

Images of assimilation: photographs of Indian schools in Arizona

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Introduction

This paper examines recently discovered photographs of Arizona Indian schools. The amateur snapshots were drawn from a personal album of about 150 photographs collected by a woman who, we deduce, worked at the Pima Indian school in Sacaton.¹ We do not know the name of the woman who made the album and sketchy captions, handwritten on the front or back of the photographs, provide scant documentation. The images date from c. 1917 and provide tantalizing bits of information about the structure of an Indian school, its environment in the desert South of Phoenix, and the daily lives of the students and teachers. The snapshots appear to have been taken by an acquaintance visiting one of the teachers at the school who captioned the images and compiled the album. The album provides a foundation for inferences and interpretations grounded in the literature. Arizona schools identified in the photo captions include the Blackwater day school Sacaton, Keams Canyon, and Rice Station boarding schools. During the period when these images were made each of these institutions functioned as feeder schools, funnelling students to the off-reservation boarding school in Phoenix that was the second largest in the country.

A major goal of this study is to suggest ways that photographs can be used as primary source data in historical and social research. We will provide a brief history of Indian schools focusing on those in Arizona. In the next section we will examine the uses of photography to represent Indians and Indian schools. This conventional research will ground the discussion of social and cultural settings in which the photographs were made. We will then turn to a close examination of the Sacaton album in an attempt to decode and unearth the meanings of the snapshots. But first, by example, we hope to convince historians of education to treat photographs and other visual representations as significant sources of information.

Many books and articles on Indian schools include photographs but few interrogate photographs in ways analogous to the ways that historians examine written texts.² In an earlier discussion of the uses of historical photographs, the senior author argued:

1 Sacaton is a small town that twice penetrated the national consciousness. It was the birthplace of Ira Hayes, the Pima Indian celebrated for being among the marines photographed raising the flag on Iwo Jima, and whose life and death from alcoholism was lamented in a folk song called the *Ballad of Ira Hayes* performed by Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan and others. The second notoriety also stemmed from the Second World War. Sacaton was the town closest to the Gila River Japanese relocation camp that by December 1942 held more than 13,000 Americans, most from southern California.

2 Among recent scholars who have studied photographs of school seriously are: K. Rousmaniere, 'Questioning the Visual in the History of Education', *History of Education*, 30/2 (2001); A. Novoa, 'Ways of Saying, Ways of Seeing: Public Images of Teachers (19th and 20th Centuries)', *Paedagogica Historica*, 36/1 (2000); L.M. Malmshemer, 'Imitation White Man: Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School', *Studies in Visual Communication*, 11/4 (1985).



Figure 1. Little girls praying beside their beds, Phoenix Indian School, Arizona. Production Date 06/1900. Photographer, Alfred Fenton Messinger.

Photographs and written texts cannot be read or situated in identical ways. In fact, the meaning of a particular photograph typically is generated as much by the context in which it is found—site, collection, date, photographer, caption—as by the image itself. Certainly there are conventions at work within photographic images. We learned early to read the visual world in terms of the natural setting, the built environment, body language and facial expressions; photographic images have emotional content and meaning beyond our ability to describe verbally. Visual knowledge cannot be reduced to verbal description-and vice versa.³

Historians typically include photos as illustrations where they operate to reinforce the textual narrative, at best as an aid the reader's historical imagination, at worst as a sort of trump card—seeing is believing. For example, David Wallace Adams, in a provocative attempt to uncover the motivations of those who built the institutions for Native American schooling, reprinted 'Good Night' (figure 1).⁴ This photo could fruitfully have been analysed as visual evidence to bolster Adam's argument that three 'fundamental considerations' drove the Indian school movement: Protestant ideology, a social evolutionary paradigm that imagined civilization as progress from savagery, and white Americans' thirst for land. Unfortunately he did not discuss the photo at all.

Messinger's 'Good Night' represents the first and second of these deep meanings particularly well. One way to tease out how meaning is created in the minds of viewers is to consider three concepts borrowed from semiology: iconic, indexical and symbolic.⁵ These dimensions of meaning were employed by Richard Zakia and Mihai Nadin in an *Interpretant Matrix*® which they used to deconstruct advertisements. We have found their

3 E. Margolis, 'Mining Photographs: Unearthing the Meaning of Historical Photos', *Radical History Review*, 40/January (1988), 35–6.

4 D.W. Adams, 'Fundamental Considerations: The Deep Meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880–1900', *Harvard Educational Review*, 58/1 (1988), 7.

5 These concepts were first employed by C.S. Peirce; cf. M. Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 129n.

matrix a useful heuristic in the analysis of historic photographs. As they wrote: 'Iconic signs maintain an atmosphere of familiarity; indexical signs express relations of proximity or connections in time and space; the symbolic components allow for the extensive sharing of meanings within a certain public sector.'⁶ Iconic signs derive meaning because of likeness to the object of representation. Indexical signs point to other signs or things in the world to derive their meaning; all photos have an indexical dimension in that they are traces of a previous presence, like fossils or footprints. Symbolic signs derive their meaning from common cultural understandings. Thus in Western culture a snake has connotations symbolizing the fall and the Garden of Eden.

Using this semiotic paradigm, a careful examination of the photograph 'Good Night' reveals several possible meanings. On the iconic dimension one can notice that the little girls are dressed in white nighties, that their hair is combed and in most cases neatly tied, that they were posed but one child appears more interested in the photographer than the praying, that white sheets or blankets have been folded over iron bedsteads, that some of the girls are kneeling on rugs, and so on. Examining the indexical dimension, the caption printed with the photographic image points to the fact that in June 1900 at the Phoenix Indian School little girls were photographed at night by a photographer named Messinger. Actually, the title accomplished a bit of misdirection. Typical of interior photographs of this era, the artificial light used to permit the exposure created a bright scene with little indication of night-time ambiance. Thus the written words were chosen to influence the perception of the photograph, and thus help in the suspension of disbelief by blinding us to some of the indexical features of the print itself. Additional kinds of pointing are accomplished by the pose. One is the girls' facing toward the light side of the frame and directing our attention toward the light; a second is the finger tents pointing upwards; a third is the child's gaze at the camera and hence at viewers of the image. While appearing to be a candid moment, her look was clearly part of the *mise en scène* constructed by the photographer since equipment and emulsions available in 1900 made candid indoor photography virtually impossible. The girl's gaze toward the photographer results in the impression of direct eye contact with the viewer and, in effect, her gaze pulls the viewer into the scene by suggesting that we are being seen. She alone has subjectivity, the other girls in the image whose faces are turned away, or in the case of the first girl who has closed her eyes, exist simply as objects for our gaze. Other curious things about this the young girl's interaction with the camera include: her size, she is much smaller than the others and appears younger (note the babyish hands); the style of her hair, her curls and bows are much more 'stylish' than any of the other girls; and all the girls at this age were placed two to a bed, but she alone is paired with a much older girl. Also, she has a lighter complexion and a more Anglo appearance than the others. One could hypothesize that she was not a typical member of this girls' dormitory, and possibly extend the question to whether she was 'staffage', added to the scene by the photographer. If so her gaze may have another function: she accomplishes a wink of complicity between Anglo viewers and the school, allowing the viewer to imagine in her the 'ideal' for the other girls to emulate.

Iconic and indexical features provide essential information for viewers to be able to read the image but symbolic level features function most centrally to reinforce Adams's point about deep meaning. The image has a dark side and a light side. Western culture equates white and childhood with purity and innocence, and darkness with savagery and

6 M. Nadin and Richard D. Zakia, *Creating Effective Advertising: Using Semiotics* (Consultant Press, 1995).

the unknown (hence the heart of darkness). Children are thought to be innocent, but little girls are even more pure than little boys with their ‘snips and snails and puppy dog tails’. In the divided image, the girls are part of the light (dressed in white); they face away from darkness and into the light. Without the white blankets carefully arranged over the institutional bedsteads the image of the girls would be dramatically different. Vertical slats of metal bedsteads would convey the harsh impression of imprisonment, with the young girls looking through iron bars. The posture of kneeling is associated with submission; in Christian culture the tented fingers symbolize prayer. The attitude of prayer, absent trappings of candles, church or clergy strongly suggests Protestant notions of individual salvation and personal morality. On the symbolic level, the image demonstrates to Anglo American viewers both the successful conversion of innocent Indian children to enlightened Christians, and their movement on the historical continuum from the darkness of savagery into the light of civilization. This suggests an alternative reading of the caption ‘Good Night’ as the opposite of heathenish ‘bad nights’ spent around the campfire.

In the study of visual evidence there are a number of additional analytic processes that are helpful:

Using photographs as primary source material requires gathering data about both the photograph and the social historical context within which it was embedded. One must discover something about why a picture was made, who made it and how it was made. Was it a candid shot or was it staged? Is it a trick? Was it taken for purposes of propaganda? As a documentary, advertisement, snapshot, corporate record, or even as a joke? It is also instructive to consider why and how the photo came to be preserved.⁷

Research on the context of the photo ‘Good Night’ revealed additional information. The National Archives website, where the image resides, offers this information on Record Group 75: Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), 1793–1989: ‘These Exhibit panels made by the BIA possibly to demonstrate that the American Indians were provided with public services and assistance in effectively using their resources’ (*sic*). The documentation tells us little about why the specific picture was made but confirms two things: first, that the photo was used by and preserved as part of the government’s record collection and archival function and, second, that it was probably used as part of an exhibit to demonstrate the successful education and assimilation of Indian children—precisely the point Adams set out to make. Although Adams carefully argued the centrality of Protestant ideology and the up-from-barbarism paradigm to the Indian school movement and presented ample primary written texts in support of his thesis he did not do this with the image that was included only as a visual clincher. It is unfortunate because an analysis of the image would have strongly supported his thesis about the motives of the reformers, and the way they portrayed their programme to the public. Since deep motivations, such as those of the reformers, are often expressed in the unspoken language of symbol and image it would have served his purposes better if the image ‘Good Night’ had been treated and analysed as data, rather than as simply illustration. In the next section we will briefly discuss the boarding school movement.

Indian boarding schools

In several countries where Anglo European colonists occupied lands with large indigenous tribal populations, the local people were subjected to forced regimes of acculturation and

⁷ Margolis, ‘Mining Photographs’, 36.

assimilation. In the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, young children were taken far from their parents and community, had their hair cut, were required to wear Euro-American dress and forbidden to speak their mother tongue.⁸ In the USA, alongside quasi-military discipline and basic education, boarding schools provided vocational training, art and music education, and sports. Frequently young students were also placed with Anglo families for additional cultural re-education.⁹ In some places Native children were adopted by white families. In each country the long-term goal of 'education' was to eliminate the indigenous culture and in some fashion submerge those populations in the dominant one.¹⁰

Carlisle Indian School

In the United States Captain Richard Pratt established the Carlisle Indian School in 1879. Pratt, like many other Anglo Americans, characterized tribal societies as 'Communitistic', 'indolent', 'dirty' and 'ignorant', contrasting this with Western civilization, characterized as 'virile', 'peaceable', 'industrious' and 'individualistic'. Captain Pratt articulated a systematic programme of cultural extinction, arguing that: 'The Indian must die as an Indian and live as a man.' He believed in subjecting Native American youth to quasi-military discipline—uniforms and drill exercises alongside instruction in English and industrial training. Half of the day was devoted to labour, designed to instil industrial discipline in people thought to be naturally lazy. Conveniently, this provided much of the reproductive labour required by the schools and substantially reduced the expense of operation.¹¹ Sports and regimented band practice were likewise part of the disciplinary regime. Pratt developed a system called 'outing' to facilitate this enforced acculturation. In Pratt's outing system students were first taught English and then were placed with local families in Pennsylvania to attend public schools and participate in the community.¹² He was opposed to returning children to the 'Communitistic government of the tribes'.¹³

8 Historical treatments include: in the United States, L.R. Winer, 'Federal Legislation on Indian Education 1819–1970' (1972); J.A. Reyhner and Jeanne Eder, *A History of Indian Education* (Billings, MT: Eastern Montana College, 1989); D.W. Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875–1928* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995). In Canada, J. Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill, 'The Legacy of the Past: An Overview', in *Indian Education in Canada Volume 1: The Legacy*, edited by Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert and Don McCaskill (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986); J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); G. McMaster, 'Colonial Alchemy: Reading the Boarding School Experience', in *Partial Recall*, edited by L.R. Lippard (New York: New Press, 1992). In Australia, B. Cummings, *Take This Child . . . From Kahlin Compound to the Retta Dixon Children's Home* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1990), R. MacDonald, *Between Two Worlds: The Commonwealth Government and the Removal of Aborigines* (Alice Springs: IAD Press, 1995). And in New Zealand, L. Simon and L. T. Smith, eds, *A Civilising Mission?: Perceptions and Representations of the Native Schools System* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001).

9 We are using the term 'Anglo' as it has commonly been used in the American Southwest. The population was historically characterized as Indian (Native American), Mexican (including Mexicano immigrants and Mexican Americans or Chicanos) and Anglo, which included all sorts of English-speaking European Americans including recent immigrants and sometimes even Blacks.

10 As Adams wrote in his explicitly entitled book *Education for Extinction*, 'The boarding school, whether on or off the reservation, was the institutional manifestation of the government's determination to completely restructure the Indian's minds and personalities' (p. 97).

11 *Ibid.*, 149–63.

12 Malmshemer, 'Imitation White Man', 55.

13 R.A. Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935*, 1st edn (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 7.

Pratt's experiment at Carlisle laid the basis for a network of comparatively well-funded federal institutions with a coherent curriculum intended to assimilate Native Americans into the dominant culture. Indian schools were supported by powerful politicians such as General Thomas Morgan, who became head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) a decade after the founding of Carlisle and dramatically expanded the network of off-reservation boarding schools. Morgan justified the expense with the argument that it was cheaper to educate Indians than to kill them.¹⁴

Phoenix Indian School

In the 1880s the Anglo population of Phoenix, Arizona, began agitating Morgan to construct a school for the Pima and Maricopas who lived along the Gila River in the southern part of the state. While these were peaceable farming communities, who had actually aided the whites in their battles with more resistant tribes like the Apache, their culture was seen as amoral, indolent and worthless. Whites demanded that they be 'Americanized'.¹⁵ Indian schools also offered Phoenicians substantial economic benefits: purchases of land and construction of buildings helped developers, federally funded school payrolls flowed directly into the community, and federal contracts supported local businesses that provided the school with services and supplies. Eventually the school even became a tourist attraction. For these reasons local boosters actively supported the school to promote the development of Phoenix. In 1890 the *Arizona Republican* estimated that the school might add US\$50,000 annually to the local economy. The newspaper wrote: 'In a few years our lands, now being so extensively planted with fruit trees and vines, would give employment to many of the pupils.'¹⁶

Robert Trennert, whose work remains the best source on the Phoenix Indian school, noted that the school promised to train Indian students and develop an 'outing' system different in intent from Pratt's experiment at Carlisle. Pennsylvania had few indigenous people when Carlisle was established; the Native American children brought there from the West were a curiosity to the locals and posed no threat to the dominant social order. In contrast, Arizona had the largest Indian population in the country and demands by ranchers, farmers and housewives for cheap labour transformed the 'outing system' into a structure of exploitation.¹⁷ The first superintendent of the Phoenix Indian school, Wellington Rich, took a different tack from Pratt's, stating: 'I have no sympathy with the scheme of *diffusing* the educated Indian youth among the whites, They should as a rule, in my opinion, return to their people and assist in the civilization of the latter.' As Trennert concluded:

From the beginning then, the Phoenix Indian School deviated from eastern expectations. It would not be another Carlisle, and the term 'Americanization', as used locally, had a different meaning. It was acceptable for the school to place great emphasis on vocational training, and students might even be encouraged to get work experience in town, but no one believed that large numbers of Indians were destined to live permanently in Phoenix as equals.¹⁸

14 Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 20. Cited figures suggesting that eight years of schooling cost about 1200 dollars while it cost nearly one million dollars to 'kill an Indian in warfare'. See also Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 22.

15 Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 12.

16 Quoted in Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 58.

17 *Ibid.*, 162.

18 Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 31, quoting Wellington Rich.

In the 1890s day schools, mission schools and boarding schools for Native Americans were operating in a number of places in Arizona including the Navajo, Hopi, Apache, San Carlos and Papago reservations. Desiring to make his new school appear successful, Superintendent Rich recognized that he needed to recruit not just what Anglos denigrated as 'Blanket Indians' fresh off the reservation but also students who were fluent English speakers and had already been subjected to the regime of schooling. In the early 1890s he attempted to have an entire advanced class at the Pima school at Sacaton moved to the Phoenix school. Inevitably, regional schools like Sacaton came to function as feeder schools for the Phoenix boarding school, while the Phoenix school defined its position as the 'top of the educational pyramid'.¹⁹

Superintendent Rich further argued that Indians had to be taught to desire commodities and to accumulate property: 'it is absolutely necessary that they be inspired with a strong desire for better homes, better food, better clothing, etc., than they enjoy in their natural state, and that they be qualified to obtain these things by their own exertions'. The hidden curriculum of capitalist consumption bolstered the overt curriculum of industrial training: 'Hence each one should be taught an industry or trained for a calling which he can utilize by means of which he can earn a good living and accumulate property after leaving school.' The end product would be an assimilated Indian, one whose traditional way of thinking and tribal lifestyle had been obliterated in favour of the individualism associated with American life.²⁰

However, photographs of the school and classroom activities attest that what was being taught was not individualism at all; regimentation and discipline contributed the main message and military uniforms submerged individual personality. The curriculum emphasized marching, the rhythm of the time clock, rank and hierarchy, neatness and cleanliness—the hallmarks of industrial discipline. Apparently Pratt recognized the contradiction in this policy. In a letter dated 1882 supporting the outing system, he wrote: 'The order and system so necessary in an institution retards rather than develops habits of self-reliance and forethought. Individuality is lost.'²¹

Photography

We will now turn to the peculiar role of photography in the history of Indians and Indian education.²² Indian schools and students were frequently photographed for purposes of documentation, and as official records the images were preserved in large numbers.

The first photographic interpretations of Native Americans date from daguerreotypes made in the 1840s. These images range from posed studio portraits from this era, to

19 Ibid., 36, 38.

20 Quoted in *ibid.*, 34–5.

21 Quoted in D.H. DeJong, *Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States* (Golden, CO: North American Press, 1993), 115.

22 There are two main sources on Indian school photography: Lonna M. Malmshheimer's 1985 article 'Imitation White Man'; and the 1991 episode of the PBS series on the American Experience called: *In the White Man's Image*. See also the senior author's article on school photography: 'Class Pictures: Representations of Race, Gender and Ability in a Century of School Photography'. J.R. Miller suggested using photographs to help recover lost meanings of Native experiences with boarding schools in Canada, but she did not really grapple with the nature of photographic images or the problematics of employing images made by Anglo photographers in such an endeavour. A better essay on photos of Canadian boarding schools is by Gerald McMaster, who asked from a Native perspective 'Can photographs answer elusive questions of a history that has been repeatedly suppressed?'. He points to interesting images of resistance. G. McMaster. 'Colonial Alchemy: Reading the Boarding School Experience'. In *Partial Recall*, edited by L. R. Lippard, 77–87 (New York: The New Press, 1992), 77.



Figure 2. Chiricahua Apaches as they arrived at Carlisle from Fort Marion, Florida, 4 November 1886. Photographer J.N. Choate. Hugh Chee, Bishop Eatannah, Ernest Hogee, Humphrey Escharzay, Samson Noran, Basil Ekarden, Clement Seanilzay, Beatrice Kiahtel, Janette Pahgostatam, Margaret Y. Nadasthilah, Fred'k Eskelsejah, Denver Public Library X-32903.

diplomatic visits to Washington, and environmental portraits from the surveys and expeditions in *cartes-de-visite*, stereo and cabinet card formats. Scholars have noted that at Carlisle students were photographed individually and in groups when they arrived from the reservation in native dress. They were photographed again after a period during which, as Malmshemer noted, they had lived in cloudy Pennsylvania long enough to have lost their suntan and become visibly whiter, and they had been 'scrubbed', had their hair cut and were dressed in military uniform.²³ While some of the 'before' photographs were posed informally, the 'after' shots carefully conformed to established conventions of middle-class portraiture, thus reinforcing the predominantly Anglo viewers' perception that a 'civilizing process' was being documented. Pratt termed such paired portraits 'propaganda' and consciously employed them to demonstrate the change from 'Indian' to 'man', from barbarism to civilization. Malmshemer explained that Pratt intended 'Transformation of the body (to stand) for transformation of the soul'.²⁴

Figures 2 and 3 are illustrative of Pratt's effort to use photography to demonstrate the success of his school. In the 'before' picture many of the children are barefoot although one wears what appear to be riding boots. They are not wearing traditional garb, but apparently whatever cast-off clothes they wore when they arrived at school. A few of the boys have their arms folded in a gesture that McMaster interpreted as resistance.²⁵ The three women stand front and centre, independently, not touching. Being posed outside adds to the 'vagabond' sense of the group. In the 'after' shot, a group portrait taken indoors against a neutral backdrop shows everyone in clean uniforms with neatly combed hair. The group has been carefully posed in a symmetrical tableau. Indeed, as

23 Malmshemer, 'Imitation White Man: Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School', 66n.

24 Ibid., 59, 56.

25 McMaster, 'Colonial Alchemy'.



Figure 3. Chiricahua Apaches (the same pupils) four months after arriving at Carlisle 1886. Photographer J.N. Choate. Studio portrait (sitting and standing) of Samson Noran, Fred'k Eskelsejah, Clement Seanilzay, Hugh Chee, Ernest Hoguee, Margaret Y. Nadasthilah, Humphrey Escharzay, Beatrice Kiahtel, Janette Pahgostatam, Bishop Eatannah, and Basil Ekarden, Denver Public Library X-32904.

Malmsheimer suggested, they do appear 'lighter'. The three women lean on each other and are surrounded protectively by the young men in a pose more in keeping with Anglo gender roles. Hands over heart and hats in hand replaced the folded arms. The effectiveness of Pratt's propaganda of the image, and a testimony to the suspension of disbelief common to nineteenth-century viewers of photographs, can be read in the words of Merrill Gates, who, as Adams put it, 'had seen the photographs' and in them had recognized the 'transformation of the soul':

They came children; they return young men and young women; yet they look younger in the face than when they came to us. The prematurely aged look of hopeless heathenism has given way to that dew of eternal youth which makes the difference between the savage and the man who lives in the thoughts of an eternal future.²⁶

Photographs taken by Anglo photographers for Anglo viewers played a unique role in manufacturing images of assimilation. Promotional photographs, and after about 1905 images reproduced in large quantities as postcards, emphasized uniformed Native Americans in formation, engaged in sports and occupational training, hard at work, or studying in dormitories or individual rooms with sparse Victorian decor. Schools were represented as imposing institutions and/or park-like campuses.²⁷

Alfred Fenton Messinger, the photographer who created the image 'Good Night' described earlier, provides an example of photographic representation of an Indian school at the turn of the century. Messinger was a bookkeeper at an agricultural implement dealer in Phoenix who entered a commercial photography partnership with William Altenburgh

²⁶ Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 56, quoting Merrill Edward Gates, 'Land and Law as Agents in Educating Indians' (1885).

²⁷ Margolis, 'Class Pictures', 26-9.

in 1897.²⁸ The partnership soon faltered and Messinger continued to operate on his own as ‘Messinger Viewist’.²⁹ Based on prints in a studio album, Messinger apparently received a commission to document the Phoenix Indian School. In June 1900 he made a series of photographs at the recently completed facility. Preserved images begin at the entrance arch, then progress down the entrance drive to the office and adjacent fountain. He photographed each building at the site. These images are typical architectural views and he used newly planted trees to frame the buildings. Prints were marked with a rubber stamp that produced captions and the photographer’s credit on each one.

Messinger included interior images of dormitories and their decor. It is likely that ‘Good Night’ was made during these efforts. The series of images also included students posed in clean, well-organized classrooms photographed with a slightly wide-angle lens. Boys’ classes emphasize occupational training; students dressed in crisp uniform pants and white shirts are shown drafting, drawing and woodworking. Girls were typically dressed in white aprons and photographed in domestic science, cooking, sewing and knitting classes. A few images were simply class portraits, others depicted activities including exercise class, farming and the uniformed Indian School band posed at the gazebo. Messinger also photographed floats produced by the Indian School for the Mid-Winter Carnival. Each float reproduced common stereotypes of Native Americans during this era. One float was a traditional *travois* carrying a student and school banner. Another depicts a patriotic theme complete with a student dressed as Uncle Sam and was titled ‘Greater America: Peace on Earth. Good Will Toward Men’. A third float had younger students posed around a giant papier maché prop to create a float with the theme of the ‘Old Woman who lived in a Shoe’.

Impressions of Native Americans conveyed by school photographic campaigns dovetailed perfectly with the Indian documentary project of Edward S. Curtis. The first volume of his massive 20-volume work *The North American Indian* was published in 1907. Like many earlier ‘ethnographic documentation’ projects, Curtis injected editorial control by adding or modifying the costumes and props that appear in the images. Curtis called photography an ‘art-science’ defining a role for the documentary photographer that went beyond notions that photographs were ‘documents’ in the sense of ‘objective representations of what his subjects were’.³⁰ Curtis selected subjects that seemed to him to be noble primitives and carefully posed them to reinforce that perception. Solomon-Godeau argued that ‘photography functions to ratify and affirm the complex ideological web that at any moment in historical time is perceived as *tout court* . . . photographs depicting the exotic native Other became fuel for the *mission civilisatrice*.’³¹

From time to time Curtis manufactured costumes or dressed his subjects in ‘Indian’ clothes that he carried around in a trunk; he used scrims and tents to eliminate unwanted backgrounds, manipulated depth of field and used framing to eliminate signs of modern life from the images he constructed; to further isolate the subjects he retouched, cropped and dodged images in the dark room.³² Close analysis of Curtis’s photographs performed by Christopher Lyman, James Faris and others have revealed how he consciously created a vision of the ‘untutored savage’ and a ‘vanishing race’. Faris’s detailed examination of

28 Phoenix City Directory 1897 (Phoenix Directory Company).

29 Phoenix City Directory 1899–1900 (Phoenix Directory Company).

30 C.M. Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: Photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1982), 18.

31 A. Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 171–2.

32 Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions*, 62–8.

Curtis's Navajo photos demonstrated empirically that 'his Navajo work was completely set up, using not only "phony" costumes, additions and poses . . . but, indeed, in some cases, actual phony Navajo'.³³ Lyman read the symbolism in Curtis's photo, entitled 'The Vanishing Race—Navajo', in this way:

A line of Indians diagonally traverses a murky foreground (the present) toward a threatening wall of darkness (the future) above which is an aura of light (Curtis's hope for improvement of Indians through assimilation into White culture).³⁴

Like everyone, Curtis viewed the world through cultural frames of reference that operated as lenses and blinkers which allowed him to focus on certain facets while obscuring others. As Lyman noted: 'Just as it was difficult for Curtis to see Indians for what they were through the veil of his culture at the time, so it is difficult for us to see him and his work for what *they* were through the bias of our time.'³⁵ Events since 1900 cannot be forgotten, and from our vantage in the twenty-first century there is no way to see except through the bias of our time. The implications of this are profound, and raise a central issue for this investigation. How is it that photographs of Indian students and schools that were made to represent enlightenment and assimilation—in a word Progress—have come to many modern eyes to be images of oppression?

Alan Sekula posed another question central to our project: 'How is historical and social memory preserved, transformed, restricted, and obliterated by photographs?'³⁶ Drawing attention to the problems of interpretation posed by historic photos, Sekula warned that 'Photography constructs an imaginary world and passes it off as reality'.³⁷ He termed as fallacy assumptions that photographs 'transmit truths', 'reflect reality' or are 'historical documents'. 'The very term document entails a notion of legal or official truth, as well as a notion of *proximity to* and verification of an original event.'³⁸ In contrast with the view of photos as documents, Sekula drew attention to what he termed the 'semantic availability' of images:

. . . not only are the pictures in archives often *literally* for sale, but their meanings are up for grabs. . . . This semantic availability of pictures in archives exhibits the same abstract logic as that which characterizes goods on the marketplace.³⁹

In an earlier article called 'Class Pictures', Margolis echoed this perspective, noting:

In other words, regardless of the intent of the photographer, captions and documentary evidence preserved with the image, or attempts by the repository to control or restrict usage, photographs can and often are used in ways that may be quite antithetical to the original meanings. Ripped free from context, photographs become free floating signifiers that appear to be little snippets of reality and can be used to bolster or 'prove' a variety of contradictory theses.⁴⁰

33 J.C. Faris, *Navajo and Photography: A Critical History of the Representation of an American People* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 108.

34 Lyman, *The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions*, 80.

35 *Ibid.*, 19.

36 A. Sekula, 'Photography between Labor and Capital', in *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton. 1948–1968*, edited by B.H.D. Buchloh and R. Wilkie (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983), 193.

37 *Ibid.*, 195.

38 *Ibid.*, 198.

39 *Ibid.*, 194.

40 Margolis, 'Class Pictures'. An anonymous reviewer of this article on school photography correctly pointed out the reflexive confirmation of this quality of the image with the observation that: 'One possible "antithetical" use, of course, is the sort that occurs in this article: critical social analysis of pictures not made with this purpose in mind.'

Each time a photograph is examined, three variables combine to provide meaning: the photographer's intent, the image itself and the perspective of the viewer. The photographer's intent can frequently be inferred or deduced from captions, documentary material, the context of other photographs in a series, etc. The image itself can be examined from a number of perspectives including the disciplines of semiotics, history, cultural criticism, literature and so on, the goal being to describe as deeply as possible elements and meanings of the image. The last variable in this equation is the one to which Sekula's observation speaks most directly. The goal of the first two investigations is to gather as much evidence of meaning as possible concerning the image in question. The third variable, the standpoint and project of the observer, synthesizes the selection and codification of meanings from among the knowledge, experience and personal perspective of the viewer. Whether, for instance, the observer focuses on technical ability, artistic style, symbolic meaning or historic context—and which of the available meanings is chosen or foregrounded—has to do with the stance and standpoint of the observer. In the discussion of the Arizona album that follows we will provide some thoughts, interpretation and analysis, and possible answers to the questions raised by Sekula and Solomon-Godeau.

The Arizona Indian schools album

Description

As inexpensive hand-held cameras became popular in the 1890s and fostered amateur photography, images made at Indian schools by visitors, teachers and staff reflected themes similar to those emphasized by the professional photographers, and provide compelling vernacular views of the pervasiveness of the acculturation efforts. The Sacaton album is one such construction. The album was purchased with no provenance, and had changed hands several times before being acquired. Surprisingly, because they could have easily been sold separately, a group of unmounted duplicate prints was purchased with the album. These proved to be extremely helpful because several had pencil notations that added information to the photographs mounted on the album pages.

Without provenance, analysis of the album required obtaining as much information as possible about the images so as to build a logical context for understanding the images and the meaning of the album as a whole. The second author has developed a three-level structure for organizing context:

Evidence—objective, factual, documentary information provided by the photograph or its context (e.g. format, content within the photograph, attribution to photographic studio based on imprint or printed identification from the period, etc.)

Interpretation—deductions built on circumstantial evidence and context that can be clearly verified to and by others (e.g. dating from format or image content, verification of period or more recent written identification, comparison with other known images, etc.)

Speculation—subjective attributions that extend the interpretation based on less concrete evidence, or emotional reaction to the image.⁴¹

Unattributed albums of photographs by amateur photographers thus offer a significant challenge. It is important to note that any deductions can only be as accurate as the weakest link in the information that is available about the image at a given time. As new

⁴¹ J. Rowe, *Evidence, Interpretation, and Speculation: Thoughts on Kaloma, the Purported Photograph of Josie Earp* (Main Antique Digest, 2002 [cited 2 March 2003]); [available from <http://www.maineantiquedigest.com/articles/oct02/josi1002.htm>].

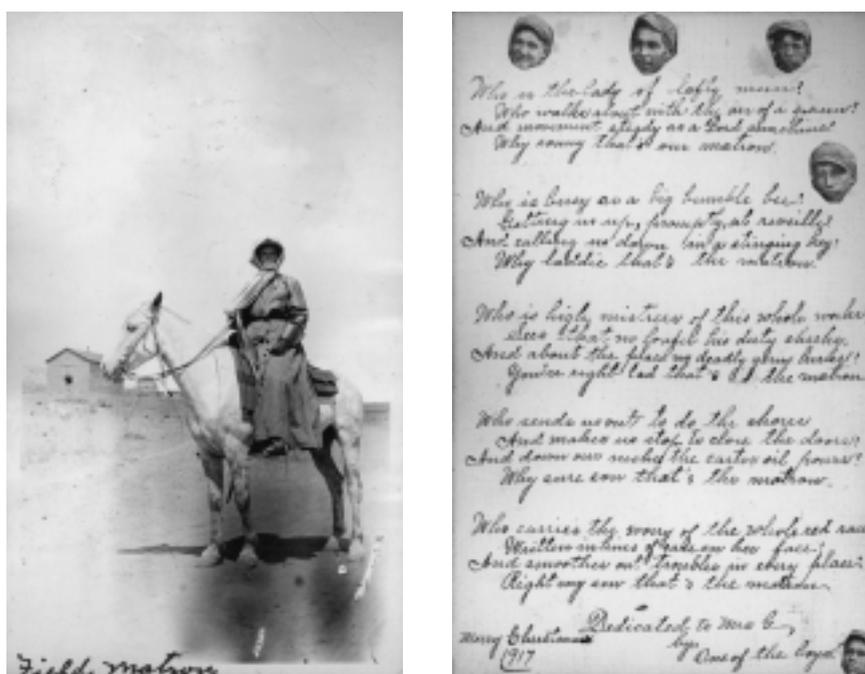


Figure 4. Field Matron, Sacaton Indian School. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

information is located, it must be compared with current knowledge and checked for ‘fit’ with previous hypotheses and interpretations.

In the Sacaton album the photos were not made by a trained photographer with a sophisticated aesthetic eye. They are primarily snapshots, taken in reaction to the environment of the school and events and activities that occurred. While none of the individual shots is as symbolically rich as ‘Good Night’ or ‘The Vanishing Race—Navajo’, the barren landscape, the depiction of the regimentation of even unstructured and recreational activities, and the choice of photographic subjects paints a chilling picture of the strictness and structure used to ensure assimilation. Most interesting to the modern viewer is the naturalness of representations that in many cases seem to be harsh violations of childhood.

Who is the lady of Lofty mein
 Who walks about with the air of a queen
 And movement as steady as a Ford machine
 Why sonny that’s our matron

Who is busy as a big bumble bee
 Getting us up promptly at reveille
 And calling us down in a stinging hey
 Why laddie that’s our matron

Who is high mistress of this whole works
 Sees that no loafer his duty shirks
 And about the place no deadly germ lurks
 You’re right lad that’s our matron

Who sends us out to do the chores
 And makes us stop to close the doors
 And down our necks the castor oil flows
 Why sure son that's our matron.

Who carries the worry of the whole red race
 written in lines of care on her face
 And smoothes out troubles in every place
 Right my son that's our matron
 (Dedicated to Mrs. G By One of the Boys, 1917)

The album included 153 photographs that we sequentially numbered for reference in this article. The first 76 shots were made at or near the Pima Indian School in Sacaton, Arizona. The poem reproduced above in both image and text ends the Sacaton sequence. Its location and subject matter suggests it may have been prepared as a parting statement for the matron from her students. It is followed by a shot of a Saguaro cactus (found only in the Sonoran desert) and two pages from which once-mounted photos were at some point removed. The photos following the Sacaton series appear to be a tour of Arizona with some emphasis on Indian schools: Grand Canyon, Navajos, the *Casa Grande* ruins (with a caption explaining that *Casa Grande* means Big House in Spanish), a touristy series on the Hopi reservation, and a visit to Rice Station school. Unlike the Sacaton photographs, several of these later images, primarily those of Hopi ceremonials, differ from the amateur snapshots that form the bulk of the album in that they were commercially reproduced post cards. Our analysis will focus on the 76 snapshots made at or near the Pima School in Sacaton. The site of the school was 30 miles south of Phoenix, two miles west of present-day Sacaton. There had been a number of missionary schools serving the Pima dating back to 1870, but the first boarding school opened in 1881.⁴²

The photographs in the album are primarily 2.5 × 4.25 inches. They were taken on 116 size roll film introduced in 1899 for the growing amateur marketplace. Virtually all of the images are horizontal format. Based on the size and format, the camera used was probably either a Kodak Brownie or a relatively low-cost (approximately US\$12) folding camera such as the No. 1 Folding Kodak. The slightly wide-angle lens visually over-emphasized the distance between the photographer and subject, increasing the sense of separation. The small size of the viewfinder made exact composition and awareness of subject expression difficult at best. Focusing was imprecise as well, requiring the photographer to estimate distances and set the correct focusing range without a rangefinder. These cameras were extremely popular during this era and film could be processed and printed by local photographers or other 'Kodak' processors. Contact prints were made by placing the negative on the photographically sensitized paper that was exposed to light then processed, dried and trimmed if desired.⁴³

Technological limitations of the camera and film speed dictated that amateur photographs such as these were made outdoors. This explains why there are no shots of children in classrooms. The simple rule of photographing with the sun over one's shoulder to simplify exposure occasionally had unintended consequences. When photographing with the sun low in the sky, either morning or afternoon, occasionally a 'self-portrait' in the form of the photographer's shadow is visible in the foreground. Several images in the

42 C. Carney, 'A History of Education on the Gila River Indian Reservation', (1974).

43 J. Rowe, *Photographers in Arizona 1850–1920: A History and Directory* (Nevada City, CA: Carl Mauts Publishing, 1997), 112.

album include such cues and were taken by what appears to be a man wearing a flat-brimmed hat.

The photographs were consciously arranged both in an order and aesthetically on the pages of the album. The album is arranged vertically with two images per page. As noted earlier, a partial second set of unmounted prints was obtained along with the album. Captions on the snapshots in the album were written in ink on the face of the image. Additional captions and information had been pencilled on the reverse of the unmounted prints. In quoting captions we brought both sources together.

In terms of the sequence of images and composition of the album, the first eight photos in the album are of older boys in uniform. Numbers nine to 25 focus on the exterior environment and most depict buildings identified by captions so that they constitute a visual survey of the school. Photos 26–28 show students lined up for dinner. According to the captions there were 87 girls and 115 boys. Photo 29 is identified as ‘Laura. My name sake’, perhaps a clue to the name of the author of the album. Shots 30 to 37 are from a day trip to the Blackwater Day School in Sacaton. Images 38–40 depict young female students in drill-team formation, while 48–52 are medium close-up posed portraits of older male students who wear uniforms or suits and ties with a certain élan suggesting familiarity.⁴⁴ Photos 53 (reproduced below) and 54 show the jail and police. The following eight shots, 62 to 70, are the only ones that address the Pima village adjacent to the school. Included in this sequence is the image of ‘the lady who cares for my clothes’ discussed below. In an attempt to provide an even grander general context the photographer climbed the water tower and made a couple of long shots that were the last of the photographs taken at Sacaton. The following page has a blank US Field Matron identification form pasted in, suggesting that the author was in fact a field matron. The final image was the poem to ‘our matron’ reproduced above.

That the compiler of the album was a teacher or matron can be deduced from captions to photos 9 and 10: ‘My six youngest, from 6 to 7 years old’ and ‘Boys dormitory. My room with the white paper in the window, wood box in the corner.’ Interestingly, there are instructions on some of the prints. Shot 63, for instance, is captioned: ‘A Pima Home. Front view Mrs. Macks home. The boy at the gate Herbert Jackson went with me. Send me one more of this.’ And number 27: ‘Going to dinner. Children marching in to dinner. This is the only one you sent. I want one please. . . .’ These notes suggest that someone else, possibly the male whose shadow appears in several of the photographs, was the probable maker of the images. From these notations he appears to have retained possession of the negatives. The discourse also suggests that the author of the album was being sent two copies of each shot, one included in the album, the others retained as unmounted images with additional notes and captions. As noted, a few of these images appear to have been given to the subjects, but the rest remained with the album in the effects of its compiler.

Reading the album: pictures and captions

In her perceptive chapter entitled ‘Who is Speaking Thus?’ Abigail Solomon-Godeau set forth a project for those who would use documentary photographs in social and cultural research:

44 According to Carol Carney, *ibid.*, 8, upper grade boys averaged 19 in age in 1921.

... individual documentary projects, themselves the product of distinct historical circumstances and milieus, 'speak' of agendas both open and covert, personal and institutional, that inform their contents and, to a greater or lesser extent, mediate our reading of them. It is properly the work of historians and critics to attempt to excavate these coded and buried meanings, to bring to light these rhetorical and formal strategies that determined the work's production, meaning, reception, and use.⁴⁵

We will undertake Solomon-Godeau's suggestions in unearthing the agenda and buried meanings encoded in the Sacaton album. Although '1917' on the above poem is the only date that appears in the album, it seems probable that the photos in the album were made between 1915 and 1920, and perhaps in the single school year 1917–18. The photographic format and album type are also consistent with this era. The year 1917 was a momentous one: the USA entered the First World War and the Bolsheviks overthrew the Czar of all Russia; 'Blackjack' Pershing gave up chasing Pancho Villa around the Mexican border; America was reading Zane Grey westerns; and congress passed a bill over Woodrow Wilson's veto making literacy a requirement for citizenship, thereby disenfranchising many residents. The commitment of the country regarding Indian education had changed, as Frederick Hoxie documented in his history of the campaign to assimilate Indians. The reformers who created Indian schools had seen Indians as backward not by race but as products of primitive social conditions; they believed that through education Indians were fully capable of becoming modern citizens and productive workers in industrial society. By the 1920s, however, the combination of the failure of the Indian school experiment to accomplish its utopian goals, the rise of 'scientific' racism and the eugenics movement, and demands for cheap labour by powerful economic actors in mining and agriculture brought a halt to assimilation efforts.⁴⁶ In 1916 Indian schools were divided into three categories: primary, pre-vocational and vocational. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Woodrow Wilson, a banker from Texas named Cato Sells, believed in 'training Indian boys and girls for efficient and useful lives under the conditions which they must meet after leaving school'.⁴⁷ In Hoxie's analysis:

(The early reformers) ... organized a campaign to incorporate Indians into American life, and their goal—total assimilation—was a mirror of what they believed was possible. By 1920 their campaign was over. Like generals who claim victory while retreating, men like Walter Camp accepted the marginal place that scientists, educators and politicians had assigned to native people and announced themselves satisfied. Assimilation had come to mean its opposite.⁴⁸

In other words, Indians were to take their place in a racialized caste system besides African-Americans, Southern and Eastern European immigrants, Asians and Mexicans. 'Assimilation', Hoxie argued, 'had come to mean knowing one's place and fulfilling one's role'.⁴⁹ These were among the expectations for Indian schooling, and the cultural context of the era when the photos in the Sacaton album were taken.

45 Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock*, 182.

46 In the following year, 1918, the Galton society was formed to unite a resurgent American Nativism with scientific racism. Cf. S. Selden, *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America*, edited by J.F. Solti, vol. 23, *Advances in Contemporary Educational Thought* (New York and London: Teachers College Press, 1999), 13–14.

47 F.E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 205. Quoting Cato Sells in the Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1916.

48 *Ibid.*, 243.

49 *Ibid.*, 242.



Figure 5. 'Girl's home and Post Office. Laundry, Girl's Dormitory, P.O., and flagpole view from the clubhouse. No. 1 Right Hand. Dormitory faces South, Supts house East, School house North.' From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

Set and setting

The Sacaton photographs are quotidian matter-of-fact snapshots absent the self-consciously symbolic meanings embedded in images such as Messinger's 'Good Night' or J.N. Choat's before and after photographs at Carlisle. They lack a number of other hallmarks of Indian school pictures as well: photographers frequently represented pride of ownership and control by making architecture appear monumental or assembling the entire student body for a group shot; they composed images of students at work either to demonstrate the inculcation of the Protestant ethic, or the fact that taxpayer money was not being wasted; they took a lot of in-class pictures to demonstrate schooling. The vast majority of Indian school photographs comprise a genre that is recognizable even without captions.⁵⁰ However, with the possible exception of the shots of Indians in uniform (discussed below), the Sacaton photos almost all require captions and context; torn from the album they would not be immediately intelligible as Indian school photographs. Singly, and as a collection, these photographs rely heavily on indexical dimensions of meaning construction, as evidenced by the arrows and X's on the prints pointing to 'my room', 'post office', 'My six youngest' and so on. The album thus maps surface features of the people, places and things that made up the Sacaton experience. Like most personal albums, this one appears to have been produced and organized for one single unifying gaze as a key to memory and no doubt as a visual aid for story telling.

The album includes 17 establishing shots—portraits of campus buildings often including directions to adjacent buildings to orient locations within the campus. Most of the captions are similar to that of number 17 (figure 5). These photos reveal the barren setting typical of the Sonoran desert south of Phoenix. The buildings, for the most part wood-framed, brick or adobe, are set apart from one another by hardpan yards with little vegetation. Palm trees here and there testify to an attempt to landscape. The water tower and perhaps the bakery smokestack appear to be the tallest structures on campus.

50 Kate Rousmaniere, 'Questioning the Visual in the History of Education', eloquently made this point about school photography in general, arguing that across time and culture one can recognize a photograph of school almost immediately.



Figure 6. 'Sacaton from the Tower'. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

Identified buildings include: girls' dormitory, girls' home, boys' dormitory, bath house, laundry, bakery, clubhouse, jail, school building, employees building (men's), superintendent's house, chapel, Pres. Church, Dr. Cottage, Mr. Henderson's cottage, trader's store, cotton gin and pumping station.

In her book on symbolism in Western films, Jane Tompkins argued persuasively that the opening shot of westerns, typically a wide shot of the desert, imagines a hard land, absent trees, shade and water 'inimical to human beings'.⁵¹ Tompkins went on to describe the dialectic between the desert portrayed as a 'tabula rasa' and the town as civilization; she argued that:

There is a tremendous tension in Westerns between the landscape and town. The genre pulls toward the landscape—that, in a sense, is its whole point. But because there's so much emphasis on getting away, town also exerts a tremendous pull; otherwise there would be no reason to flee.⁵²

While the climb up the water tower for a snapshot or two was somewhat perilous, it was apparently worth it to the photographer. The search for a high place to show school, town and desert can be read as a gesture of ownership, of surveillance and of symbolic power. We might also conclude that fences, school buildings, courtyards and parade grounds on the desert landscape are the architectural equivalent of the uniforms, haircuts, postures of submission and order imposed on the Indian children. Taken as a whole, then, the Sacaton album is a visual synthesis; its montage of iconic, indexical and symbolic cues suggests the taming of the western land and its inhabitants.

Rank and file

The authors have examined more than a thousand photographs made at Indian schools during this era. Shots like number 4 (figure 7) of uniformed Indian students grouped outside campus buildings are the single most common view. The album begins with eight posed shots of disciplined young male Indians in uniform arrayed formally in rank and

51 J.P. Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 71.

52 *Ibid.*, 85.



Figure 7. Co B Pima Indian School, Sacaton, AZ (hats in hand). From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002



Figure 8. Erros Osif. He is the neatest and most gentleman(ly) one of the boys—military suit. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

file. At Sacaton, the children were organized into three companies, A, B and C. The photographer posed each group twice—once with hats on, and again with hats in hand placed over heart in the attitude of patriotic deference one takes before the flag. These six shots were followed by two images of smaller groups of older students in positions of authority identified as ‘officers and buglers’.

Even factoring in the slightly wide-angle lens, there is a distance between photographer and subject; the few portraits seem stiff. Photo 50 is one of five named older male students who seem highly acculturated and in positions of authority.⁵³ There are no individual portraits of female or younger students. It is as if the only intimate contact the teacher/matron had with students was with ‘officers’ and even that was distant and formal. The caption suggests the high value placed on neatness and being a gentleman. The sense of separation one gets from the photographs of the officers and students is powerfully reinforced by the alienation, and perhaps grudging admiration, one feels reading the poem about ‘our matron’ which ‘one of the boys’ dedicated to Mrs. G. We never learn who the ‘lady of lofty mein’ is, beyond her described duties of surveillance, troubleshooting, discipline and hygiene. She seems as foreign to the students as they appear to the camera.

It is important to keep in mind that these negatives were exposed by an Anglo American photographer and intended for the Anglo gaze. Among other meanings, photos such as 4 and 50 confirmed to Anglo viewers that indeed the Indian problem was being solved. Those that were once viewed as savage enemies now appear peacefully dressed in uniforms closely resembling the uniforms worn by the US cavalry that defeated them in battle. The images in the Sacaton album were reactions to the environment and events at the school and, while not partaking directly in the project to use photography as visual propaganda to demonstrate assimilation, provide a view similar to Pratt’s of the schools’ mission by emphasizing discipline and hierarchy. Relations of domination forcing Indian students to adopt postures of assimilation were not, of course, made by photography, as Solomon-Godeau noted in an analogous discussion of gender:

... the discursive strategies common to the representations themselves, indicate that the problems of oppression, subordination and objectification do not exclusively reside in the given contents of an image. Images, in other words, do not produce a world of female objects and male subjects; rather they may articulate, naturalize and confirm an oppression order whose roots lie elsewhere.⁵⁴

In the album, Sacaton looks less like a school than like the frontier forts promoted to the American public a few years later in westerns like ‘She Wore a Yellow Ribbon’. In contrast with earlier photographic studies at Carlisle or Hampton Institute that included images of teachers teaching and students studying, or vocational training in workshops and on field trips, the Sacaton Album has no shots of classrooms, field trips or the shops where students worked and learned the needle trades, baking or carpentry. While as we noted earlier the lack of indoor views may simply be an artefact of the technological limitations of the camera, it might also be that the Sacaton Album depicted its author’s and perhaps the school’s institutional concern with order and socialization over education *per se*.

In his foundational work of symbolic interactionism, *Asylums*, Erving Goffman described the functioning of ‘total institutions’ that separate and isolate members from the

53 Erros Osif was photographed three times

54 A. Solomon-Godeau, ‘Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions About Documentary Photography’, in *Photography at the Dock*, 221.

larger social world. The hallmarks of these organizations are what Goffman termed ‘mortifications of the self’: removal of personal possessions, loss of control over your schedule, uniforms, haircuts and the inability to escape from institutional rules and procedures. The goal is to tear down and re-create the individual to meet the demands of the organization. In many respects, Indian boarding schools appear to fit Goffman’s model, which included prisons, monasteries and residential medical facilities.⁵⁵ However, Adams argued that the schools were different from Goffman’s formulation because he had proposed that: ‘Total institutions do not substitute their own unique culture for something already formed. We do not deal with acculturation as assimilation but with something more restricted than these. In a sense, total institutions do not look for cultural victory.’⁵⁶ In an extended footnote, Adams argued that boarding schools went beyond Goffman’s formulation to seek total ‘cultural victory’ concluding that failure had two sources: first, the inability of any institution to exert absolute control; and second, Indian resistance.⁵⁷

The concept of student resistance has been offered by educational researchers to counter overly structural accounts of schooling as social reproduction. Stemming from Paul Willis’s study of British working-class boys, critical researchers like Michael Apple, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren began to develop models demonstrating the importance of student agency in thwarting socialization messages.⁵⁸ Adams engaged this tradition in a chapter examining Indian students’ resistance to the boarding school. He noted instances of ‘escape, arson, passive resistance, nicknaming (of teachers and supervisors), and cultural maintenance’.⁵⁹ Michael Coleman synthesized autobiographical materials of Indians who had attended boarding and mission schools to distinguish between ‘resistance’, mostly seen as pranks, and ‘rejection’, arguing in effect that the limiting case of resistance was to simply leave school. By all accounts student resistance was a real phenomenon but it cannot very well be seen in photographs. What viewers are exposed to are images made by Anglo photographers from positions of power, and while we may read facial expressions as in photos ii (see figure 2), 4 (see figure 7) or 7 (see figure 11) to indicate a certain unwillingness, we know the children could not resist being posed and having their pictures taken.⁶⁰ More to the point, the carefully composed and constructed

55 E. Goffman, *Asylums* (New York: Doubleday, Anchor, 1961).

56 E. Goffman, ‘The Characteristics of Total Institutions’, in *Complex Organizations: A Sociological Reader*, edited by A. Etzioni (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1961), cited in Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 358.

57 It is unfortunate that the term ‘resistance’ has been used to describe everything from arson to name calling. It thereby loses much of its explanatory usefulness. Much resistance is by necessity what Maddox termed ‘expressions of alienated resentment’ and has little effect on the structural regularities of domination. R. Maddox, ‘Bombs, Bikinis, and the Popes of Rock and Roll: Reflections on Resistance, the Play of Subordinations, and Liberalism in Andalusia and Academia, 1983–1995’, in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, edited by A. Gupta and J. Ferguson (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997).

58 P. Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, revised edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981 [1977]); M.W. Apple, *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education: Essays on Class, Ideology, and the State* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); H.A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1983); P. McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (New York: Longman, 1998).

59 Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 234–5. Two of the best accounts of resistance written by teachers are: Herbert Kohl, *I Won’t Learn from You* (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 1991) and Harry Wolcott’s account of being a white teacher in a Native village, ‘The Teacher as an Enemy’, in *Education and Cultural Process*, edited by G.D. Spindler (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974).

60 In his perceptive study, James Faris offers many examples of adult Navajo in their own land who refuse to be photographed, turn their head or cover their face to avoid the photographer’s shot. Presumably this was not an option in the total institution of the boarding school, especially when the photographer was a teacher or with a teacher. J. Faris, *Navajo and Photography*.



Figure 9. Mrs Gilman. Lincoln's birthday memorial. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002



Figure 10. Miss Harvey with her yard cleaners at work. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

photographs sought to depict the Anglo American project as welcomed, not desperately resisted by Native Americans.

While resistance took place off camera, many of the practices of total institutions, including mortifications of the self and degradation ceremonies, were enacted for the camera. Harold Garfinkel coined the term 'degradation ceremony' to describe social practices intended to lower a person's status. These rituals described in the literature ranged from the universal practice of cutting incoming students' hair, scrubbing and delousing them and burning their clothes, to humiliating punishments including being made to stand in a corner, whippings and incarceration.⁶¹ Mortifications of the flesh

61 H. Garfinkel, 'The Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies', *American Journal of Sociology*, 61 (1956), M.C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1993), 174.



Figure 11. Officers A, B and C Pima Indian School, Sacaton, AZ. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

included punishment for speaking one's mother tongue, required Christian training that disparaged 'faith in Kachina gods, medicine bundles, and spirit guides', and ceremonial enactments of the American myths including the principle of Manifest Destiny.⁶² A photograph of the inculcation of patriotic stories was found in the Sacaton album. Interestingly, Photo 34 (figure 9) of an outdoor class studying a model of Lincoln's log cabin was the only shot in the album that actually showed schooling taking place.

Occasionally ceremonies were photographed that seem to have no purpose beyond degrading the status of Indian students, for example students being supervised cleaning the school grounds on hands and knees. Even though photo 22 (figure 10) is slightly out of focus, we reproduced it because it contains many elements of interest. Despite the fact that her back is to the camera, the dominant individual in the image is Miss Harvey; large, dressed in white and in the foreground. Behind her a group of 30 or more Indian students are cleaning the school yard on their hands and knees. The image not only displays social status and rank but the degradation ceremony of yard cleaning by hand testifies to make-work discipline in service to neatness and cleanliness 'for the *mission civilisatrice*'. Importantly, the scene was warranted as worthy of a photograph, and further, of inclusion in the compilation of images of life at the school. Trennert quoted the superintendent of the Phoenix school: 'The child is taught how to do a thing, when to do it, and to do it whether he wants to or not.' Indeed, teaching Indian students to work became the supreme goal of the institution, its motto being 'Indolence is the cankerworm of progress, so our pupils are taught to kill the worm'.⁶³

Discipline and punish

The shot of unsmiling, stern-looking Indian children selected from among the students to be officers at Sacaton (figure 11) celebrates other elements of the boarding school as a total institution. Rank and privilege were awarded for good behaviour; power over others was the reward for toeing the line and demonstrating the attitudes and postures of

⁶² Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 23–4.

⁶³ Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 68.

acculturation. As in most total institutions, a reward system was employed to enforce the rules, ensuring compliance among the ‘inmates’ even when matrons or other agents of social control were not present. Another element of the function of ‘rank’ takes a bit more explanation. We know from the work of Stanley Milgram in his famous ‘obedience’ experiments that distancing the punisher from the one being punished makes obedience more likely. Establishing a hierarchy of function in the machinery of discipline makes it possible for every person in the chain of command to avoid responsibility for his/her individual actions. Individuals thus become willing to engage in behaviour they might not have otherwise. This may simultaneously have had the effect of distancing staff from the day-to-day need to punish small infractions.⁶⁴

In a caption to a photograph nearly identical to photo 7 (see figure 11), published in Robert Trennert’s article entitled ‘Corporal Punishment and the Politics of Indian Reform’, he made the point that older student ‘officers’ were ‘placed in charge of younger pupils, and they enforced a disciplinary system regarded by critics as harsh and demeaning’.⁶⁵ Although Trennert concluded that there was insufficient evidence for some of the accusations,⁶⁶ descriptions of excessive corporal punishment at the Phoenix school seem to fit the chain of command model described by Milgram: ‘matrons regularly used male employees to whip unruly Indian girls’.⁶⁷ The school’s ‘Indian disciplinarian’ was accused of ‘whipping, beating, and abusing Indian students’.⁶⁸ Another Indian disciplinarian ‘testified that in 1928 he participated in the mass flogging of eighty little Indian boys because they had damaged a merry-go-round. The floggings were carried out by larger Indian boys, under orders from the disciplinarian, using a double thick harness strap.’⁶⁹ Coleman similarly noted that ‘Some pupils of both sexes picked on, bullied, or even terrorized their companions; not all the suffering endured at the school was imposed by the authorities’. Stronger students tormented weaker ones, and one tribe might prey on another. Presumably, as in prisons today, administrators sometimes sought to manipulate these antagonisms to their own purpose. As Coleman put it the ‘prefect system could easily become officially sanctioned bullying’. In these cases, those who set the rules and consequences of infraction were separated from those who carried out the orders.⁷⁰

From Carlisle on down, Indian schools used confinement for discipline problems and to punish runaways. Photo 53 (figure 12) depicts a small, isolated, adobe building identified as the ‘jail’. The use of jails was not abolished until 1929, the same year that corporal punishment was forbidden.⁷¹ It is significant that this little jail was noteworthy enough to be included in the album. Moreover, shots 53 and 54, jail and police, coming after portraits of officers, suggests an escalation of authority and implied control.

64 S. Milgram, *Obedience* (New York: New York University, Center for Media Services: New York University Film Library, 1969); videorecording, S. Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: an Experimental View* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

65 R.A. Trennert, ‘Corporal Punishment and the Politics of Indian Reform’, *History of Education Quarterly*, 29/winter (1989), 609.

66 *Ibid.*, 614.

67 *Ibid.*, 600.

68 *Ibid.*, 605.

69 *Ibid.*, 606.

70 Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930*, 127ff., 33. Coleman preferred to emphasize students in the helper role of ‘mediator’; however, his work is grounded in written autobiographical reflections of some of the more successful students. One must always be aware of the sampling bias inherent in this approach. Resistant or rejecting students were far less likely to write their reminiscences.

71 Trennert, ‘Corporal Punishment and the Politics of Indian Reform’, 603.



Figure 12. 'Jail' Pima Indian School, Sacaton, AZ. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

Constructing new identities

The project to develop total institutions to de-indianize young native Americans was an invention of the dominant Anglo-American political system; as we have seen, the photographic image system was both a trace and a functional element of that project. Far from emphasizing individualism, the curriculum obviously intended to replace one social identity, the tribal, with another quasi-military identity. The essence of the new identity was obedience to authority. Trennert quoted Samuel Armstrong, the director of the Hampton Institute when it included Indians as well as African-Americans, to the effect that when they arrived the Indian children had: 'absolutely no idea of obedience. They yield to a command when they feel it is just and reasonable, but simple obedience to authority seems an idea quite foreign to their minds, and is one of very slow growth.'⁷² After personal obedience was inculcated, students were taught to march to the abstract impersonal rhythm of the time clock. In the early 1970s, Carol Carney, a graduate student in the College of Education at Arizona State University, interviewed Arnold Allison who had been a student at Sacaton from 1927 to 1932. Allison recalled the regimen in force a decade after the album was made:

- 6:00 AM—Students awakened by a bugle call; they had 15 minutes to wash, brush teeth, and make bed
- 6:15 AM—Practice marching and drilling
- 6:30 AM—Breakfast
- 7:00 AM—Do chores; sweep, clean dorms, wash dishes,
- 7:45 AM—Dress in uniforms
- 8:00 AM—Class starts with bugle call; young ones have class until 3:00, older children until 4:00
- 5:30 PM—Supper
- 7:00–8:00 PM—Night School for students who have fallen behind or have misbehaved.⁷³

⁷² Ibid., 597.

⁷³ Carney, 'A History of Education on the Gila River Indian Reservation', 8.



Figure 13. Phoenix Indian School. Part of a Panorama made in 1908 showing the students arrayed on the parade ground. Source: Library of Congress

The Phoenix Indian School was famous for its uniforms, marching and regulation. The school superintendent provided the rationalization for regimentation to unite obedience and clock time with other western virtues:

Too much praise can not be given to the merits of military organization, drill and routine in connection with the discipline of the school; every good end is obtained thereby. It teaches patriotism, obedience, courage, courtesy, promptness, and constancy; besides, in my opinion, it outranks any other plan or system in producing and developing every good moral, mental, and physical quality of the pupil.⁷⁴

Regimentation was important not for its own sake alone but as a step in the production of a docile and motivated workforce. In 1909, the Secretary of the Interior addressed Phoenix students to emphasize both the Protestant work ethic and a peculiarly American imperative of the need to sacrifice pleasure to attain a position in life conceived as a system of social stratification:

We have got to become men and women and we have to take our place in the line of life, just as you take your places in the ranks of your companies. You have got to march through this world; the world expects you to do something, not simply to play and not simply to have pleasure.⁷⁵

Photo v (figure 14) indicates the extent to which the work ethic of Protestantism was hammered into students on a daily basis. While the symmetry of the dining room denotes the institutional emphasis on cleanliness and order, this photograph is only interesting as an iconic reproduction of the written text which bluntly exposes the hidden curriculum of work: 'There is no excellence without great labor.'⁷⁶ (Of course great labour is no assurance of excellence, as many Native Americans labouring in the cotton fields or in domestic service might attest.) That this otherwise uninteresting scene was photographed, reproduced as a postcard, and preserved in an archive suggests the interest the banner held for photographer and historian alike.

⁷⁴ Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 48.

⁷⁵ Secretary of the Interior Richard Ballinger quoted in Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 120.

⁷⁶ In a similar vein, one of Frances Benjamin Johnston's photographs from Carlisle taken between 1900 and 1903 shows a banner with the device 'Labor conquers all things'.



Figure 14. This photo of an empty dining room set for a meal is interesting because of the banner 'There is no excellence without great labor'. Source: postcard in the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002 n.d.



Figure 15. Girls cooking at the Phoenix Indian School circa 1900. Photographer Alfred Fenton Messinger. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

Labour

Although not directly pictured in the Sacaton album, labour was a central element of all Indian schools. In his chapter on the curriculum, Coleman described the 'half-and-half system'.⁷⁷ This term refers to the fact that for half of the day Indian children attended class for academic or vocational subjects including English, maths, art and so on. For the other half they performed manual labour. Photographs in archives show Indian students working at jobs including: gardening, canning, farming, caring for livestock, milking, splitting

⁷⁷ It is a logical inference that Indian students did labour in the laundry, cotton gin and dining rooms that were identified in the Sacaton album. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930*, 105ff.

wood, cooking, sewing, doing laundry, ironing, cabinet making, tinsmithing, blacksmithing, construction and printing. While some of the children in these photos are young, these are not pictures of child's play; they depict heavy industrial labour in factories and on farms. In 1881 Carlisle students produced nearly 9000 tin products with a value of 6300 dollars; students at Genoa in 1890 farmed 300 acres.⁷⁸ Coleman described education and acculturation goals for this labour:

Not only would manual labor, including 'outings' with white families, help teach Indian boys farming, blacksmithing, or tinsmithing, and girls the domestic arts. But such things, along with military discipline, would develop 'civilized habits', Western concepts of time, and a Christian respect for work.⁷⁹

More importantly, reproductive labour done by the students in effect made them pay for their education. Students manufactured their uniforms, grew and cooked food for the dining halls, laboured in the institution's industrial laundries, performed maintenance, and did the cleaning and grounds work. A student at Phoenix described scrubbing the floor in the dining hall (presumably the same one in photo v [figure 14] above):

If we were not finished when the 8:00 A.M. whistle sounded, the dining room matron would go around strapping us while we were still on our hands and knees. This was just the right position for a swat—all the matron had to do was raise our dresses and strap.⁸⁰

Students resented the forced labour that, if it had any educative intent in the first place, lost it in endless repetition to become mindless drudgery. In 1928 a highly critical report on Indian schools, the Meriam report, noted: 'Boarding schools are frankly supported in part by the labor of the students', who 'work for half a day and go to school for half a day'. The Meriam Report argued, 'The question may very properly be raised, as to whether much of the work of Indian children in boarding schools would not be prohibited in many states by child labor laws, notably the work in the machine laundries'.⁸¹

In their *History of Arizona*, Sloan and Adams pointed out the tragic choice produced by Indian vocational education:

The training, which emphasizes industrial work, teaches the Indian child the American language and American ways of living. When he finishes school, the Papago returns to his native haunts and either ekes out his livelihood as best he can, or he leaves his people again to seek labor in some white community. Young Papago women are constantly hired as house maids, or, more often, as wash women.⁸²

We can infer that the 'wash woman' in photo 62 (figure 16) learned to 'care for clothes' in the Indian school both because there was no place else to learn such a skill and because the schools intended to produce trained and 'Americanized' domestic workers to work for nearby Anglo families. By 1914, 169 Indian girls from the Phoenix Indian school were working out as domestic servants.⁸³

78 Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 149. Coleman quoted the principal at Carlisle as saying that students produced nearly a dollar's worth of products for every federal dollar invested. M.C. Coleman, 'The Symbiotic Embrace: American Indians, White Educators and the School, 1820s–1920s', *History of Education*, 25/1 (1996).

79 Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850–1930*, 112.

80 Anna Shaw quoted in Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 153.

81 M. Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, 3rd edn, revised and enlarged (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 20.

82 R.E. Sloan and W.R. Adams, *History of Arizona*, Vol. II (Phoenix, AZ: Record Publishers, 1930).

83 Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 52, 54, 100–1.



Figure 16. 'The home and lady who cares for my clothes'. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

It is instructive to remember that at the same time this campaign was being waged to inculcate Indian children with the work ethic, middle-class white children were going to summer camp to 'play Indian'. In a parody that could only begin after the Indians had been vanquished, Anglo America began an orgy of 'imperialist nostalgia' that continues to this day.⁸⁴ Philip Deloria provided a fascinating analysis of the romantic attraction Anglos had for the Indians they were trying to make extinct. At the same time Indian children were being marched, drilled and worked like adults, Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Woodcraft Indians and dozens of summer camp programmes attempted to put Anglo children in touch with 'the primitive' through camping out, dressing up and enacting made-up 'Indian' rituals.⁸⁵ Conversely, at Sacaton, as in other boarding schools, Indian children were strictly disciplined and their labour was essential to the school's survival. Trennert provided a glimpse of the conditions of institutional life for the little girls in white dresses depicted in Photo 39 (figure 17):

Women's activities were supervised by the matron, and in addition to classroom activities, they were put to work in such departments as housekeeping, sewing, kitchen and dining room, or laundry. Like the boys, much of their labor went into keeping the school solvent. They made, washed, and ironed their own clothes; cleaned their rooms; swept, dusted, and scrubbed the buildings; and prepared and served the food.⁸⁶

Conclusion

Beginning in the mid-1920s a national outcry arose to reform the Indian schools.⁸⁷ As previously noted, corporal punishment and jails were prohibited in 1929, and the boarding schools began to change in the 1930s during the Roosevelt administration. A controversial social worker, John Collier Sr, was appointed Indian Commissioner and began a 'New

84 Renato Rosaldo defined the term as 'a particular kind of nostalgia, often found under imperialism, where people mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed'. R. Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 69.

85 P.J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

86 Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 47.

87 Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*, 16ff. Trennert, 'Corporal Punishment and the Politics of Indian Reform', 603.



Figure 17. 'Girls of Co. C. Drill The little tots marching. From the collection of Jeremy Rowe, Mesa, Arizona. © 2002

Deal' for the American Indian. Collier set out to end the land allotment process that was breaking up the reservations and restore economic and cultural control to the tribes. The Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 ended the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887, which had sought to privatize Indian lands. The Johnson–O'Malley Act of that same year provided federal assistance to public schools to educate Indian children, and created a revenue source to cover the fact that Indian lands did not generate property taxes, which are the basis for school finance in the United States.⁸⁸

Slowly and in fits and starts boarding schools began to move away from military discipline and forced acculturation toward self-determination.⁸⁹ Native arts and crafts were taught, and some ceremonials were allowed on school grounds. Unfortunately, unlike Pratt who skilfully employed photography as a propaganda vehicle to exemplify 'assimilation', Collier's administration and those that followed failed to make effective use of photographs to promote these efforts. There is an element of irony here: Collier's son, John Collier Jr, became an ethnographer and pioneer in the use of cameras in field research. His book *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method* is still in use.⁹⁰ In it Collier advocated using cameras to record elements of culture and people's lives so that they might be studied and understood. *Visual Anthropology* offered an explicit alternative to the use of photography as propaganda; moreover, visual ethnographies of Native American life might have helped John Collier Sr in his political battles with advocates of enforced assimilation.

It is peculiar that photography of Indian schooling disappears under the Collier administration. Revelations of abuse, poor conditions, overcrowding, untrained teachers and the general failures of the system of Indian schools had been documented in the Meriam report of 1928. Documentary photographers such as Marion Post Wolcott, Ben Shawn and Dorothea Lange consciously used their cameras to expose discrimination,

88 DeJong, *Promises of the Past*.

89 K.R. Philip, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform 1920–1954* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1977).

90 J.J. Collier and M. Collier, *Visual Anthropology* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986).

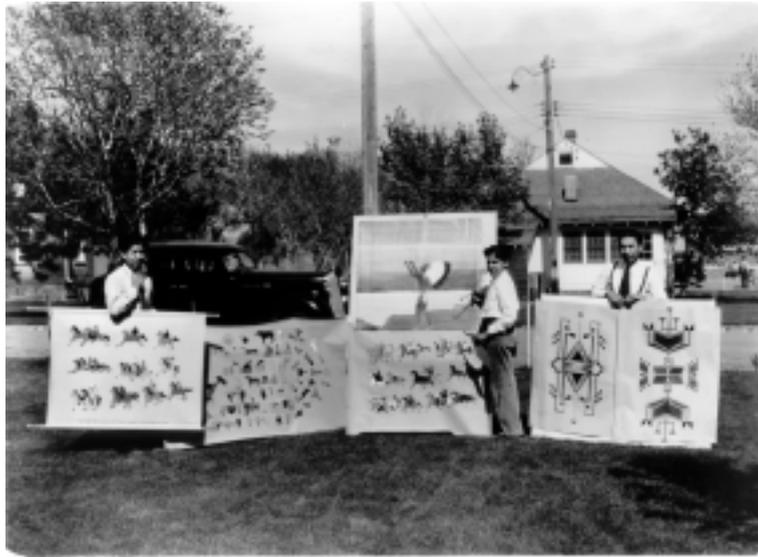


Figure 18. Pierre Indian School. Boys display their painting skills 1937. National Archives and Record Service (Bureau of Indian Affairs), NRE-75-PI(PHO)-79.

injustice, and poverty. But the great documentary project of the 1930s and 1940s directed by Roy Stryker for the Farm Security Administration and later the Office of War Information (FSA/OWI) largely ignored Indian schools. Except for a small series made in 1936 by Arthur Rothstein, 'Pueblo Indians in the Indian Service School. Taos, New Mexico', there are no photographs of Indian schools in the vast collection. Even John Collier Jr, who was one of the FSA photographers, ignored Indian schools and reservations.⁹¹ We actively sought Indian school images in other archives from the 1930s and 1940s with little success. Photo ix (figure 18) from the Pierre SD Indian School taken in 1937 is one of four views from what appears to be parents' day or a craft fair highlighting Native American arts and crafts. Archery and a costume play, Indian arts and crafts, traditional dance or ceremony may be read as depicting cultural integrity, unlike the earlier depictions of order and industry.

This returns us to the issue of how Indian school photos, including those in the album we examined, came to be seen as evidence of an oppressive system rather than progress in the civilization of savages. Much has happened in the more than 80 years since the photos were taken. Most importantly, Indians did not vanish, in many cases the tribes increased in population and have increasingly sought to maintain their culture; the civil rights movement changed forever America's view of 'the other'; and, under the impact of educational psychology, the notion that children need to be disciplined through regimentation and punishment is going the way of the buggy

91 More than 164,000 photographs from the FSA/OWI have been digitized and are online in a searchable archive [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/fsaquery.html>]. While not perfect, the search engine facilitates the electronic retrieval of images; a search for photos of school retrieved 4465 records, Cf. E. Margolis, 'Liberal Documentary Goes to School: Farm Security Administration Photographs of Students, Teachers and Schools', in *American Visual Cultures*, edited by D. Holloway and John Beck (London and New York: Continuum, forthcoming).

whip.⁹² Similarly, most people, not just scholars, are aware of issues of brainwashing, deprogramming and the problems of total institutions. American culture moved beyond the philosophy of cultural genocide that was the genesis of the boarding school movement. The worldview that supported Indian schools faded into historical obscurity, as has much of the photographic record of the era.

We have argued for, and attempted by example to demonstrate, the value of photographs as data for historical and social research. Although we attempted a deeper understanding of these socially constructed images by providing context and discussion of the environment in which they were made, when we view the images of these individuals and events we cannot help but see them through a filter of today's cultural environment. Despite captions and all the tricks of the photographer's trade, the images can be fixed in the dark room, but their meaning will continue to develop.

92 Hoxie concluded that Indian culture provided 'invisible storehouses for values and traditions'. Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 243. It is interesting to consider as Trennert wrote: 'Most Indian parents would have been horrified at the thought of striking their children.' The view of Native American parents once considered 'indolent' and 'primitive' is very much in keeping with the modern views of child abuse. Laws even against spanking have been passed in several European countries. Trennert, 'Corporal Punishment and the Politics of Indian Reform', 596.