was a continuation of such cross-cultural transactions, not evidence of a one-way assimilation to Victorian norms.

Like the celebrated drawings of her fellow warriors at the fort, Mochis’ beadwork and bread also revealed something of her inner experiences of captivity, particularly her very human desire to care for her children from afar, and to maintain her connection to family and homelands. As with so much in her life, Mochis executed her plans successfully. In July of 1876, she instructed Lieutenant Pratt to mail to the Cheyenne agency “shirt stuff” for her son, and a shawl for her daughter. In September, Pratt forwarded money from the prisoners to their families back home. Included in that was a

244 “Our Indian Wards. N. Y. World, n.d. n.p. n.d.: n.p. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
sum from Medicine Water to “his mother, $1.00, Sister, $1.00, and three children $1.00 each- $5.00.”

Fortification: Imperial Domesticity and the Dilemma of the Indian Feminine

What a pity to send them back with their families to their former wild frontier life.  
—Sarah Mather, of her Indian students imprisoned at Fort Marion

These invaders, motivated by commerce...(require) no responsibility to carry forth, only ammunition to move ahead. In reference to our circular world’s ecology and humanity, the linear conquest often destroys that which is truly dear in its wake.  
—Edgar Heap of Birds, Cheyenne artist and descendant of a Fort Marion POW artist

Once they gained Pratt’s confidence, the Indian POWs enjoyed considerable freedom at Fort Marion, which deepened encounter with civilian townsfolk. One visitor, a Mrs. S. S. Robbins, described her family’s first meeting with the prisoners in a travelogue. Robbins, her mother, a nanny, and juvenile members of her family spent the winter in St. Augustine in an attempt to nurse two of its members back to health. The family marveled at the lack of oversight apparent there as they entered the fort: “(W)e


247 S.A. Mather to Miss Blanchard, 13 January 1886, Miss Sarah Mather folder, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.

heard a queer sound as if some one was laughing way down at the bottom of his stomach. Turning round, we saw an Indian with a gun on his shoulders, who had come up softly behind us." 249 Almost immediately, one of the prisoners approached the group with a sea bean in his hand, and startled the nanny. "(S)he was gesturing away at him, with her cotton gloves all spread apart, as if she was going to scratch him.” Mrs. Robbins’ mother admonished her aide, interpreting why these prisoners of war were selling their handiwork: “those poor fellows make a little money, and keep themselves from dying of homesickness.” The older woman purchased the bean and they moved on to a table covered with photographs and drawings and staffed by prisoners.250 The colored-pencil drawings of the Fort Marion POWs burst with color, action, and emotion. The warriors drew vivid depictions of their exploits in war, buffalo and antelope hunting, and tenderly rendered scenes of ceremony and everyday life with their families. As had others before them, some in Mrs. Robbins’ family began to shift their opinions of the captives within encounter.

Mother said it was the most wonderful thing she ever heard, that these Indians were brought here only six months before, naked, with the scalps of white men braided into their hair. Now, they all wore the United States uniform, and acted as if they were almost soldiers; but I was dreadfully afraid of them, and kept hold of mother all the time at first.251

The family continued to roam the fort with seeming freedom until one of the prisoners sounded the bugle call. Pratt appeared for roll call. “Oh, such awful-looking men as they

are!” Mrs. Robbins remarked, as Pratt went down the list of names, including Medicine Water. In her telling, each responded with “Ugh.” But by the time the group left the fort, Mrs. Robbins and some in her family planned to attend Wednesday afternoon archery lessons given by the prisoners. “Was there ever anything so nice?” Mrs. Robbins asked herself as she left the site.

The POWs did in fact conduct archery lessons at Fort Marion, simultaneously arming the warriors while bringing them into close physical contact with white women and children. Could anything signal submission more intensely, particularly for those imprisoned for murdering settler women and their children? The perceived ‘docility’ of the Cheyenne POWs was in fact a complex exchange of perceptions, ideas, and power. The POWs’ drawings and archery classes, according to sports historian Kay Koppedrayer, “allowed the American buyers a safe visual enjoyment of (traditional tribal) life, safe because of the distance that separated not only them, but also the Native American men themselves from it.”

Most of the written record belongs to Victorian Americans, but much also can be gleaned from other accounts of tribal captivity as when Libbie Custer joined her husband in Indian Territory after the Washita massacre in 1868. Like Mrs. Robbins, meeting Indian captives inspired in Libbie a sense of dread and wonder. Within her husband’s highly liminal space of captivity in a makeshift stockade at Fort Hays, Libbie was both fearful of and fascinated by the opportunity to encounter Cheyenne individuals “on whom we could safely look, or with whom we could actually

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visit.”253 The civilians of St. Augustine expressed similar sentiments in abundant published and archival sources.

Less explored is the likelihood that Cheyenne captivity norms informed the behavior of the family members who were imprisoned at Fort Marion seven years later. Custer’s Cheyenne female captives assertively appealed to Libbie and the soldiers, drawing upon their sense of obligation and humanity. From Ma-wis-sah’s demand that Custer behave like their new head man to one Cheyenne woman’s repeated pantomime of the “ping! ping!” of gunfire,254 the relatives of Pratt’s Cheyenne prisoners also deployed supplicatory and affective strategies when interacting with their captors. Through such, and within this new form of captive encounter in St. Augustine, Cheyenne prisoners inspired a group of privileged Americans uniquely positioned to change their futures—and the future of many Indian families.

By the POWs’ arrival in 1875, St. Augustine had emerged as a bustling tourist destination for Eastern elites. Doctors, politicians, merchants, and others within the nation’s emerging middle-class flocked to the city’s glamorous new hotels and proliferate rooming houses. By sheer coincidence, St. Augustine also served as one of the most developed, ambitious, and racially diverse educational environments in the country. A $1 million Peabody gift, state funds, Black tax revenue, Northern benevolent societies, and the Freedmen’s Bureau resources funded more than three dozen day schools, almost as many night schools, and the enrollment of more than two thousand students in Florida

Freedmen schools. Freedmen’s educational opportunities rivaled and, in places, surpassed those for white residents.

While still on the Plains, the warriors had been the intense focus of men: soldiers, federal agents, and federal leadership. At Fort Marion, the warriors increasingly became the focus of women’s work. Not only did women serve as the primary customers for the prisoners’ domestic goods, broadening encounter inspired white women to incorporate the prisoners into feminized spheres of imperialism. Missionary and reform-minded women proliferated in St. Augustine, and regularly staffed area Freedmen’s classrooms and Sunday schools as part of their everyday service work. Reformist women also were aware of the increasingly valued work of white women via mid-nineteenth-century Indian missions, reminds Women’s Studies scholar Jane Simonsen. Indian work was increasingly “conceived of as a women’s enterprise—one that developed the more ethereal ideal of “influence” into the professionalized roles of missionary, teacher, and domestic scientist.” According to C. L. Highham’s comprehensive study of missionary wives, service work with the Indian prisoners at Fort Marion was well within the feminine sphere by 1875: “The men who did poorly at seminaries or who possessed limited skills ended up on the western frontiers of North America. Thus, women chose to work with the Indians, while men were forced to.”

Soon after the arrival of Pratt and the warriors, St. Augustine’s leading reformist matron wasted no time paying a visit to the fort. The primary champion of the

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educational project for warriors at Fort Marion, equal to Pratt, was missionary teacher Sarah Ann Mather. A friend and contemporary of Harriet Beecher Stowe, “Miss Mather” ran a finishing school for elite young women, and served as superintendent of the Freedmen’s school system in St. Augustine. Pratt immediately accepted her offer to bring area women to the fort to instruct the prisoners, calling Mather “one of those women with a born genius for instruction—one whose very life is in teaching.”

By the height of the first tourist season the winter of 1876, classroom instruction was well underway thanks to the city’s local and resoriter corps of women. To a sympathetic visitor, Dr. Cornelius Agnew, Pratt reported: “The school prospers. Each day I can see that rays of light are breaking in on the dark minds.”

In his correspondence with Agnew, Pratt’s advocacy for the prisoners did not include formal education. Pratt praised the work of the teachers there for the “visiting season.” Two months after his arrival to St. Augustine, Pratt wrote the War Department asking to run Fort Marion like a New England penitentiary that taught and worked its inmates in the trades. A few months later, to Agnew Pratt posited a more permanent solution in a “stirring New England community” where the POWs would learn farming and carpentry. The jailor was confident of the prisoners’ obedience, and promised to “answer for any bad behavior.” Pratt identified the main obstacle to the uplift of the

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258 Pratt, Richard H. to Dr. Cornelius R. Agnew. 31 March 1876. R.H. Pratt folder, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
prisoners as the “difficulty of language…the difficulty of good men getting immediately at them, is so immense as to discourage almost all effort.”

Archival shortcomings may help explain why historians credit Pratt with masterminding what became the federal Indian boarding school project. In truth, it was at least as much the vision of educated women trained at places like Mt. Holyoke and Catharine Beecher’s schools. These daughters of Protestant ministers, missionaries, Lane Seminarians and Oberlin Rebels secured “one of the few outlets (that) valued women’s education” via access to domestic and international missions, and later Freedmen’s schools. The ladies renovated one of the cell casemates closest to his office into a basic schoolroom, and brought in small chalkboards, letter cards, books, and books used in Freedmen’s schools. Besides English instruction, Math and bible studies filled out the curriculum. Mather’s partner, Rebecca Perrit, joined Confederate widows and the wives of Northern doctors and senators to staff the fort’s growing academic offerings. “To the faithfulness of these and other fine women was largely due the quick progress in intelligence the Indians made,” Pratt wrote in his memoir. Without her, he told the *Hartford Daily Times* in early 1879, he would “never have begun the work of civilizing

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260 Pratt, Richard H. to Dr. Cornelius R. Agnew, 23 February 1876, R.H. Pratt folder, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
262 In a letter to Dr. Cornelius Agnew, Pratt identified the five most devoted teachers at the fort: Mrs. George Couper Gibbs and Mrs. Kingsley Gibbs, local widows of Confederate officers; Amy Caruthers, wife of Dr. Horace Caruthers of Tarrytown, New York; a Mrs. Shipthurst of Philadelphia; and a Miss Murray, also from the Tarrytown area. Pratt, R.H. to Dr. Cornelius Agnew, 31 March 1876, R.H. Pratt folder, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
and educating” the warriors.\textsuperscript{264} In Lookingbill’s assessment, “He considered it her labor, not his.”\textsuperscript{265}


(\textsuperscript{fig. 4}) “Captain Pratt Visiting Class at Fort Marion” by Zotom, a Kiowa POW at Fort Marion. Taylor Museum at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. <https://plainsledgerart.org/plates/view/402>
In addition to her experience as a professional educator, Mather fulfilled much deeper cultural imperatives. Her great uncle, Cotton Mather, was only the most famous of the New England seminarians populating her sterling Massachusetts stock. Her credibility was further enhanced because she was among the first cohort at Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary. Holyoke founder Mary Lyon helped Catharine Beecher develop Hartford Female Seminary, where little sister Harriet was educated. They shared a vision for the broad scope of women’s influence via education. Mary Lyon and Catharine Beecher both fostered within their students the notion that white women were uniquely suited to serve as teachers and mothers. “Woman’s great mission is to train immature, weak, and ignorant creatures to obey the laws of God; the physical, the intellectual, the social, and the moral,”266 Catharine published in 1872.

This generation of women educators centered curricular priorities on producing classically trained women who could take over primary school education. A heavy emphasis on Christian devotion, the discipline of the body, vocational training, and modest living stayed with the Beecher sisters and Sarah Mather, and this training appeared abundantly in their writing and teaching. Of her tutelage under Lyons, Mather wrote:

The first year of the Mt. Holyoke school there (were) only 80 pupils, consequently we had more of Miss Lyons’ direct personal influence, which abides with me to this day. It was there I was taught self-denial for the good of others, and a principle was instilled to do with my might what my hands found to do. .. She was determined we should all do something in the world. The last time I saw here, she had time for only one question in the midst of the bustle. “Are you married or are you teaching?”

Mather was most definitely teaching, though her contemporaries did not adhere to those two roles as a binary. The ideologies taught at Holyoke and Catharine Beecher’s seminaries manifested domestically and internationally as its graduates spread out among colonized and otherwise vulnerable populations via their teaching and missionary assignments.

At Fort Marion, much more than English fluency and mathematic proficiency began to foment under the dedicated tutelage of St. Augustine’s educated women. White expectations of obedience were further clarified for the Indians by a Freedmen’s curriculum that promoted Protestant values of docility, Christianity, and thrift. The material covered by the Plains prisoners was not markedly different from the one labored over by young Harriet Beecher at her sister Catharine’s Hartford school or the first lessons offered by American Missionary Association instructors who followed Union
troops into the city. None of St. Augustine’s teachers, including Mather, deemed the Indians’ arrival to Florida or the creation of classes at the fort worthy of mention to AMA leadership. The surviving letters from all of the city’s teachers, many who worked directly with the Southern Plains prisoners, did not relate a word about the classes at the old fort to headquarters in New York City.

Perhaps the support of the AMA was demonstrated implicitly in the involvement of Minnesota Episcopal Bishop Henry Whipple, a board member of the American Missionary Association and long-standing missionary to the Minnesota Ojibwe. During the years of the interment of the Southern Plains POWs, Whipple wintered in St. Augustine in an attempt to offset serious health issues. Whipple taught at Fort Marion twice weekly and delivered Sunday sermons, all of which focused heavily on obedience.

I was never more touched than when I entered this school. Here were men who had committed murder upon helpless women and children sitting like docile children at the feet of the women learning to read. Their faces have changed. They have all lost that look of savage hate, and the light of a new life is dawning on their hearts... (their appreciation of my sermon) shows that even in the most savage men there is a heart which can be reached by discipline, kindness, and Christian teaching.  

This relatively new feminine sphere had now enlarged again, demonstrating educated women’s ability to transform deadly warrior men into children in rapt obedience to them. In April of 1877, Stowe penned the definitive recounting of Fort Marion’s prison school for The Christian Union. In Palmetto five years prior, Stowe asserted her St. Johns River classroom could help eradicate the perceived laziness, crime, and insolence that

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were the by-product of slavery on the character of Black folks. The work of Mather and Pratt showed Stowe such training was nothing short of a revelation for Indians at the fort. By 1877, Fort Marion’s single-cell classroom had grown to a collection of casement classrooms, each with a white female teacher presiding. Stowe’s article published about her experience with Mather at the fort promised her *Christian Union* readers that there were now “no savages” at Fort Marion. While the prisoners’ “fiend-like fierceness and atrocity” dominated their personas when they arrived to St. Augustine, now only anxious students “in the United States uniform” rushed to meet the fort’s school bell. Their eagerness must have evoked for Stowe the kind of nearly supernatural reverence she attributed to early Freedmen students for their books and lessons; the Indians carried the same sorts of books in their hands as they entered their prison schoolroom.

Pratt similarly credited the classroom experience with transforming the very physiognomy of his prisoners:

> Here they were around us—the very being that had been the terror of our Western settlements, and what did they look like?
> The Indian face is naturally a stern and hard one, but as they gathered round their teacher and returned her morning greeting the smiles on those faces made them seem even handsome…docile and eager, with books in hand, men who had been the foremost in battle and bloodshed.

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In the eyes of their captors, teachers, and chroniclers, the opportunity of captivity, when met with Christian schooling, rendered male savages reborn as more fully human beings—albeit juvenile ones. Plains Indians had not undergone the infantilizing and confounding experience of captive labor as had Southern slaves. Though vehemently opposed as an institution by abolitionists, what Stowe now characterized as slavery’s “imperfect training” had its usefulness for the undomesticated at places such as Hampton Industrial Institute in Virginia, also funded by the American Missionary Association, and now among Indians at Fort Marion. Pratt helped secure day labor for the prisoners around town. Along with income from the production of drawings and craft items, Stowe glowingly reported most of the (male) prisoners’ income was funneled back to children and family members experiencing another form of federal captivity on reservations in Indian Territory. “Yes,” Stowe affirmed to her Christian Union readers, “these fearful beings whom we were tempted to look on only as noxious wild beasts have the hearts of men.”

The fate of Mochis, however, remained invisible; only one published account of prison life at Fort Marion mentioned her participating in classroom activity, and none place her at the wage labor jobs or production of the popular drawings. It wasn’t until Mochis was encountered in an appropriately gendered space—the fort kitchen—that her presence within captivity became briefly visible again. As Stowe reported, a male

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prisoner was learning “a profitable trade” baking admirable loaves of bread for the fort.

Mochis’ merit remained less assured:

(T)he terrific woman, who once was so formidable, now presides over a Peerless cooking stove, and made the day we were there a great caldron of savory soup, which we saw, in passing upon the dinner-table of the tribes, flanked by large dishes of boiled meat, and great white blocks of bread. We cannot but think that such an experience may suggest to her a pleasanter style of diet… (which she) prefers to eating the hearts of enemies. 273

Like Stowe, her sisters, and fellow suffragists, Mochis was in the kitchen while the men were doing more public work. This might have been a choice Mochis made for herself, and may have been related to the illness her descendants blame for her untimely death. Most telling was Stowe’s reaction to the Cheyenne woman’s exclusion from the classroom; the potential, and potential dangers, of allowing Indians into white domestic spaces were deeply charged contestations for the writer. As Higham found in her study of missionary women working within Indian communities in this era, “Female missionaries saved their most damning and shocking descriptions for individual native women who failed to meet their standards of domesticity.” 274

Perhaps the influence of her father, Reverend Lyman Beecher, stayed with Stowe. Though he vocally opposed Removal as a member of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, Reverend Beecher also vehemently opposed miscegenation with Indians. They were not to be trusted within the more intimate spheres

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of civilized life.\textsuperscript{275} Or perhaps Stowe was also linking contestations about the gender
demands for other racialized women; as Minnah could not be both a capable farmer and
cook, Mochis could not be understood by Stowe as having prowess in war and in the
kitchen. Stowe’s relief at Mochis’ abilities over the stove pot, but also a stubborn
criticism of such, represented much in the fortification of white femininity. In the Fort
Marion kitchen, as on the St. Johns River with Minnah, Stowe again found herself within
what Kaplan calls the “double movement” of manifest domesticity, which “expand(ed)
female influence beyond the home and the nation while simultaneously contracting
woman’s sphere to police domestic boundaries against the threat of foreignness
both within and without.”\textsuperscript{276}

The presence of Mochis, not in Indian Territory but in St. Augustine’s stronghold
of the national myth, proved confusing indeed. That she was helping with bread was
nothing short of literary in its narrative perfection, as bread was “the very foundation of a
good table” and a civilized nation in Stowe’s rendering:

This matter of lightness is the distinctive line between savage and civilized
bread. The savage mixes simple flour and water into balls of past, which he
throws into boiling water, and which come out solid, glutinous masses, of
which his common saying is, “Man eat dis, he no die,” which a facetious
traveler who was obliged to subsist on it interpreted to mean, “Dis no kill you,
nothing will.” In short, it requires the stomach of a wild animal or of a savage
to digest this primitive form of bread…. (Poor bread is) wholly unworthy of
the men and women of the Republic. Good patriots ought not to be put off in
that way, —they deserve better fare….and we earnestly entreat American

\textsuperscript{275} In 1832, when Lyman Beecher learned of the Supreme Court decision opposing Cherokee Removal in \textit{Worcester v. Georgia}, “He jumped up, clapped his hands, and took hold of my hand and said, “God, be praised,” and ran right out to tell his daughter and his family.” (Elias Boudinot, letter from Boston, March 7, 1832. <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/chronicles/v006/v006p328.html>)

Much was at stake in Stowe’s worldview with Mochis’ mastery of the Peerless stove. Even when performing domesticity correctly, Mochis’ “essence” was still very much the subject of speculation for Stowe and the women who left her out of their histories.

In contrast to the drawings, newspaper articles, and subsequent publications and scholarship that abundantly expressed the experience of her male comrades at the fort, Mochis’ presence was erased almost entirely from the American story of the Fort Marion POWs and students. The only publicly available images of Mochis’ are the Fort Marion stereoscopes. Like the national domestic sphere that refused to obey, Mochis never quite “came in” to an American imagination that couldn’t quite conceive of a person who fit no racial or gendered identity they understood. In the last image of Mochis from Fort Marion, she’s pictured among the men (fig. 6). All are holding bows, and perhaps they have just completed an archery demonstration or lesson for visiting Americans. A bow rests lightly atop Mochis’ right wrist, signifying her ability to hunt and fight as any Cheyenne warrior could with exceptional skill. In another image from the series, Mochis was replaced with a white woman wearing a flowered hat and wrapped in an Indian blanket (fig. 7). Unlike her Cheyenne counterpart, the white woman does not hold a bow. Though it’s impossible to know the sequence in which these photographs were taken, spatially the white woman and Mochis occupy the same place. This positional interchange invites inquiry. Many accomplished writers of the day described the prisoners and their activities to a curious nation. Yet only when Mochis conformed to

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white Victorian gender norms did she become literally legible to the nation holding her captive. In a spooky foreshadowing of the assimilationist Indian school Pratt would very soon create in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Mochis’ replacement with an unarmed white woman offers a glimpse into what awaits all Indian girls, including Mochis’ own daughter.

(fig. 6) *Mochis is in the back row, third from right.*

Photographer: O. Pierre Haven.
Title: “Southern Gems.”
By: The Florida Club
Robert Dennis Collection of Stereoscopic Views, New York Public Library
CALL NO: MFY Dennis Coll 90-F139
The failure of American writers and photographers to envision Mochis’ complex Cheyenne femininity did not erase the fact that she was a real person—a daughter, wife, mother, and a woman honored with the responsibility of fighting for her people within a spiritually cultivated and ritualized corps of women. She was not an unseen presence suggested by a line of laundry strung along the St. Johns River. Nor was she merely a shadow on a piece of photographic paper. The presence of former abolitionists and
Freedmen’s educators and reformers in St. Augustine offered a vivid alternative to stories of Indian-settler violence that had preoccupied the nation for a decade. But Mochis’ brave and violent protection of her people and her lands, and her experience within captivity, did not fit any language available to white literacy. Perhaps Mochis’ experience was more akin to that of the German sisters with “Indian mother.” She resisted it, but she survived.

As it had been in so many other eras, St. Augustine would serve to contain and stabilize intensely competing themes in a fragile, but resolutely American, new order. Captivity shifted to encounter at Ft. Marion. The promise of being freed, and allowed to continue on to an American school grew for the male POWs. The Americans most directly responsible for the fate of the prisoners spoke of and published accounts of the experiment. Power brokers within the War Department, the Indian Bureau, and missionary organizations read newspaper stories from Pratt and his corps of teachers promising even these most militarized and unassimilated warriors showed the capacity to learn. Two dozen of the youngest prisoners were identified as suitable and willing to pursue school enrollment upon their release, Etahdleuh Doanmoe most recognized among them. Born in 1856, the Kiowa warrior distinguished himself as a student and artist of note during his imprisonment. The other prisoners and Pratt often assigned him positions of leadership. “It was generally conceded that Etahdleuh was quite foremost among those who were entitled to such privilege” of continued education, Pratt reported in Battlefield
and Classroom. Since the teachers enjoyed “social distinction” in St. Augustine, they applied their influence “to create a sentiment among the visitors in Etahdleuh’s favor to see if they could not raise at least enough money to send him away to school.”

The lady teachers decided to stage a “Mother Goose” program, “using their own and our children,” meaning the young Indian men. Such language reveals much about the potency of the captive educational project; the American children were all under the age of eight, but the Indian warriors ranged in age from their upper teens to their mid-twenties. Mochis apparently did not participate; what could be the entertainment value of a female Indian warrior, or a female Indian baker? Lieutenant Pratt queried the Mother Goose actors about what they would like to see the Indian men perform. The children and their mothers requested an Indian dance, a war whoop, a love song sung in a tribal language, and a demonstration of tribal sign language. Though the jailer had worked hard to discipline the appearance and behavior of his prisoners over the last three years, Pratt’s attitude towards the display of these most conventional expressions of tribal tradition shifted in this moment. Now firmly in his control, and for reasons he valued, Pratt allowed his prisoners’ behavior to return to tribal norms. Pratt enthusiastically promised his American collaborators, “I will arrange that.”

Pratt and his lady supporters made good use of St. Augustine’s burgeoning tourist resources. They reserved the largest hotel dining room, which sat approximately 300, and the children sold tickets on the bustling St. Augustine streets. Even at a dollar a ticket, no

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Pratt, Richard Henry. *Battlefield and Classroom Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904.* New Haven: Yale University Press. 188.

Pratt, Richard Henry. *Battlefield and Classroom Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904.* New Haven: Yale University Press. 188.
small fee in that day, more than 700 were sold and a second performance had to be added. On the night of the revue, the Indian actors were allowed to again don the traditional clothing they wore as they crossed the continent in chains. Etahdleuh had saved the braids Pratt forced him to snip off soon after his arrival at the fort in 1875, as well as a large eagle feather. These he pinned to his head before going out to sing his love song to a sold out crowd.

The audience cheered Etahdleuh’s performance, but what interested Pratt more was the drama occurring backstage, with “mother trainers,” white children, and “injins” “all on fraternal relations, eager to begin a small effort to lift Indians into their rightful place as real potential Americans.” In Battlefield and Classroom, and subsequent speeches and articles, Pratt’s imaginative moment did not look backwards, to the massacres and land dispossession that landed these individuals into captivity at Fort Marion. Nor did Pratt contemplate the irony of such a performance signaling the assimilation of his captives. Through Indian play, Pratt had at last arrived at a rendering of liminality and potential that could propel his vision, and the efforts of his supporters, forward. Through the infantilization of native men within a Mother Goose pageant, and an orchestrated staging of common signifiers of “Indian” culture, Pratt envisioned the potential of his educational experiment.

The St. Augustine audience responded with remarkable enthusiasm. In his memoir, Pratt credited the Mother Goose performances with inspiring locals and resorters

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to “agree individually to stand for the three years’ expenses of all those who wanted to go to school.” As predicted in *Harper’s Bazaar* in 1874, the Mother Goose play revealed St. Augustine as a place where wartime allegiances and racial issues were overridden for the right cause. Ohio Senator and Mrs. George Pendleton joined wealthy Confederate widows in promising to fund several students. Prominent Minnesota missionary Henry Benjamin Whipple offered to take school four prisoners in his home. Amy Caruthers, a participant in the Ladies Archery Club, and her husband, Dr. Horace Caruthers, pledged to bring her Kiowa student, Tsait-Kope-Ta, back to their home in Tarrytown, New York. In all, twenty-two prisoners found sponsorship that night.²⁸²

CHAPTER THREE

Re-Membering Mo’olelo: ‘Opukaha‘ia, the Armstrongs, and Education in Trans-Pacific Empire and Hawaiian Dispossession

“(Mo’olelo) means a fragment of a story, as though the teller recognizes that he is not saying everything there is to say about the subject.”

—John Kamakawiwo’ole Osorio

Dismembering Lahui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887

Lieutenant Pratt’s Mo’olelo: From Prisoners to Students

With the funding for enrollment in school secured for his prisoners, Lieutenant Richard Pratt immediately began soliciting state agricultural colleges about taking the prisoners as students; the Indian Bureau had earlier prescribed agricultural industry for tribal communities. In Battlefield and Classroom, Pratt credited Miss Sarah Mather with pursuing another option, an industrial school in Hampton, Virginia created for Freedmen in 1868. According to Pratt, it was Mather who first reached out to Hampton Institute Principal Samuel Chapman Armstrong.\(^\text{284}\) Mather’s intervention made sense; the American Missionary Association funded both the establishment of Hampton and underwrote St. Augustine’s Freedmen’s Schools. Mather had institutional influence and,


like her friend Harriet Beecher Stowe, enjoyed a personal friendship with Samuel Chapman Armstrong. As Secretary of the American Missionary Association, Bishop Whipple held enormous sway with the group that largely funded Hampton Institute—though Whipple and Armstrong contentiously grappled over the financing and control of Hampton for at least a decade.

Pratt’s memoir claims Armstrong initially agreed to enroll only one prisoner, although closer examination makes such unlikely. Armstrong was on record as early as 1870, and every few years afterwards, trying to persuade United States legislators, missionary organizations, and school supporters to help him enroll Indian students at Hampton. Pratt’s recollection, and American Indian boarding school scholarship more broadly, has painted an incomplete picture of this and other key components of Armstrong’s entrance into Indian education.285 When examined with a longer lens, the involvement of Samuel Chapman Armstrong in industrial educational reveals a trans-Pacific colonial-missionary project that linked indigenous and Black populations in massive land and cultural dispossession for a century or more.

One thing is certain: in April of 1878, the War Department authorized the Indian Bureau to assume responsibility for the twenty-two prisoners who would be continuing on, as free men, to schools on the Eastern seaboard. Fifteen would stay at Hampton Institute, while the rest continued on to homes and schools as promised by their sponsors.

in Florida.\textsuperscript{286} Etahdleuh and his fellow Plains warriors arrived by steamer at Hampton Institute’s dock around midnight on April 14.

Though it makes for simpler storytelling, the arrival of Indians to Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s doorstep was in no way the beginning of any chapter in the American Indian educational narrative, though reformers, scholars, and Indian people have repeated Pratt’s story often. In fact, Armstrong had been working every angle of influence and persuasion available to him since 1870, trying to secure Indian enrollment—and secure federal funding for such—at his privately funded school. In 1870, Armstrong wrote friend Edward Parmelee Smith, a member of the American Missionary Association and a co-founder of Fisk Free Colored School. That year, the Indian Bureau recruited Smith to work with the Red Lake Ojibwe in Minnesota, and soon became a rising star within the agency.\textsuperscript{287} “Please give me a chance,” Armstrong implored Smith, “for I can ride & throw a lasso and get along gloriously with savages.”\textsuperscript{288}

The earliest recorded correspondence between Pratt and Armstrong occurred seven years later, when Pratt received a letter written by Armstrong to his friend Martin I. Townsend, U.S. Senator for New York, two months after the surrender of Chief Joseph.

\textsuperscript{286} Pratt, Richard Henry. \textit{Battlefield and Classroom Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904}. New Haven: Yale University Press. 191.
and his people on October 5, 1877 in Montana Territory. The opportunities presented by Indian captivity, and developed by Pratt and Mather with American Missionary Association teachers, had not escaped Armstrong’s notice. This time, Hampton’s principal exhibited the diplomacy of a more seasoned administrator and highly public figure.

I have recently been in Washington and seen some people about the matter of educating 25 or 30 or more Nez Percez Indian youth—new prisoners of war—at this institution… We have just the system for these Indians. Would not this experiment be worth trying?…We don’t need this job. We are all right—but these Indians are not: we are in earnest to help them.

Long before *Battlefield and Classroom* indicated, Armstrong proved an enthusiastic correspondent to Lieutenant Pratt. Armstrong’s first letters to Pratt, in January of 1878, articulated the “special” nature of Indian students and expressed enthusiasm for the “experiment” of educating them at Hampton.

Somewhere between getting along “gloriously with savages” and the development of an ideal “system” for Indians, Samuel Chapman Armstrong reflected and enlarged a discursive and methodological space that proved useful for late-nineteenth-century settler-colonial praxis, and also profoundly impactful for Indian families and children. Pratt, hoping to return to his regiment in Kansas, was instead ordered to stay at Hampton, help establish the prisoners into student life, and assist the school in establishing labor

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290 Samuel C. Armstrong to Martin I. Townsend, December 3, 1877, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

291 Samuel C. Armstrong to Richard Henry Pratt, January 28, 1878, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
programs for them. Pratt spent a year under the tutelage of Hampton’s principal. In 1879, Pratt convinced the War Department and the Department of Interior that a separate school for Indians was needed.

In crucial ways, Carlisle Indian Industrial School is the progeny of Hampton Institute. The schools shared private and federal funding sources, teachers, students, and curricula. The Kanaka Maoli notion of mo’olelo creates space in which to consider the incomplete nature of every story, including the creation story of federal American Indian boarding schools. It certainly broadens the context, and strengthens understanding of the very direct connections between settler-colonial schools and land and cultural dispossession of indigenous peoples globally. As the St. Augustine Mother Goose pageant obscured the grim story of how and why Plains warriors ended up in that city, Pratt’s own mo’olelo and the historiography profoundly neglect the critical influence of Samuel Chapman Armstrong and the Hawaiian mission on the American Indian educational “experiment” and indigenous dispossession. Despite its temporal and geographic distance, the Hawaiian mission from 1809 to 1893 was intimately bound up in a larger mo’olelo. The creation story of the Hawaiian mission, and its history, were in every way connected to the arrival of seventeen Southern Plains men aboard a ship arriving on yet another strange shore.

One of the most confounding elements of the American Indian boarding school narrative is the profound shift from the captivity practices of the War Department to

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Interior Department’s oversight of compulsory manual labor military schools begun at an abandoned Army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1879. The historiography suggests Lieutenant Pratt, the Indians’ reluctant jailor and equally unsure educator, conceptualized this vision of Indian assimilation with relatively limited input from others. Not enough has been made of the year Pratt and his prisoners-turned-students spent with Samuel Chapman Armstrong at Hampton Institute, nor of the influence of the Hawaiian mission on both Hampton and Carlisle schools. A more inclusive investigation helps further enlighten the fundamental, tri-racial connections between Reconstruction-era Freedmen, Indians, and Hawaiians, and the missionary-led programs that dispossessed them all of lands, resources, and opportunity at the service of the development of white-controlled commercial development and the fostering of American empire.

Trans-Pacific Moʻolelo: Henry ʻOpukahaʻia and the Connecticut Missionaries

We thought, surely this is he who shall comfort Owhyhee. We saw so plainly the hand of God, in bringing him hither…. And to some it may seem, as if God were frowning upon (the Foreign Mission School), and were warning us, after so much needless expense, and labour lost in the education of this youth, to cease from our vain expectations of sending the Gospel to Owhyhee, and give up our labour of love.

“But we do not thus interpret the voice of his Providence which speaks to us this day, but rather hear him saying to us, more audibly than ever, “Go forward.””

——Lyman Beecher
A Sermon Delivered at the Funeral of Henry Obookiah in Cornwall, Connecticut, 1818

It meant something to the Hampton School, and perhaps to the ex-slaves of America, that from 1820 to 1860, the distinctively missionary period, there was worked out in the Hawaiian Islands the problem of the emancipation, enfranchisement, and Christian civilization of a dark-skinned Polynesian people in many respects like the negro race.

—Samuel Chapman Armstrong

*Twenty-Two Years’ Work of the Hampton Institute*

Hampton Institute Press, 1890

‘Opukaha`ia’s was the kind of grief that worked on the mind like a fever dream, in flashes and swirls, a horrific kaleidoscope of knives and spears and bodies falling. ‘Opukaha`ia was a twelve-year-old boy from the village of Ka’u on Hawaii’s Kona Coast. In 1804, a clash between rival factions drew violence directly into his village. Later, when he grew into a young man in a far-off land, ‘Opukaha`ia would speak and write many times about the gory scenes of his parents, baby brother, and aunt murdered as they attempted to escape invading warriors. This mo`olelo would loosen people, power, and resources, carried on seafaring routes by merchants and missionaries aboard ships mobilizing commodities, ideas, and empire globally. The first among them would be ‘Opukaha`ia himself. His mo`olelo took a new form one day in his sixteenth year, while he looked over the blue harbor in front of his uncle’s home, saw ships that plied the wide seas, and tried to imagine a different life. Though a loving uncle had taken ‘Opukaha`ia into his home, and was training the boy to join him among the ranks of Kona’s kahuna priests, ‘Opukaha`ia yearned to escape his own memories most of all, according to his posthumous *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah, a native of Owhyhee, and a member of the Foreign Mission School.*

And while I was at play with other children—after we had made an end
of playing, they return to their parents—but I was returned into tears; —
for I have no home, neither father nor mother…I did not care where I
shall go to. I thought to myself that if I should get away, and go to some
other country, probably I may find some comfort.….  

‘Opukaha‘ia set his sights on one trade schooner in particular, and as soon as its anchor
dropped, the boy jumped into the sea and swam out. His uncle’s canoe traveled back and
forth from land to the American schooner, and the boy pled and negotiated his desire to
take to the sea, as so many young Hawaiian men had done before him. On board, a
Hawaiian cabin boy named Thomas Hopu translated for a captain willing to take on new
crew. ‘Opukaha‘ia eventually came to an agreement with his village: he could be
released from his kahuna training if he appeased the gods with the gift of one hog.

The ship was the *Triumph*, and its captain, Caleb Brinwhole of New Haven,
Connecticut. As had been done with Thomas Hopu, Captain Brinwhole renamed his new
cabin boy: Henry Obookiah. Crewman Russell Hubbard, a Yale Divinity School student
perhaps on his own coming-of-age mo‘olelo, took a shine to the Hawaiians and taught
them English, the alphabet, and some Christian catechism. The *Tribute* journeyed into
established early nineteenth-century trade routes: to the Alaskan coast for seal pelts, to
Canton, China for tea, cinnamon, and silks. As the *Tribute* rounded South Africa’s Cape
of Good Hope, and entered into an oceanic world new to the Pacific Islanders, *Memoirs*
reveals the crew initiated ‘Opukaha‘ia and Hopu into a new Atlantic story world.

Sailors on board the ship began to terrify at us. —They said that there was
a man named Neptune who lived in that place and his abiding place was in
the sea. In the evening the sailors begun to act…telling about Neptune’s

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coming with an iron canoe, and paddle. … ‘Have you got my boys?’ said
the old Neptune. — ‘Yes,’ answered the captain. — ‘How many boys have
you?’ added the old Neptune. ‘Two,’ said the captain. … As soon as we
heard the captain says ‘two,’ we both scared almost to death: and we
wished we were at home. 297

The Triumph reached its berth in New York Harbor in 1809. After Captain Brintnall sold
his valuable commodity cargo, he invited the Hawaiian boys to come home with him. As
contemporary Polynesian linguist Albert Schutz characterized, “Had Captain Brintnall
not been a New Haven resident…Hawaiian history in general might have taken a
different turn.” 298 Henry and Thomas left the sea and headed inland to Connecticut, into a
new kind of Hawaiian mo’olelo that would profoundly change their lives, and the lives of
Native peoples on the islands and the continent.

In New Haven, Obookiah 299 in particular captured the attention and assistance of
the town’s Yale seminarians, and soon leaders of the American Board of Commissioners
of Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which held its first meeting the following year. In the
telling of his memoirist Edwin W. Dwight, son of Yale College President Timothy
Dwight, Obookiah’s forlorn vigil on the front steps of Yale ignited the interest of some of
New England’s most prominent men of letters:

When Obookiah was first discovered at New-Haven…his appearance was
unpromising. He was clothed in a rough sailor’s suit, was of a clumsy
form, and his countenance dull and heavy… But when asked, “Do you
wish to learn?” his countenance began to brighten…. It soon appeared that

297 Dwight, Edwin Welles. *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah, a native of Owhyhee, and a member of the
298 Schutz, Albert J. *The Voices of Eden: A History of Hawaiian Language Studies.* Honolulu: Unive-
299 In this text, I will use the Anglicization of ‘Opukaha’ia’s name along with the proper Hawaiian spelling
because Henry himself used Obookiah for the duration of his short life. The literature I’m quoting also uses
the Anglicized spelling, so I also will use it for clarity, But in acknowledgement of ‘Opukaha’ia’s enduring
identity as a Kanaka Maoli man, I will use the proper Hawaiian language spelling as well.
his eyes were open to everything that was passing around him, and that he had an unusual degree of discernment with regard to persons and things of every description that came within his notice.\textsuperscript{300}

Obookiah’s tears, and his desire to learn what the seminarians could teach, awakened in the missionaries an awareness of the boy’s humanity, if not the intense curiosity and bold global journey that landed him in New Haven. Obookiah’s keen and comical social commentary, particularly his ability to turn the seminarians’ cultural superiority back on them, also gained their respect. The boy’s willingness to seemingly put aside his kahuna priest training, and embrace Christian ideals, secured the devotion of his teachers in New Haven and the sponsorship of New England’s rising missionary elite. Reported Edwin, “He was at once very sensibly impressed with the ludicrous nature of idol worship…he said, “Owyhee gods! they wood, burn; Me go home, put ’em in a fire, burn ’em up…We make them—Our God, He make us.”\textsuperscript{301}

The Dwights rewarded Obookiah with an offer of lodging and tutoring in their home. The lad deepened his English fluency at lightening speed, and rejected an opportunity to return to “Owhyhee” on a departing schooner. Edwin and Timothy Dwight facilitated Obookiah’s succession of short-term residencies with some of President Dwight’s most influential protégés, Samuel Mills and Lyman Beecher among them. It was common practice for young white men and women in that era, including Beecher’s wife Roxana, to work and board at homes close to the schools where they studied. Once

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married, the Beechers also took in scores of students attending nearby colleges and academies in Litchfield, Connecticut. Henry was similarly charged with earning his keep as he traveled from one reverend’s home and academy to the next, at one place learning geography, at another higher math. According to memoirist Edwin Dwight, Obookiah was “found to excel in every thing to which he turned his hand,”302 from mowing with a scythe to reaping with a sickle. He reported to his sponsors that working in the field set his active mind to work thinking about heaven “all time.”303 In the spring of 1811, Obookiah had been sent into the woods to clear and cut with an axe when he had the kind of revelation Calvinists promised those committed to hard work and faith: “I thought that if I should then die, I would certainly be cast off for ever. While I was working, it appeared as it was a voice saying, ‘Cut it down, why cumbereth it to the ground.’ …I fell upon my knees and looked up to the Almighty Jehovah for help.”304

Obookiah’s Memoirs, given a counter-missionary reading, actually question Dwight’s narrative of sure and steady conversion. Simply put, this Hawaiian youth held onto his uncertainty against the most aggressive and influential evangelists, perhaps in the history of the United States, until just before his death. “I was told by them about heaven and hell, but I did not pay any attention to what they say; for I thought I was just

as happy as the other people, as those who do know about God much more than I do.”

‘Opukaha‘ia came of age as Henry Obookiah under the constant and careful disciplining and tutelage of ABCFM missionaries. In the six years of Obookiah’s Christian training and American education, his letters and memoir reveal an individual who grappled in very deep, complex ways with questions of faith. The ABCFM itself underwent similar surges and crises of confidence from 1810-1817. Reading Henry’s posthumous memoirs against the missionary grain reveals that it was actually the act of creating an English-Hawaiian orthography and translating the Bible into the Hawaiian language that immediately preceded Obookiah’s formal conversion to Christianity at Church of Christ in Torrington, Connecticut, on April 9, 1815.

That year, the ABCFM received a large bequest from a Salem shipping heir. Combined with the conclusion of the War of 1812, the nation and its missionaries pursued expansion. In November of 1815, the ABCFM became the first American overseas mission society when it officially declared its intention to create a Hawaiian station. Samuel Mills, a founder of the ABCFM and “the key instigator of American foreign missions,” claims missionary historian Charles Maxfield. Mills met Obookiah at the Dwight home soon after his arrival, and immediately took him under wing, serving as the Hawaiian teenager’s closest sponsor. Of the half-dozen Hawaiians coming in and out of Board tutelage, Memoirs reports the Board appointed Obookiah to serve as lead

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“missionary to my poor countrymen—who are yet living in region and shadow of
death.” The following year, the Board created the American Education Society to
finance young male missionaries preparing for the field, and within months the Board
opened the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut. Henry Obookiah and the
other Hawaiian youths travelled widely to raise funds and other support for a mission to
their homeland and the Connecticut school. Henry was the first enrolled student, and was
soon joined by nineteen other Pacific Island, American Indian, and East Indian men.

American Studies firmly roots the ABCFM’s early school at critical intersections of
race, nation, and empire: “‘Opukaha‘ia’s transformation shaped the character of the
emerging American mission movement…the American Board initially embraced the
principle of native agency, of training indigenous people to serve as missionaries among
their own communities.” The curriculum of the Foreign Mission School reflected such
an approach, with curricula that included reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar,
rhetoric, composition, geography, surveying and navigation, natural philosophy, Latin,
Greek, and theology. Henry Obookiah taught himself Greek and Hebrew, and
translated scripture from it into his native language. The school sought to prepare its
students to recreate, in indigenous communities with diverse environmental and political
economies, a town very much like Cornwall; learning trades of tailors, cobblers,
blacksmiths, coopers and the like put indigenes one step closer to capitalism and

307 Dwight, Edwin Welles. Memoirs of Henry Obookiah, a native of Owhyhee, and a member of the
There was much the New England Protestants could not have known about Kanaka Maoli culture’s magnificent traditions of intellectualism and technological innovation perfected to a Pacific environment. When he left the Kona Coast, ‘Opukaha‘ia was being trained as a kahuna, or high priest. Nineteenth-century Hawaiian historian and scholar Samuel Kamakau wrote of Nauwa houses, where “ancestry was taught, both on the father’s and on the mother’s side, the land where one was born, and the signs by which one could tell the birthplace of one’s ancestors.” An intricate and rigorous chant tradition surrounded this rigorous genealogical instruction that, at all times, was also woven in with Kanaka connections to land and place. Besides the complex spiritual ontologies and rituals of his people, ‘Opukaha‘ia and the other teens would have received extensive tutelage in the complex arts of canoe building, seafaring, navigation, astronomy, martial arts, food cultivation, land and fisheries management, oral literatures, and much more.

The vocations and academics offered to the Hawaiians in Connecticut was, at best, equal in skill and scholarliness to the training the young men had already received at home. It certainly was not superior to “heathen” education. The young men sought adventure, as all young men do, and as children of the largest trade hub in the Pacific, they surely understood the value of learning the language of the archipelago’s largest trade participants. As American Studies scholar John Andrew reminds, there also was a

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larger objective at work for the creators of the Foreign Mission School. “It represented, in
short, exactly that ideal society that leaders of the missionary movement wished to see
replicated across the American countryside and around the world.” Cornwall school also
brought into sharp silhouette a polemic that would be worked out in indigenous schools
for the next century or more: “bring the heathen into contact with Christians, and exhibit
heathen manners, as a living and impressive spectacle.” Townspeople and students
would learn the proper moral lessons from each other: residents discovering what to
avoid and students seeing what to model.”

On February 17, 1818, nine months after the Foreign Mission School opened,
twenty-six-year-old Henry Obookiah died of typhus. The Board tapped Lyman Beecher
to deliver the funeral sermon. The minister labored to articulate and explain the
complexities of race and faith occasioned by the arrival of ‘Opukaha‘ia to the American
continent. In his sermon, Beecher evoked a watery world, only recently recovered from
the great flood, where human tribes had “relapsed again into idolatry. And in the land of
Canaan, what reiterated apostacies to idol worship took place” “until the Messiah
came.” Reminded Beecher, these idolators “were dispersed 3,000 years ago, and the
Jews almost 2,000.” Obookiah’s untimely passing clearly rocked the faith of friends,
sponsors, and evangelicals throughout New England. Beecher’s eulogy also grasped to
stabilize support for the Foreign Mission School and the Board, which were laying the

groundwork for the imminent launching of Western tribal and global missions. His sermon acknowledged the “mysterious providence”\textsuperscript{316} of Obookiah’s death within what seemed a divinely manifested moment of territorial and spiritual expansionism for the ABCFM and the United States.

By the rapid population of our country, the distribution of Bibles, the labors of Missionaries, revivals of religion, and the efforts made to evangelize the world, a great and increasing demand is made for ministerial labor. The cry, “give us minister,” becomes more importunate every year. In this emergency, we should expect that the Most High would regard with peculiar favor the life and health of his ministering servants.\textsuperscript{317}

Beecher further encouraged the faithful to understand such challenges as God’s way of “wean(ing) them from the world and to prepare them for glory…to feel their dependence upon God.”\textsuperscript{318} For, he reminded, such was the inspiration of Obookiah’s final moments. The young Hawaiian shook hands with all at his bedside, and with perfect composure addressed to them the parting salutation of his native language, “Alloah o’e.”—My love be with you.” After a brief moment of revival, one of the Hawaiian men looked down and realized Henry had passed. “The spirit had departed—but a smile, such as none present had ever beheld—and expression of the final triumph of his soul,


remained upon his countenance.” As the Canaan idolaters before him, who had escaped the rising waters only to be conquered by Christian faith, so Obookiah’s death signaled farewell for the “idolatry” of his Hawaiian brethren.

Beecher’s fable of ‘Opukaha‘ia’s death electrified the imagination of ABCFM leadership; from it, Beecher imagined, rose the “great Apostolic commission, “Go ye out into all the earth and preach the gospel to every creature.” It also assisted the Calvinists at a moment of perceived vulnerability, as Transcendentalists and Universalists began to capture the imagination and attention of a new generation of Yale seminarians under Timothy Dwight’s tutelage. By taking this charge into the “wilderness” of the indigene, the Calvinists also sharpened their swords against this new, decidedly less dogmatic “book of nature.” Beecher’s sermon predicted that from Obookiah’s Christ-like death scene would rise the Protestant “authorized system of instruction.”

Reason without revelation is the powerless eye of infancy, gazing upon impenetrable darkness. The actual state of the heathen world confirms our theory…. All heathen lands are at this day, without God and without any correct system of worship or morals; or appropriate means of sanctification or pardon. — They afford no evidence of holiness such as qualifies men for heaven, but rather unequivocal evidence of the unbroken dominion of sin.

Beecher's sermon circulated in booklet form as Edwin Dwight rushed to compile letters,

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speeches, and personal remembrances into *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah, a native of Owhyhee, and a member of the Foreign Mission School; who died at Cornwall, Conn. Feb. 17, 1818, aged 26 years*. Beecher’s funerary narrative and *Memoirs* made a clarion call for the notion that foreign missions, in the words of missionary historian William R. Hutchison, “must be pursued for the health and fulfillment of the churches at home, Christianity itself would expire, mission publicists warned, if it was denied its true nature and ceased to expand over all the world.”

Yet much also was missing from the ABCFM’s fable of ‘Opukaha‘ia; the depth of his intellect and his religious training within the kahuna traditional priesthood system was of less interest to his memoirist than Obookiah’s enduring uncertainty about his worthiness before a Christian God. *Memoirs* created a literary character named Henry Obookiah, and in so doing revealed more an evangelical critique of indigeneity that neglected much. In framing ‘Opukaha‘ia within a Biblical narrative trope, the seminarians impoverished their own analysis. What meaning could have been made from the Hawaiian boys who decided to leave New Haven and return to the islands, of the shared coming-of-age seafaring adventures of white seminarians and young men from ever-more connected oceanic worlds?

If the goal of *Memoirs* was simply to raise enthusiasm and financing for Obookiah’s intended mission on the Sandwich Islands, it was an unrivaled success. As ‘Opukaha‘ia had done while he was living, his mo‘olelo traveled New England and pulled money and volunteers into the cause. Hiram Bingham was finishing up his

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theological studies at Andover when ‘Opukaha‘ia died. Bingham committed to the terms
required of service in the Sandwich Islands; he secured a wife and attained ordination in
September of 1918. Twelve others joined Hiram and Sybil Bingham at Boston Harbor.
The party included a printer called to action by Memoirs and four Hawaiian men prepared
at Cornwall to be, as Hiram Bingham described it, “useful missionaries, physicians,
surgeons, schoolmasters or interpreters.”

Coincidental or divinely fated, the stars of ‘Opukaha‘ia’s mo‘olelo, in the hands
of those who attempted to change him, became the constellations by which three
generations of increasingly powerful American missionaries, and their epistemological
and ontological cargo, would navigate trans-Pacific circuits of power. By the end of
1819, reports historian Maxfield, the Board had doubled its missionary force, initiated
missions to Hawaii and Palestine, and generated a much more sprawling funding base
from which it would only grow. For this effort, Obookiah’s eulogy proved potent, too.

By means of (Obookiah’s) conversion, numbers of his brethren,
wandering like lost sheep in our land, have been brought also to the
knowledge of his truth, and by the remote instrumentality of the same
event, (the Foreign Mission School), the hope of Owhyhee and other
heathen lands, has been established…. His death will give notoriety to this
institution—will awaken a tender sympathy for Owhyhee, and give it an
interest in the prayers and charities of thousands who otherwise had not
heard of this establishment, or been interested in its prosperity.

If their Lord claimed the young Hawaiian who seemed ordained to lead the crusade of

324 Bingham, Hiram. A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands. 2 ed. Hartford: H.
Huntington, 1848. 58.
325 Maxfield, Charles A. "The Reflex Influence of Missions: The Domestic Operations of the American
Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810-1850." 63. Union Theological Seminary in Virginia,
1995. United States -- Virginia: ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT); ProQuest Dissertations &
326 Beecher, Lyman. A Sermon Delivered at the Funeral of Henry Obookiah: a native of Owhyhee, and a
member of the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut, February 18, 1818. New Haven:
Calvinism to the people of the Sandwich Islands, then New England’s eager evangelicals must leave their New England villages and cross the Pacific to answer what Beecher termed “The great Apostolic commission, “Go ye out into all the earth and preach the gospel to every creature.” With the forceful memorial sermon of Lyman Beecher as an ideological compass, and the narrative structure of *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah*, the American Board had a methodology and myth upon which they would build for the next century.

Bingham and twelve collaborators left for Hawaii from Boston’s Long Wharf in September of 1819, only weeks after Bingham’s ordination and marriage, both required of his post. The funds raised by Obookiah’s *Memoirs* and the ABCFM, as well as supplies donated by New England Congregationalists, secured the missionaries passage on a whaling ship. The ABCFM party included three Hawaiian men who had been trained for the work alongside Obookiah, including Thomas Hopu. Yet Kanaka Maoli death continued to serve as an inspirational through line for the ABCFM’s Hawaiian mission. Bingham’s party arrived only months after the death of the supreme ruler of the Sandwich Islands, Kamehameha I.

The coming and going of outsiders had always been a part of Pacific Island histories. In 1778, Captain James Cook was only the most recent arrival, but one who heralded profound change that would affect the success of the ABCFM mission a generation later. Cook and other marine traders introduced massive virgin soil epidemics

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to the archipelago that, coupled with the death of Kamehameha I, contributed to a loosening of the traditional Aikapu religion in the Sandwich Islands. Bingham and his supporters understood these tragedies as signs of divine intervention in support of their missionary work, claims Maxfield, and they reported back the news as providential.

They promptly reported to their supporters in America the message they received before they had set foot on Hawaiian soil: "TAMAHAMHA IS DEAD; --THE TABOOS ARE BROKEN; --THE IDOLS ARE BURNT; --THE MOREEAHS ARE DESTROYED; AND THE PRIESTHOOD ABOLISHED." The missionaries and their supporters clearly saw that God had prepared the way, and was blessing their enterprise.

Contributions increased; volunteers for missionary service increased dramatically; Missionary Herald circulation increased from 7,000 to 10,000, as the reports of the missionaries to Hawaii were published in serial form.328

The opinions of Hawaiians then, and now, offered more diversity. Nineteenth-century Hawaiian scholar and civic leader, Samuel Kamakau, published his seminal *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* in parts in the 1860s and 1870s. Kamakau relates the story of the “arrival of the first missionary women” to Kamakahonu, on the western coast of Hawaii.

As all mo’olelos, Kamakau’s own life likely influenced his telling of both missionary encounters and his book’s powerful assertion of the deep intelligence and ingenuity of Hawaiian traditional lifeways. Born in 1815, Kamakau converted to Christianity and attended the ABCFM’s Lahainaluna Seminary. His proud explications of Kanaka Maoli epistemologies and ontologies shared the page with his complex renderings of the

missionaries who challenged their very continuance. In relating the arrival of female missionaries to Hawaii’s western district, he describes indigenous people confident in their place, and curious about these latest visitors to their busy beaches.

White men and their children by native women had often been seen on Hawaii, but when the missionaries, men and women, came ashore at Kamakahonu and walked along the beach, the [Hawaiian] people came in crowds…and exclaimed over the pretty faces of the white women, their deep-set eyes, their bonnets that jutted forward, and their long necks which won for them the name of “Long neck” (‘A‘i-oeoe). Crowds gathered, and one and another exclaimed, “How white the women are!” “What bright-colored eyes!” “What strange hats, not at all like the tall hats of the men!” “What long necks! But pleasing to look at!” What pinched in bodies!”

Frenchman John Rives, credited with helping to establish the Catholic mission on the island, met the party on the beach. Thomas Hopu and first-wave missionary Reverend Asa Thurston greeted an unfriendly Rives. As counsel to King Kamehameha II, Rives spoke with authority when he told the Protestant missionaries, in Samuel Kamakau’s words, “the king doesn’t want them and they should go.” The presence of Cornwall-trained Thomas Hopu proved essential. Hopu directed the party down the beach, to the fenced yard of Queen Ke-opu-o-lani, mother of the king. At her gate, Hopu cried out, “Is the Chieftess’s place tabu?” The missionaries were allowed to enter the royal domicile. Hopu introduced their purpose and translated for them.

(Thomas Hopu) said, “These white people are kahunas of the most high God who have come to tell us of the One who made heaven and earth,” and added, “hereafter will come the great day (la) when all will be judged before God.” The chiefs and people thought, “Is the sun (la) going to grow bigger?” [mistaking the word “day” for the “sun” shining above], and they

said among themselves, “This traveler is telling tall tales!” and called him a romancer (ma‘oi).  

Rev. and Mrs. Thurston were allowed to stay, and Keopu‘olani became, in Kamakau’s terms, “the mother of Christian Hawaii.” While some reigning Kanaka elites were open to Christianity, requesting baptism, many others resisted the most recent crew of newcomers or framed Calvinist influence in resolutely Hawaiian terms and histories, according to contemporary Hawaiian historian Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa.

In traditional terms, the massive depopulation experienced by Hawaiians, beginning in 1778, indicated a lack of pono [well-being], the maintenance of which was the responsibility of the Ali‘i Nui [royal family]. In their search for a new pono that could stem the death of their people, the Ali‘i Nui abandoned the Aikapu religion and the traditional Akua [deities] because they no longer seemed to sustain life. The rejection of Aikapu, however, left a religious void—an absence of any Akua whatsoever. When the Calvinists arrived six months after the breaking of the Aikapu, representing themselves as the source of foreign mana, and offering a religious respite from the foreign diseases, they effectively forestalled the emergence of a new form of Hawaiian religion more appropriate to the governing of Hawaiian society.

Traditional spiritual and political leaders worked together to try to stabilize the people, including intensified use of sophisticated island pharmacology and placing restrictions on foreigners. “None of these efforts succeeded, however,” writes Hawaiian historian Noenoe Silva, "and mass death and depopulation ensued.” Conservative estimates of

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Hawaii’s population in 1778 range from 400,000 to 1,000,000; just forty-five years later that number was reduced to about 135,000.”

Bingham made two critical contributions to the eventual methodologies of global indigenous colonial educational structures during this particularly tumultuous era. He and his American and Hawaiian collaborators finalized and circulated Hawaiian-English language resources created by Henry Obookiah and the seminarians at Cornwall. In his memoir, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands*, Bingham recalled that, despite regular tutorials by Hawaiian students at the Foreign Mission School, and many Hawaiians’ rough fluency with trade vernacular needed to do business with American seamen, “scarcely the sound of a single syllable was correctly expressed, either in writing or speaking” by the evangelicals. Among the mission’s earliest work was attaining fluency in the Hawaiian language. The involvement of Thomas Hopu and the other Foreign Mission School graduates surely proved invaluable, as was the contribution of their staff printer. Soon, the ABCFM press churned with evangelical pamphlets, orthographies, and Obookiah’s translation of the Book of Genesis.

In the analysis of Hawaiian historian and linguist Noenoe Silva, such transcription of epistemological complexity found in the Hawaiian language into written form contained and codified Hawaiian meaning-making in ways that deeply served missionaries attempting to influence a vulnerable population. “The reduction of the language to writing was meant to, and did, facilitate the process of conversion to

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Christianity.” Silva’s close epistemological analysis illuminates the stakes for the control of meaning-making via the written word, taking special care with the idea of *pono*, in her translation conveying notions of “goodness,” “excellence,” and “prosperity,” among other applications. In traditional Kanaka Maoli structures, the chiefs and royals were expected to maintain this state of balance and material well-being for their people. With the growing influence of Calvinist evangelicals and their widely publications, Silva claims, “Rightness meant something different in the two worlds, but the missionaries were able, in barely questioned translation, to appropriate this powerful term—an appropriation that would have radical consequences.” 337 “More than any other missionary innovation,” Silva adds, “it was the alphabet—but with fixed rules for its use—that would enable the Hawaiians to read religious materials written in their own language, thus preparing the way for their conversion to Christianity.” 338

The Bible’s compelling ideas found an epistemological infrastructure at the hands of foreigners who controlled the dissemination of a new form of transitive mo’olelo in the written word.

With at least functional bilingualism, and with the assistance of their Hawaiian students, ABCFM personnel were successful in another crucial way. They secured the participation and support of key members of *ali‘i*, or Hawaiian ruling class; *ali‘i* conversion and gifts of land served as sufficient foundation upon which a larger religious, cultural, economic, and colonial project would be built on the Sandwich Islands, and that

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would circle back across the Pacific to the United States in the form of the missionary sons.

**Missionary Mo’olelo: Richard Armstrong, Missionaries, and Money**

*This is a new mo’olelo, one that has never been told in quite this way before. It is a story of how colonialism worked in Hawaii, not through the naked seizure of land and governments but through a slow, insinuating invasion of people, ideas, and institutions.*

–John Kamakawiwoʻole Osorio

*Dismembering Lahui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887*

It meant something to the Hampton School, and perhaps to the ex-slaves of America, that from 1820 to 1860, the distinctively missionary period, there was worked out in the Hawaiian Islands the problem of the emancipation, enfranchisement, and Christian civilization of a dark-skinned Polynesian people in many respects like the negro race.

–Samuel Chapman Armstrong

*Twenty-Two Years’ Work of the Hampton Institute*

With Hopu and ‘Opukahaʻia’s journey into New England, the American Indian mo’olelo shifted. Significant among those whose “tender sympathy” was aroused was Princeton seminarian Richard Armstrong. Born in 1805, Armstrong came of age during a time of unique nationalism, as American victory over Britain and its allied tribes in the War of 1812 signaled a more complexified and aggressive continental focus. As a student at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Armstrong shared his nation’s fascination with this moment of overlap, as the founding fathers and continental expansionism shared a national stage. “The greatest sight I ever witnessed was in Baltimore on the Tenth of July,” Armstrong recalled. “I saw Charles Carroll, the only remaining singer of the

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Declaration of Independence, lay the first stone of the Balt. and Ohio railroad. Mr. Carroll is ninety-two years old.”

As Armstrong worked his way through Dickinson and the Theological Seminary at Princeton, race and indigeneity increasingly focused the efforts and attention of his Calvinist mentors. The Foreign Mission School had taken on the name Cornwall School. There, Cherokee students John Ridge and Elias Boudinot, sons of the influential Cherokee plantation families, caused public outrage when they became engaged to local white women in 1824 and 1826, respectively. One nearby Connecticut newspaper said Ridge’s American fiancée, had “made herself a squaw, and connected her race to a race of Indians.” When Boudinot’s betrothed announced her engagement, her brother and their neighbors burned the bride in effigy in the town square. American Studies scholar John Andrew emphasizes the Cherokee responded from a position of power, as the American Board had a keen interest in its mission among them. Boudinot wrote to the Board and demanded “a public recantation by the Foreign Mission School agents and threatened that the Cherokees would stop sending youths to the school.”

In Boston, Board leadership fretted about the mixed messages facing their cause: in light of the reaction of the townspeople and educators in Cornwall, Connecticut, how could the ABCFM promise converted Indians inclusion into the society for which they were being trained? After much debate, the Board settled on a solution, one that would

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reverse and restabilize their more aggressive global goals for the next four generations.
American Board leadership decided the appropriate venue for indigenous religious,
cultural and educational conversion was not among whites in faraway towns; the
ABCFM must deepen its commitment to schools within Native communities. The
strategy worked, claims Maxfield: “By 1830, (the ABCFM) was administering an
enterprise with annual receipts in excess of $100,000, and with a missionary force of 225,
supervising about 600 native teachers with over 50,000 students in mission schools, and
churches with 1,100 native Christian members. The ABCFM was fast becoming a big
business, and (its governing body) worked to give it a life that was both business-like and
pious.”344

Considering the Beecher family response to events helps contextualize Harriet’s
1870s ambiguity about the proper place and space that Indians should occupy in
American culture, and under what terms. The Ridge and Boudinot miscegenation
controversy sparked a formal report from Lyman Beecher. According to Boudinot
biographer Ralph Gabriel, Beecher advised the Board to "regard those who have engaged
in or accessory to this transaction, as criminal; an offering insult to the Christian
Community; and as sporting with the sacred interests of this charitable institution.”345
Other members of Harriett's family added their voices to outcry. But in 1832, Boudinot
reported to his brother that, when he delivered news of the Supreme Court decision

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opposing Cherokee Removal to Rev. Beecher, “He jumped up, clapped his hands, and took hold of my hand and said, “God, be praised,” and ran right out to tell his daughter and his family.”

The decision to bring schools to indigenes, and the work against the Removal of the Five Civilized Tribes by ABCFM missionaries Reverends Jeremiah Evarts and Samuel Worcester, set a potent backdrop. In 1831, Richard Armstrong reported the American Board endeavored to send twenty missionaries to the Sandwich Islands in eighteen months. In a letter recommending Reverend Armstrong for the post, Princeton Theology founder and president Reverend Dr. Archibald Alexander wrote, “It is also a fact well known that there is not now in the world any missionary station which promises more comfort and success than that of the Sandwich Islands.” When Richard Armstrong committed to the “third wave” to the Sandwich Islands, primary in his mind was the desire to more forcefully deploy the missionary objectives via the Kanaka Maoli educational system. Wives were a prerequisite for overseas missionary work, and Richard hastily secured the consent of his bride-to-be, Clarissa Chapman, a Massachusetts farm girl “whose close sympathy with him in his desire to devote himself to work among the heathen.” They were wed in October of 1831, and a month later joined seventeen other missionaries on a whaling ship bound for Maui. The religious, political, and colonial

capitalistic coups and failures of Richard would come to profoundly shape the fate of Hawaiians and missionaries on the islands and within a growing American empire.

The Armstrongs and their missionary compatriots arrived on Maui on May 17, 1832. King Kaukeaoule, or King Kamehameha III, succeeded his deceased predecessor. He and Queen Ka’ahumanu, already converted by Bingham, helped build a house for the Armstrongs on Maui. The missionaries set about their core work, defined by Bingham as “preaching, translating, and teaching.” Earlier missionaries made significant inroads in converting, or at least persuading, ruling and common Hawaiians of the merits of Calvinist doctrines. After the spiritual crisis occasioned by the death of King Kamehameha I, his widow Queen Ka’ahumanu “arbitrated the presence and influence” of American Board personnel until her death in June of 1832, explains Hawaiian historian John Osorio. She was baptized in 1824, and with her leaders instituted a new social system in the absence of the kapu, one influenced by the teachings of the foreign ministers. The “prohibitionary or sumptuary” laws attempted to ban hula and “altered traditional morality and custom, but also resulted in the Natives’ abnegation of their own culture and values as well as in their reliance on foreigners to tell them what was pono.”

Still, as Osorio and other scholars of Hawaii and the Pacific Islands remind, “Fatal Impact” logic cannot be applied. New Pacific Island History rejects narratives that render

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native innocents doomed upon contact with the white wicked. In Osorio’s analysis, the military dominance of Kamehameha I over the archipelago created vulnerability as it centered leadership on one man, his family and closest advisors. “Kamehameha’s military supremacy suppressed the power of other Ali’i Nui, whose rivalry with one another had contributed so much to the competitiveness and vibrancy of Hawaiian society.” Adapted modes of governance, and eventual erosion of island-specific diversity had started to occur well before the arrival of Bingham, Thurston, and the others. Still, the American missionaries encountered a Kanaka Maoli world both resilient and explosively complex. For the first-wave missionaries, tutoring a handful of Hawaiian men in Connecticut was an entirely different project from entering into a highly developed Pacific Island world where the Americans, and their worldview, were decidedly without grounding.

Again, Hawaiian scholars help enlighten with the deployment of the semiotic primacy of their language. Explains Haunani-Kay Trask, a contemporary Hawaiian scholar and activist,

(Hawaiian language shows) possession in two ways: through the use of an “a” possessive, which reveals acquired status, and through the use of an “o” possessive, which denotes inherent status. My body (k’u kino) and my parents (ko’u makua), for example, take the “o” form; most material objects, such as food (ka’u mea’ai) take the “a” form. But land, like one’s body and one’s parents, takes the “o” possessive (ko’u ‘aina). Thus, in our way of speaking, land is inherent to the people; it is like our bodies and

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354 For example, Kamakau references that on Kauai, Oahu, and Molokai, women did not take on the primary work of tilling the ground, fishing, and cooking outside, whereas on Maui and Hawaii women “worked outside as hard as the men.” Kamakau, Samuel M. *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*. Honolulu: The Kamehameha Schools Press, 1961. 288-89.
our parents. The people cannot exist without the land, and the land cannot exist without the people.\textsuperscript{355}

In the newspaper articles that became \textit{Ruling Chiefs}, nineteenth-century Hawaiian scholar Samuel Kamakau recounted a legend that further describes the extent of the deeply learned Kanaka Maoli. This mo’olelo tells of King Keawe-nui-a-‘Umi and the considerable skills of his relative and “favorite servant,” Paka’a. Paka’a was expert in the “arts” key to the care and strengthening of his Mo‘i, or ruler:

1. The natural history of the land (\textit{papa huli honua ‘aina}). …He knew all there was before and behind the land everywhere. He was familiar with all the winds form Hawaii to Kauai, the direction they blew, and the way they affected the ocean…..
2. Paka’a was trained to read signs (\textit{kilokila}), and knew how to manage a canoe in the ocean, out of sight of land. He knew how to tell when the sea would be calm, when there would be a tempest in the ocean, and when there would be great billows. He observed the stars, the rainbow colors at the edge of the stars, the way they twinkled, their red glowing, the dimming of the stars in a storm, the reddish rim on the clouds, the way in which they move, the lowering of the sky, the heavy cloudiness, the gales, the blowing of the \textit{ho‘alua} wind, the \textit{a‘e} wind from below, the whirlwind, and the towering billows of the ocean.
3. Paka was taught how to right a canoe upset at sea, a canoe that had turned bottom up. …
4. Paka’a also learned to paddle canoes…Because of his skill in navigation he became director of Keawe-nui-a-‘Umi’s sea travels. He was the captain who was in charge of his voyages, having charge of the canoes that went out to the ocean and other canoes of the chief.\textsuperscript{356}

While much of these arts were still actively practiced upon the arrival of the American Board’s first missionaries, and well beyond, the effects of population collapse on Kanaka Maoli cannot be overestimated. It certainly impacted the swiftness with which

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the Board missionaries were able to get a spatial and spiritual foothold on the islands. The arrival of international trade to the islands after Captain James Cook’s ill-fated landing in 1778 introduced virgin soil epidemics. Hawaiian and other scholars offer varying data, but the estimated Kanaka Maoli death toll by the time of Queen Ka‘ahumanu’s baptism was between 265,000 and 865,000 souls.\(^{357}\) From 1803 to 1831, Hawaiian historian John Osorio estimates Hawaiian communities lost a full half of their population.\(^{358}\) “The church became an institution promising life when death was everywhere, and the eventual conversion of Hawaiians by the thousands must be understood in the context of a time when their own religion, akua [religion], and Ali‘i [royal leaders] could not prevent them from dying.”\(^{359}\)

Missionary schools executed much of the heavy lifting of converting those Hawaiians who took on Christianity and pursued a more Western approach to capitalistic uses of land, resources, and the terms of the notion of being educated. By 1832, first- and second-wave missionaries and Kanaka royals had developed a multitude of instructional opportunities. Fulfilling the ABCFM promise made upon ‘Opukaha‘ia’s death, in 1831 Lahainaluna Seminary began the work of training Kanaka men for the ministry. Bingham carried forward the Foreign Mission School model, devising curriculum that preparing Hawaiian men to serve as “useful missionaries, physicians, surgeons, schoolmasters or

interpreters.” Though students helped fund their coursework with labor, it was not a pedagogical focus. As a teacher training, or Normal, school Lahainaluna predated the first American normal school by eight years. Other American Board personnel oversaw many smaller, Kanaka-run schools throughout the archipelago; King Kaukeaoule attended Armstrong’s home school on Maui, as did hundreds of adults and children in distinct cohorts designed for them.

From the start, Richard and Clarissa Armstrong played a strong role. From their first Maui station, the couple developed a school for men with at least thirty regular attendees, another school for adult women, and a third school for some two hundred Hawaiian children taught by “native monitors.” The Armstrongs also developed a more advanced seminary-style academy for boys being groomed for future missionary work that were, as Bingham described, “promising lads, as capable of learning as any class of boys in America.” Sermons and a Sabbath school comprised of four or five hundred children, as well as the superintendency of other schools on the island, made for a busy life for the couple.

The Armstrongs started a family immediately, and in January of 1839, Clarissa delivered their sixth child, Samuel Chapman. The family was living in Wailuku at the eastern shore of Maui, on a plot remembered in Edenic terms by its children. The yard contained kukui, palm and citrus trees that kept the family in oil and food, and scented

360 Bingham, Hiram. *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands.* 2 ed. Hartford: H. Huntington, 1848. 58.
and shaded their activities. A mountain stream ran through the yard, supplying cold, pure drinking water. The “plain room” in which Samuel was born overlooked a valley and mountain gorge, where rice and sugar cane were cultivated. After Armstrong’s death in 1893, lead Hampton teacher Helen W. Ludlow gathered letters, stories, and writings associated with her principal. Hampton Institute Press published the collection in 1898. Elder brother William Nevins Armstrong, later an Attorney General of the Hawaiian Islands, contributed his recollection of the panoramic scene of his early childhood:

The sun sets behind these mountains, so that the house falls into the shadow early in the afternoon, and with the shadows always comes a cool air. Clouds rest on the mountain tops, and the constant showers keep the trees and grasses green. Looking the other way, one gazes upon one of the grandest sights in the world…the waves of the Pacific Ocean…. It would be difficult to imagine a spot, with its magnificent environments of mountain and ocean, better suited for the birth of men who take inspiration from their surroundings, and try to measure their own moral growth by such great standards as nature gives them. 363

In 1840, when Samuel was still a baby, Richard and Clarissa Armstrong were called to take over the central station of the Sandwich Island missionary complex, in Honolulu, though they still held claim to the little house built for them in Maui. The American Board under less-than-ideal circumstances had recalled Hiram Bingham to the States, and Richard Armstrong was assigned to replace him. The family took up residence at Stone House, the former outpost of a British admiral involved in a weak annexation attempt in 1843. The remaining cannons nearby regularly reminded islanders of the militarized component of this strategic Pacific trade hub: a “royal battery of fifteen sixty-pounders often fired national salutes, which were answered by ships of war in the

harbor below, and made the windows and dishes rattle…. I thought the place impregnable.”

Mother Clarissa raised her large brood and administered the considerable medical, social, and pedagogical tasks of the outpost while Richard’s supervision of the archipelago’s wide web of native-run schools and Protestant parishes kept him away from home often.

As with the Cherokee miscegenation controversy in Cornwall, Connecticut in the mid-1820s, Hawaiian missionary parents adopted severe methods to segregate their children from their Kanaka Maoli contemporaries. Upon moving into Stone House, Clarissa Armstrong commissioned the erection of high walls to cloister her children from interaction with Kanaka children. American Board parents routinely sent their children back to the United States at a very young age, twenty in all by Bingham’s count. Missionary children were expected to take up the work of their parents, and the indulgence of parental “fondness” could not hamper the preparation of the next generation. Bingham reported the Armstrongs relinquished their two eldest daughters at age seven and eight to the care of friends in California, but mainland boarding schools were another common solution.

(I)n order that they might escape the dangers of a heathen country, and inherit a portion of the civil, religious, and literary privileges which their ancestors had bequeathed to them, and at the same time allow the parents more time and strength for missionary work. … (The children) would be greatly exposed to be corrupted by the influence of low and vile examples

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around them; and the obstacles to their forming a character for usefulness were by no means small….

In 1842, American Board leaders created Punahou School from a parcel of land gifted by Queen Ka’ahumanu from one of the original plots of King Kamehameha I. Missionary parents unabashedly admitted the school was created to prevent their children from co-mingling with Native youth, according to their children. Descendants of leading missionary-turned-plantation families, Alexander, Castle and Peabody, penned a history of the school. The seminary-style academy enrolled only missionary offspring, and New England educators were imported to prepare the second generation to lead on the islands and the continent. Like the Puritan Praying Towns of two centuries prior, or the Cornwall, Connecticut community they just departed, missionaries sought to “open” the Hawaiian “field” while simultaneously maintaining a distinct, racialized sphere off limits even to Hawaiian royal children they were preparing for Euroamerican forms of leadership.

Hawaiian historian Lilikala Kame’elehiwa reminds that the aims of the American Board missionaries had spread far beyond those inspired by Henry Obookiah and begun by Hiram Bingham in 1819.

The American kahuna [missionaries] worked behind the scenes to consolidate their position and to gain time, time to raise their children and to teach them how to take over Hawaii. To the outside world they presented themselves as merely political and economic advisors to an infant nation rising from the shackles of barbarism. In reality they were biding their time until they alone would rule Hawai‘i.

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Under the Punahou roof, Samuel Chapman Armstrong joined other future settler-colonial future legislators, judges, and titans of industry, including the Doles and the progeny of all Hawaii’s later “Big Five” sugar companies that soon developed into global trade powerhouses from their strategic Pacific locale.

Calvinist wives also set about converting and disciplining the domestic sphere. As Connecticut’s Foreign Mission School attempted to prepare indigenes to replicate a New England village political economy in their homelands, so Clarissa attempted to teach Hawaiian females the appropriately gendered skills for “Christian womanhood” that she herself learned as a Massachusetts farm girl: spinning, weaving, knitting, Bible studies, hymn singing, embroidery, and the domestic regimen required for a meticulous home. The American women reported limited success and intense frustration with their assimilationist endeavors among Kanaka Maoli women and girls. Hawaiian women enjoyed radically different sexual, creative, expressive, and domestic expectations as those of the New England women. They also boasted considerable skill sets, but ones that seemed almost invisible to the Calvinist women with intensely specific expectations.

On some of the islands, women labored physically in the fields and contributed expert knowledge of land and food cultivation. They used age-old and diverse technologies of textile manufacture and design, furnishing their domestic spaces with tapa blankets, pillows, sleeping mats, specialty fabrics for wearing and a multitude of other purposes, and the intricate arts of dyeing and perfuming. Said Kamakau, “It

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required intelligence to do this work properly.” Women also contributed deeply to the spiritual, governmental, and intellectual resources of their communities as rulers, teachers, healers, and practitioners of the complex art and performative literature of hula. This gloss is in no way complete, but it can function as a way to read against the grain of missionary narratives such as Clarissa’s. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Hawaiian girls were valued distantly to their male siblings. “In the old days,” reminded Kamakau in his 1860s publications, “the daughter were made much of by the parents and grandparents and by the people in general. “Beautiful above are the cliffs of Wailau” was the saying.”

Still, the Calvinist women reported steadfast confidence in Providence and their conversionary purpose. Clarissa’s missionary home visits instructed Kanaka Maoli women and girls on subjects ranging from cookery to carpentry, “endeavoring in all ways to make the influence of family life a power among the heathen.” While dutifully replicating the mission’s vigilant surveillance and criticism of its manifestations, Samuel and his family benefited constantly from the “power” of the generous and nurturing traditions of Hawaiian family life. Efforts to discipline and isolate Kanaka Maoli families failed miserably, of course. Samuel’s letters, journals, and writings reveal a constant interaction with and interest in diverse people and parts of life on the Sandwich Islands. His writings also challenge the notion of innately corrupt Kanaka familial and domestic structures. The journals and letters of Richard and Samuel are rife with accounts of

Hawaiians providing impromptu assistance traversing flooded rivers, guiding them through the islands’ tricky and diverse terrain, and the open-door hospitality in the humblest Hawaiian homes. Richard often returned from forays full of tales of the kindness and “childlike” grace of his parishioners, when once a local man left Richard a watermelon in the road on an especially hot day, and the constant assistance of honest Kanaka guides who oversaw his purse as they directed the pastor on his travels in sophisticated canoes, on foot, and on horseback.

Samuel and his missionary “cousins” from Punahou School also profited, quite literally, from similar Kanaka Maoli values as they trained to one day assume the oversight privileges of settler-colonial elites. As a teenager, Samuel and his friends earned money for college by serving as government agents collecting on the despised Hawaiian “dog tax,” a one-dollar annual fee whose avoidance was the stuff of legend. As the missionary boys trekked through remote mountain and jungle paths, Samuel benefitted from the considerable and sublime domestic technologies developed by the Hawaiian people over centuries; in his biography of his father, he wrote of their “fragrant home-made mats,” delicious poi fruit dishes, “to me the most satisfying food in the world,” and feasts prepared for guests in sophisticated underground cooking pits.

The lowest types of humanity are, it seems to me, to be found in civilization, not among the heathen. How often have we boys halted our horses before their thatched houses, and been greeted with, “Where are you from”…Next, the question, “Are you hungry?” To which there was but one answer, “Very hungry.” Then a stampede of the household and neighborhood in pursuit of some fleet chicken, which was soon boiling in the pot… father's old retainers would “lomi-lomi” the fatigue all out of us, for these people have, it is claimed, the most perfect massage, or
movement cure, known. It is part of their hospitality, and is delicious.\footnote{Armstrong, Mary Ford and S.C. Armstrong. \textit{America. Richard Armstrong. Hawaii}. Hampton, Va: Normal school press print, 1887. 83.} Though never credited thus, in every way the values of traditional Kanaka Maoli culture—love, generosity, compassion, respect, reciprocity—made the Armstrongs’ domestic needs and missionary projects possible. Yet Richard and many other missionary parents ingrained in their children the notion of the indelible, fatal corruption of Hawaiian lifeways. In his father’s biography, Samuel’s sarcastic telling of the “burning question” of the Hawaiian dog tax both amuses and offends in turns. Armstrong perhaps intended to brag of his methods to outsmart the locals and their “curs,” boasting of galloping up to a home on horseback so that the resident canines would roar from “under the dresses of their squatting mistresses…(which) began the pleading, “Don’t count that dog; we are going to eat him to-morrow!”\footnote{Armstrong, Mary Ford and S.C. Armstrong. \textit{America. Richard Armstrong. Hawaii}. Hampton, Va: Normal school press print, 1887. 82.} Within the confines of his father’s church, Armstrong’s writings praised the strong oratorical traditions and skills of the Kanaka Maoli: “Their language is full of worship, rich in expressions of adoration, and a prayer in it is far more impressive than in English…their child like simplicity and genuine devotion, became sometimes sublime.”\footnote{Armstrong, Mary Ford and S.C. Armstrong. \textit{America. Richard Armstrong. Hawaii}. Hampton, Va: Normal school press print, 1887. 75.} But within a more politicized discourse, Samuel’s critique of Kanaka Maoli orality achieved little beyond bemused paternalism: “Torrents of eloquence were poured out on this subject (of the dog tax), and one country member, Ukeke, nearly gained immortality by a bill to abolish the tax on good dogs, and tax only the bad ones, but the revenue was necessary to support royalty and the state, and there
was no escape.”

Samuel’s prolific writings and public speeches were rife with stories that simultaneously condemned and praised, often on the same page; his appreciative story of being fed and massaged was followed by a critique of the dwellings that gave him shelter: “The huts contained but one room…with no chance for privacy or anything like family life. Morality required a new order of things…their social ideas were erroneous, and if mission work begins with proclaiming the gospel, it must end by organizing society.”

Towards that end, the American Board families and their collaborateurs in the colonial capitalist sector set to work.

Language proved a springboard by which, in a very short period of time, Richard Armstrong led a dramatic change in praxis from the American Board’s original educational mission in the islands. He maximized the usefulness of his extraordinary rhetorical platform as editor of In Ka Hae Hawaii, the government’s Hawaiian-language newspaper, and the English-only Polynesian. As Armstrong gained influence, the newspaper he edited also grew more assertive in its views, such as the 1858 story that forcefully questioned Prince Lot Kapuaiwa’s authority to thwart a complete ban on hula and chastising dancers he claimed were selling kisses for 12 ½ cents.

“While the main purpose of these papers was to communicate laws and government policies,” explains Hawaiian historian Noenoe Silva, “the missionaries in charge of publication also used

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them to proselytize, to civilize, and to promote ideas such as farming for profit rather
than subsistence.” The unprecedented access of information, and opportunity for
participatory public discourse, further motivated Hawaiians of all castes to learn to
understand and write English. The publications also afforded opportunities to train the
Hawaiian-born, second-generation missionaries such as Samuel Armstrong, who assisted
his father in the writing and editing of both papers.

English-language instruction proved a site of particular potency. When launching the
Hawaiian mission in 1818, the ABCFM devoted considerable attention to Hawaiian-
language resources created by their Hawaiian students. Bingham and early missionaries
committed themselves to becoming fluent quickly so they could convert and instruct
Hawaiians in their language. Though some resisted, Armstrong led Hawaiian royals and,
eventually, the entire educational system into an “English-mainly” approach.

(1)t would be an unspeakable blessing to have every native child placed in
a good English school, and kept there until it had [acquired] a thorough
knowledge of what is now, in fact, to a great extent, the business language
of the Islands, and which would open its mind to new and exhaustless
 treasures of moral and intellectual wealth.380

From within a logic of the supremacy of English rhetoric and thought, a bifurcated
pedagogy evolved, dividing Kanaka Maoli along ever-deepening capitalist class lines.
The stakes for everyday Hawaiians and their leaders was high. “Select” schools would be
taught in English and claimed to prepare students for life within the growing white
merchant class. “Common” schools were taught in Hawaiian and prepared everyday

379 Silva, Noenoe K. Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism. Durham:
380 Report of the President of the Board of Education to the Hawaiian Legislature (1858) 11-12 (quoted in
Schutz, Voices of Eden 345).
Hawaiians for wage labor in the islands’ expanding agribusiness. In 1846, the Hawaiian legislature pronounced laws would be published in both Hawaiian and English, and a decade later the courts began a fifty-year tug-of-war over which language would have interpretive primacy over Hawaiian jurisprudence.  

Class polemics also deepened when ABCFM missionaries David and Sarah Lyman established Hilo Boys’ Boarding School on the Big Island in 1836, which Armstrong helped support from his much more centralized and influential station. Hilo narrated its purpose as teaching boys to build work and farm; boys constructed their own Western-style dorms and worked the fields to grow their own food. While the Reverend Lyman’s Western architectural designs and foodstuffs may have differed a bit from traditional Hawaiian norms, the young Hawaiians came to Hilo from communities with highly developed traditional technologies optimal for island environment. Still, the idea of industrial education took hold among the missionary set, its ideologies spreading across the islands in discursive ripples from pulpits, classrooms, royal policy declarations, and pages of the government-run newspapers.

Though some scholars claim Lahainaluna Seminary influenced Samuel Armstrong’s curricular design for Hampton Institute in 1868, educational scholar C. Kalani Beyer’s research refutes this characterization, writing, “it was the work being done by Reverend David Lyman at Hilo Boys’ Boarding School that impressed (Samuel

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At Hilo, and later Hampton, manual labor was at the core of the curriculum as a literal tool to discipline and develop the morals and minds of those populations understood to be lacking both.

A New Kind of Minister: Richard Armstrong as Consulate and Land Owner

As the language of law became a site of contestation, so did the structure of traditional Hawaiian forms of governance and jurisprudence. A weak but unsettling attempt by the British to colonize the Hawaiian Islands in 1843 reinvigorated the strategic usefulness of American involvement on the islands. A year later, missionaries and American businessmen were successful in persuading the Mo‘i rulers and Aliʻi leaders to adopt ever more American forms of governance and jurisprudence. Missionary and Secretary for Foreign Relations Dr. Gerrit Judd led the way and hired an American lawyer to help create three “Organic Acts” from 1844–46. These laws created an executive branch, departments headed by ministers, a Privy Council to advise the King, a Land Commission, and a separate judiciary branch. The laws also opened the royal Privy Council to foreign leadership. No longer were only the Aliʻi subchiefs and royal extended family in roles of empowered advisement; now even the newest American arrivals populated key ministerial positions. Further, even the most recent foreigners could

attain Hawaiian citizenship, and all of the privileges of indigeneity, simply by swearing an oath of allegiance to the King. From 1840-46, everyday Kanaka Maoli began to rebel by circulating and publishing dozens of petitions that “all expressed concern over (foreign) ownership of land and presence in the highest councils of government, but they also, without exception, sought reassurance that the Ali‘i Nui were still their chiefs.”

Perhaps not coincidentally, the American Board mission in the Sandwich Islands faced considerable pressure from headquarters to end its reliance on ABCFM funds during this period. From Boston, it appeared the Sandwich Islands were, or should soon be, self-supporting. Further, the ABCFM was enacting policy away from missions that also contained “large secular establishments” more like villages than parishes in scope and budget. Religious historian Charles Maxfield reminds of a critical shift, dubbed “devolution” by the ABCFM: “The new leaders of the Board believed that these new missionaries, freed from any obligation to “civilize,” could get closer to the people and therefore more effectively evangelize.”

The rhetoric coming out of the Board’s Boston headquarters, if not the praxis of its faraway stations, set an important backdrop for the political maneuvering of Hawaii’s mission. By historian Kame‘eleihiwa’s estimation, the eminent loss of station funding, coupled with the promise of a budding Hawaiian plantation economy, motivated most missionaries to push for the right to own land on the islands. With editorial control over

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the two largest newspapers on the islands, the mission’s attack on what it characterized as a feudal land system created discursive opportunities for Armstrong and his peers. American Board missionaries demonstrated fluency in Hawaiian, and had enough of a familiarity with Kanaka traditions to critique them. Yet the mission articulated a willful misunderstanding of traditional land stewardship, which Trask and others explain was inherent, like one’s connection to body or family.\footnote{Trask, Haunani-Kay. \textit{From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii}. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999. 116.} Instead, Armstrong in particular articulated a strategic interpretation of Kanaka land tenure that conflated Calvinist morality of labor with the rhetoric of race. It was a logic his son and others would perpetuate a generation later with schools for Freedmen and American Indians.

From the earliest days of Western contact, my people told their guests that \textit{no one} owned the land…. By claiming that a Pacific people lived under a European system—that the Hawaiians lived under feudalism—Westerners could then degrade a successful system of shared land use with a pejorative and inaccurate Western term. Land tenure changes instituted by Americans and in line with current Western notions of private property were then made to appear beneficial to our people.\footnote{Trask, Haunani-Kay. \textit{From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaii}. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999. 115.}

Pressure from American Board headquarters in Boston, aggressive French and British interests, and the considerable power now secured by Americans within Hawaiian governance culminated in the 1848 Mahele, or transfer of communally managed lands of the Kanaka Maoli into fee simple plots. The vigorous and intelligent advocacy of Kanaka Maoli via petition and publishing, in the end, was not successful. To describe it perhaps too simply, the Mahele Act promised to divvy up Kanaka Maoli \textit{Aina}. Through a complex process, the \textit{Mo’I} royals would retain some of their land. The rest would be
divided into thirds: one third for the Ali‘i Nui and konohiki leaders and land stewards, one third to the government, and a third to the Maka‘ainana or common people. In the years leading up to Mahele, the Privy Council had already established a commission to develop title. Once Mahele was enacted, the immediately established a Land Commission and placed among its ranks missionaries and white capitalists who would have a determining voice in just how Hawaiian Aina would be allotted. “(F)oreigners, aliens, and citizens…rushed forward to present their claims.”389 The Commission further displaced the traditional status and role of the Mo‘i chiefs and konohiki subchiefs, who were trained from childhood to effect balance and harmony as arbiters of land usage and dispute.390 By 1848, the ministers of Finance, Public Instruction, Foreign Affairs, and the Attorney General were all Americans. Under their leadership, the structure and deployment of Mahele further paved the way for foreigners to gain land. “A quiet revolution had been accomplished…Hawaiian sovereignty, manifest in control of the Aina, had been usurped by foreigners behind a façade of American legal jargon.”391

A second misfortune washed over the Kanaka Maoli at this most vulnerable time, except again the invader was not political, but biological according to Hawai‘i State Department of Business statistician Robert C. Schmitt and population scholar Eleanor C. Nordyke. New port development in San Francisco greatly diminished the travel time to

Hawaii from the United States, allowing infected seafarers to survive the trans-Pacific journey long enough to spread disease. Increased trade and foreign immigration for plantation labor exacerbated exposure.\textsuperscript{392} During the winter of 1848-49, tsunamis of virulent epidemics decimated Kanaka Maoli communities: influenza, measles, mumps, and whooping cough.\textsuperscript{393} The \textit{Missionary Herald} reported the grim news: “(W)hole villages, prostrate at once with this disease, there not being persons enough in health to prepare food for the sick…(W)e soon saw it cutting down infants and little children in great numbers…nine-tenth (of the infants) in some parts, are supposed to be already in their graves…The aged have almost all disappeared from among us.”\textsuperscript{394} Schmitt and Nordyke placed estimates of the death toll from 10,000 to well over one-quarter of the total Kanaka population.\textsuperscript{395}

Mission doctors blamed the moral and dietary failings of Hawaiians for what they understood to be an act of an angry God. Native practitioners scrambled to find established medicines and regimens to deal with the vicious maw of foreign pestilence. Hawaiian people, and their leaders, struggled to fit calamity into both traditional and Christian ontologies as they grieved. Rapid depopulation made impossible centuries-old systems of land management, including upland cultivation and lowland taro patches, which required considerable labor to maintain. The “thriving agricultural communities, important to the collective food and revenue base of the entire society” also were

understood within the Kanaka spiritual system to be a sign of “a healthy and prosperous civilization.”  

This grim state of affairs broke King Kauikeaouli, already weakened by a mysterious wave of untimely deaths that rippled through the ranks of his most trained and trusted Mo‘i during his lifetime.

In Osorio’s estimation, entertaining the notion of Mahele “was a foreign solution to the problem of managing lands increasingly emptied of people.” The emotional toll of the loss of so many of his closest advisors, and this most recent population collapse, proved too much for the heart of the king. He had suffered so much loss since his ascension to the throne in 1832, and began drinking heavily. “Regardless of how they attempted to explain the mass deaths,” continues Osorio. “(Kanaka Maoli) grieved over the enormous loss of life and worried about the fate of the lahui—on a scale that we today can barely imagine.”

During this upheaval, King Kauikeaouli’s American-born Minister of Public Instruction died and on October 28, 1847, William Lee notified Richard Armstrong that he had been tapped to take over. Armstrong was required to consult with the Hawaiian mission body before making a decision. Armstrong’s peers denied their support of the nomination. Some openly, and others more subtly, expressed disapproval of his forceful advocacy of English-only schools and emphasis on manual labor as primary pedagogy. Further, the mission body at least claimed it was not the place of Board personnel to

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serve in any official governmental capacity. Armstrong turned down the king’s invitation, but not without conveying his passion for the work of the Minister of Public Instruction.

No sphere of labor sir, would be more congenial to my feelings, than the department of public instruction, and I may add, no branch of government, seems to be of more vital importance to the welfare, of the Hawaiian race than this. Education, intellectual, moral, and physical, is the great lever by which philanthropists of every land, are seeking to redeem and elevate the mass of the people. Here it is of peculiar importance…. 

A month later, Armstrong changed his mind and accepted a new kind of ministry. The cabinet position emboldened Armstrong. After more than a decade of negotiating his personal beliefs with the desires of the body of the Sandwich Island mission, Armstrong was free of that accountability. He had only to answer to a king he helped convert, and a Privy Council largely populated with his fellow Americans and chiefs friendly to his ilk. Armstrong immediately assumed the chaplaincy of the palace, delivering Sunday evening sermons for the royal family. On May 20, 1849, King Kauikeaouli arrived inebriated. In front of all in attendance, Armstrong chastised the king. The following day, the king assembled the Privy Council and demanded Armstrong be excised from the cabinet, and then threatened to abdicate the throne if his wish was denied. The weariness of the Kingdom was reflected in the protracted negotiations between the sovereign, his cabinet, and the former missionary. In the end, the king agreed to forgive Armstrong if he was removed from the cabinet and demoted to president of the newly created Board of Education.

Armstrong remained undeterred. Fourteen months after his royal reprimand, in May of 1850, a debate raged in the Privy Council and among the people and settlers about the propriety of foreign ownership of Hawaiian land. As Hawaiian commoners struggled through a new and alien process for land access, they and their leaders also recognized the serious threat of massive dispossession. On July 10, 1850, the new legislation engaged in a heated debate over foreign ownership of land on the islands. The next day, Richard Armstrong, a former cabinet member, used circuitous logic and his considerable political power to convince the new House of Representatives that all foreigners should be allowed the opportunity to purchase property on the islands in the same manner as other “civilized countries.” The low social standing of some of the Representatives, combined with their debt to the American Calvinists were in no small part responsible for their place in the legislature, proved too strong to overrule Armstrong’s lobbying.401

The promise of the Mahele was to remake the Hawaiian land tenure system and in the process endow the everyday Hawaiian with private property and participation in the capitalist economy with the fruits of that land. Instead, Mahele filled a critical financial gap for the missionaries and their families. The American Board terminated ABCFM funding in 1850, and the attendant moral and administrative oversight. Lilikala Kameʻeleihiwa’s scholarship meticulously tracks the acquisitions of the missionary class, which aggressively pursued the new opportunities created by the laws and Mahele they helped bring into being. Later in 1850, each missionary man and woman, husband and

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wife individually, applied to the Privy Council for 560 acres each, “and what is more, their request was granted. In addition, because the Hawaiian government thought the brethren were the only foreigners who could be trusted, and who understood the new system established in 1845, many were appointed as government land agents, effectively usurping the function of the konohiki. [traditional land stewards]”

Kame’eleihiwa characterizes Armstrong among the most acquisitional “missionaries-turned-entrepreneurs.” From 1849-51, Armstrong was gifted or purchased at least 3,300 government acres “at a pittance compared to their demonstrated market value.” The painstaking research of Hawaiian historian Lilikala Kame’eleihiwa revealed Armstrong’s Maui purchases alone—558 acres for $558—was purchased at one-fifth the market value. “He actively continued buying Aina on O’ahu and Maui in this matter through 1856, subsequently becoming a wealthy landowner.” Kanaka Maoli were slow to take advantage of the new system, and those who did obtained little more than the property upon which their homes and taro patches were established. Kame’eleihiwa estimates that nine percent of the common Hawaiians received land, but not in a quantity that would enable a viable commercial farm.

Many of the newly landed missionaries arrived on the Sandwich Islands just before or soon after their organization’s firm stand against Creek and Cherokee Removal,

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which began in 1831. ABCFM Secretary Jeremiah Evarts demanded “committed
Christians to call to task civil rulers if they departed from the path of justice and
morality,” reminds American Indian historian Francis Paul Prucha. Evarts considered the
State of Georgia’s forced seizure of tribal lands “a moral wrong, a sin of great
magnitude.” A decade later, the Hawaiian missionaries instead maneuvered massive
land dispossession from indigenous Hawaiians in a way that not only evoked Removal
but presaged American Indian Allotment stateside. In scholar Kame’eleihiwa’s terms, the
very missionaries who came to the Sandwich Islands to help elevate Kanaka Maoli
worked every opportunity to “live like Chiefs upon Hawaiian Aina. As (Kanaka Maoli)
Aina were usurped, so were their political positions, for control of the Aina was the
essence of sovereignty.”

In 1846, American Board missionaries on the Privy Council maneuvered the
hiring of an American attorney, William Little Lee, to take the newly created post of
Attorney General. Lee wrote the Third Organic Act, which restructured the judiciary. Lee
also authored the Mahele legislation and the first Hawaiian Constitution, in 1850. Though
Lee soon admitted Mahele was a “failure” a year later, he was not averse to taking
advantage of the disastrous legislative canon he authored. Lee partnered with banker
Charles Bishop to start Lihu’e sugar plantation on the island of Kaua’i. Reverends Dole,
Castle, Cook, and most of the other ABCFM missionaries also secured sizeable tracts.

Richard Armstrong immediately partnered with two other American Board missionaries to start Haiku Sugar Plantation on his deeply discounted Maui lands, which had served as his original missionary station. With the moral and legislative ground laid by the American Board personnel, commercial developers flooded the Sandwich Islands. The commercial players quickly facilitated a massive influx of foreign labor to work plantation fields, mills, and stores. “The worst predictions of the 1846 maka‘ainana petitions had come true.”

As Armstrong was establishing his plantation, he also took immediate advantage of his ministerial position and established the first government-sponsored school in English in 1851. According to Hawaiian-language linguist and historian Paul Lucas, “Hawaiian-medium schools, which held the most promise for educating Hawaiians in their native language and developing them as competent bilingual speakers, suffered.”

English-medium schools and teachers received the lion’s share of the resources, and drew the most students, both impoverishing Hawaiian-language schools. English-language curriculum from the States soon dominated. Several missionaries went on record opposing this policy shift and its weakening of Hawaiian language, “one of the oldest living languages,” calling such a move “suicidal” to Hawaiian culture. At Hilo, Rev. David Lyman resisted English instruction until he was forced to submit in 1953.

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Richard Armstrong died from injuries sustained in a horseback riding accident in 1860. That year, Samuel fulfilled his father’s wishes and left the islands for the first time to attend Williams College, a popular choice for sons of prominent missionaries. Upon graduating, he served as an officer and commander of Black troops during the Civil War, including distinguished combat during Gettysburg under several of the key officers who would go on to lead in the Indian Wars. After the war, the Army placed Armstrong in command of Hampton Roads, Virginia, a hub for freed and escaped slaves. In 1868, drawing from the model created by his father and his colleagues at Hilo school, Armstrong created an industrial school for Freedmen.

By the end of the century, the “Big Five” agribusiness conglomerates dominated the political economy of the Hawaiian Islands. The missionary-led schools provided them with local labor well trained for plantation-related work. According to Richard Weigle, a WWII-era Department of State executive, “sugar was the main industry of the islands and the one upon which the entire economy was based.” All were led by former missionary families and their partners, who went on to engineer the Bayonet Constitution in 1887, the same year Senator Henry Dawes successfully convinced the United States legislature to pass the General Allotment Act, startling similar in scope and intent to the Mahele of 1848. Six years later, Samuel Chapman Armstrong’s “missionary cousins” from Punahou School, after forceful lobbying in Washington, D.C., overthrew the Hawaiian kingdom with the tacit support of President Grover Cleveland, and the intervention of U.S.

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Marines and Navy ships who arrived in Honolulu Harbor. Kanaka Maoli royals, people, and land were now captive to American military takeover.

By the time the legal, political, and financial wrangling of Mahele concluded, of the Hawaiian kingdom’s 4.2 million acres, the *Mo‘i* royals possessed a little over a million acres, *konohiki* and *Ali‘i Nui* possessed approximately 1.5 million acres combined, and only 80,000 *Maka‘ainana* commoners, who Mahele was supposed to set free from serfdom, together possessed less than 30,000 acres. Osorio rejects characterization of Mahele as a failure, although his scholarship has been dedicated to show its devastating effects on Kanaka Maoli families, culture, and *Aina*. “Because missionary advisors who designed the land division intended to destroy the interdependence between konohiki [stewards of the land and people] and Maka‘ainan [everyday people of the land] in the first place, the Mahele was hardly a failure at all.”

The American Indian mo‘olelo looked sharply similar in praxis and scope.

The appropriation of ‘Opukaha‘ia’s seafaring mo‘olelo in the hands of the missionaries who worked so diligently to change him set a useful narrative of devastation, transformation, and redemption as enduring as the biblical texts that inspired them. Though he died of typhus the year before, at age twenty-six, ‘Opukaha‘ia’s life became a new testament for the conversion and education of indigenous peoples in the “Sandwich Islands” as well as in Native North America three generations later. The mo‘olelo of Indian boarding schools began, in a very direct sense, with the unbearable grief of a sixteen-year-old Hawaiian orphan in 1808. That story, quite directly, continued

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with Samuel Armstrong. His beliefs strengthened and enlarged the ideological corruption of educational methodology in the United States. Using what he dubbed “tender violence,”414 Richard and Clarissa’s sixth child dutifully replicated and interpreted the work of white supremacy during his Reconstruction-era superintendence of Hampton Institute in a way that would both redeem and realize his father’s articulations of race and class at a time of particular volatility for Black, Indian, and Hawaiian communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

The “Ploughshare & pruning-hook period will be inaugurated very shortly”:
Captivity Gives Way to Dispossession

(The turkeys) never indicated a desire to leave us...we had turkey from the wild of our own
raising for Thanksgiving and Christmas. There was a lesson in this to the man who was
pondering much over the race question. He saw that even wild turkey only need the environment
and kind treatment of domestic civilized life to become a very part of it.415

—Lieutenant Richard Pratt about giving
wild turkey eggs to his hen to raise

Battlefield and Classroom

Mo’olelo & Hampton: Solving the ‘Structural Problem’ of Culture
in the Chaos of Race

When a North American savage ceases to yearn for other people’s hair
and begins to produce tin dust-pans, it really looks as if civilization had
gotten a reasonably secure preliminary grip upon the race.... (I)t costs $20,000
to kill an Indian; but to burn the Kiowa orator of to-day from a dangerous savage
into a civilized Christian cost only $1,000.... Shall we kill them or civilize them?416

—coverage of Hampton Institute Commencement
May 23, 1879
Philadelphia Evening Bulletin

Around midnight on April 14, 1878, the Fort Marion prisoners, Lieutenant Pratt
and Miss Mather entered the narrow mouth of the Chesapeake Bay aboard an excursion
steamer headed from St. Augustine to its summer harbor in Virginia. It was the second

415 Pratt, Richard Henry. *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904.*
Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society
Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
significant naval journey for the prisoners, and it could not have escaped the Plains men that this ride was altogether different from their grim sail down the St. John’s River three years earlier. This ship’s captain, sympathetic to the story of the prisoners, agreed to transport the Indians and their jailor free of charge.\footnote{C.H.C. “The Experiment at Hampton, Va., and Its Results—The Best Hope of the Indian and the Black Man. Philadelphia Evening Bulletin. 23 May 1879; n.p. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.} Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute hugged the outermost shore of the Virginia Peninsula, and the school maintained a long dock for the ships that regularly brought visitors to campus. Despite the late hour, students, teachers, and the school’s superintendent, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, crowded the shoreline to view and greet the Indians.

In his history of Hampton Institute, \textit{Twenty-Two Years’ Work of the Hampton Institute}, Armstrong recalled the prisoners “landing at midnight on the shores of freedom.” Yet, like the beaches of the Pacific, the shores of Virginia retained a complex liminality with Indian feet on the ground. Armstrong shifted his vernacular to that of a pulp Western, writing “No one who witnessed that midnight raid on Hampton Institute will ever forget it. The camp was ready for the raiders with coffee and words of welcome.”\footnote{Armstrong, Samuel Chapman. \textit{Twenty-Two Years’ Work of the Hampton Institute}. Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1890. 312.} For Samuel Chapman Armstrong, essentialist signifiers of racialized identity never wore away, even after years spent at the pursuit of such. Though they arrived in white attire, likely Fort Marion’s cast-off Army uniforms, Hampton’s superintendent first saw raiding Indian braves. What Armstrong would clarify with
impressive speed was a vision that Indians were no longer warriors who could learn, they were laborers in training like their African-American classmates.

The arrival of Indians to Hampton Institute also marked an important shift for the superintendent and his school, but within a contiguous pursuit of indigenous transformation and resource extraction. Samuel left Hawaii in 1860, shortly after the unexpected death of Richard from a horseback riding accident. Upon the advice of his father before his death, Samuel chose to attend Massachusetts’ Williams College, a favorite of ABCFM missionaries. While there, the Civil War broke out and Samuel enlisted immediately. Letters home to family in Hawaii overflow with tales of daring and scenes of gore at Gettysburg. But when he decided to pursue the opportunity to lead Black troops, Samuel Armstrong found his calling. He qualified for the assignment, and was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel leading the Ninth United States Colored Troops. From the start and until the end of the war, Armstrong questioned the abilities of Black soldiers, and African-Americans generally. A 1863 letter to his mother, Clarissa, offered one such muse: “The African race is before the world…and all mankind are looking to see whether the African will show himself equal to the opportunity before him. And what is this opportunity? It is, to demonstrate to the world that he is a man.”\footnote{S.C. Armstrong to C.C. Armstrong, 17 November 1863, Armstrong Family Papers, Williamsiana Collection, Williams College.} Armstrong’s letters home sang the praises of fellow white soldiers, but made no substantive recounting of the same about his Black troops.

During and immediately after the war, the Union encouraged fugitive and freed slaves to find their way to Hampton Roads, Virginia for sanctuary. Its location at the
mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, near Fortress Monroe, made Hampton Roads one of the most strategic naval outposts of the war. Just before the war, the county contained only 2,600 Black occupants. At the close of the war, 40,000 Freedmen lived on the peninsula.\textsuperscript{420}

In 1866, the Freedmen’s Bureau placed Armstrong in command of a ten-county area there. The small seaside town struggled to meet the needs of a burgeoning Freedmen’s population.\textsuperscript{421} The American Missionary Association was the first aid society to step in to provide aid in 1861. Armstrong’s Freedman’s Bureau office and the AMA worked with varying degrees of morality and effectiveness within an explosive post-bellum moment, according to African-American History scholar Robert Engs

Reconstruction’s devastating policies and the conflicted response of philanthropic groups created a racially electrified atmosphere in Hampton, Virginia. Farms and businesses abandoned by white Southerners taken up by the fugitive slaves who knew well how to work them. A humble but thriving black community began to form from starvation and desperation. Yet pardons for Confederate rebels soon meant Southern whites had the legal standing to reclaim their improved lands and evict Black squatters. Marauding gangs of whites also wreaked terror on black households, schools, churches, and leadership. Federal lands promised by the Freedmen’s Bureau rarely panned out, and Freedmen “were to return to their home plantations and work for their former owners.”\textsuperscript{422}

\textsuperscript{421} Armstrong, Samuel Chapman. \textit{Twenty-two years’ work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute at Hampton, Virginia: records of Negro and Indian graduates and ex-students}. Hampton: Normal School Press, 1893. 3.
Armstrong’s years under his father’s tutelage in Hawaii stayed with him. Using Hilo Boys’ Boarding School as a model, Armstrong proposed creating an industrial academy to cultivate “the hand, the head, and the heart” of Virginia’s burgeoning Freedmen population. Armstrong drew from the Calvinist methods of Hilo in promoting the uplifting effects of labor on “darkies” under the tutelage of superior whites. The Freedmen’s Bureau and the AMA funded the establishment of Hampton Institute in 1868.

By the time the Fort Marion POWs arrived a decade later, the curricular and ideological workings of the school and the authority of its superintendent were well-established. Boarding school scholarship offers several substantive comparative studies of Pratt and Armstrong’s beliefs and practices related to race and culture. The two men often contradicted themselves and one another on characterizing the characteristics and appropriate social role for racialized groups, but on a few points there were consistent. Despite his direct involvement with local and federal policies that systematically stripped Black Americans of their political and human rights, and their fragile economic opportunities, Armstrong still espoused that race was primary. Armstrong believed race

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created innate behaviors, and that it would take generations for Indians and Blacks to achieve cultural parity with whites. Pratt professed there was nothing preventing the ‘red race’ from rapid assimilation into U.S. citizenship besides the habits of dying tribal culture(s). On one point they agreed: only through white, Christian uplift could the darker races find personal and economic salvation.

In his memoir, Pratt wrote of his early days at Hampton when he and Armstrong “had many talks, principally at night, when we walked the Hampton grounds sometimes until the midnight hour. “I told the General my dissatisfaction with systems to educate the Negro and Indian in exclusively race schools and especially with educating the two races together.” Within the immersion of slavery, reasoned Pratt, Blacks had learned English and industry. Should the Indians not have the same immersive opportunity? After all, “Indians were like other people and could be as easily educated.”

Armstrong’s entire youth was spent immersed in the gorgeous and sophisticated Kanaka Maoli culture. Yet despite many meals spent at their tables eating poi, and the hours splayed out on scented mats receiving lomi-lomi massage from gracious Kanaka hosts, nothing convinced Armstrong of the worthiness of indigenous Hawaiians. Samuel remained Clarissa’s son, forever walled off from non-whites at Stone House, even though the missionaries’ very lives depended upon Hawaiian courtesy, lands and labor. When he moved to the United States, Armstrong transferred his prejudice to “darkies” of every stripe.

Pratt proved much easier to influence. After the war, in 1867, Pratt joined the Tenth U.S. Cavalry, a newly organized regiment consisting of Negro enlisted men, white officers and Indian scouts.\textsuperscript{426} They were stationed at Fort Arbuckle, and each day Pratt chose who would serve as orderly to the commanding officer, a coveted detail. Black troops were new to the Tenth, but Pratt allowed them to compete alongside white troops for the spot. The Black troops held their own on all inspections and drills. One day, after being unable to find one point of unequal merit between a Black and white finalist, Pratt ordered each to strip down to his skivvies. The Black soldier won for his clean underwear and socks.

Pratt’s scouts also changed his notion of Indians. One night, Pratt’s regiment spent a night under the stars. The officer had just dozed off when he felt a snake slither across his neck. He leapt to his feet and shouted out in alarm, dragging the snake from his neck. The other soldiers woke up and an Indian sergeant came rushing over.

(H)e calmed my nerves by telling a number of thrilling snake experiences, mostly relating to the deadly rattler. I finally lay down again, concluding that I had disturbed the resting place of the only snake there, which was probably more frightened than I…. The Indian sergeant sat by and talked with me quite a while, and I was further impressed with the fact that he was both a manly and perfectly normal member of the human family.\textsuperscript{427}

Despite their spirited discussions, Pratt wrote, Armstrong’s views remained “tenacious.”\textsuperscript{428}


By 1878, in the assessment Engs, Reconstruction was “over” and African-American “were being pushed with every-increasing vigor toward a status of permanent inferiority.” Indians would be pushed in the opposite direction, towards absorption into mainstream American society. But Engs incorrectly identifies that effort as reaching its full force before the POWs arrived at Hampton. First, these initial seventeen Indian students at Hampton and their warden were filtered through a Hawaiian mo’olelo half a century old and two generations in the making. Underdeveloped in the historiography are the influences of Richard Armstrong as a primary influence on Samuel’s life’s work, and thus the experiences and outcomes of American Indians.

Hilo Boys’ Boarding School posited indigenous youth as laborers in the service of settler-colonial capitalism via training them to have proficiency with American-style manual labor, New England-derived commodity farming, and the English language and currency. The boys were not taught to become business owners, nor to assume a leadership position within a business. Armstrong brought the logic of the school he admired so much to his work in Virginia. According to Engs, the large population of Freedmen living near Hampton Roads was “uniquely prepared to take advantage of the Northern white interest in their community and to turn these white initiatives to their own purposes.” As the ideas of Hilo took root and grew at Hampton Institute, writes Engs, “two disparate visions of post-bellum black life developed side by side and were often

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interwoven with each other. One looked to full equality in the present; the other postponed that equality to some distant future.”

Armstrong had been actively seeking opportunities to enroll Indians at Hampton since 1870, when a Hampton trustee took a leadership position within the Indian Bureau. An 1872 letter to wife Emma reveals a financial motivation for seeking the enrollment of Indians: “I am on the track of some more money—it will be necessary to prove that the darky is an Indian in order to get it; but I can easily do that….” Funding a school for Freedmen alone required intensive fund-raising efforts, but Indian students directed treaty-protected federal appropriations to the school. A closer look into Armstrong’s life also reveals a deeper motivation. Samuel worked diligently to replicate and reckon with his father’s legacy. Just as Richard shifted from missionary to sugar plantation owner, so Samuel used the excuse of uplifting students to further stabilize and expand his own interests and those of his American supporters. The admission of Indian students to Hampton created financial stability for Hampton, as funds for those students came from largely guaranteed Congressional disbursements and not through philanthropic fund-raising. Indian students also gained Armstrong access to the highest-

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level federal policymakers at a time when interest in Freedmen’s education, and the
desire to fund Black education, was waning.\textsuperscript{433}

Indian student enrollment held the promise of another reckoning for Samuel. He
remained haunted by his father’s private belief that his mission had been a failure.
Though the reverend contributed mightily to the Christian conversion of some 15,000
Kanaka Maoli, Richard lamented that he had failed by not decisively terminating the
source of Hawaiian savagery: Kanaka Maoli culture.\textsuperscript{434} As Samuel wrote in his father’s
biography, \textit{America. Richard Armstrong, Hawaii}.:

(Our work) required a new order of things, and I feel now that there was
lack of attention to the practical details of life…. It was lessons in living
that they needed; their old social ideas were erroneous, and if mission
work begins with proclaiming the gospel, it must end by organizing
society.\textsuperscript{435}

Allowing Indian students at Hampton Institute afforded Armstrong a much more
invigorated role in the assimilationist impulses and programs that marked late-nineteenth-
century Indian policy. With captivity achieved under Pratt, a new method of and thinking
about how to handle the Indian problem found its clumsy and contradictory articulation at
Hampton from 1878-1879.

Though they differed on other key issues, Pratt and Armstrong bolstered one
another methodologically. Much about Pratt’s leadership at Fort Marion smoothed the
transitioning to life at Hampton. Pratt suited his captives up in Army uniforms, drilled

\textsuperscript{433} Engs, Robert Francis. \textit{Educating the Disenfranchised: Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Hampton
\textsuperscript{434} Armstrong, Mary. F. and Samuel Chapman Armstrong. \textit{America. Richard Armstrong, Hawaii}. Hampton,
Va.: Normal School Steam Press, 1887. 99-100.
\textsuperscript{435} Armstrong, Mary. F. and Samuel Chapman Armstrong. \textit{America. Richard Armstrong, Hawaii}. Hampton,
Va.: Normal School Steam Press, 1887. 99-100.
them like soldiers, and managed them as any other regiment. The military motif of the Fort Marion “students,” if they could be called that, was a coincident fact to their presence in the classroom. Most of all, the submission and militarization of Indian men created a space into which the ladies felt they could safely enter, and in which the Army was comfortable allowing them to do so. Indians in Army uniforms signaled submission in the immediate aftermath of war. At Hampton, African-Americans in Army uniforms signaled Emancipation—and a more empowered form at that. Hampton’s Black students also wore Army-style uniforms and followed the rigorous structures of a military academy.

At Fort Marion, Miss Mather’s team replicated the rudimentary lessons of a kindergarten or Sunday School. Armstrong’s curriculum also offered only basic academics to Freedmen, claiming too much education was a bad thing. According to Education scholar Kelani Beyer, by the time Pratt arrived, “Armstrong opposed classical higher education for blacks and native Americans, preferring that nonwhite students be educated in rudimentary subjects and the ethics of work.”436 Engs similarly critiques such logics for Armstrong’s Black students in Virginia.

The disingenuousness of American arguing that blacks were unfit for full freedom is plainly revealed by a special irony in the Hampton experience. There, where the postponement of equality was being most loudly advocated, was one of the few places in America that blacks had most nearly achieved it!437

Though offensive to many in its recipient populations, the Hilo model proved persuasive to the people who counted in all branches of the federal government. Come Fall, General Philip Sheridan began making noise about Pratt’s continued assignment at Hampton, even as the Indian Bureau gave early indications it would support the recruitment of more students to Hampton Institute.

Armstrong and Pratt were good at nothing if not sallying forth; the men were determined to secure the enrollment of more Indian children at Hampton. The summer of 1878, Pratt expected to return to the Tenth Cavalry and took some leave time. Correspondence with Armstrong indicates Pratt viewed his contribution to Indian education largely complete. Still, the pair met in Washington in June for meetings with the Adjutant General, the Secretary of War, and in Congress. Pratt reported to Laura there was “much sympathy” with the idea to secure the enrollment of fifty to sixty Southern Plains youth at Hampton. Pratt also told his wife that the rumor had it Generals Sheridan and Pope “are not satisfied that I am away” from military work. In late July, Pratt queried Armstrong from Randolph, New York: “If you can advise me now of any effort to make, I shall be glad to make it. There is quite a general desire I (should) come west. The returned Indians seem to think I can do something for them. I can’t see how. I hope that the way will be made clear so I can make no mistake.”

By September 10, Pratt and Armstrong had their answer: they were authorized to recruit fifty Indian students for Hampton. Pratt recommended to top brass at the Capitol

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438 R.H. Pratt to A.L. Pratt, 20 June 1878, Box 18, Folder 612, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
that they deploy the Fort Marion POWs to recruit youth from their Southern Plains reservations. The War Department had other ideas, and instructed Pratt to leave immediately for the Northern Plains, where tribal unrest was brewing. Captivity had returned to Indian education. On September 15, 1878, Pratt arrived in Bismark, Dakota Territory. He secured a carriage driver to take him on a four-day jaunt, “100 miles and back” to Fort Berthold.\textsuperscript{440} From there Pratt traveled southward down the Missouri River to the Yankton Sioux Agency. Pratt stopped at five agencies in all, and at each place he asked the Indian agent to assist him with securing boys and girls in mid-adolescence who could come with him back to Hampton. In Pratt’s telling of it, he had little trouble securing his allotted number of students from the tribal communities. On November 4, 1878, Pratt wrote Armstrong that their mission had been accomplished:

> After 75 miles steamboat ride on Missouri River on last boat of season through two days’ snow and ice and over 1400 miles of railroad Hampton’s Dakota Indian boys and girls will reach Fort Monroe Tuesday morning individually pledged to speed their own salvation on your basis of application to duty and to hard work.\textsuperscript{441}

A new method of extraction unfolded quickly between the arrival of seventeen Fort Marion POWs to Hampton in April of 1878, and Pratt’s authorization to retrieve fifty more from the Northern Missouri five months later. Pratt and Armstrong had created the

\textsuperscript{440} R. H. Pratt to A.L. Pratt, 15 September 1878, Box 18, Folder 612, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

\textsuperscript{441} R.H. Pratt to S.C. Armstrong, 4 November 1878, Richard Henry Pratt Box, Indian Collection, Samuel Chapman Armstrong Papers, Hampton University Archives.
legislative, policy, and fiscal pathways for removing Indian children to faraway federal industrial schools.

It’s no wonder the media and federal dignitaries accepted Armstrong’s invitation to attend it historic Commencement the following May. The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin sent a reporter to Hampton Institute to cover historic commencement exercises, the first in the school’s history to include Indian students. Here the Fort Marion POWs concluded their tenure as enrolled students of industrial education, although their tutelage in such would continue. Through labor, “Two great race problems are in process of solution at Hampton,” the article proclaimed. The newly learned skills of the Indians found particular focus, from reading Scripture to geography, arithmetic, and proficiency with handling currency. Demonstrations of vocational training such as carpentry and blacksmithing also drew the writer’s praise, especially tin-smithing. “When a North American savage ceases to yearn for other people’s hair and begins to produce tin dust-pans, it really looks as if civilization had gotten a reasonably secure preliminary grip upon the race.”

On the second day, a “delegation of six wild Cheyennes” appeared at Hampton en route to or from the Capitol. Though the Philadelpia newspaper mocked the entourage’s purpose for their trip to Washington, tribes in this era traveled to Washington, D.C. for only the most solemn reasons such as treaty violations. Or perhaps the Cheyenne dignitaries were there to see the graduation of their kinsmen from Hampton. As the

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442 C.H.C “The Experiments of Hampton, Va., and Its Results—The Best Hope of the Indian and this Black Man.” Philadelphia Evening Bulletin. 23 May 1879; pp. n.p. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
newspaper observed, the Indian student crafting his dust pan, the Cheyenne delegates entered the workshop.

The *Bulletin* reporter leaned over to the student and asked, “Do you think you are better off and happier than these Indians in the blankets, or not?” The student smiled, “winked a mighty wink,” and pulled his face into an inexplicable frown. Much could be interpreted in such a non-committal response. Was the Indian student refusing to speak against his chiefs? Biting his tongue against his criticism of the chiefs’ “aboriginal frippery”? Politely deflecting the writer’s rude question? The article seemed certain of the student’s intention: “Volumes could not have expressed more forcibly his keep appreciation of the fact that he considered himself an uncommonly blessed Indian.”

From within this more intimate form of assimilative captivity, Indian people were much more available to this sort of presumption and interrogation; the media and its nation appeared to be gaining confidence and surety about interpreting Indian faces, thoughts, and needs. Indian presence within the well-known vocational aims of Hampton, drawn directly from Hilo school, further clarified the national gaze about the proper place for Indians in society. The *Bulletin* article announced Indian people belonged alongside Black laborers. Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz gave the keynote speech at this historic Hampton Commencement. He then disclosed to the Philadelphia newspaper that he was seeking Congressional approval to transform the shuttered Carlisle Barracks in

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Pennsylvania into a government-run school modeled after Hampton, but for the sole use of Indian industrial education. Schurz said he hoped Lieutenant Pratt would serve as its superintendent.

The *Bulletin* appealed to the logic of its readers: “(I)t costs $20,000 to kill an Indian; but to burn the Kiowa orator of to-day from a dangerous savage into a civilized Christian cost only $1,000…. Shall we kill them or civilize them?” As the events Little Bighorn illustrated just three years prior, this was still an open question.

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Captive Encounter to Carlisle: U.S. Expansionism
Over Indian Bodies and the Importance of Captivity

The law had been drawn for Carlisle Barracks only. (Secretary) Schurz thought it well to insert “Carlisle Barracks or any other vacant military posts or barracks.”

—Lieutenant Richard Pratt on the commitment to establish Indian industrial education

_Battlefield and Classroom_

A party of seven from Big Cypress swamp were distant, and declined to shake hands, and said they wanted no Washington talk...(they) refused food and tobacco from Lieutenant Pratt, stating that they could buy what they wanted.

—Seminole reaction to Pratt’s expedition to initiate treaty and boarding school negotiations

_Seminoles react to the Pratt expedition to initiate treaty and boarding school negotiations. September 12, 1879. Rocky Mountain News_.

Pratt was nothing if not an opportunist. His ability to facilitate and utilize the most potent contributions of others propelled him forward again, during the winter of 1879. His lobbying there with Armstrong the prior year, for an increase in Indian student enrollment there, served the lieutenant well. With his experience of the transformative effects of captivity at Fort Marion and Hampton Institute, Pratt now had an established method and institutional model about which to advocate. Unlike Armstrong’s grim portrait of racialized peoples, Pratt espoused his view that Indians only needed a totalizing institution such as a boarding school to resolutely change the course of their race. As Pratt later explained


447 “The Last of the Seminoles. What Remains of a Once Great and Powerful Indian Nation.” _Rocky Mountain News_. 12 September 1879; pg. 6; col. A.
In Indian civilization, I am a Baptist, because I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked.448

Pratt spent much time in Washington, D.C. lobbying the federal leadership to create an industrial boarding school just for Indian students. Pratt’s letters and memoir give the impression he had little trouble accessing the most high-level personnel he needed. In March of 1879, Pratt worked with Secretary of War George McCrary to craft a bill that authorized the transference of Carlisle Barracks from the War Department to the Department of the Interior for the creation of an Indian industrial school. When they ran it past Secretary Schurz, he expanded the bill’s intent to include the transformation of any abandoned military post of barracks for such a purpose.449

Significantly absent from Pratt’s narrative was the inclusion of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Ezra Hayt in these initial workings. Perhaps it occurred, but is absent from Pratt’s papers and memoir. In any case, this marked a significant shift in the investment of federal resources towards a particular kind of educational project; the Indian industrial educational “experiment” had now been codified as one firmly within the objectives of federal agencies, and one that was contextualized as military in nature. As with Hampton, Hilo’s industrial model again became militarized in an American setting.

As Pratt ran the halls of the Capitol, he was advised to secure support for the bill on the floor of the House and Senate. Pratt again relied on his St. Augustine support base. Ohio Senator George Pendleton George and his wife, Alice, wintered in St. Augustine.


Alice helped Miss Mather in the classrooms at Fort Marion and became “well acquainted” with Pratt.\textsuperscript{450} The couple also had sponsored Making Medicine’s studies in Paris Hill, New York.\textsuperscript{451} In February and March, Lieutenant Pratt wrote excitedly to his wife, Laura. Pratt wrote Laura that he found Carlisle particularly promising, with ample quarters, premium farmland and schools nearby, and a large town of Methodists. Perhaps most promising was the legacy of exceptionalism that the area seemed to foster. When the Carlisle option opened, ever-savvy Pratt reached out to one of its most esteemed local sons: Professor Spencer Baird. Pratt had maintained contact with the Smithsonian director. He held a Secretary-level position within the federal government, and his close association with top brass within the War and Interior departments added further value to the friendship. Pratt reached out to Baird, who grew up in Carlisle and taught at Dickinson College there. “(Baird’s) family lives there,” Pratt reported to Laura, “and he will give me entrée into the best society at once. He takes to the scheme (of an Indian school) most kindly and says I will find plenty of sympathy and help.” That Richard Armstrong, Samuel’s father, grew up nearby and also attended Dickinson further encouraged the location. “It seems to me the Ploughshare and pruning-hook period will be inaugurated very shortly.”\textsuperscript{452}

Pratt’s confident and optimistic lobbying through the summer of 1879 seemed to ignore the dissatisfied letters of his former prisoners which reached him with regularity.

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\textsuperscript{451} Making Medicine honored the sponsorship and teaching of George and Alice Pendleton when he changed his name to David Pendleton Oakerhater.
\textsuperscript{452} R.H. Pratt to Anna Laura Pratt, 13 February 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
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that year. Five had chosen to train in the homes of New England farmers or to return to their agencies to foster assimilation efforts there. Physical exhaustion, illness, and the pain of separation from their loved ones and lands began to take a serious toll on the young men. Dr. Horace and Amy Caruthers remained steadfast supporters of the POWs.

Kiowa Tsait-kope-ta, or Bear Mountain, still lived under in their home in Tarrytown, New York. He arrived the previous April, but by November Horace reported Tsait-kope-ta was struggling emotionally. As the Cheyenne captives of the Washita Massacre, Tsait-kope-ta exhibited the supplicatory and familial protocols seen from Cheyenne captives. Amy found the boy unfailingly polite to his “Mama” without “one breach of decorum.” He even honored them by taking on the name “Paul Caruthers.”

Though Tsait-kope-ta told Amy of his awakening to Christianity, “He is depressed often by not being well and often expressing the idea that he will not live to get back to his people,” Horace reported. In January of the following year, “Paul Caruthers” wrote Pratt himself and answered Pratt’s query about the lasting possibilities of assimilation among the Kiowa warriors who returned to Indian Territory. “(T)hey are not boys but men, old men don’t give up old way…I feel much about this, but don’t want make too Long letter.” He also asked Pratt if there was a way to find out if his mother received his letters and money. “(S)end money & letter long ago to my mother & no answer & again & mama & Dr. write twice.” Strangely, someone crossed out the word

454 The couple also sponsored the Hampton enrollment fee for Cheyenne POW Roman Nose, who took the name Henry Caruthers Roman Nose in tribute.
“mama” throughout Paul’s letter.\footnote{Paul Caruthers to R.H. Pratt, Box 2, Folder 52, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.} Apparently, the young Kiowa man still had not quite met someone’s standard of conformity.

From Lee, Massachusetts, Etahdleauh Doanmoe wrote that he and some of the other Kiowa prisoners met and discussed their experiences working on Massachusetts farms and living with American families. Tsadletah couldn’t sleep. Though in Florida, Pratt found Doanmoe to be “the most anxious among those who wanted to go away to school and get a better education,”\footnote{Pratt, Richard Henry. \textit{Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904}. Edited by Robert Utley. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1964. 188.} a year later the young man yearned “to talk with my people with my own tongue” and to be heard by them. He also expressed his love for two fellow POWs who still toiled at Hampton.\footnote{Etahdleauh Doanmoe to R.H. Pratt, 8 June 1879, Box 2, Folder 67, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.} A month later, Doanmoe reported Soaring Eagle moved to another home because he didn’t like his sponsor. Though he distinguished himself as a moving orator and performer in St. Augustine, and a skilled buffalo hunter and equestiram warrior, Doanmoe reported he struggled with haying and mowing six days a week: “I am very sorry to say this, I am not very strong to do hard work, but I would not tell (my sponsor) about it.” Perhaps homesickness physically weakened the young man, who then asked Pratt to bring him West so he could share his Christian awakening in Indian Territory.\footnote{Etahdleauh Doanmoe to R.H. Pratt, 4 July 1879, Box 2, Folder 67, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.} By August, Doanmoe’s spirits were lifting, but Tsadletah “is spitting the blood.” Doanmoe again made a plea to accompany Pratt
back to Kiowa homelands and family.\textsuperscript{459} Pratt would accommodate this request soon enough.

At Darlington Agency in June of 1879, Howling Wolf, another popular ledger artist and orator at Fort Marion, made a strong plea to Pratt. As so many Cheyenne captives before him, Howling Wolf began with sentiment and moral obligation: “I have a littel talk to give you to day for I beleave you to be my friend.” He then explained he had been the “means of twenty threa Cheyens throwing of thear blankets.” (sic) But the Indian Bureau failed to provide work or clothing in the prior year, and the crooked traders inflated prices beyond what Howling Wolf saw “in the states.” From within a space that he clearly understood to be outside of the United States, but also paying a high price for his attempt to function within it, Howling Wolf’s patience was wearing as thin as his clothes.

Despite considerable investment of resources, and even loss of life, the federal departments and bureaus involved in Indian work seemed to have lost interest in fulfilling the assimilative promise of captivity once the “ringleaders” submitted. Howling Wolf reminded Pratt of the stakes of U.S. neglect: “I am on the white mans road but have got the Cheyens on my Back and am getting behind.” Howling Wolf struggled to continue to recommend the “white mans road,” especially when unassimilated tribesmen received wagons before those who “ware white mans cloths.”\textsuperscript{460} Howling Wolf issued a cautionary tale to the man in whom he had put so much faith:

\textsuperscript{459} Etahdleau Doanmoe to R.H. Pratt, 6 August 1879, Box 2, Folder 67, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
\textsuperscript{460} Howling Wolf to R. H. Pratt, 5 June 1879, Box 4, Folder 133, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
When I was away from hear I had a nuf to eat and clothes to ware. When I hunted the Bufolo I was not fear. When I was with you I did not want for eney thing but hear I am Poor. I would like to go out on the planes a gain where I could rome at will and not come back a gain. But before I take such a step I thought best to ask you what you thought about it...there is a grate meney wild horse in mexico and if I should get thare I could captives a herd and bring them back hear for then I would not be poor...I have given my two little gurls to the school and I do not want to take them a way. 

Howling Wolf concluded by announcing he was going to hold what reads like a traditional gathering; he planned to kill his cow, prepare a feast, and ask the chiefs to join him in his “lodg (sic) and have a talk and make a road.”

Four months later, a letter from Cheyenne & Arapaho Agency employee Charles Campbell praised the “progress” his charges have made and that there is no need for the “nonsensical argument” that they can only be “held in check by brute force.” He reported optimistically of David Pendleton Oakerhater’s recent return from missionary training in New York, and the likely success of Oakerhater filling a school with Cheyenne children. Yet, no one had yet received “official advice on the subject of his mission from the Dept. and do not yet know how many children are needed from this Agency.” Further, improperly reduced beef rations had Cheyenne families in a state of “considerable dissatisfaction.” Campbell reassured Pratt that the ration issue had been resolved, and a new school building offered much promise.

Still, the former POW now looked with new eyes upon the state of his people. Medicine Water the warrior fought courageously to preserve Cheyenne lands and culture, but David Pendleton Oakerhater, according to Campbell, “does not relish” the “filthy

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461 Howling Wolf to R. H. Pratt, 5 June 1879, Box 4, Folder 133, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
habits” of “camp Indians.” It is entirely possible that the newly anointed Episcopal missionary understood the connection between dispossession, violation of treaty ration terms, and the struggling status of his community. But a new language was developing as an earlier form of slaughter and captivity evolved into to the slower deterioration of containment to reservation life.

Letters from former POWs to Pratt demonstrated a more systematic assessment was desperately needed by the very men who were pushing so hard for the creation of an Indian industrial school at Carlisle Barracks. These early warning signs appear to have fallen on deaf ears. Pratt launched an extensive personal campaign throughout 1879, which confidently assured his politically influential correspondents and newspaper reporters that the Indian assimilation experiment was going swimmingly. As president of Kentucky Central Railroad and a senator, Pendleton proved an effective ally. Pratt, Pendleton, Schurz, and McCrary lobbied hard and shepherded the Carlisle bill to ratification that summer.

In the aftermath of captive encounter in St. Augustine, the collection of Indian bodies intensified within a larger extractive national project. The United States shifted to a much more muscular and conflated approach to the collection of Indian lands, and their floral, faunal, and mineral resources while the Fort Marion POWs endured imprisonment from

462 Charles E. Campbell to R.H. Pratt, 2 October 1879, Box 2, Folder 44, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
463 R.H. Pratt to A. L. Pratt, 26 March 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
1875-1878. The subdued captivity at Fort Marion during this time did not escape the
attention of Smithsonian Institution director Prof. Spencer F. Baird. Baird wrote to Pratt
and secured his permission to make the most of the “rare opportunity for studying the
anatomy of the Indian”; Baird dispatched sculptor Clark Mills to Florida to create
phrenological casts of the prisoners.\textsuperscript{464} Anthropologic interest in Indians swelled after the
Centennial celebration in 1876, at the International Exposition in Philadelphia. That the
Northern Plains tribes defeated the Army and killed Custer at the Battle of Little Big
Horn in June, during the Expo’s summer rush, seemed only to intensify the nation’s
conflicted curiosity about tribal peoples. At the end of the Expo, ethnology exhibits were
loaded into twenty freight cars, and ethnographic objects donated at the Expo filled forty
more. The entire lot was shipped to the Smithsonian Institution.\textsuperscript{465} The following year,
the museum expanded capacity and added the American Indian Ethnography department,
increasing the museum size by tenfold with a collection that “is more extended and varied
in specimens than any other ever established.”\textsuperscript{466}

Mills was a favorite artist for nationalist works, including the equestrian statues of
Andrew Jackson in Washington, D.C. and New Orleans, and Abraham Lincoln’s death
mask. Mills traveled to Fort Marion in July of 1877 and created phrenologic skull
castings of Mochis, Medicine Water and sixty-two other prisoners.\textsuperscript{467} Study of the Fort
Marion POWs offered a new kind of nationalistic artistry; Mills credited the casts with

\textsuperscript{464} Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Washington: Government Printing
Office, 1878. 39.
\textsuperscript{465} Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Washington: Government Printing
Office, 1878. 48.
\textsuperscript{466} Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution. Washington: Government Printing
Office, 1877. 8.
\textsuperscript{467} Spencer F. Baird to R. H. Pratt, 12 June 1877, Box 1, Folder 24, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke
Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
“the discovery that the Indian’s head is differently shaped from a white man’s, and this fact is in a fair way to settle the Indian question forever—which is to educate.” The brain of Kiowa warrior Lone Wolf apparently work with enough proficiency to see the humor in the exercise. After Mills removed the plaster likeness from Lone Wolf, the prisoners were taken aback. Then, according to a New York Times report, the prisoners “laughed as heartily as an Indian can laugh” over the “white Indian.”

In December of 1878, Pratt invited phrenological study to continue at Hampton Institute on the newly arrived students from the Northern Plains. Pratt urged Baird to send his sculptor “at once.” The Lieutenant enjoyed considerably less autonomy at Hampton, where the status of his students and his work were less legible as internment. Departmental leadership in some corners was growing impatient with Pratt’s post; according to a 1878 telegram from Commissioner of Indian Affairs Hayt, the War Department had been questioning if there were in fact “urgent reasons” for Pratt’s continued assignment at Hampton. “This has an ominous look,” Pratt warned Baird, “and it might be best to send Clark Mills at once.” Mills made thirty-six masks of the newly arrived Indian students at Hampton. Outside the particularities of Pratt’s post, the relationship between the War Department “much facilitated” the work of the nation’s museum according to Smithsonian annual reports from that era. General W. T. Sherman also served on the board of directors, and in 1879 the War Department issued a directive

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468 Clark Mills to the Honorable Robert B. Vance. 1 March 1882, INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
470 R. H. Pratt to S. F. Baird, 26 December 1878, Box 130, Vol. 180, Incoming Correspondence, Record Unit 26, Smithsonian Institutional Archives.
that surveyors and exploratory expeditions hand over any articles of interest to the Smithsonian.\textsuperscript{471} Collaboration between personnel from the War and Interior departments and the Smithsonian proliferated. The collection of the new ethnology division now held Mills’ “masks” as well as the defleshed bones and skulls of the relatives of the Cheyenne POWs—the victims of the Sand Creek massacre.\textsuperscript{472}

In May of 1879, as Pratt and his supporters in the Capitol pushed for an Indian industrial school, evidence of the amalgamating creep of federal institutions was evidenced across the green expanse of the National Mall. Reverend John H. Denison had joined an employee of the Smithsonian Institution for an inspection of its new ethnological exhibits. His story in \textit{The Congregationalist} newspaper, with a dateline from Hampton, did not identify him. But Denison was the best friend and Williams College roommate of Samuel Armstrong.\textsuperscript{473} Denison’s guide was Kiowa Tich-ke-matse, or Squint Eyes, one of the most accomplished of the Fort Marion artists and a former student at Hampton Institute. While in Florida, Baird enlisted the assistance of the POWs in collecting animals and assisting archaeologist Robert Peabody with the excavation of shell mounds. Tich-ke-matse used his artistic talents well, apparently, and was hired by the Smithsonian as a taxidermist.


As the pair strolled the new Indian galleries, Denison saw Tich-ke-matse draw back. “(M)y companion, a young Indian warrior, gave a start of surprise, for in a group of plaster casts to which he pointed, he recognized himself and his fellow prisoners of war.” The reverend then gave a cursory rundown of the crimes for which Tich-ke-matse and his fellow prisoners were accused, including “Squint Eyes, ringleader.” According to Denison, “This is the way the (masks) are catalogued in the Smithsonian, and (the masks are) the supplement thereof!”

In Denison’s view, as in Mills’, the likeness of Indian faces and anatomy served as evidence for their nature and actions, although Denison’s article suggests a note of sarcasm about such.

The following month, Commissioner Hayt tapped Pratt to return to Florida to attempt to begin negotiations with the unremoved Seminole and Creeks for land cessions and the education of their children. When dealing with any tribe, Pratt preferred to have another Indian along. The Smithsonian tasked Tich-ke-matse with gathering more animal specimens for the natural history collection. The former captor and captive joined together for a common, but complex, effort at U.S. extraction and expansion. A fully staffed expedition headed out from Fort Meade, located inland from current-day Tampa, in the marshy center of the peninsula. Pratt always thought racially in such moments, seeming to fail to recognize the diversity of tribal languages and culture. His Kiowa assistant had no more ability to communicate with the Florida tribesmen than did Pratt. As Mills’ phrenological casting attempted to make visible something substantive and failed, so worked Pratt’s impulse to foreground his Indian guide to the Florida Indians.

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474 Denison, John H. “A Supplement to the Last Smithsonian Report.” The Congregationalist. (Boston, MA) 21 May 1879; pg. 2; Issue 21; col. B.
The premise for Pratt’s expedition, according to one newspaper account, was cattle poaching by the Indians on American herds. Pratt’s memoir claimed Hayt wanted an assessment of the “condition of the Indians in that state with a view to extending Bureau control over them.” “The state of Florida wanted to get rid of its Indians...removal of the Indians to the Indian Territory was intended.” Pratt’s party reached what he thought was the northernmost settlement of Seminoles, the village of “Old Chipco.” In fact, Chipco was Creek. The chief tolerated the presence of the expedition for two nights and a day. Pratt used the language of the emerging field of American anthropology in his account of the trip to Laura, a gloss on the harsher agenda revealed in his memoir. He wrote of studying the twenty-six villagers, “fine specimens of the Indian race.” Pratt complimented their choice of territory, located among “many beautiful little lakes” stocked with delicious black bass. A “bowlegged Indian” took Pratt fishing, a favorite pastime he mentioned in his letters to fish expert Spencer Baird. The “pine openings” led to Indian camps well-supplied with deerskins, and meticulously cultivated farm fields of corn, rice, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and tobacco. The men word “Caddo like hunting shirts made of calico gaudily embroidered” and cloth turbans. In a climate rife with snakes and alligators, Pratt slyly praised the bravery of the shoeless Indians. Tich-ke-mats’e’s success at capturing a large selection of birds found ample mention, but he appeared to serve no diplomatic purpose. Perhaps Pratt was merely trying

477 R.H. Pratt to A.L. Pratt, 1 July 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
to entertain his reader, or maybe Pratt also hoped to remind the Smithsonian and the federal agencies of the potential of his work in such bountiful territory. Even Pratt could not have been surprised when Chipco spurned him, situated as he was within such an edenic setting. According to one newspaper account, Pratt called out to the elderly chief, saying he was there “to see what they wanted.”

Chipco replied that he did not want to hear any Washington talk; that he wanted no education for his people, nor plows, and simply wanted to be let alone. He emphatically declined to attend (a) proposed conference at Fort Meyers on the Coloosahatchee.  

To emphasize the point, a villager named Tom shot an arrow into a nearby tree. Pratt and his party got the message and moved on. Next, they encountered a party of seven in Big Cypress swamp. This group similarly refused to approach, shake hands, or engage in “Washington talk.” From a distance, Pratt assessed the villagers: “The men and women were strong and well built and the children active and jolly.” When Pratt pulled food and tobacco out to offer, the men spurned such old tactics, stating they “could buy what they wanted.” The resources in Chipco’s village also showed local Indians could grow what they wanted as well, but central Florida tribes participated in a robust and diverse political economy, which Pratt detailed for the newspaper.

Although the (Creek) Indians in central Florida appeared to be thriving, Pratt recommended the old fort barracks at Tampa Bay be turned into a school for Seminole

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478 “The Last of the Seminoles: What Remains of a Once Great and Powerful Indian Nation.” Rocky Mountain News, (Denver, CO), 12 September 1879; pg. 6; col. A.
479 “The Last of the Seminoles: What Remains of a Once Great and Powerful Indian Nation.” Rocky Mountain News, (Denver, CO), 12 September 1879; pg. 6; col. A.
children. But without the benefit of captivity, nothing could be done to immediately “bring in” the Florida tribal youth. When Pratt returned to Virginia in July, he wasn’t quite honest with Armstrong about his plans. The superintendent showed Pratt to a large farm near campus and shared his vision of enrolling “up to 250 to 300 young Indians” for a special branch of Hampton. Armstrong asked Pratt to develop it. Pratt declined the general’s offer on the premise that he still wished to return to his regiment.

On August 21, 1879, Pratt had his school. With the creation of Carlisle, the United States expressed a definitive endorsement of Pratt’s belief over Armstrong’s; Pratt now had the font from which to “thoroughly soak” a population, and Indian youth had the capability at the redemption of such immersion. The method by which it could be accomplished, however, derived directly from what Armstrong had created at Hampton and the Hawaiian mission had created at Hilo.

Immediately after the announcement of the bill’s passage, Pratt wrote to Laura from the Capitol on Indian Bureau stationary. His tone was uncharacteristically effusive: “My own dear loving little wife. I send you a thousand kisses. Carlisle “is ours and fairly won.”

The following day, the Lieutenant sent a more solemn missive. As he was celebrating his victory, a letter arrived from Laura with news that she was ill. The Army’s

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481 “The Last of the Seminoles: What Remains of a Once Great and Powerful Indian Nation.” Rocky Mountain News, (Denver, CO), 12 September 1879; pg. 6; col. A.
483 R. H. Pratt to A. L. Pratt, 21 August 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
swiftly evolving Indian policy had taken the couple from Fort Arbuckle in Indian Territory at the close of the Civil War to Florida. Laura assisted Miss Mather often with the care and instruction of the Indian students at Fort Marion, and in gathering them up on the Northern Plains for Hampton—sometimes at the couple’s expense. Richard tried to reassure Laura that their new life at Carlisle Barracks would be an opportunity to settle down “for a few years, I hope we both may gather up more vigor, and that we may otherwise better our condition (and) save some of our pay, which we have heretofore spent in travel.” 484

To the Indian Bureau, Pratt recommended Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School build on his relationships with the former prisoners and recruit Kiowa, Cheyenne and Arapaho youth. 485 Pratt was instead directed to the Sioux at the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Agencies and directed to retrieve three-dozen children from each. 486

I protested that I had never met these discontented branches of the Sioux Indians; that they were then in a hostile attitude…. But Mr. Hayt, the Commissioner, was insistent that I must go to Spotted Tail and Red Cloud, because the children would be hostages for the good behavior of their people…. 487

Though the prisoners and Pratt had left St. Augustine and the little fort school, Freedmen’s educator Sarah Mather “urgently desired” 488 to accompany Pratt if he ever recruited children from the Western tribes again. On September 8, Pratt telegraphed

484 R. H. Pratt to Anna Laura Pratt, 21 August 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
485 R. H. Pratt to Anna Laura Pratt, 22 August 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
Mather that he was leaving for Dakota Territory in two days. Could she come and assist with encouraging the recruitment of female students, and act as their travel matron? Mather left St. Augustine immediately, on her sixtieth birthday.\(^{489}\) She and Pratt headed out together for the Northern Plains.

The arduous cross-country journey involved trains, river steamers, and a two-day wagon ride. When the pair arrived at Rosebud Agency, the Indian agent gathered Spotted Tail and other leading men together at his office. An oppositional discussion with a few headmen stretched through the day until Pratt demanded he receive an audience of forty Sioux leaders in the council house.

I stood up and, assuming all the dignity I could, said that the Government was about to adopt a new policy with the Indians; that it believed the Indian youth capable of acquiring the same education and industries our whit youth had and this would make them the equals of our youth…. The purpose in establishing a school so far east was to bring them near Washington, where all the people could see the improvement…and witness their progress and their ability to learn.\(^{490}\)

Pratt gathered all the dignity he could muster, and told the chiefs the United States now understood Indian children needed the same educational opportunities as white ones. Further, they required knowledge of the industries of a modernizing America. The Indian Bureau established a school so far away from tribes so that Indian kids could inspire the attention and support of the U.S. federal government. Increasing encroachment of white

\(^{489}\) S.A. Mather to Miss Blanchard, 13 January 1886, Miss Sarah Mather folder, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.

settlement necessitated they say yes, for “there was nothing left for them but to become a very part of it all.” 491

Chief White Tail rose first and said, “The white people are all thieves and liars. We do not want our children to learn such things.” Pratt’s response was characteristically direct: “But Spotted Tail, you cannot read or write, you cannot speak the language of this country…. Because you were not educated, these mountains, valleys, and streams have passed from you” via treaty mismanagement. 492 Later that day, Miss Mather reinforced what Pratt said to some of the chiefs. By the time he left Dakota Territory, Pratt had more than his allotted number of Sioux children, many the sons, daughters, and grandchildren of notoriously resistant chiefs such as Red Cloud and American Hourse.

Pratt again escorted Indian individuals into a form of captivity that would utterly change their lives, and the future of their people. The children and relatives of Red Cloud, American Horse, and the other defiant Sioux chiefs were not themselves accused of any act of violence against the United States or its citizens. But in the minds of the agencies and individuals who together secured their presence in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, these children were very much captives as insurance for the good behavior of their parents.

As evidenced by the War Department’s advocacy for the creation of Carlisle, and codified in the phrenologic studies of the Smithsonian, Indian criminality need not be enacted by deeds. The highly synthesized work of the War Department, the nation’s museum, a Hawaiian mo’olelo, and missionaries, an awareness had arisen that the

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Indianness was written indelibly on the body. Mills considered his form of phrenology “one of the greatest blessings of the age to the human race” for its ability to understand and anticipate proclivities “cultivated by (Indians’) mode of life.” As the shape of their faces and skulls clearly evidenced, destructiveness, self-reliance, and secretiveness were hereditary. Knowing such helped justify preventative measures such as keeping the degraded “under constant fear.”

The intimacy and curiosity of captive encounter morphed along with its forms. The “before and after” pictures taken of Indian children at Hampton and Carlisle endure as some of the most powerful illustrations of the complex work of industrial boarding schools.

In late October of 1879, Laura Pratt received a telegram from her husband, who was leaving Wichita, Kansas: “Battle over, start in morning.” On November 1, 1879, the train carrying Pratt, Mather, and the Sioux children pulled into the Carlisle, Pennsylvania station. As in 1875 in Indianapolis, locals crowded around Pratt’s car to get a look at the Indians. Before leaving for the Dakotas, Pratt requested the Indian Bureau provision the barracks with food, clothing, and school supplies. In much the same way as Fort Marion, when Pratt and the Sioux children arrived to a barren facility. Pratt quickly secured the basics, and then he and Mather headed back to Kansas to gather the second group of children, this time from the Cheyenne, Kiowa and Pawnee agencies. Weeks later, this second entourage also arrived to empty cupboards, closets, and beds.

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493 Clark Mills to the Honorable Robert B. Vance. 1 March 1882, INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
494 R. H. Pratt to A. L. Pratt, 24 October 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
the first few days of operations, Pratt was so distressed over his meager food budget he telegraphed Commissioner Hayt that “it would be impossible for me to conduct a school of hungry children with any hope of success.”

Countless improbable miracles paved the way for the creation of Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School at the federal level: a risky trip to Dakota Territory, considerable politicking, a Congressional Bill, and the deaccessioning of an Army barracks were only the most visible. Yet the Indian Bureau and the War Department again demonstrated that, once contained, the opportunity of Indian captives did not interest them. Of course, these children mattered very much to their parents, grandparents, and extended families. The fear and grief of unbearably distant separation—of sending children in the care of a U.S. Army that had systematically robbed, starved, and slaughtered them—cannot be imagined. Yet it was this very hunger and dispossession that motivated the chiefs to acquiesce to the Indian Bureau and missionary persuasion once again.

American industrial boarding schools would far surpass Hilo in their aims to not only train the laborers of tomorrow, but to rob those individuals of a heritage that might rescue them from assimilation. In a very material way, it was Pratt who best fulfilled Richard Armstrong’s vision for eradicating the structural problem of indigenous culture, so that real change could occur. Richard’s son, Samuel, put his full force behind a mid-nineteenth-century belief that skin pigment and bone structure were in fact the

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496 R. H. Pratt to Anna Laura Pratt, 22 August 1879, Box 18, Folder 613, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. 233.
determining factors for human behavior. Within this phrenological and scientific racism, culture was only a secondary manifestation of a core hereditary inheritance.

With his mind ‘tenaciously’ set on this belief, Armstrong overcame the deflating effect of losing his place as the center of Indian education. Only months after Pratt successfully lobbied for the establishment of Carlisle, Armstrong returned to Hawaii for the first time in twenty years. He used his elite access and enlarged role in indigenous education to fullest effect. Armstrong met with Bernice Pauahi Bishop and her husband, Charles. Bernice was a Hawaiian woman of royal lineage and means, and she held the largest remaining tracts of royally designated lands in the archipelago.\textsuperscript{497} Bernice also was cousin to King Lunaliho, for whom Charles served as a close advisor. A banker and sugar planter, in the estimation of Hawaiian historian Lilikala Kameʻeleihiw, Charles was “one of the most rapacious capitalists on the islands”\textsuperscript{498} As Pratt had done with Carlisle, Armstrong was determined to create a Hampton-style school for indigenous Hawaiians. Armstrong also replicated Pratt’s approach with Dakota chiefs; he promised Bernice that this new school would be designed to produce “future leaders among the Hawaiian people.”\textsuperscript{499} Instead, Armstrong established curricular programs that “mirrored”\textsuperscript{500} Hampton’s mission to create a wage labor pool. When Bernice died of cancer in 1884,
she bequeathed a parcel for the establishment of Kamehamena Schools.\textsuperscript{501} While shaping Kamehameha schools, Armstrong also helped establish and staff Kau’ai Industrial School, which was an island replica of Hampton, including large fields for military drills.\textsuperscript{502}

second-generation missionaries assumed more power over education as they took political power from Hawaiians.” An American-dominated and industrializing economy heated a demand for labor, “Thus, manual training was sponsored in the interest of preserving and expanding the economy. ...(and missionary) interests were served by ensuring that all schools where Hawaiians were educated also used a common school curriculum, lessening the availability of Hawaiians prepared to compete with (non-Natives) for leadership positions.\textsuperscript{503}

When he returned from Hawaii, General Philip Sheridan called on Armstrong to assist with initiating early treaty discussions with the Apaches, who were facing horrid violence and treaty violations in the Southwest. Armstrong also supported the creation of the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887; in Lindsey’s characterization, “The highest moral position, Armstrong insisted, was to act in the best interest of the Indians without their consent.” Not only did Armstrong replicate Richard’s promotion of the Mahele in Hawaii in 1848, Samuel’s endorsement helped offset Pratt’s vociferous opposition to Allotment. The massive transference of lands from indigenous to settler-colonial possession accomplished what white immigrants could not—in Hawaiian aina or Indian Country. The structural barrier of indigenous cultures was dealt a might blow with the dispossession of its most precious resources, its homelands and its children.

CONCLUSION

“I ready go guard house. I stay there thousand years, never shake hands wid him”: Captivity as a Practice of Obedience, Obfuscation, and Resistance

It is cheaper to educate a man and to raise him to self-support than to raise another generation of savages and then fight them.504

—General Thomas J. Morgan, Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Board of Indian Commissioners in 1892

Agnotology & Praxis: Indian Youth as a Site of Narration and Erasure

The way to strengthen the weak is constantly to test them under favorable conditions. To change low ideas of their mutual relations into higher ones, they must be trained, not in the abstract, but in the concrete.505

—Southern Workman newspaper of Hampton Institute January, 1878

Every one of us have got children at school and we will behave ourselves on account of these children, we want them to learn…. 506

—Geronimo to Lieutenant Hugh Lennox Scott and Captain Marion Maus from his imprisonment at Alabama’s Mount Vernon Barracks, August 1894

The uniformed men stepped into crisp formation on the broad green lawn of Hampton Institute one summer morning in 1890. Called cadets, the Black and Indian youth and young men performing their drills were not enlisted in any branch of the armed

forces. Yet this did not diminish the importance of the demonstration of their obedience and preparedness for service to a rapidly industrializing South, or a nation that had still failed to attain an absolute conquest of Indian territories and peoples. Student performance took on special importance this morning, for newly promoted Major General Nelson Appleton Miles had sent word that he would be present to inspect the Hampton drills.

The fierce approach of the general during the Indian Wars, most recently his successful pursuit of Geronimo’s band, helped earn Miles his new stripes that spring. Such officers were valued as the nation prepared to take on a more aggressive, transoceanic expansion of U.S. empire. The fort and naval base at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, in Hampton Roads, Virginia, had long served as key U.S. military strongholds. Soon after his promotion, Miles journeyed there to inspect Fortress Monroe. Miles’ Sunday itinerary included church services and student inspection at Hampton Institute. The cadets marched in dark uniforms with military-style trimming, a visual message of disciplined and militarized Indian male bodies must have reassured the notorious “Indian fighter,” who knew that unrest continued to foment within the Western tribes the summer of 1890; many Indians were Ghost Dancing and otherwise resisting U.S. directives for their behavior and containment. As the day’s orders rang across the Hampton marching green, one name caught the general’s attention: “Paul Natchee.” Was the boy from Fort Sill, the general inquired, and one of the Apache boys imprisoned at Mount Vernon barracks? Someone from the school confirmed Paul’s identity.
Paul “Natchee” was the son of headman Naiche,⁵⁰⁷ and he may have been one of the children who accompanied him and Geronimo on a prolonged odyssey of cat and mouse with the U.S. Army from 1885-86. The Apaches were fleeing insecure food supplies and deadly, malarial conditions on the San Carlos reservation, as well as increasingly violent hostilities with the Army and American settlers invading their territory.⁵⁰⁸ Sheridan and Custer’s “experiment” with the captivity of Cheyenne women and children on the Washita River in 1868 had become accepted practice by 1885; General Philip Sheridan commanded Miles to ensnare the Apaches by any means necessary. When Geronimo and Naiche’s people proved elusive, in 1886 the Army rounded up their families and their entire community—even Apache men who served as Army scouts—and shipped some 300 Apache women, children, and elders by train to Fort Marion and nearby Fort Pickens. In June of 1886, leadership from the Board of Indian Commissioners requested Armstrong replace graduating Indian students with “a dozen or more very bright Indian boys and girls now in Florida, children of the imprisoned Apaches.”⁵⁰⁹ Paul Natchee likely was part of that group.

As General Miles watched the Hampton cadets work through their morning routine in the Virginia morning air, the general realized he was witnessing a drill performed by the son of his Apache foe. Miles exclaimed, “This is the son of the old Chief Natchee whom, I am sorry to relate, I was obliged to kill because of his persistent

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⁵⁰⁹ A. B. Upshaw to S. C. Armstrong, 2 June 1886, Box 1, Folder 15, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
treachery.” The general instructed Robert Moton, the Indian student commandant, to bring Paul to see him after Sunday services. General Miles delivered the main address at the Hampton chapel, and afterwards Moton escorted young Natchee to greet the general. “I brought him up to General Miles,” Moton recalled in his autobiography, “with all of the deference due to the General’s position, accompanied as he was by a large retinue of army officers and many prominent civilians as well as several naval officers, there being at that time some war vessels anchored in Hampton Roads.” Miles greeted the Indian teenager with a striking degree of cordiality—particularly in front of such a prominent entourage.

Paul Natchee’s response proved even more remarkable. Moton estimated Paul to be seventeen years old, but he was in fact only twelve. After years spent on the run from the Army and imprisoned in Florida, Paul understood the consequences of resisting the will of an officer. Still, when greeted by Miles, Paul refused to salute. When General Miles tried to shake hands with the boy, Paul ignored the officer’s outstretched hand.

Mortified, Moton whispered, “The General wants to shake hands with you.”

“Know it,” Paul replied, but did not break his gaze or extend his palm.

“General Miles,” recalled Moton, “who had won his fame as an Indian fighter and who always observed every movement about him, turned to me and said, “Never mind, Major. He is an Indian. He will not shake hands.” The General lectured (Paul) in a very

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510 Moton, Robert Russa. Finding a Way Out: an autobiography. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1920. 126. Moton’s autobiography inaccurately reported the death of “Chief Natchee,” who was not dead in 1890 but was imprisoned with the other Chiricahua Apaches at Mount Vernon Barracks in Alabama. Naiche—spelled “Natchez” in General Nelson A. Miles’ memoir Personal recollections and observations —was a son of Cochise and a high-profile headman. Perhaps Moton’s recollection was inaccurate, and General Miles and Paul spoke of imprisoning Paul’s father.
kindly way on his stubbornness, telling him that his father might have been of great
service to his race but for his indomitable and unconquerable stubbornness, which
undoubtedly Paul had inherited.”

As a self-described “intimate” of the Indian students in his charge, Moton’s
deferece to the general was not offset by his student’s traumatized reaction. More
curious was the major general’s persistent confrontation of the twelve-year-old Apache
boy. The general understood, in a very direct way, that tribal containment was far from a
mission accomplished in the West the summer of 1890. Students from Geronimo’s band
reminded the nation of the Army’s perceived necessity to imprison the entire village of
non-combatants in Florida, and were a living reminder of the United States’ insecure
conquest of tribes. Left in their homelands, Miles claimed, Apache boys “from twelve to
eighteen were the very worst and most vicious of all.” Likely to escape legal and military
prosecution in Miles’s estimation, Apache youth “who had undoubtedly committed the
larger number of crimes would have escaped, and remaining in that country would have
returned to the warpath.” In boarding schools, the general saw a solution: “Many of
these {boys} were afterward sent to the Carlisle school,” the general concluded, “and
their improvement was very marked and of a permanent character.”

Co., 1920. 124.
513 Miles, Nelson Appleton, and Marion Perry Maus. Personal recollections and observations of General
Nelson A. Miles: embracing a brief history of the Civil War; or, From New England to the Golden Gate,
and the story of his Indian campaigns, with comments on the exploration, development, and progress of our
514 Ibid.
In fact, it was not the resistance of Apache youth, but staggering death rates among the Apache POWs interred at Fort Marion brought serious pressure to bear on Army brass from inside its ranks and the Indian Rights Association.515 Some 165 of the Apache POWs were children,516 and all but eleven of them were taken, against the strong protestations of their parents, to Carlisle Indian Industrial School.517 The Indian boarding school project had taken a decided turn in a very short period of time. In St. Augustine in 1878, young adult warriors from the Southern Plains chose to attend school at Hampton. They worked alongside local Floridians and Eastern tourists to raise the funds required to pay for their experience. The next class of Indian students at Hampton, and the first group to attend Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School, were early teens. But they were sent to the schools with the permission of their parents in 1878 and 1879.

Within a few years, however, the Department of the Interior and the War Department revived the element of captivity, first seen at Fort Marion. Like Custer’s captive-taking at the Washita Massacre in 1868, Pratt’s educational “experiment” became a tool for tribal submission. According to historian Margaret D. Jacobs: “…the government used the tactic to compel obedience and docility, as a powerful means of control. The Apache children were essentially kidnapped; in order to ever hope to see their children again, their families had to pay ransom through their compliance with

government wishes.”

Geronimo expressed his awareness for such in 1894. While still under lock and key at Alabama’s Mount Vernon Barracks, Geronimo admitted that Apache parents understood their children’s forced residency at Carlisle and Hampton meant that Apache parents must “behave” themselves.

In a very real sense, General Nelson Miles’s confrontation of Paul Natchee culminated a career-long engagement with the strategic usefulness of transforming Indian “resisters” into boarding school “students.” In 1875, Miles helped broker the Cheyenne surrender of the German sisters, and watched the girls finger the Southern Plains warriors. Mochis’ and Medicine Water’s daughters, Tahnea and Sprinkle Horse Woman, faced the hardships of reservation life without their parents from 1875-78. After the Fort Marion POWs were sent away from their homelands, Nelson Miles adopted the two older German girls. As Cheyenne children endured the food shortages and resource theft common to early reservation era, Catherine and Sophia German started anew in Kansas with a Congressional endowment of $10,000 from Cheyenne annuities, compensation for their pain and suffering. Cheyenne girls received no compensation for the violence and captivity enacted upon them in a war in which the Army trespassed into Cheyenne territory and destroyed their family members, property and the buffalo herds.

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While writing his memoir, Miles asked Pratt for a summary of his work as jailer and school principal, and photographs of “more prominent Indians—both Savages, and some of the best specimens of those who have become educated and civilized.” A portrait of Pratt and “before and after” photographs of the Chiricahua Apache students figure prominently in Miles’s autobiography. With the fighting ability of Geronimo and Naiche waning or exhausted, the young Indian cadets—some at Hampton, many others at Carlisle Indian Industrial School—represented something new. Their bodies disciplined and cloaked in quasi-Army uniforms, their lives subsumed within a reformatory institution, Indian boys like Paul Natchee represented much more than a cultural conversion. The militarization of Indian youth had created a praxis and an aesthetic with potency for a nation on the cusp of a more securely expansionist and empirical reach. Paul’s unwillingness to play along with the general’s cruel and amnesiac banter tested the bounds of a more tacit captivity at Hampton as publicly as his father challenging the U.S. Army to chase him into Mexico.

Privately, Pratt wrote to wife Laura of the insufficiency of such an image, for Carlisle’s transformative powers were so strong that the Apache children actually were “not the same” people after four months at the school. The photograph of the Apache children at Carlisle, Paul Natchee’s contemporaries, mirrored General Miles’ demand that

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521 Nelson A. Miles to Richard H. Pratt, 5 July 1895, Box 6, Folder 206, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.


523 R. H. Pratt to Anna Laura Pratt. March 15, 1887. Box 18, Folder 614, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
young Paul ignore his lived trauma by expecting a handshake. Carlisle’s notorious student portraits, in the analysis of Cultural Studies scholar Laura Wexler, “helped to heighten regard for territorial acquisitions…by erasing the violence of colonial encounters in the very act of portraying them.” Though Robert Moton did not signpost the encounter between Paul and Miles as such, Paul’s refusal to submit to his captor unmasked the dominant imagery of the schools, which, in Wexler’s analysis, “masked and distorted what otherwise must have been more apparent: hatred, fear, collusion, resistance, and mimicry on the part of the subaltern; compulsion, presumption, confusion, brutality, and soul murder on the part of the colonial agent.”

Paul Natchee’s defiance of one of the nation’s most notorious generals “humiliated” his Hampton commandant. Moton intended to punish Paul “very severely,” but the general talked him out of it: “Do not punish him,” Miles counseled Moton, “he inherits that spirit. It can never be gotten out of him.” Moton ordered Paul to his office, and upon entering the boy said, “I ready go guard house. I stay there thousand years, never shake hands wid him. He killed my father.” The twelve-year-old boy then “broke down and wept,” softly repeating his pledge like a prayer. Though Moton read Natchee’s pledge as insubordination, it also revealed the boy’s understanding of the penetrating depth of his captivity. The Apache youth already had endured several forms, from Army capture

to imprisonment in two forts. With clarity and courage beyond his years, Paul was ready to accept more intensified confinement rather than ignore the general’s violent relationship to Paul’s family and people.

Moton’s unsatisfying gloss of the final encounter between Paul Natchee and his captor mirrors a shortcoming that exists still in the critique of the Indian boarding school project: the subtle and grotesque ways this new form of institutional captivity was used to elide U.S. savagery and create a national narrative entirely dependent upon ahistorical and morally whitewashed fiction. In less than a generation, the War Department and its nation began to realize a more insidious and obfuscational opportunity in Indian boarding schools.

Sarah Mather and her partner Rebecca Perritt remained involved in staffing and developing curriculum for Carlisle, including several trips to the Northern Plains throughout the 1880s to secure students for Pratt’s school. By then, the new form of captivity they helped develop had grown into a muscular and accepted federal praxis. When captive Apache children appeared at Fort Marion in 1886, Mather revived her prison school—perhaps even teaching Paul Natchee before he was shipped north. Mather also took over the guardianship of a Lipan Apache child who was imprisoned with Geronimo’s band. When he was sent to Carlisle with his sister and dozens of other Apache kids, he was renamed “Jack Mather.” His student file reflected only information drawn from his time as a captive. Thus, as Native Studies scholar Jacqueline Fear-Segal asserts, Jack and his sister’s adoption into Mather’s domestic sphere “severed (Jack and his sister’s) connection to each other as well as
to their own people...new names also wiped clean the bureaucratic slate; in
administrative terms, their lives had “started again” when they were sent to
Carlisle.”

With Indian children held in a new kind of captivity, a new national mo’olelo
about Indians and U.S. expansionism could emerge defiant of fact or context. As they had
in Hawaii and the Southern Plains, the personnel and praxis of industrial boarding
schools assisted with other extractions; settler-colonial grabs for indigenous lands and
resources accelerated. After the last large group of Chiricahua Apaches were sent into
captivity at Fort Marion in 1886, Miles reported area mines reopened and a fifty-percent
increase in the value of settler horse and cattle ranches. The officer also directly linked
his military work and that of Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

…I urged an entire change in the system of government and management
of these Indians. … Out of Captain Pratt’s judicious management of this
body of wild, savage murderers, has grown the great industrial Indian
school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The tribes from which the children have
been taken to be educated have benefited to an incalculable extent. The
subjugation of the Indians permitted the settlements of northern Texas,
eastern New Mexico, Colorado, and Southern Kansas to enjoy an
unprecedented and unbroken era of prosperity and security….

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By mid-1890, the United States and its War Department had attained a more resolute dominance over the administration and extraction of indigenous bodies and resources. The General Allotment Act, led by long-time Pratt confidante Senator Henry Dawes, manifested an ideological victory—if not yet a territorial fait accompli. That same year in Hawaii, second-generation missionaries-turned-plantation masters and their merchant collaborators forced King Kalakaua at gunpoint to sign away most royal authority over what was an increasingly valuable trade and military Pacific hub. The Bayonet Constitution stripped of power the centuries-old Hawaiian royal and elite lineages, and shifted authority to a legislature and cabinet dominated by Americans. The push for Hawaiian annexation to the U.S. took on renewed vigor on both sides of the Pacific. In 1886, Apache children were being taken, against the loud protestations of their imprisoned parents, from internment at Fort Marion to a new kind of captivity at Carlisle Indian Industrial School. The following year, construction began for Kamehameha School.

Americans confiscated all Crown lands after the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy and Queen Liliuokalani in 1893. Sanford B. Dole, son of a missionary and a plantation titan, took over the provisional government established by the Americans. Dole had begun his civil career in Hawaii as principal of Punahou School, which served the missionary children and now ruling class of the islands. They turned their attention to Hawaiian education with intensified focus. The effort to Americanize and industrialize schools for Kanaka Maoli “accelerated at an unrelenting pace, resulting in the virtual elimination of Hawaiian as a spoken language in everyday life” according to a 1994
study. In 1896, three years after the overthrow, Hawaiian historian Paul F. Nahoa enacted a law requiring that English be the medium of instruction in all public and private schools. Island missionary Rev. McArthur predicted:

The present generation will generally know English; the next generation will know little else. Here is an element of vast power in many ways. . . kahunaism, fetishism and heathenism generally will largely go out.

In 1880, the year Armstrong began his campaign to create Kamehameha School, Hawaiian-language schools numbered 150 and there were 60 English schools. By 1902, there were 203 English language schools and zero Hawaiian-language schools. As with the Indian industrial boarding schools in the United States, the dispossession of indigenous lands, resources, children, and culture occurred simultaneously.

Dispossession of individuals, lands, and resources took its toll on the surviving Cheyenne POWs who returned to the Darlington Agency the Spring of 1878. Soldiers stood “in battle positions” to guard the returning POWs” according to Cheyenne oral history. But soon “(t)here was much celebrating and gathering of the people to see and visit the returning Cheyenne warriors.” Conditions on the Cheyenne reservation remained

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difficult, despite the efforts of agent John D. Miles to secure promised rations and medical supplies and expertise. Some fifteen years of genocidal warfare, the profundity of the loss of the buffalo, and captivity took its toll on the Cheyenne. Several of the POWs died within five years of returning to Indian Territory. In 1880 or 1881, Sipes wrote, “(Mochis) was laid to rest along the Washita River with all honors of a Cheyenne Indian warrior woman.” She was forty-one. “Standing Bird elders say she died from complications of the dark, damp, moss-covered cell she was confined to,” Sipes related. “Some say it was from loneliness of leaving her small children behind at Darlington when she was sent to Ft. Marion.” In 1983, Cheyenne elder Pete Bird Chief told Sipes that Medicine Water carried scars from the Army’s shackles his entire life. “When Pete would sit and listen to Medicine Water tell stories of Ft. Marion when Pete was a young man,” Sipes related, “Medicine Water would point to the scars on his ankles made by the chains and say, " This is what the government did to us to get control of our land, buffalo, ways of life as people and took away our freedom as Cheyennes.”

In 1886, the year the Chiricahua Apache children were gathered up and shipped to Fort Marion, Tahnea was sent to Carlisle with a party of more than thirty kids from the Cheyenne & Arapaho reservation. Many came from families with well-known parents. By the time she was established as a Carlisle cadet, Tahnea was listed in school records as Elva or Eva Medicine Water. Within a few short years since the release of the men and women imprisoned at Fort Marion in 1878, the curiosity of the colonial gaze had shifted.

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535 Ibid
Official school photographer, John Choate, shot portraits of Tahnea and Medicine Water on the Carlisle campus. (fig. 8, 9 and 10) Tahnea wore a tiny feminized soldier’s uniform. The images paid particular attention to the girl’s adapted soldier uniform, its shiny metal buttons softened by a large satin bow befitting any white Victorian girl. Choate photographed the aging warrior sitting on a bench in the central green. In the frontal shot, Medicine Water’s expression appears alert and confident, but his shoulders hunch slightly upwards self-protectively. The second portrait takes an altogether different view: positioned stiffly in profile, in this photograph the person of Medicine Water recedes and his silhouette against a pale sky seems the point of the photograph.
(fig. 8) “Portrait of Elva Medicine Water 1879,” by John Choate. From the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. I believe this photo was taken at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, as Choate was the official photographer for the school and his studio was in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

LOCAL NUMBER: NAA INV 06817000, Photo Lot 81-12 06817000
National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

<http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=Elva+medicine+water&image.x=0&image.y=0>
(fig. 9) Portrait of Medicine Water, credited to James Mooney. I believe this photo might have been taken by John Choate, who was the official photographer for Carlisle Indian Industrial School. I suspect this photograph was taken at Carlisle and that he was visiting daughter “Elva.” The Smithsonian Institution identifies this individual as “Medicine Water? or Soft Belly?” Medicine Water was identified in this picture by Cheyenne elders, according to John Sipes, Jr.  

http://collections.si.edu/search/record/siris_arc_17733 and Sipes, John L., Jr. “Cheyenne POWs’ experiences told…” Watonga Republican. n.d.: n.p. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion,
(fig. 10) — “Medicine Water? or Soft Belly?” Medicine Water in profile.

figures 9 and 10:
LOCAL NUMBER: NAA INV 00366000 and NAA INV 00366100, Photo Lot 81-12 06817000
National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution
<http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=medicine+water&image.x=0&image.y=0>

1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.
First image-in as a bloodthirsty savage in frontier media, then photographed in
his seeming transformation from thin POW to U.S soldier, Medicine Water was one of
the most visible Indians of his time. In this final photograph from captivity, now in the
form of an Army barracks turned federal Indian boarding school, empire appears
interested merely in the shape of the man’s skull. Perhaps anthropologist Franz Boas
wanted to build on Mills’ skull casts, or maybe another anthropologist commissioned or
inspired Choate. In 1891, Boas included Carlisle student populations among his
physiognomic studies for the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893.\textsuperscript{537}

Of course, the colonial gaze missed much more than it captured in these and other
efforts. As he had during his impossibly distant interment, Medicine Water and his family
continued to care for their children when they were then removed by many of the same
Army personnel who effected exile at Fort Marion. In 1881, Medicine Water’s brother
Man-on-Cloud visited Cheyenne students at Carlisle.\textsuperscript{538} In 1887, on behalf of Medicine
Water, an agency employee sent Pratt $35 to pay for Elva’s train fare home. But
Medicine Water had to leave his daughter’s fate in the hands of his former jailor. “If in
the exercise of your discretion you see proper to keep her in school,” then Medicine
Water wanted the money to stay in Elva’s student account.\textsuperscript{539} That Medicine Water
needed an agency employee to pen this letter for him speaks to the efficacy of Miss

\begin{footnotes}
\item[537] Franz Boas to R.H. Pratt, 6 June 1891, Box 1, Folder 34, Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare
\item[538] Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
\item[539] Geary Times Journal, 18 February. 1937. Quoted in “Medicine Water. Mi-huh-heu-i-mup.” John Sipes,
\item[ ] Jr. Cheyenne Family Oral Histories - Standing Bird Family.
\item[ ] <http://home.epix.net/~landis/medicinewater.html>
\item[ ] G.D. Williams to R. H. Pratt, 6 August 1887. Quoted in “Medicine Water. Mi-huh-heu-i-mup.” John
\item[ ] Sipes, Jr. Cheyenne Family Oral Histories - Standing Bird Family.
\item[ ] <http://home.epix.net/~landis/medicinewater.html>
\end{footnotes}
Mather’s Fort Marion English classes and/or the degree to which U.S. federal officials administered the affairs of Cheyenne.

One thing appears certain. Even into his most advanced years, Sipes was told Medicine Water insisted on maintaining his identity as a Cheyenne man and warrior. Medicine Water lived until 1926 on his allotment near Watonga, Oklahoma.  

“He rode a horse until he could no longer walk or count a horse. The last year of his life on the Standing Bird allotment, he wore his war shirt constantly and died wearing it at age 91.” The warrior also was notorious for riding his horse to town, way past the point at which he should have been astride a horse. “(He) would throw down gates, never lock them back, and he always rode in the middle of the road, never moving for wagons or automobiles. Even in his old age he still demanded respect as a Cheyenne Bowstring war chief.”

Like Mochis, the Cheyenne people made sure Medicine Water was buried within the territory for which he fought his entire adult life, in Custer County, Oklahoma, with all the honors of a Cheyenne warrior.


541 Sipes, John L., Jr. “Cheyenne POWs’ experiences told…” *Watonga Republican*. n.d.: n.p. INDIANS: Western Indian Prisoners at Fort Marion, 1870s, 1 of 2 folder, Fort Marion Indian Prisoners Collection, St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library, St. Augustine Historical Society.


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