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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

THE INDIAN INDUSTRIES LEAGUE AND ITS SUPPORT OF AMERICAN
INDIAN ARTS, 1893-1922: A STUDY OF CHANGING ATTITUDES
TOWARD INDIAN WOMEN AND ASSIMILATIONIST POLICY

by

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B.A., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1988

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requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the history of the Indian Industries League (IIL), a Boston reform organization established in 1893 to foster "civilized" industries among American Indians. The original aim was to assimilate Indians into the national life, but by 1900 the goal had shifted to promoting Indian arts. This study examines why so many Indian reformers abandoned their assimilationist goals after 1900. It finds that these reformers changed their minds not, as other scholars have suggested, because they had despaired of Indians' ability to assimilate, but because they came to value Indian artistic production and, by extension, Indian cultures themselves.

Chapter 1 argues that the IIL organized to help Indian women develop civilized domestic industries in response to prevailing negative images of Indian women, images expressed in the literary works of Frances Sparhawk, the IIL's founder. Chapter 2 looks outside the Indian reform movement at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, and at a subsequent decade of Arts and Crafts Movement rhetoric, both of which recast "primitive" women as skilled craftswomen and articulated defenses of Indian arts that the IIL itself would

use after 1900. The third chapter suggests that female field workers affiliated with the IIL increasingly reported their growing respect for Indian cultures and pressured the IIL's leadership to rethink some negative stereotypes about Indians. Chapter 4 describes how Nellie Doubleday and other influential IIL members seized on field workers' reports, extolled the beauty of Indian arts, pointed to the income potential of such arts, and redirected the IIL's support to a range of native industries -- Oklahoma beadwork, California basketry, Pueblo pottery, Navajo weaving -- that would benefit Indian women. Chapter 5 argues that in the IIL's efforts to revive, protect, and promote Navajo weaving, it anticipated some policy positions taken by later generations of Indian reformers. The final chapter analyzes the writings of IIL member Constance Goddard Du Bois to demonstrate that in their promotion of Indian arts, reformers could develop probing criticisms of American culture and sensitive understandings of Indian cultures.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Connecticut Indian Association
CIAP	Cambridge Indian Association Papers
CHS	Cambridge Historical Society
ILL	Indian Industries League
IRA	Indian Rights Association
MEAP	Mary Ellicott Arnold Papers
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society
MIA	Massachusetts Indian Association
NEWPA	New England Woman's Press Association
NIA	National Indian Association
OHS	Ohio Historical Society
OIA	Office of Indian Affairs
PCGD	Papers of Constance Goddard Du Bois
PWNIA	Papers of the Women's National Indian Association
WKMP	Warren King Moorehead Papers
WNIA	Women's National Indian Association

INTRODUCTION

On fashionable Newbury Street in Boston, Massachusetts, a shopper might be drawn to Decor International, one of many stores in the Boston area where "useful" ethnic arts from around the world can be purchased. Some of these stores, such as Pier One, belong to national chains, and their inexpensive merchandise raises the image of low-paid workers. But Decor International, by openly confronting the issue of worker exploitation, represents what marketing experts are calling a "new trend" in imported goods. The store features a prominent display of clothing from "Marketplace: Handiwork of India," a nonprofit company whose "purpose is employing Indian women who live in poverty and suffer under abusive situations." The company's catalog tells the stories of some of its 400 seamstresses, stressing that the American consumer's purchases help these women achieve economic independence. The women make clothing based on traditional patterns and incorporating tribal myths, although the company's founder emphasizes that the visual beauty of this clothing is a sad contrast to the degraded poverty and abusive environment in which the seamstresses live.¹

This new trend in the marketing of third-world goods combines a consumer desire for handcrafted "native" objects with a consumer concern for the condition of the artisans who manufacture these goods. One buys

¹ Christine Gardner, "Sewing Threads of Hope," The TAB [Natick] 19 Sept. 1995, pp. 20-21, 23.

something beautiful and relatively inexpensive without feeling that a faceless worker somewhere has been exploited. On the contrary, the purchase actually assists the worker in achieving a measure of dignity and independence. But is this trend really "new?" If one accepts that American Indians living on reservations at the turn of this century endured third world conditions, the answer is no.²

In 1893 a Boston woman, Frances Campbell Sparhawk, joined with many of her friends from the American Indian reform movement to start an organization with a purpose similar to that of Marketplace: Handiwork of India. The organization they built, the Indian Industries League (1893-1922), hoped to alleviate reservation Indians' poverty and prepare them for American citizenship by teaching them "civilized," self-supporting industries such as blacksmithing, harness making, and dress making. Through the dignity of wage-earning labor, the reformers imagined, individual Indians would sever tribal bonds, emerge from reservation degradation, and take their rightful place beside white Americans. Something surprising happened, however, as the League struggled to find an industry to support: it settled on native arts.³

Sparhawk and the other founding members of the Indian Industries League were part of a nineteenth-century Protestant reform effort to Americanize the Indians by eradicating all aspects of their traditional cultures

² This study will use "American Indian" and "Indian" to refer to the original inhabitants of North America.

³ I settled on the term "arts" rather than "craft arts" or "handicrafts" because I want to draw attention to the idea that even objects made for the curio trade should be considered for their cultural meaning.

-- language, dress, religion, gender roles -- through education and the break-up of tribal landholdings.⁴ The Indian Industries League was merely the last in a series of nineteenth-century Indian reform organizations dedicated to assimilating Indians. Before it came the Indian Rights Association (1882), the Boston Indian Citizenship Committee (1879), the Women's National Indian Association (1879), and the Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indians (1883), an annual gathering of reformers and politicians working to shape Indian policy.

The impetus for these earlier organizations had come from reformers' perception that President Ulysses Grant's post-Civil War "Peace Policy" had

⁴ There is a rich literature on this topic. See, for example, Henry Eugene Fritz, The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860-1890 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963); Robert H. Keller, Jr., American Protestantism and United States Indian Policy, 1869-82 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Christine Bolt, American Indian Policy and American Reform: Case Studies of the Campaign to Assimilate the American Indians (London and Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987); Brian Dippie, The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1982); William Hagan, The Indian Rights Association: The Herbert Welsh Years, 1882-1904 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985); Donal F. Lindsey, Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923 (Urbana & Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1995); Robert Mardock, The Reformers and the American Indian (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971); Francis Prucha, ed., Americanizing the American Indian: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian," 1865-1900 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); Prucha, American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976); Prucha, The Churches and the Indian Schools, 1888-1912 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); Prucha, The Great Father: The U.S. Government and the American Indian 2 Vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984). Along with Prucha's Great Father, the best of these works is Frederick E. Hoxie's A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

failed. Grant had allied the federal government with churches to solve the Indian problem by assimilating Indians through peaceful methods such as reservation schools rather than by exterminating them through war. Critics complained, however, that corruption and misery typified the Indian reservations, making them poor environments for civilizing work. The policy's failure was vividly brought to the public's attention when a group of Cheyenne Indians protesting the conditions on their reservation were slaughtered by the United States Army in 1879. In response, a handful of Indian reform organizations sprang up to lobby for policy changes which could ensure the rapid assimilation of Indians and destruction of their reservation system. Certain that off-reservation education could speed Indians along the path of social evolution, these organizations pushed to replace or supplement missionary schools with government-run boarding schools such as Richard Pratt's Carlisle Indian Industrial School (1879). Their crowning achievement was the 1887 General Allotment Act (known as the Dawes Act, after its sponsor, Senator Henry Dawes), a piece of legislation which provided for the allotment of reservations into 160 acre parcels for each Indian, theoretically enabling each Indian to become an independent farmer; after a number of years, citizenship would be granted. Any remaining tribal lands would be sold to whites, and the reservations would fade away, the tribal bonds forever severed, the Indians absorbed into white American society.

Though the League was a late-comer to this reform movement, entering after the more obvious public policy goals had been achieved, its leaders boasted experience in a number of the earlier organizations, especially

in the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), which included numerous state and local branches throughout the northeast. Though an important force in securing the 1887 Dawes Act, the WNIA subsequently concentrated its efforts on "practical" activity rather than on political lobbying. Recognizing that allotment's success depended on Indians' ability to acquire white American values and skills, the WNIA funded a network of female field workers who by example and instruction were to civilize Indians. The WNIA gave its attention almost exclusively to Indian women, in the belief that women were "natural" civilizers. The WNIA also acted upon an old stereotype that Indian women were "squaw drudges," degraded and abused by men within tribal cultures; assimilating Indians required a radical transformation of traditional Indian gender roles.

As originally conceived, the League shared the WNIA's core beliefs and goals, differing mainly in its emphasis on establishing wage-earning industries for Indian women rather than simply teaching domestic skills. Frances Sparhawk's novels and articles about Indians vividly express the prevailing negative stereotypes of traditional Indian women and tribal life which fueled reformers' zeal. In her stories, the heroines and heroes are Indians educated at eastern boarding schools; the villains are traditional-minded Indians, often old women. The moral of each story is the same: educated Indians who returned to reservations faced enormous difficulty in applying their civilized knowledge because traditional Indians and corrupt white Indian agents conspired to thwart their attempts at industry. With nowhere to turn for moral or financial support, the educated Indians often "returned to the blanket," accepting the Indian traditions which the boarding

schools had tried to erase. Here the League planned to be of aid. By funding industrial projects and loaning money to individual Indians, the League would support the self-motivated returned students and provide employment possibilities for other Indians. In actuality, the League's efforts to establish civilized industries failed before the end of the century. Some individual loans were made, but starting civilized industries such as saw or textile mills proved complex and expensive.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, however, several factors set the League on a new and unexpected course of action: the promotion of Indian arts. If one takes art to represent cultural values, this shift in policy was startling. How could a group of reformers dedicated to eradicating all traces of Indian culture and assimilating Indians into American society suddenly decide to encourage, revive, and sell Indian arts? The answer is a combination of broader societal shifts in attitudes toward Indian culture, growing respect for Indians among field workers, the influence of several key League members, and simple pragmatism. The result of this shifting policy, however, created serious challenges to the assimilationist project.

The image of the Indian woman as a "squaw drudge" underwent a crucial revision during the 1890s as different groups of white people began to emphasize primitive women's artistic talents. I use the Woman's Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition as a convenient marker of this new perception. In the Woman's Building, fairgoers saw an array of women's arts and industries produced by "primitive" peoples from around the world (including America) displayed as evidence of women's creative power and

their contributions to civilized industries.⁵ A number of speakers at the Woman's Congress held during the Fair addressed the topic of primitive women's work, arguing that primitive women demonstrated a wider range of domestic skills than did many modern housewives, especially in terms of artistic creativity. The Arts and Crafts Movement reinforced this latter idea, extolling the decorative virtues of American Indian baskets, blankets, and pottery. By the end of the decade Indian women had become rather firmly identified with the production of beautiful utilitarian art objects.

Simultaneously, other white women began to challenge the assumption that a primitive lifestyle was inherently oppressive for women. Some speakers at the Woman's Congress claimed that primitive women actually were happier than modern women. This claim could rest on either the idea that primitive women's duties revolved more closely around the home, or on the idea that primitive women's work was more meaningful than modern women's. Suffragists examined history books and declared that American Indian women enjoyed greater political power and social rights than did their white sisters. Newspapers and popular magazines picked up on these trends and published articles about Indian women's rights.

These revisions of Indian women's image owed something to anthropology, to the work of scientists such as Otis T. Mason and Alice Fletcher whose writings about Indians influenced some key members of the

⁵ For the most part, I will use the words "civilized," "primitive," and "savage" without quotation marks, although it should be understood that these terms are simply those used in the primary texts I examine. I do not mean to imply that I accept any of these categories as accurate descriptions of reality. It is important, however, to realize that many of the people examined here used "primitive" and "Indian" interchangeably.

League. Mason, in his book Woman's Share in Primitive Culture (1894), detailed the numerous contributions women had made to the foundations of civilization.⁶ Civilization, in his opinion, began when men organized and took over the industries women had developed as individual homemakers. Fletcher, once a committed assimilationist, argued in public that her studies of Indian cultures revealed that Indian women were neither degraded nor abused in historical times, and that poverty, not tradition, accounted for any present problems. With more field experience, she decided that even present Indian communities were not as "degraded" as once imagined. League members Nellie Doubleday and Constance Goddard Du Bois, who were instrumental in persuading the League to promote Indian basketry, drew explicitly on Mason's work to support their argument that Indian arts were not "savage" but civilized. They also shared Fletcher's opinion about the status of Indian women.

Another influence on the League's support of native arts came from female field workers who in their letters and reports increasingly painted a picture of Indian life much brighter than that offered in Sparhawk's novels. Sent to teach Indians domestic skills and civilized gender roles, these women often found themselves living in conditions that defied white style domesticity and required that they assume roles generally taken by men. As they began to perceive themselves differently, they relaxed their resistance to Indian culture and gender roles. No longer was their primary concern discouraging Indian traditions; rather, they labored in whatever ways they

⁶ Otis T. Mason, Woman's Share in Primitive Culture (1894. New York: D. Appleton, 1899).

could to help the Indians, many of whom became their good friends. The more radical among these workers even declared the superiority of aspects of Indian culture. All, however, were linked by a willingness to aid Indian women in their attempts to earn money through the sale of their art.

Finally, pragmatism dictated that the League abandon the dream of establishing civilized industries and concentrate instead on developing the native industries which already existed or could be easily revived. Such industries had minimal start-up costs, required no special training on the field workers' part, appealed to the Indians themselves, promised to provide much-needed income for Indian women, and were clearly desired by American consumers. In fact, Indians had made arts for the tourist trade throughout the nineteenth century, and by the 1880s this trade had become rather extensive in some regions of the country. The League focused its attention partly on bringing in Indians who were not presently active participants in that trade. Most important though, it bought Indian arts directly from the field, selling them in Boston and then using the profits to buy more goods; in this manner it imagined it could provide a greater economic benefit to the Indians than could the traders and collectors whom it saw as underpaying Indians for their labor. In the League's decade plus involvement with Indian arts, it affected the shape of some Indian arts and anticipated actions taken by new reform groups established in the 1920s.

The promotion of Indian arts had to be reconciled with the long-standing assimilation project, specifically with the goal of ensuring the Indians' equal status in American society. But since total assimilation and the promotion of native arts were apparently in conflict, logically the latter

could be justified only if the former were shown to be somehow flawed. If not, those less convinced of the Indians' equal humanity might comfortably conclude that the encouragement of native arts was but one aspect of an industrial education which would prepare Indians for separation from rather than integration into American society. Over the years, the League did backtrack on some aspects of the assimilationist program by encouraging the transfer of tribal knowledge from old to young Indians and acting to prevent the allotment of tribal lands which contained important basket-making materials. In its annual reports the League struggled to justify its actions by insisting that the preservation of some tribal traditions was compatible with the goal of assimilation; in the new paradigm, the Indian^r would enrich American culture with native contributions. Again, this promise of cultural pluralism anticipated the direction of Indian policy later in the century.⁷

Individual League members, however, proposed radical challenges to the assimilationist project on the theory that American civilization was not a worthy goal. During the course of her investigations into Mission Indian art and mythology, Constance Goddard Du Bois constructed a reasoned defense of Indian culture which elevated the position of the Indian woman and disputed the notion of inherent Euro-American cultural superiority. While her views remained largely hidden in her private notes and letters, and her mental breakdown in 1909 prevented their wider distribution, Du Bois achieved an understanding of and sympathy for Indian culture that compare favorably with statements by some of today's Indian artists and leaders.

⁷ Kenneth Philp, John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954 (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1977).

The notes of cultural primitivism sounded by Du Bois and others around her were not unique to the reformers in this study. Their cultural primitivism differed, however, in a significant way from previous manifestations in that the context for their cultural primitivism was the Indian reform movement, which had historically found little to praise in Indian life. While to varying degrees these reformers extolled Indian virtues as a way to criticize white American vices, their criticisms revolved around attitudes and policies which threatened on one side Indians' lives and economic survival and on the other their cultural viability. These reformers did not invent an image of Indians which would serve an interest beyond their reform work.⁸ On the contrary, their actual experiences with Indians shattered the invented image (the squaw drudge) which they had previously used to justify their own activity. These reformers dedicated their lives, and in the case of Du Bois one might say gave her life, to securing justice and prosperity for Indians.

The history of the Indian Industries League offers us a small window onto an understudied period of Indian reform. Most studies of Indian reform organizations and government Indian policy end in the late 1880s or pick up in the 1920s. By filling this gap, the League's history enables us to make reasoned arguments about a single organization's modification of its goals and strategies. There has been some debate over why the assimilationist

⁸ By contrast, the environmental movement is often cited as an example of the way that an invented image of Indians (in this case as caretakers of the earth) can be put to a use which does not directly benefit Indians themselves. See, for example, Denise Low, "Contemporary Reinvention of Chief Seattle: Variant Texts of Chief Seattle's 1854 Speech," *American Indian Quarterly* 19 (Summer 1995): 407-421.

activity of reform groups seemed to decline after 1900. Frederic Hoxie has argued that this decline reflected a loss of faith in the Indians' ability to assimilate; policy makers resigned themselves to the idea that Indians would take a permanent place at the fringes of American society. While such a resignation seems to have typified the Indian Office during this period, the League and the various reformers connected with it did not abandon their belief that Indians were perfectly capable of competing with whites in all intellectual respects; the promotion of Indian arts represented economic relief for Indians and a deeper appreciation of Indian cultures, not a retreat from principles of equality.⁹

A study of the League also adds a new dimension to the growing literature about early twentieth-century American Indian art history. The central studies in this field have focused on the role of anthropologists,

⁹ For several reasons, I have given minimal attention to the government role in developing native industries. The people and organizations I examined seemed for the most part to work without government oversight; in fact, the League's efforts to establish a government Indian arts and crafts bureau failed. Although the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) reworked its educational policy at the turn of the century to permit the teaching of native arts, most of the field workers connected with the League worked outside the large schools that might have hired native arts teachers; the native arts they encouraged and bought were made by older Indians or by those not in school at all. On the other hand, the study points to the cooperation the OIA demonstrated by requesting field matrons to correspond with the League about native industries; this cooperation, however, cost the government nothing. Likewise, the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs during the first decade of the twentieth century included ritual calls for greater toleration of Indian traditions; how or whether those calls were translated into action at the local level is a separate question. The starting point for a reexamination of government Indian policy during the early twentieth century might be a series of case studies of individual Indian schools to determine the extent and impact of any native arts instruction.

traders, private collectors, or artists in collecting, promoting, shaping, and interpreting Indian arts.¹⁰ The role of Indian reformers in these activities has gone relatively unexamined; even when figures from the Indian reform movement are studied, they are usually considered in the context of their artistic or scientific interests.¹¹ What one sees in the history of the League's involvement with native arts, however, is the central importance of a desire to aid individual Indians and specific tribes. The present study offers a close examination of a single reform group, but it points to the existence of a loosely organized network of missionaries, government workers, and local Indian associations who participated to varying degrees in shaping the early twentieth-century production and collection of Indian arts. As the final chapter of this dissertation reveals, one of the benefits of studying these reformers is that their interest in individual Indians makes them good sources for developing concrete pictures of the Indian artists themselves.¹²

¹⁰ Examples include Janet Catherine Berlo, ed., The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting (Seattle: Univ of Washington, 1992); Douglas Cole, Captured Heritage (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985). Molly H. Mullin argues that intellectuals' early twentieth century interest in Southwestern native arts reflected an anti-assimilationist desire to preserve rather than destroy cultural difference. Mullin, "Consuming the American Southwest: Culture, Art, and Difference" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1993).

¹¹ See, for example, W. Jackson Rushing who looks at the early twentieth-century artists/reformers from New Mexico. Rushing, Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde: A History of Cultural Primitivism (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995).

¹² An obvious question raised by this study is how Indians themselves reacted to, perceived, and perhaps shaped the efforts of white reformers to promote their arts. Later Indian-led reform groups such as the Society of American Indians (1911) included the promotion of Indian arts among their causes. In addition, the steadfast refusal of boarding school educated Indians to renounce their cultures must have had some influence

In a small way then, this study begins the process of turning our attention away from the museums and intellectuals who collected Indian arts and back toward the Indians who created those arts.

on white leaders' decision to modify assimilationist goals. Oral histories might offer voices from reservation Indians, those who were in contact with the League's field workers.

CHAPTER 1

"TAKE PITY ON MY WOMEN. . . . GIVE A FUTURE TO MY WOMEN":
THE PRE-1893 IMAGE OF INDIAN WOMEN AND THE GENESIS OF THE
INDIAN INDUSTRIES LEAGUE¹

This chapter describes the genesis of the Indian Industries League, arguing that the organization developed in response to prevailing negative stereotypes of the status of Indian women in their native cultures. The women who founded the League were connected with a major force in the Indian reform movement: the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA). From the WNIA came both the conviction that women (white and Indian) had a special role to play in the civilizing process and that Indians needed to exchange Indian homes for white ones, tribal connections for nuclear familial ones. This latter conviction stemmed from a belief that Indian women in the tribal environment were degraded and abused by Indian men. In short, traditional Indian culture in all its forms needed to be obliterated. This chapter looks at these ideas about Indians largely through the eyes of the League's founder, author and activist Frances Campbell Sparhawk. By examining her articles, stories, and novels in the context of white women's reform activity in the 1880s and early 1890s, one gets a vivid picture of how the League's members perceived the lives of Indian women.

¹ Quotation is attributed to Sitting Bull. It appears as the epigraph in an article about field matrons. Annie Beecher Scoville, "The Field Matron's Mission," Outlook 68 (Aug. 24, 1901): 975.

One also comes to understand how these white women imagined they could play a significant role in alleviating the Indian women's perceived troubles.

INDIAN REFORM AS WOMAN'S WORK

At the 1892 Annual Meeting of the Women's National Indian Association, Frances Campbell Sparhawk proposed the establishment of an independent Indian Industries League, which she imagined "would open individual opportunities to individual Indians and concomitantly encourage self-supporting industries in Indian communities."² Inviting General Oliver Otis Howard to become a League vice-president, Sparhawk opined that "Nothing is now more needed in the whole range of Indian work than holding these young Indians to the industries they have learned at school, and than keeping them from a relapse into barbarism."³ Her idea was well-received by the many New England women in the WNIA, and in late 1893, under Sparhawk's guidance, the Indian Industries League formed at a meeting in the office of the Citizens' Law and Order League at 50 Bromfield St. in Boston. Mrs. Sarah E. Hooper presided over the first meeting,

² The only full-length study of the WNIA is by Helen M. Wanken, "'Woman's Sphere' and Indian Reform: The Women's National Indian Association, 1879-1901" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1981). For an excellent article-length assessment of the WNIA, see Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Nineteenth Century Women and Reform: The Women's National Indian Association," *American Indian Quarterly* 14 (Winter 1990): 1-18. Quotation from Wanken, p. 238; information about the 1892 WNIA meeting can also be found in Indian Industries League, *Record Book I*, Feb. 3, 1894, p. 19, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.

³ Frances Campbell Sparhawk to O. O. Howard, Feb. 16, 1894, Oliver Otis Howard Papers, Bowdoin College Library Special Collections, Brunswick, Maine.

Sparhawk described the concept of the League, "Mr. L. Edwin Dudley spoke of the Carlisle Indian work in which he had a part," and Mary E. Dewey, Mrs. James C. Fisk, and Mrs. Sara T. Kinney attended. By the fourth meeting three more key members were in attendance: Sibyl Carter, Elizabeth Bullard, and Merial Dorchester.⁴ Leaders in the Indian reform movement, these and the other women who joined the League in its first few months approached Indian affairs from a self-consciously woman's organization (WNIA) and in a way that stressed the perceived needs of Indian women.

The founding mothers of the Indian Industries League were tied together by several factors. All had been active in the WNIA (through its branch associations) for some time, were more keenly interested in education or "industry" than in political rights for Indians, and (with the exception of Dewey, Sparhawk, and Carter) were married. Together, they constituted a group of middle aged and older women (at forty-six, Sparhawk was the youngest) with relatively conservative ideas about women's roles.⁵ Not until the twentieth century would the League show much interest in challenging government Indian policy, and even then its battles were small-scale and led by male members. These women were organizers, and just as their knowledge of Indians came to them indirectly, so too their help was indirect. Their role was to develop and guide organizations which could then support

⁴ IIL, Record Book I, Nov. 23, 1893, p. 9, MHS; *ibid*, Jan. 29, 1894, p. 15, MHS.

⁵ For example, in 1891 Bullard wrote in connection to a conflict with the Alabama legislature over Indians and the liquor laws, "Not being a Suffragist, I am not anxious to besiege legislatures." Bullard to Herbert Welsh, January 19, 1891, Indian Rights Association Papers (Reel 8), quoted in Wanken, p. 133.

the actual work of those in the field, and to effect this goal they created the Indian Industries League.

The League's leader was Frances Sparhawk; as its secretary through the first decade of the twentieth century, she kept the record books and wrote the annual reports.⁶ The daughter of Dr. Thomas and Elizabeth Sparhawk, Frances Sparhawk was born on July 28, 1847 in Amesbury, Massachusetts, where she enjoyed a warm friendship with her famous neighbor, John Greenleaf Whittier, another prominent figure in the Indian reform movement.⁷ This friendship likely influenced her decision to pursue a writing career. In 1867 she graduated as the valedictorian from the Ipswich Female Seminary and put her education to work by writing for magazines and newspapers; by 1881 she had written the first of her many novels.⁸

⁶ The secretary was also the general manager, and most requests for aid came through her. Even after Sparhawk resigned as secretary, she continued to be a regular attendee at the monthly executive committee meetings.

⁷ Biographical information comes from several sources: National Cyclopedia of American Biography, 1909 ed., s.v. "Sparhawk, Frances Campbell"; American Women, 1893 (Reprint, Detroit: Gale Research, 1973), s.v. "Sparhawk, Miss Frances Campbell,"; Who Was Who in America with World Notables Vol. 4, 1961-68, s.v. "Sparhawk, Frances Campbell." Sparhawk's familiarity with Whittier is evident in the numerous ways she showed her respect for him while she edited the Carlisle Indian School paper, The Red Man (1887-89). She often placed a line or two from a Whittier poem at the head of the lead column on page one, she mentioned him in various articles, and she devoted the entire front page of the Dec. 1887 issue to a celebration of his 80th birthday. She also wrote several articles about Whittier dating from the 1890s and 1900s, an introduction to a 1908 edition of Whittier's Snowbound, and her 1925 book-length reminiscence of the poet.

⁸ In 1881 her first book, A Lazy Man's Work (New York: H. Holt), was published, and she followed it with two romance novels published serially in the New England Magazine (1884) and the Christian Union (1886). Several of her seventeen or so novels that followed originally appeared in these two

Sparhawk turned her pen to articles about Indians in the mid-1880s, worked at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School from 1887 to 1889, visited the Haskell Indian School, and became an active member of the WNIA in the early 1890s. In the dedication to her first Indian novel she credited her mother with inspiring her to work for the Indian cause: "To the memory of my mother, who from the time of the Nez Perce War [1877] and the plea of Chief Joseph questioned why the Indians were kept in Reservations."⁹

The other founding members of the League had equally long resumé of Indian reform work, and their cross-membership in WNIA branch associations benefitted the League by broadening its potential membership base and enabling it to pool resources on some tasks.¹⁰ Sibyl Carter was well-

magazines and in the Congregationalist, another religious journal of the time which supported Indian causes with editorials and muckraking fiction. Her Indian novel Onoqua (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1892) appeared in the Congregationalist in serial form before its publication.

⁹ Frances Sparhawk, "Dedication," A Chronicle of Conquest (Boston: D. Lathrop, 1890). Sparhawk's mother was one of many New Englanders whose feelings were aroused by the struggle of Chief Joseph to protect his Nez Perce homeland against the U.S. army in 1877, one of several events around this time that drew concerned whites into the cause and led to the formation of such organizations as the Boston Indian Citizenship Committee and the Women's National Indian Association.

¹⁰ For example, Hooper's position in the Massachusetts Indian Association (MIA) proved useful to the IIL, as she was able to serve as a go-between who could coordinate their resources. Her association also gave the IIL prestige and legitimacy. In 1904 she arranged for the MIA to pay \$400 per year in co-support (with the League) of missionaries to the Yuma Indians (Arizona), Caro. G. [or T. - first name and initial illegible] W. Bird to Hooper, June 6, 1904, Sarah E. Hooper Papers, MHS. In the winter of 1903, when the League's future was briefly in question, she explored the possibility of a merger with the MIA, and in 1904 she arranged for the MIA to help fund League president John Lockwood's tour of western Indian reservations, IIL, Record Book II, Nov. 5, 1903, p. 162; *ibid*, Dec. 3, 1903, p. 166; IIL, Record Book

known in reform circles for starting lace industries among the Indians which epitomized civilized ideas of industry and womanhood; she called lace work "industry for mothers" and saw it as an antidote to primitivism.¹¹ Merial Dorchester brought impeccable qualifications as the wife of the Superintendent of Indian Schools and as someone with first-hand knowledge of reservation conditions. The unchallenged matriarch of the group, Sarah E. Hooper, boasted a distinguished history of service to various reform organizations: the New England Branch of the Sanitary Commission, the Soldiers Relief Society (Boston), the Soldiers' Memorial Society (organized to establish schools for the freed blacks), and the Boston Cooking School. In 1883 she joined a newly formed branch of the WNIA, the Massachusetts Indian Association (MIA), in which she remained active through at least 1907.¹² Sara T. Kinney (1842-1922), an original member of the League's executive committee and a vice president until the League's demise in 1921, had been

III, Jan. 7, 1904, p. 1; *ibid*, May 3, 1904, p. 22, MHS. The League also made important contacts in the CIA through Sara Kinney.

¹¹ "Industry for Mothers," New York Tribune, 22 June 1902, p. 6 (II). For histories of Carter's Indian lace industry, see Jane W. Guthrie, "Lace-Making Among the Indians," Outlook 66 (Sept. 1, 1900): 59-62; and Kate C. Duncan, "American Indian Lace Making," American Indian Art Magazine 5 (May 1980): 29-35, 80. Carter's first name was spelled "Sybil" by those in the Indian organizations, but I have followed the spelling used by Duncan and Guthrie.

¹² Information about Hooper taken from the following items in the Sarah E. Hooper Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society: Sarah E. Hooper, journal, 1855; newspaper clipping; report of the Soldiers' Memorial Society Annual Meeting, June 20, 1871; an 1884 invitation to a reception for the Boston Cooking School; an undated fourth annual circular of the Boston Cooking School; Hooper's work for the Christian Register and membership in the WNIA referred to in three letters (two from Feb. 6, 1883, the third from April, 1883) from Henry W. Foote to Hooper. She is referred to as Sarah I. Hooper in all League documents.

an active member of the Connecticut Indian Association (CIA), another branch of the WNIA, from its 1880 origins, becoming its president in 1883 and directing its Homebuilding Division.¹³ Elizabeth Bullard was a member of the MIA, its secretary since 1885 and president by 1888; she also headed the Indian Education Committee of the WNIA from 1888 until its 1893 demise.¹⁴ Mary E. Dewey (1821-1910) brought a deep and often gloomily pessimistic knowledge about organizations, being a long-time member of the MIA, and its corresponding secretary from 1886 to 1901.¹⁵

One of the League's only male founders, L. Edwin Dudley, used the first meeting to mention his experience at the the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Sparhawk too had worked there in the late 1880s, and anyone interested in Indian reform was familiar with the ideas espoused by the Carlisle School founder, Richard Henry Pratt. While the WNIA and the League gave special attention to the plight of Indian women, many of their fundamental ideas about assimilation and Indians, particularly about the transformative power of education, had been given a national audience by Pratt through his school and its newspaper, The Red Man.¹⁶ Many of Sparhawk's articles appeared in this paper, which she edited while working at

¹³ Joan Mark, A Stranger in Her Native Land: Alice Fletcher and the American Indians (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), p. 104; Wanken, p. 62. Kinney was the wife of the Hartford Courant editor, John C. Kinney.

¹⁴ Wanken, pp. 109, 149.

¹⁵ According to Wanken, Dewey peppered the MIA reports with ritual predictions of failure (117). Dewey's thoughts can also be had in the frequent articles she wrote for the Boston reform magazine Lend a Hand.

¹⁶ Also named at various times, Big Morning Star, The Morning Star, and Eadle Ketah Toh.

Carlisle from December 1887 to 1889.¹⁷ A brief consideration of Pratt's project and of Sparhawk's writings on the Indian problem will help us understand part of the reform tradition from which the League grew.

Pratt was famous at the time for his efforts to assimilate the Indian, infamous now for his oft-repeated conviction: "Kill the Indian, save the man." He believed that the best way to assimilate Indians into American life was to remove them while children from their reservations, educate them at Eastern boarding schools where they could learn the skills and values of white Americans, and hire them out to work for local farmers (the "outing system"). A military man, Pratt favored discipline for his students: military style uniforms, cropped hair, drilling, and marching (the Carlisle marching band was quite famous) were central components of the Carlisle system. All traces of Indian culture were to be rooted out. Yet, Pratt's scorn of Indian culture was balanced by his faith in the equality of the individual Indian. If only the Indian received some education and industrial training, and were given the opportunity to work, he would certainly be assimilated into American society as easily as any immigrant. The barriers to such assimilation, however, were the reservation system which kept Indians confined to areas where there was no work, the racism of white Americans, political corruption that sent irresponsible Indian agents to oversee the

¹⁷ Sparhawk joined the Carlisle staff as a clerk at a pay rate of \$600 per year. Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1888 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), p. 384.

reservations, and the desire of older Indians to preserve their traditional cultures rather than accept the white one.¹⁸

Sparhawk's contributions to the Carlisle paper nicely illustrate the range and focus of her philosophy about the Indian problem prior to the formation of the League. In these articles we see her articulating familiar planks of the Indian rights movement. She pointed to the responsibility of whites, past and present, for the present condition of Indians and to the continuing danger "bad" whites posed by corrupting, tempting, and provoking Indians into immoral behavior.¹⁹ She warned against the barriers native languages and tribal loyalties posed to the assimilation of the Indian.²⁰ She praised the essential goodness of individual Indians and argued the benefits of off-reservation education.²¹ She summoned the civilizing power of Christian communities, arguing that integrating Indian children into white society would cleanse the "incrustations of savagery and filth."²² Yet she insisted that the Indians' savagery was a product of tribal culture, not of race.²³ She compared Indians on reservations to Old Testament Jews in Egypt; if called off the reservations, Indians, like Jews,

¹⁸ Richard Henry Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904, ed. Robert M. Utley (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964).

¹⁹ Sparhawk, "What Can We Do For the Indians," The Morning Star (July 1886): 1.

²⁰ Sparhawk, "Government Tyranny," The Red Man (March 1888): 4; Sparhawk, "The Vernacular Again," The Red Man (May 1889): 5.

²¹ Sparhawk, "Both Sides: A Fact," The Red Man (March 1889): 5; Sparhawk, "An Indian Silversmith," The Red Man (July & Aug. 1889): 7.

²² Sparhawk, "Scatter and Civilize," The Red Man (Dec. 1888): 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

would struggle, survive, and prosper.²⁴ She compared the moral mission of civilizing the Indian to that of freeing the slaves, evoking the abolitionist tradition of her old neighbor John Greenleaf Whittier.²⁵ She insisted that civilization efforts should precede missionary efforts.²⁶ And she devoted much attention to the plight of Indian women, whom she portrayed as degraded by tribal life.

Although Sparhawk joined forces with men such as Pratt in the effort to assimilate the Indians, she occasionally used figurative language which indicated that she perceived the civilizing process to be a woman's task. In her novel A Chronicle of Conquest (1890) she remarked that five years was "the time in which the Government and the people expect an Indian straight from savagery to acquire such knowledge and such civilization that his very presence at his reservation will leaven at once the solid lump of barbarism he finds there."²⁷ The bread-making metaphor is domestic, and suggests that civilizing is a feminine endeavor. Like many women of her era, Sparhawk

²⁴ Sparhawk, "Reservations Ancient and Modern," The Red Man (Sept. 1888): 1.

²⁵ Sparhawk, "What Can We Do For the Indians," The Morning Star (July 1886): 1; Sparhawk, "The Way to Civilize," The Morning Star (Nov. 1886): 2. This latter article is an excerpt from "The Query Club," first published in the September 1886 issue of Education. Ironically, post-reconstruction leaders of the Pan-Indian Movement would distance themselves from African Americans, claiming that the latter were not as naturally fit for civilization. See Robert Allen Warrior, Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneapolis Press, 1995), p. 13; Hazel Hertzberg, The Search for an American Indian Identity: Modern Pan-Indian Movements (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971).

²⁶ Sparhawk, "Which is the Way," The Morning Star (Jan. 1888): 2.

²⁷ Sparhawk, A Chronicle of Conquest, p. 202.

believed that the uplift of any civilization depended on the presence of strong, virtuous women. On the one hand she wanted to cultivate such virtues in Indian women and create an environment (non-reservation, properly domestic) in which they could exercise their power. On the other, she believed that white women were peculiarly suited to directing this work. She was not alone in her belief. The WNIA had been founded on the same principle, and Sara Winnemucca, a Piute Indian who agitated for Indians' rights, wrote in 1883, "If women could go into your Congress, I think justice would soon be done to the Indians."²⁸ Quite possibly, Sparhawk may have had some reservations about Pratt's decided emphasis on Indian boys (obvious through his love of military, band, and athletic drills, all of which excluded Carlisle's female students). Immediately after leaving Carlisle, Sparhawk joined several women's organizations: the New England Woman's Press Association, the Newton Woman's Club, and the Women's National Indian Association.

The importance of the WNIA rested in its focus on the Americanization and Christianization of Indian women. Originally founded in 1879 to criticize the reservation system and protest injustices against the Indians, the WNIA modified its goals after the passage of the 1887 Dawes Act, which provided a system whereby Indians would receive individual land

²⁸ Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins, Life Among the Piutes, p. 53, quoted in Jane B. Katz, ed., I Am the Fire of Time: The Voices of Native American Women (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1977), p. 43. Winnemucca gave scores of lectures to Eastern audiences, mostly female. One lecture was given in the home of Sparhawk's neighbor, Whittier. See also Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Sarah Winnemucca's Practical Solution of the Indian Problem, A Letter to Dr. Lymon Abbot [sic] of the "Christian Union" (Cambridge: University Press, 1886).

grants from tribally held lands and could eventually become independent Americans, unaffiliated with any tribe. As Quinton recalled in 1893, "When it became evident that this great reform would be a success, the attention of the association was given to missionary work, to home building, hospital, educational and other work needed among the Indians on the reservations."²⁹ In other words, once the Indians were "liberated" (or nearly so) from their tribal connections, the WNIA saw them as "immigrants" of a sort, newcomers to America who needed some help assimilating to a strange, new world. Although it stressed many of the same goals and ideals that characterized Pratt's vision, the WNIA differed mainly in its belief that white women, due to their inherent feminine virtues, had a special role to play in helping the Indian. Specifically, they would be able to teach Indian women how to be like white women in dress, manner, and religion. Thus the WNIA defined its missionaries' work among Indians: "to teach them to make, and properly keep, comfortable homes; to teach them domestic works and arts; how to prepare food and make clothing; how to care for the sick and for children; to respect work and to be self-supporting"; and to learn English and

²⁹ Amelia S. Quinton, "The Woman's National Indian Association," in The Congress of Women Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, USA, 1893, ed. Mary Kavanaugh Oldham Eagle (Chicago: American Publishing House, 1894; New York: Arno Press, 1974), p. 72. The WNIA had actually started to shift its work to missionary efforts by 1884, after the formation of the Indian Rights Association (which had a male membership) seemed to ensure that the political work of reform was in capable hand. The WNIA was, however, instrumental in mobilizing support (through its eighty-three branch organizations) for the Dawes Act.

convert to Christianity.³⁰ To these ends, the WNIA sponsored female missionaries, funded homebuilding projects, and raised public interest in the plight of Indian women. Underlying this activity was the theory that stable homes and virtuous women comprised the foundation of civilization. By focusing its attention on raising the position of Indian women, the WNIA imagined it would civilize entire tribes. Once domesticized, these Indian women would have the same civilizing effect on Indian men that white women had on white men.³¹

Helen Wanken suggests that Sparhawk's association with the WNIA was merely one of convenience, intended to give her a more prominent forum for her ideas.³² This motive seems partially reasonable, but Sparhawk had had a long relationship with the Christian Union (the Outlook after 1893) and The New England Magazine, as well as The Red Man, where she was able to express her opinions. What seems more likely is that Sparhawk committed herself wholeheartedly to the Indian cause around 1890 and sought out all forums that would help her further her project. She also joined the New England Woman's Press Association in 1890, where she

³⁰ WNIA, Report of Missionary Work, 1886, Papers of the Women's National Indian Association, Huntington Free Library, Bronx, New York, microfilm.

³¹ The Piute Indian reformer Sarah Winnemucca concurred that Indian women held the potential to save Indian men. H. David Brumble III, American Indian Autobiography (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 65.

³² Wanken, p. 236.

delivered several lectures on "The Indian Question."³³ She seemed to be learning how organizations were run and preparing to begin her own.

Sparhawk's first step as a WNIA member was to institute a department which would prove the precursor to the League. In its attempts to effect practical reforms, the WNIA had formed various committees and departments, including an Indian Home Building department (which the anthropologist Alice Fletcher had proposed at the 1884 Lake Mohonk Conference³⁴), an Indian Education Committee, a Young People's Department, the Hospital Department, and in 1890, the Committee on Indian Libraries and the Indian Civilization Department. Started by Grace Howard, "the Indian Civilization committee was established to promote industrial training" by teaching "useful industries to students returning from boarding schools and to furnish work for those who already possessed sufficient skills"; Howard's inattention, however, led to the Department's collapse within a year.³⁵ Sparhawk saw an opportunity and quickly petitioned the executive

³³ Myra B. Lord, History of the New England Woman's Press Association, 1885-1931 (Newton, MA: Graphic Press, 1932), pp. 52, 170.

³⁴ Mark, p. 105. Mark notes that although the WNIA raised funds to build thirty or forty homes, the Indians perceived the loans for such homes as gifts and did not pay them back, putting Fletcher "in the middle, urging patience and understanding of the reservation situation on the one hand, and prodding the young people to pay their debts on the other" (105). The IIL's own record books show that while loans may have been a long time in being repaid, they usually were.

³⁵ Wanken, pp. 146-147. Grace Howard had started an industrial school for girls at Crow Creek Mission, South Dakota in 1887. She joined the WNIA in 1890. When she lectured for the Cambridge Indian Association (no date) she said, "I have lived alone for years with the Indians and have never been frightened until now when I came out in an electric car." See The Morning Star (Sept. 1887): 5; quotation from Ames, p. 86.

board of the WNIA for authorization to run a division of Indian Industries under the auspices of the Department of Libraries (which she headed); by November of 1891 the new division was in place.³⁶

Under Sparhawk's direction, the new division won a medal for its exhibition of Indian industries (done by "Indian blacksmiths, carpenters, harness makers, and seamstresses") at the 1892 Boston Mechanics Fair.³⁷ At this time, "industries" meant white industries, the kinds of professional crafts taught at the Carlisle Indian School. These kinds of industries were becoming increasingly irrelevant in a modernizing society, but reformers like Pratt, Quinton, and Sparhawk clung to the notion that teaching Indians how to make harnesses would enable them to find employment within the American economy or at least serve them well as they became independent farmers.³⁸

Despite her connections with the WNIA, when Sparhawk decided to start her own Indian industries organization, she did not want it to exclude male members. In the first nine months of the League's existence, its executive committee met eight times to debate its relationship with the WNIA, which prohibited men from joining. Although only one man

³⁶ Wanken, pp. 232-233.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 239. See also Sparhawk's League history, which she was directed to write at the March 30, 1921 IIL meeting, IIL, Record Book IV, inserted typescript report, MHS.

³⁸ This conviction became increasingly less supportable, especially when many former Carlisle students who formed Pan-Indian groups in the early twentieth century began calling for a more academic-oriented educational program for Indians. These leaders argued that Indians needed academic skills, not nineteenth-century vocational skills, to compete in the modern world.

attended any of the first six of these meetings, and the first two League presidents -- Mrs. William Claflin and Mrs. Merial A. Dorchester -- were women, the executive committee wanted to accept men as members. It feared that any official connection with WNIA would require it to prohibit male membership and pay dues to the WNIA. A connection had benefits, however, mainly those of cross-membership, so it was finally settled that the League would become an "auxiliary" of the WNIA, a vaguely defined status that assured it financial and procedural independence and allowed for male membership.³⁹

Why was Sparhawk so determined to include men in her organization? The evidence suggests a pragmatic rather than ideological motivation, and indicates that she perceived "industries" as controlled by men, not women. Writing to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Jones in 1901, she acknowledged that "The industries of the world are in the hands of men. Their wisdom in council and knowledge of affairs in action seem to the women of the league necessary to its success, or assuredly, to its wider usefulness."⁴⁰ In fact, the League made great use of men. Not only were nearly all of the leading male reformers of Indian affairs nominated as members of the League's executive committee or as vice-presidents (most accepted), but the League presidency was held by Edward Abbott and Col. John

³⁹ III, Record Book I, monthly meetings from Nov. 23, 1893 to Sept. 27, 1894 (summer months -- July, Aug., Sept. -- excluded), pp. 9-41, MHS. The two female presidents resigned in quick succession because of illness, leading to the nomination of Edward Abbott to that position on Nov. 22, 1894.

⁴⁰ Sparhawk to William A. Jones, February 14, 1901, OIA, LR, 1901-9721, quoted in Wanken, p. 242.

Stebeck Lockwood from 1894-1920.⁴¹ The meeting following the initial WNIA decision boasted an equal complement of male members: Henry O. Houghton, William Lee, John S. Lockwood, and Frank Wood. Daniel Dorchester and Edward Abbott joined by November 1894.⁴² The educator William Mowry, archaeologist Warren King Moorehead, and Massachusetts' state legislator J. Weston Allen played active roles in the League in the twentieth century.⁴³ These men obviously gave the League visibility and a measure of practical experience in public affairs that helped sustain it over its twenty-seven year existence.⁴⁴

One gets little sense from either Sparhawk's actions or novels that she had much faith in the virtue of men's power, although she obviously believed that male power was useful, especially if guided by a knowledgeable woman. Sparhawk explored this theme in her first Indian novel, A Chronicle of Conquest, which presents Carlisle through the eyes of Polly Blatchley, a third-year Vassar student who has decided to study the Indians while she overcomes some unspecified health problems. The novel is

⁴¹ Lockwood became president in 1898 and died on January 31, 1920. J. Weston Allen, a League executive committee member since 1913, took his place until the League was officially dissolved in January of 1922.

⁴² III, Record Book I, May 31, 1894, p. 36; *ibid*, Nov. 22, 1894, p. 42, MHS.

⁴³ William Augustus Mowry (1829-1917) was an educator, author, editor and publisher (of New England Journal of Education, Education, and Common School Education), and was active in numerous civic and reform organizations. The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, 1936 eds, s.v. "Mowry, William Augustus." Sparhawk wrote several articles for Education during the 1880s and 1890s.

⁴⁴ The League ceased all real activity by 1919 even though it did not formally dissolve until 1922.

actually a collection of short "stories" about Indians which Polly hears at Carlisle and then writes down for her father. These stories are held together by a rather flimsy plot involving a man who is wooing Polly, and a young Indian couple, Richard Dunning (Cheyenne) and Nettie Atsyé (Pawnee), who are trying to carve out a normal "white" life in Pennsylvania.⁴⁵

Sparhawk confines the Indians' love story to a single chapter, but packs it with some sharp lessons about how white women are crucial to the project of helping Indians. The chapter opens with Nettie standing in the September moonlight outside the home of Ralph and Mary Linley, a well-to-do white couple for whom Nettie works as part of Carlisle's "outing" system. She is happily contemplating a letter from her true love, though she is concerned that they may not be able to find employment in Pennsylvania, thwarting their marriage plans and perhaps leading them to return to the reservation. Meanwhile, inside the house, the married white couple behave in a way that betrays white men's blindness to the Indians' problems. Mary must get her husband's attention by putting her hands between his eyes and the newspaper he is reading. Expressing her concern that Nettie will soon be leaving (to return to Carlisle), she elicits the lighthearted and insensitive advice from Ralph that she "treat her [Nettie] like a bale of goods that you won't deliver." His nose apparently buried in a newspaper most of the time, Ralph is totally unaware that Nettie has a lover, prompting Mary to chide him: "How

⁴⁵ Peter Nabokov points out that inter-tribal romances and marriages, fostered at the Indian boarding schools were key to the development of the Pan-Indian Movement. Peter Nabokov, ed., Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992 (New York: Viking, 1991), p. 216.

consummately masculine! Poor fellow! How hard it must be to be so extremely -- uninspired! to be a man!"⁴⁶

Ralph takes Mary's observations in good humor, but the unmistakable undercurrent here is that men (with the exception of the Captain Pratt) are profoundly incapable of imagining or recognizing romance, nor, by extension, humanity, in the lives of Indians. Rather, they see Indians as economic units -- bales of goods. Ralph does remember Richard Dunning, "a splendid fellow" he wanted to hire, but it takes Mary to suggest that Ralph hire Richard to take the place of his head dairyman who is leaving in a few months. Even then, Ralph does not realize that Richard is Nettie's fiance or that Mary plans to help the couple marry and then let them live in the Linley home. As the plan dawns on Ralph, Mary lets fly with playful teasing that has a violent undertone: "Has the suggestion made its way into your brain, my lord and master, or shall I get the auger?"⁴⁷ Ralph responds admiringly to the brilliance of Mary's scheme and exclaims that he is "Excellently mated!" to which Mary rejoins, "Certainly -- by the law of contraries."⁴⁸ The woman is brilliant, and the man dull. Though Mary and Ralph banter with seeming good humor, the marriage is not one between intellectual equals.

Sparhawk resolves the situation with what seems like a sly reminder of the role women played in the Indian reform movement: politically disenfranchised agitators who put ideas into the heads of men who then translated those ideas to paper and action (law and policy), taking the credit

⁴⁶ Sparhawk, *A Chronicle of Conquest*, pp. 204, 205.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

themselves. Eventually, Ralph does write the letter to request Richard's services, but he writes it at Mary's desk, with her pen, on her paper, and with her ideas which -- she teases him -- she hopes she had made "very plain," presumably because complex ideas would confuse him. Without a woman, Nettie and Richard's future would have been insecure indeed. The entire episode serves to illustrate the important role that women play in aiding the Indian; men alone would simply not be up to the job. It is the nurturing (and "brilliant") woman who must do it.⁴⁹

In Onoqua Sparhawk was more explicit about the respective places of men and women in Indian organizations. The novel's hero, Cetangi, through his hard work and intelligent character impresses some of the white citizens in the town in which he is working, and they determine to start an "Indian Association." A white woman, one of the "social leaders" of the town, explains to Cetangi that the association shall have both male and female members:

"We want ladies and gentlemen to belong to it. They work together better in any such thing, you know; we ladies have so much more time on our hands, and they save us from looking too much on the sentimental side; they bring in the practical. And then, you see, the gentlemen always pay more. We shall be a richer society if we bring them in."

"And then they vote," said Cetangi.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 206. Senator Henry Dawes (Massachusetts), sponsor of the 1887 General Allotment Act, was one man reached in a roundabout way by women. His daughter Anna corresponded with leading women in the movement (including Sparhawk) and relayed their ideas to him.

"Yes, yes," she laughed, "that's true; they vote; and if we have them in our Association, we'll instruct them how."⁵⁰

The exchange reveals that although Sparhawk perceived the political and economic usefulness of male membership in the Indian reform movement, she still imagined the organizations as directed by women. The plural pronouns "we" and "our" refer to women; it will be "our Association." Moreover, the disparaging remark about women "looking too much on the sentimental side" rings hollow in the context of the novel, which is a sentimental romance. Again and again, Sparhawk portrayed white women as more attuned to the Indians' lives and thus to their humanity. Of an Indian school superintendent, Sparhawk wrote: "There were girls, too, whose worth his wife knew best about and whom she meant to save from the terrible life before them."⁵¹ Contrasting women's lack of political power with their surplus of moral authority, she said that the white woman is "not an Indian agent," but she "is God's."⁵²

IMAGES OF INDIAN WOMEN AND CULTURE

The story of Nettie and Richard spoke not only to the WNIA's sense of female purpose, but also to its belief that Indian women were at peculiar risk. Underlying the motivations of white women in the reform movement was a key perception: that Indian women were degraded and abused by the conditions of tribal life. The problem with Indian men and women was that

⁵⁰ Sparhawk, Onoqua, p. 170.

⁵¹ Sparhawk, Senator Intrigue and Inspector Noseby: A Tale of Spoils (Boston: Red-letter, 1895), p. 52.

⁵² Sparhawk, A Chronicle of Conquest, p. 144.

they did not conform to white gender roles. The men were lazy, interested only in leisure activities such as hunting, and the women did too much men's work; moreover, sexual morals were too loose, as evidenced by polygamy and easy divorce. The image of overworked and sexually exploited "squaw drudges" suffering at the hands of their husbands was widespread in nineteenth-century America. As a double insult, the squaw drudge was also imagined as prone to drunkenness, violence, and cruelty.⁵³ Missionary societies were particularly critical of Indian women's exploitation and degradation at the hands of their men.⁵⁴ This image rallied women to the civilizing cause. Equally troubling was the the image of Indian girls "civilized" at places such as Carlisle who returned to horrible reservation circumstances where their new skills were scorned by traditional Indians. These problems figured prominently in Sparhawk's writing, which explored causes and solutions.

A constant threat to the returned girl often came from the old Indian women who resented the younger generations' rejection of the traditional ways. Sibyl Carter claimed "that the time to get the girls was before they returned to the reservations for that when there the mothers would not let

⁵³ For studies, see Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Complex: the Image of Indian Women in American Culture," Massachusetts Review 16 (1975): 698-714; David D. Smits, "The 'Squaw Drudge': A Prime Index of Savagism," Ethnohistory 29.4 (1982): 281-306; Glenda Riley, Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), pp. 21-24.

⁵⁴ Michael C. Coleman, Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes toward American Indians, 1837-1893 (London and Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), p. 94. The missionaries' total rejection of Indian culture and all-out effort to transform Indian sex roles correspond closely to Sparhawk's ideas.

them go again."⁵⁵ These old women schemed to trick the returned girls into wearing Indian clothes, taking part in Indian ceremonies, and finally marrying Indian men who were the most hostile to whites. Old Indian women receive particularly negative treatment in Sparhawk's novel Onoqua in which Onoqua's own mother, Naumatin, is a leading villain. She tries to prevent Onoqua from attending boarding school, and her husband later divorces her because she is so "sullen."⁵⁶ A young Indian man who hopes to marry Onoqua says of Naumatin that she "'loves to sow war,'" and he admits to himself "that it was she who had taught him to foment and use the deep disaffection of the heathen Indians who were willing to risk their all to reinstate the old order of things, and had taught him also to play upon the superstitions and unhappiness of the half educated Indians."⁵⁷ When Wasu, the boarding school educated heroine of Senator Intrigue and Inspector Noseby: A Tale of Spoils (1894) finally succumbs to the reservation pressures, "it was her mother who led her out into the space where the dancers were assembled."⁵⁸

Part of the problem faced by returned students was created by corrupt agents who wanted to keep the Indians primitive so that they (the agents) could remain on government payrolls. Sparhawk explored this problem in Senator Intrigue. Here the two lovers Wasu and Chekotoco possess the necessary Carlisle credentials, and seem set to embark on a productive life under the watchful tutelage of the local Indian school superintendent and his

⁵⁵ IIL, Record Book I, Nov. 22, 1894, pp. 43, MHS.

⁵⁶ Sparhawk, Onoqua, pp. 4, 20.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

⁵⁸ Sparhawk, Senator Intrigue, p. 160.

wife, but political machinations in Washington prove to be the couple's undoing. The superintendents, his wife, and the agent are turned out and replaced with self-interested political appointees who have no desire to see the Indians civilized. To make matters worse, an Indian Office inspector appears on the reservation and does all in his power to encourage the revitalization of the old Indian leadership, especially of their ceremonials. Pressured on one side by their traditional-minded relatives (Chekotoco's father is a chief), and lacking support from any whites on the other, Chekotoco and Wasu backslide into their old Indian ways, rejoining the tribal fold and giving up on the dream of starting a family. Their tragic return is symbolized by their reluctant decision to put on Indian clothes and dance in an Indian dance. When Wasu trades her school dress for an Indian one, "she was completely an Indian squaw."⁵⁹

The bigger danger to returned students, however, came from the traditional tribal culture. Again and again, Sparhawk told stories of Indian girls who returned to Indian cultures that did not respect education, that prohibited women's social and political choices, and that accepted polygamy. In "What Must the Educated Indian Girl Do When She Leaves School?" Sparhawk raises her readers' ire with the story of a boarding school educated girl who returns to her tribe and narrowly avoids (thanks to outside intervention) being forced to marry an evil Indian man. The heroine, Edith, spends ten years at school and returns to find herself "long since promised to her sister's husband for his wife no. 2." This man is a repulsive brute, one "in the habit of beating Edith's sister." She refuses to be his wife, so one

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

night he beats her with a whip and tries to kill her, inflicting two grazing knife wounds. She flees to the Indian agent and his wife. Safety for the civilized Indian was away from "traditional" Indians. Sparhawk's point is that Indian girls should not be sent back to reservations under the false assumption that they will be able to work civilizing miracles there: "Do we see many fair daughters of sixteen starting reform movements to advance our own race?" she asks rhetorically. Can, she asks, an educated Indian girl "sent into a community which tolerates no respect for women, can she stem the taunts and jeers of her old associates, and start a reform, or will she as would our own modest girls under similar conditions -- succumb to the inevitable?"⁶⁰ Only the presence of strong and helpful whites seemed able to protect such Indian girls in their efforts to reform their tribes.

Without such protection, even an adult Indian woman was at risk. One such woman, Natalie Osandiah, married Capea, "the leader of the 16 among the prisoners at Florida who had elected to stay at the East and be educated." Educated together, Capea insisted, against Natalie's desire to make a home in the East, that they return to the tribe and try to lead it to civilization. Naming their young son Richard, after Pratt, they struggle to set a civilized example for their fellow tribesman, but soon Capea dies and the traditional Indians rise up and destroy Natalie's white-style household and all the farming implements, forcing her to flee the reservation.⁶¹ The

⁶⁰ Sparhawk, "What Must the Educated Indian Girl Do When She Leaves School?" The Red Man (Jan. 1889): 3. The agent and his wife seem to be Quakers -- they say, "He cannot enter here. Thee is safe now." Thus, as in abolitionist literature (Uncle Tom's Cabin), the Quakers help the oppressed race on the flight from persecution.

⁶¹ Sparhawk, "Old Fetters," The Red Man (July & Aug. 1888): 1-2.

traditional Indian had no respect for the Indian woman civilized by white society.

Because Indian marriage was, in Sparhawk's mind, equivalent to slavery for women, Indian women who did not marry in a Christian setting dashed all chances of establishing a civilized home. The moral superiority of white-style marriage ceremonies is a frequent topic.⁶² In A Chronicle of Conquest Sparhawk balances Nettie's productive romance with the nearly tragic one of Faith Red Heart, a Dakota Sioux who came to Carlisle in 1879. Although her people were "concerned in the Custer massacre," Faith Red Heart was no savage.⁶³ In fact, she feared becoming "what the Indians call wife -- a woman whose rights may be at any time usurped, a woman who is only a slave."⁶⁴ Her family, however, had not received the message of sex equality, and after three years at Carlisle she was called back by her traditional-minded father to marry another Indian in exchange for one hundred ponies.⁶⁵ Sparhawk explains that the old Indian chiefs were reluctant to send girls to Carlisle because they knew that the men would follow the women; the key to civilizing the Indian men was civilizing the Indian girls.⁶⁶ Luckily, Pratt had "rescued" Faith Red Heart from her evil father and brother by bullying them into letting her return to the school where in time she might marry a better sort of Indian with whom she could establish a proper home nearby.

⁶² Sparhawk, Onoqua, p. 215.

⁶³ Sparhawk, A Chronicle of Conquest, p. 122.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

A League member and missionary, Helen Clark, was as late as 1905 writing that Indian marriage degraded Indian women, turning them into squaw drudges who labored while their husbands loafed (Fig. 1). Despite sending Indian baskets to the League from 1901 to 1910, Clark perceived her primary duty to be bringing Christianity, not industry to the Indian women. Unlike Sparhawk, who believed civilization preceded Christianity, Clark explained in a 1905 essay, "What Christianity Has Done for the Indian Woman," that "Christianity means everything to the Indian woman; not only life and light, but also love and hope."⁶⁷ In her mind, a Christian Indian woman might have to labor just as hard and unreasonably as the "heathen" woman controlled by her lazy husband, but her labor would be done out of love. With Christianity, the Indian woman could face even the worst circumstances with a lightened heart. On the whole, however, Clark found that Christianity had a positive effect even on heathen husbands, more than a few of whom had "been won to a new life through their Christian wives."⁶⁸

As the next chapter will show, by 1905 some white women had come to believe that Indian women lived lives of relative equality with their husbands, and Clark agreed, but only to show how damaging that equality was. She told the story of an Indian woman who "was as good a shot as her husband," followed him on the hunt, had "varied" work, and in short led a life like a man's. The result? Her baby died, "sickened through its mother's

⁶⁷ Helen Clark, "What Christianity Has Done for the Indian Woman," in Souvenir of Western Women, ed. Mary O. Douthit (Portland, OR: Presses of Anderson and Duniway, 1905), p. 163.

⁶⁸ Clark, p. 163.

incessant toil." Nor was Clark willing to entertain the possibility that Indian family life might have been strong before the reservations disrupted it: "Christianity means the breaking up of old customs and the bringing in of new duties. When an Indian woman ceases to do a man's work, she learns the household arts. . . . Their [the Indian's] Christianity may be crude, but it leads to a new life, and the brightness of this new life is vivid when contrasted with the impenetrable gloom of the old."⁶⁹ Clark's disdain for an Indian woman doing "a man's work" or leading a "hard life" squared well with nineteenth-century stereotypes about squaw drudges.

Sparhawk's second Indian novel, *Onoqua*, vividly combined most of these negative stereotypes about old Indian women and about the degrading effect of Indian culture on its women. Set on a Montana reservation just before the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee, the novel follows its heroine's (Onoqua) travails as she tries to put her Carlisle education to use in an unresponsive environment and struggles to develop a relationship with Cetangi, another Carlisle student who is resisting the "old ways." Their romance is thwarted repeatedly by traditional Indians who plot to prevent their union and the rejection of the old life that it would symbolize. Onoqua and Cetangi finally marry, but only after suffering substantial economic and emotional losses. The main barrier to their happiness, indeed to their getting together, is the reservation environment. This is a romance where misunderstandings and cruel plotting by enemies keep the two lovers from happiness. With each setback, the reader feels more acutely the evils of the reservation system precisely because those evils are translated into threats

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 164.

against familial bliss. The novel does expose reservation "evils" such as drinking, corrupt agents, Catholic influence, and so on, but those evils are significant mainly in their power to prevent Onoqua and Cetangi from establishing a happy home free from tribal influence.

In Sparhawk's fiction, the returned girl struggled to maintain the trappings of white culture, the clothing and domestic decorations on which white reformers suggested the foundations of civilized behavior lay. Despite much talk about "common human nature," Sparhawk again and again showed that one became who one appeared to be.⁷⁰ White-style clothing signified that one believed in "the ways of white people," while the Indian clothing signified a rejection of those ways. A minor character in Onoqua, Ahsaniak, faces a terrible crisis when after two years home from school her school dress is nearly worn out and she has no choice other than to put on an Indian dress, an act which "seemed an open confession of failure; it was leaving all the past [school], it was being like the rest. . . . [T]o her civilization meant wearing a civilized dress which necessitated certain differences of living; and wearing the Indian dress meant Indian living." Even "a picture on the wall, a book, a magazine, a newspaper" would keep Ashaniak close to the spirit of the civilization she desired to imitate.⁷¹

Eventually, Onoqua and Cetangi marry, but it turns out that Onoqua still has a strong love for her race that almost threatens her marriage and points to the importance of family over tribe. Onoqua convinces Cetangi to remain on the reservation so that she can try to "save" other members of her

⁷⁰ Sparhawk, Onoqua, p. 173.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

tribe. Of course, only several years at Carlisle, away from the reservation environment, can save Indians, and Onoqua's presence evokes only resentment and evil plotting. Cetangi fears that Onoqua does not love him enough to follow him off the reservation into the white world, so he stays, a touching testament to the depth of his love for her. Finally, after events take one too many turns for the worse, Onoqua admits that staying on the reservation was a bad decision. Cetangi is relieved:

Cetangi thought she did not love him enough to be happy anywhere with him! In her love for her own race, she had not thought of the rights of their child, and of her husband. She owed it to him to let him use his faculties, all of them, to encourage him to do it. Instead of this, she had trodden his needs and his ambitions under foot. Yet, husband, wife, child, -- here was the family, here was individual life, here was the only way out of Indian tribal bondage. The future lay in the family, and not in the tribe. The family was complete in itself, could found a home anywhere, could belong to any place, any country. And she saw also that through this first duty the other would be fulfilled; for to make the best of themselves was to do the best for their people, to open new opportunities.⁷²

And how had she come to these conclusions? "Love had revealed that the world was open to her."⁷³ Through a love story, Sparhawk revealed the humanity of the Indians and their fitness for American life.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 251-252.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 252.

The home, then, was the key to civilizing the Indian. In A Chronicle of Conquest Mary oversees Nettie and Richard's all-important Christian wedding, "as demurely triumphant as any fairy godmother, and over all the dear old flag under which the bonds of savagery had been broken, and the bands which bind the home, the source of civilization and of happiness, made fast."⁷⁴ Sparhawk's novels featured contrasts between depressing Indian-style homes and cheerful white-style homes. Wasu, the Indian heroine of Senator Intrigue signals her personal growth when she reveals that she "had come to like her meat well done."⁷⁵ By virtue of their gender, young women like Polly and Mary and the other teachers at Carlisle would have a crucial and legitimate place in the arena of Indian reform. Indians' assimilation depended on their being able to establish "homes" based on love -- but only white women were knowledgeable about the home or alert to love.

Civilized homes would be headed by the young Indian men who had been educated at boarding schools and treated Indian girls with reverence and propriety. In A Chronicle of Conquest Polly Blatchley admiringly witnesses a scene at a school function in which a young Indian man displays courteous social graces toward the girls in attendance. Blatchley reflects that in his actions one sees no trace of "the men who made women the toiler and burden-bearers of their tribes, and with whom the least civility toward them

⁷⁴ Sparhawk, A Chronicle of Conquest, p. 208.

⁷⁵ Sparhawk, Senator Intrigue, p. 41.

would be not only unthought of, but derogatory."⁷⁶ Similarly, only a well-educated Indian girl could refuse to bow to arbitrary male power. Onoqua declares, "I [will not] have any man tell me what is best for me."⁷⁷

A fascinating column in The Red Man suggests that some Indian girls at Carlisle, probably under direction from their female teachers, were criticizing restrictions on Indian women's political and economic rights, including restrictions imposed at Carlisle itself. The column -- "Our Pupils' Page" -- collected samples of Indian students' writing exercises. The column usually had a thematic focus, often propagandistic (students arguing that white clothes were better than Indian and so on), and obviously responded to a specific assignment created by the teacher. The May 1888 issue contained what were introduced as "comments read at the last monthly exhibition of the school. They show that the critic is abroad and wide awake." Following this were comments by sixteen named Indian girls. Lizzie Dubray (Sioux) felt that "it is the best thing for girls to earn their own money." Lucinda Clinton (Modoc) complained that many boys spend their money unwisely. Annie Thomas (Pueblo): "I think printing is as profitable a trade for girls as it is for boys. . . . I hope it may happen that girls will learn to print. I don't think printing is any harder than washing." Hope Red Bear (Sioux): "There are in this country, a great many women who can do much good for other people in voting, but it was thought that only men should vote, and not women. The women do not drink as much as men do and in some cases women are far

⁷⁶ Sparhawk, A Chronicle of Conquest, p. 26. For an earlier version of this story, see [Sparhawk], "Christmas at Carlisle," The Morning Star (Jan. 1888): 2.

⁷⁷ Sparhawk, Onoqua, p. 135.

better than the men." Jemima Wheelock (Oneida) wrote, "Boys need to learn how to sew as well as girls."⁷⁸ These bits of student writing reveal that the status of women was an issue among the female instructors at Carlisle, since it was one of them who surely assigned this topic.⁷⁹

WHITE WOMEN'S INDIAN WORK

The white women who worked in the WNIA and later in the League, focused their civilizing attention on several areas. Through loans and missionary work, they assisted Indian women in building and maintaining homes. By supporting civilized industries such as lace making, they enabled Indian women to earn the money to furnish their homes. And in the early 1890s they backed a government program to provide "field matrons" who would instruct Indian women in the domestic arts.

⁷⁸ "Our Pupils' Page," The Red Man (May 1888): 8. Jemima Wheelock graduated from Carlisle in 1890 and taught at the Green Bay Agency, Wisconsin. She married Simon Webster and stayed in contact with Sparhawk through the Indian Industries League, requesting funds in 1902 to start a reading room or circulating library in her house. She also wrote an article for The Red Man (May 1890) called "A Woman's Work in the World." Biographical information is from Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr. and James W. Parins, eds., A Bibliography of Native American Writers, 1772-1924 (Metuchen, NJ and London: Scarecrow Press, 1981), p. 308.

⁷⁹ The Indian girls in this column expressed their discontent with their status as women in their tribes and at Carlisle, but surely the most amazing statement of discontent came in an untitled short story by Bertha Nason, a Chippewa girl. In it she tells the story of a free-flying bird that is captured and put in a gilded cage by a girl who then takes the bird on a long voyage. In time the bird grows to like being caged, and when the girl deems the bird tame enough, she lets it out to fly. But, the bird can never again fly freely because the girl keeps it on a long chain. Nason's remarkable story would seem to be a tortured attempt to come to terms with the cultural dislocation forced upon her. Her sense of loss must have given pause to some assimilationists. Nason, The Red Man (June 1888): 7.

Home-building was a central part of the WNIA's field activity, directed by Sara T. Kinney, one of the League's key executive committee members. After the 1884 Lake Mohonk conference she threw the CIA's support behind Alice Fletcher's proposal to start a "home building project."⁸⁰ Since Indian women could not fully assimilate before they had proper homes in which to practice homemaking skills, the CIA would loan them the money to build such homes. The WNIA's success could be measured by the extent to which the Indians adapted domestic trappings. Quinton claimed that where once there were "tepees," there were now "thousands of comfortable homes, built of planks, logs, or better materials; many in different places are really tasteful and complete homes, and these are now surrounded with gardens, fields, orchards and other features of civilization."⁸¹ Quinton had little respect for communal activity; she praised the circumstances that now allowed the Indian "the freedom to go where he will and make his own life . . . [where he] can find his opportunity, his work." Individual freedom was what separated the civilized American from the savage Indian. Quinton sentimentally imagined that the pre-reservation era Indian had been a "nobler" creature, devoted to the individual family unit, free of the "bonds" of the tribe. The great sin of the reservation system was that it failed to protect the Indian's "home and family," and instead strengthened tribal loyalties. Quinton wanted to "free" Indians from the tribe and turn them into pioneering family units, centered of course on a virtuous mother: "Indian women are at last

⁸⁰ Mark, p.105.

⁸¹ Quinton, p. 72.

free to express the best that is in them, to embody in deeds the noblest instincts of maternity."⁸²

As chapter three will discuss, the League's second president, Merial A. Dorchester, took the idea of domestic training to the government. After receiving a special appointment in 1889 to "supervise the boarding school education of Indian girls,"⁸³ she became convinced that more attention needed to be given to creating a domestic environment on the reservations which matched that experienced by the girls at boarding schools. She imagined that a network of field matrons could help the returned female Indian students by teaching them "the womanly industries" such as sewing, washing, and cooking, which would bring them wage earnings, presumably as domestic servants.⁸⁴ In 1891 the field matron program was made official, though on a small scale (salary for one matron), and Dorchester immediately tried to use her influence to gain an appointment for a woman with whose work she was familiar.⁸⁵ Her effort failed, but it marked only the first of many subsequent attempts (often successful) by those in organizations like the League to control field matron appointments. Over the course of its existence, the League would not only secure several such appointments but also offer supplementary support to various matrons who in turn played a

⁸² Ibid., p. 72.

⁸³ Lisa Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love and Seek the Ways of White Women': Field Matrons, the Office of Indian Affairs, and Civilization Policy, 1890-1938" (Ph.D. diss. University of Maryland, 1987), p. 29.

⁸⁴ Merial Dorchester, "Field Matrons," Lend a Hand 20 (1893), p. 240; quotation from Cambridge Indian Association, Annual Report for 1899 [newspaper clipping], Cambridge Indian Association Papers, Cambridge Historical Society, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁸⁵ Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love,'" pp. 37-39.

central role in helping the League develop its support of native arts industries.

Sibyl Carter's lace-making industry, like white-style homes, was perceived as "a great civilizing force" among the Indians (Fig. 2).⁸⁶ In the latter 1880s Carter had overworked herself in preparation of a plan to assist the Indians on the White Earth reservation (Minnesota) in developing farms; seeking rest and a change of environment, she went to Japan as a missionary.⁸⁷ In Japan she observed women making lace and determined that this craft held the power to "ameliorate . . . the condition" of the "helpless" Indian women.⁸⁸ Accordingly, in 1890, she began teaching the craft to the Ojibway Indian women on the White Earth reservation and paying them ten cents an hour for their labor; within a decade she had inspired a movement that swept reservations across America.⁸⁹ The work took advantage of the Indian women's ability in comparable "barbaric arts": "basketry, blankets, bead, and porcupine [quill] work," but the cleanliness and diligent work habits required to produce good lace work were the prime reasons for its popularity among reformers. Carter also shared with Sparhawk a faith in "the elevating influence of daily toil and the dignity of labor for self-support."⁹⁰ An economically independent woman herself, Carter pointed to the plight of returned students and widows, asking, "Have

⁸⁶ Jane W. Guthrie, "Lace-Making Among the Indians," Outlook 66 (Sept. 1, 1900): 59.

⁸⁷ Cambridge Indian Association, Annual Report for 1888 [newspaper clipping], CIAP, CHS.

⁸⁸ Guthrie, p. 59; see also, Duncan, p. 31.

⁸⁹ Guthrie, pp. 59-60; Duncan, p. 29.

⁹⁰ Guthrie, p. 60.

we gravely considered the necessity of work for daily wages for these poor people?"⁹¹ The League answered in the affirmative by offering Carter occasional gifts of money, and Sparhawk never failed to champion Carter's work in executive committee meetings or in public lectures.⁹²

Drawing on the experience of these women, the League believed that the salvation of Indian men could best be achieved through efforts to help strengthen the position of Indian women. Unlike the WNIA, however, the League stressed the uplift of Indian women through industry; from the beginning, it stressed the employment of Indian women in positions other than domestic housekeeping. The first meeting to focus on anything other than the WNIA connection question nicely illustrated the prominence that Indian women would take in League business. Sparhawk set the topic for this first "real" meeting, raising her concern about the plight of "Indian returned students," especially girls, some of whom were members of the League and had written to Sparhawk because they "were desirous to get work and to know how to start." Reservation life offered few opportunities to put their industrious new habits to use. Sparhawk read a letter from the Superintendent of the Indian School at San Carlso, Arizona, which indicated that reservation conditions were bad, especially for "the girls for whom there was nothing but camp life." The Superintendent lamented that "it seemed a cruelty to educate them for this." Underlying this concern was the conviction that Indian girls were quite educable and eager for more than the reservations

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62; Duncan, p. 31.

⁹² For example, Sparhawk read a paper on "Indian Industries and Lace Making" at the May 1900 meeting of the New England Woman's Press Association. Lord, p. 135.

offered: both Dr. Dorchester and Mrs. Fisk spoke of girls and schools (the Santee Cooking school) that supported this view. The key, however, was to give the girls an option to reservation life. Sibyl Carter's suggestion of "establishing communications with the training schools and taking them [the girls] from there when possible" seemed a practical task for the League, and "Dr. Dorchester moved that the bringing out of Indians, particularly of the Indian girls, be pushed as fast as possible, but with due discrimination." This motion approved, Sparhawk closed the meeting with a request for clerical aid, a request that Miss Dewey suggested be filled by employing "one of the Cornelius sisters" for the sum of fifty dollars.⁹³

Conveniently, Dewey's suggestion ideally fitted the League's purpose, because the Cornelius sisters were Oneida Indians from Green Bay, Wisconsin, brought to Boston by Sparhawk in 1892 as part of her plan to provide outing work for Indian girls. The sisters, Lillian and Alice, attended Girl's High (a public school), spent vacations at Sparhawk's home in Newton Center, and worked as waitresses during the summers. Funding their stay was a continual problem for Sparhawk, so fifty dollars would certainly help their cause. The sisters left Boston in 1895, Lillian dying soon after, but Alice becoming a teacher who continued to support Sparhawk's vision and who even financed her own brother's college education.⁹⁴ Thus, the first substantive meeting of the Indian Industries League could be considered a small success. The members identified a crucial problem -- the issue of how

⁹³ IIL, Record Book I, Nov. 22, 1894, pp. 41-44, MHS.

⁹⁴ Information on Cornelius sisters from Wanken, pp. 233-235. Alice Cornelius's continuing relationship with the League is documented in its record books.

to support Indian girls who wanted more than reservation life -- they found two such girls, and they appropriated the funds which would aid their quest. One might argue that a long-term success came from this meeting as well, given that Alice Cornelius exactly fulfilled the members' expectations about how readily Indians could become self-supporting if given proper training when young. She remained a member of the League until its eventual dissolution.

In the genesis and early activity of the Indian Industries League then, one sees the influence of the WNIA and its ideas about Indian women. The League's founding members had cut their reform teeth on WNIA activities and were still active in WNIA branch associations. Their logic for focusing on the plight of Indian women came directly from the philosophy articulated by the WNIA.

But Sparhawk, despite her rhetorical commitment to the family and the home in her fiction and activism, was in her personal life quite independent. Unmarried her entire life, Sparhawk committed herself to her work, not to a family, though prior to 1890 her Indian reform activism seemed decidedly in the mold of that formed by women who justified their public activity as an extension of their duties in the domestic sphere. Thus she seemed in some ways to bridge what Ellen Du Bois has described as the womanhood-as-mother and womanhood-as-worker paradigms that characterized two generations of American women, the first born in the 1850s

and 60s, the second in the 1870s and 80s.⁹⁵ Du Bois writes specifically about Suffragists, but she claims that this "shift between" the two generations' images of womanhood can help historians "conceptualize the changes in women's activities in this period as well as to suggest some of the larger transformations of the age."⁹⁶ Du Bois describes women of the older generation as seeing "their reform efforts as public expressions of their place in the family" and therefore using images of mothers, children, and home liberally in their activism. Certainly, this theme dominated much of Sparhawk's activity on behalf of the Indians during the 1880s and 1890s. Yet, Sparhawk was also a professional writer and an independent woman, putting her close to the second generation who were actually paid for their activism and whom Du Bois characterizes as having "similar reform goals but express[ing] them quite differently," preferring the image of the woman worker.⁹⁷

Sparhawk and the League straddled these two ideals of womanhood. Its founders committed to inculcating Indian women with domestic virtues, the League was simultaneously trying to make Indian women into wage-earners. Sparhawk and the League's founding mothers had long-standing connections with women's voluntary organizations, but Sparhawk also had more recent affiliations with professional organizations. In turn, the League's primary contacts in the field would be women, some missionaries,

⁹⁵ Ellen Carol Du Bois, "Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Transformation of Class Relations among Woman Suffragists," in Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era, eds. Nancy S. Dye and Noralee Frankel (Lexington, KY: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1991), p. 163.

⁹⁶ Ellen Du Bois, p. 163.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

but a growing number "field matrons," a new salaried government position. As women's work for the Indians became increasingly professionalized, women leaders in the movement modified their goals. Where the women steeped in the voluntary and missionary traditions had labored to turn Indian women into Christian housekeepers, the new professional white women placed more emphasis on helping Indian women develop marketable work skills. Perhaps like reformers of all eras, they tried to mold their proteges in their own image. No longer was it enough for Indian women to be virtuous, dress-wearing, Christian housekeepers; now they were to be educated wage-earners as well. But as white women's sense of their own identity changed, so too would their perception of Indian women.

CHAPTER 2

PRIMITIVE CRAFTSWOMEN:
TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE IMAGE OF INDIAN WOMEN, 1890-1903

This chapter looks outside the literature of the Indian reform movement to reveal that at the very moment the Indian Industries League was preparing to civilize Indian women, other white women were beginning to find much to admire in primitive women's lives. The chapter examines a number of sources which offered favorable representations of primitive women and their arts: exhibits and speeches from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago; Otis T. Mason's Woman's Share in Primitive Culture (1894); articles appearing on the woman's page of newspapers; and the rhetoric of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Together, these sources challenged Sparhawk's portrait of traditional Indian women by suggesting that Indian women practiced numerous domestic arts on which civilization rested, demonstrated superior aesthetic sensibilities, and enjoyed social and political rights unequalled by most white women.

To what extent the League's members were directly exposed to these new views of Indian women is difficult to determine, but by 1900 similar ideas were used by the League to explain why it was promoting Indian arts.¹ In a few cases, the influences are clear. League members Nellie Doubleday

¹ See Chapter 4 below.

and Constance Goddard Du Bois both drew on Mason's book to affirm the wisdom of preserving Indian women's basket-making traditions. When the League began selling Indian goods, it contracted with the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts to handle some of its sales. On the whole, the transformations in the image of Indian women examined in this chapter reflected a cultural climate which the League was able to exploit when it decided to market Indian arts.

THE 1893 COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION: THE WOMAN'S BUILDING AND ITS EXHIBITS

The imaging of primitive women at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago has received little scholarly attention. Studies of the Exposition's anthropological exhibits have not distinguished between the display of primitive men and the display of primitive women. Such studies have emphasized the racist and imperialistic ideology behind the Exposition's anthropological exhibits, but they have overlooked the positive portrayals of primitive women.² Similarly, studies of images of women at the Fair (as the Exposition was called) have given little attention to the image of primitive

² Hoxie, *A Final Promise*; Robert Rydell, "The Culture of Imperial Abundance: World's Fairs in the Making of American Culture," in *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920*, ed. Simon Bronner (New York: Norton, 1989); Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Curtis M. Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

women. The studies find a predominantly conservative image of women, but miss how this image was reinforced by the positive attention given to primitive women's domestic skills.³

Marianna Torgovnick has pointed out that most scholars of anthropological history ignore "the way that gender issues always inhabit Western versions of the primitive." She writes, "Sooner or later those familiar tropes for primitives become the tropes conventionally used for women."⁴ Recalling the Columbian Exposition, Otis T. Mason, curator of the Department of Ethnology at the United States National Museum, had no reservations about linking primitive and modern women. He discovered a striking continuity between Daniel Chester French's sixty-foot statue of the female Republic that towered one hundred feet over the waters of the Great Basin, representing the promise and fulfillment of American civilization, and a pre-Columbian Indian "homemaker" exhibited in the Anthropological Building:

In the World's Columbian Exposition the place of honour was occupied by the colossal statue of a young woman represented in burnished gold. In one hand she held the world, in the other the cap of emancipation or liberty. Upon her right hand stood the building devoted to

³ Judy Sund, "Columbus and Columbia in Chicago, 1893: Man of Genius Meets Generic Woman," Art Bulletin 75 (Sept 1993): 443-466; Martha Banta, Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 521-52; Alan Trachtenberg, The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 221.

⁴ Marianna Torgovnick, Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 17-18.

manufactures and liberal arts, upon her left hand the temple of agriculture. In the distance the dairy, the leather, and the horticultural buildings. In the anthropological building, at the extreme south of the grounds, was an exhibit from the cemetery of Ancon, in Peru. One figure was of especial interest in this connection -- the skeleton of an ancient Peruvian woman. It was in a crouching attitude, wrapped in the customary grave clothes, and about it were the spindles, cradle frame, pottery, and dishes of vegetables with which she was familiar in her life and from which her spirit was not to be separated in her death. Spontaneously the thoughtful mind connected this crouching figure with the statue in the place of honour, and with the noble buildings and scenes about her. How wonderful the transformation, wrought by no magic or legerdemain, but with woman's hands and heart and ingenuity!⁵

In his book Woman's Share in Primitive Culture (1894), Mason traced how woman's great contribution to civilization stemmed from her multi-faceted skills as a homemaker: as Mason explained in each chapter, woman had been the food bringer, the weaver, the skin dresser, the potter, the beast of burden, the jack-at-all-trades [sic], the artist, the linguist, the founder of society, and the patron of religion.⁶ The modern civilization on display at the Fair owed its proud accomplishments to the foundation laid down by the primitive woman. Moreover, the desirable and noble characteristics of the modern

⁵ Otis Tufton Mason, Woman's Share in Primitive Culture (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1894), pp. 285-286.

⁶ Each term is a chapter title from Mason's book.

woman could all be traced to the primitive: "The savage woman is really the ancestress and prototype of the modern housewife."⁷

Some American women at the Columbian Exposition may have taken exception to Mason's implication that the "modern woman" was a "housewife," others to the idea that the primitive woman had domestic virtues, but the modern woman was undoubtedly linked with her savage sisters in more than just Mason's imagination. The Woman's Building, erected as a dedication "to elevated womanhood," was on the border between the genteelly inspirational official White City and the basely exotic Midway Plaisance.⁸ Thus women and savages, their mental abilities often linked by leading anthropometrists of the day, were geographic neighbors at the White City.⁹ The Woman's Building itself contained Mary MacMonnies' mural Primitive Woman and Mary Cassatt's Modern Woman, visual evidence that the Lady Managers (who oversaw women's role at the Fair) saw women's accomplishments in the context of social evolution (Figs. 3, 4). Moreover, in that same building were exhibits of primitive handicrafts and even a female Navajo weaver with her loom (Figs. 5, 6).¹⁰ Taken together with

⁷ Mason, pp. 159-160.

⁸ Bertha Palmer, "The Growth of the Woman's Building," in Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building, ed. Maud Elliot (Paris and New York: Goupil, 1893). On the issue of the placement of the building, Alan Trachtenberg argues that the positioning of the Woman's Building, with its emphasis on the virtues of women, served as a "moral contrast" to the Midway with its displays of uncivilized peoples. Trachtenberg, p. 222.

⁹ For an excellent study of scientific racism and sexism, see Stephen Jay Gould, The Mismeasure of Man (New York and London: Norton, 1981), especially pp. 80, 115-118.

¹⁰ In 1908 the League tried unsuccessfully to bring a Navajo weaver to Boston for display in a local fair; the fair's board rejected the proposal because

contemporary texts and many of the speeches given during the Congress of Women, these exhibits suggested that the distance between the work of the primitive woman and the modern civilized woman was a small one and that the primitive woman, far from an object of derision, pity, or curiosity, was a figure of respect.

The Woman's Building juxtaposed primitive and modern women in an ambiguous manner -- many observers found as much or more to admire in the primitive as in the modern. In the planning, organization, and exhibits of the Woman's Building, one sees the impact of the theory of social evolution and an uneasy and somewhat contradictory response to it that reflected uncertainties about the real and ideal image of women that the Lady Managers wanted to present to the world. On the one hand, the organizers wanted to present the work of women to show that it was equal to the work of men. Indeed, some "radical thinkers" felt that women's work should compete with the men's in the same arenas on the basis of merit, not sex. Obviously, the commitment to a separate woman's building made such a position untenable, but the question of exactly what to exhibit remained. The main problem was that much of the modern work of women was done in cooperation with men and therefore could not be offered for view separately in a Woman's Building. Bertha Palmer, the President of the Lady Managers, explained that at previous expositions "friends of women were disappointed by the meager showing [in prizes awarded] made when the work done by women alone was separated, and they were not credited with the immense

it "prefer[ed] wild Indians if any." IIL, Record Book III, April 3, 1908, p. 151; ibid, June 5, 1908, p. 159, MHS.

amount, both in variety and volume, which women had done in conjunction with men."¹¹ Prizes had been awarded without any special recognition going to the role of women. Palmer's partial solution was to ask manufacturers throughout the Exposition to indicate on exhibit labels if the work therein had been done by men, by women, or by men and women together; such labeling would spread the recognition of women's work throughout the Exposition.

But how then would the Woman's Building convey the depth and force of women's contributions to society without simply duplicating what was displayed elsewhere? Ironically, in the Lady Managers' desire "to present a complete picture of the condition of women in every country of the world at this moment," they ended up with displays that emphasized the work of "less civilized" women and that in some ways duplicated the exhibits from the anthropological building and the Midway Plaisance.¹² If the Woman's Building were to offer works done by woman's labor alone, it would necessarily include mainly the arts and handicrafts of "primitive" women. "Siam, Japan, Algeria, Cape Colony, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Argentine Republic, Jamaica, Ceylon, Brazil, Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, and the Sandwich Islands" sent exhibits, and even civilized European nations contributed materials like lace and embroidery which illustrated woman's

¹¹ Palmer, p. 11. Palmer's phrase "friends of women" echoed that used by Quaker reformers of Indian policy who had typically referred to themselves as "friends of the Indian." Her phrase reminds us that white women in 1893 were the political equals (in their inequality) of most Indians.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

pre-industrial work.¹³ Many of these nations were also represented on the Midway Plaisance. So, even as the stated purpose of the Woman's Building was to demonstrate woman's equality with man, her equal participation in the crowning triumphs of civilization that made up the rest of the White City, and her expected important equal role in a glorious future, the actual exhibits in the building (and many of the speeches given there during the Congress of Women) pointed back to a time when woman's labor was more separated from man's. Her contributions to human survival and progress were located in a primitive past where she was equal but separate. As Anita Miller has observed, the Women's Building focused on the past, while the exhibits in other buildings glorified the technological present.¹⁴

The Lady Managers justified the backward-looking bent of their building by putting it forward as a history of woman's work, as a testimony to the fact that women "were the originators of most of the industrial arts, and that it was not until these became lucrative that they were appropriated by men, and women pushed aside."¹⁵ To reveal this past, the Lady Managers actively enlisted the aid of the Smithsonian Institution in creating a "primitive feminine industrial exhibit."¹⁶ The idea was to show that women had been the "firsts" in many industries: pottery, weaving, basket-making,

¹³ Ibid., p. 15. Torgovnick explains that "primitive" was once a flexible word, used to describe even Europeans who were not thoroughly modernized (18-22).

¹⁴ Anita Miller, introduction, The Fair Women, by Jeanne Weimann (Chicago: Academy, 1981), pp. viii.

¹⁵ Lady Managers, "Preliminary Prospectus," 1891, quoted in Weimann, p. 393.

¹⁶ Sara Hallowell, letter to Mrs. Palmer, January 1891, quoted in Weimann, p. 393.

architecture, decorative arts, and so on. Mary Lockwood, a feminist whose interest in history earned her the job of designing historical exhibits for the Patents Office and the Smithsonian, enthusiastically championed the idea of such an exhibit. Writing to Mrs. Palmer in 1891, she detailed her own investigations which had turned up convincing evidence of women's role "as inventors from the industrial age to the present."¹⁷ She pointed out that an impressive exhibit of women's work, especially pottery and basketry, could be culled from the Smithsonian's collections. At Palmer's request, Otis T. Mason put together an exhibition he called "Woman's Work in Savagery," and, liking it so much, he tried to have it displayed in the Government Building. Eventually Palmer managed to secure the eighty-case exhibition for her building, although it was not installed until June, after the Fair had opened.¹⁸

Mason's exhibition reflected his belief that one could measure a culture's level of civilization by the sophistication of its tools.¹⁹ Mason liked to demonstrate this theory by arranging the tools of various cultures in ascending order of technological complexity. But although Mason seemed to

¹⁷ Weimann, p. 393.

¹⁸ For the story of Palmer's struggle to secure the exhibit, see Weimann, pp. 394-402.

¹⁹ For concise histories of anthropological theories of culture at the turn of the century, see George Cotkin, Reluctant Modernism: American Thought and Culture, 1880-1900 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), pp. 51-73; Adam Kuper, The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); and Hoxie, pp. 115-145. The theory of social evolution (which implied that primitive cultures could evolve rapidly with the introduction of technology) was challenged in several ways by anthropologists at the turn of the century. Some of the challenges took on racial overtones to explain why certain racial groups could not and should not be rapidly assimilated into mainstream white America.

argue that women had laid the technological groundwork for men's progress, women themselves were essentially unchanged: they had been "civilized" all along, but their part in society would always be domestic. Convinced of the importance of women to the progress of civilization, Mason was nonetheless uneasy about any "progress" in the role of women, preferring that they remain separate from the modern industries which they had "invented." Mason's view coincided with that of many women at the Fair.

However, because Mason's installation was joined throughout the building by other exhibits of primitive women's work, the message of social evolution was somewhat diluted.²⁰ American Indian handicrafts from many states and territories were "scattered around the building," and a Navajo woman was on hand to demonstrate her weaving skills. Moreover, many of the displayed objects from other countries, even European ones, were actually primitive handicrafts. As Weimann concludes, "the story of woman's inventiveness was not told in the coherent, systematic way in which the Ladies had hoped to tell it."²¹

The real object lesson that one would take away from the Woman's Building was that primitive woman's work was worthy of exhibition next to modern woman's fine arts; women's technology had not really evolved.

²⁰ For the space allotment, see the building schematic facing the table of contents in Elliot.

²¹ Weimann, p. 404; for full description of the extent of primitive exhibits in the Woman's Building, see Weimann's chapter "Women in Savagery," pp. 393-425. Interestingly, the Navajo woman worked in front of a specially commissioned Navajo rug that depicted a group of horses, a new design development in Navajo weaving, and one that continues to provoke debate among collectors as to whether it represents an artistic innovation or a degradation of the "traditional" weaving art.

Indeed, many reviewers found more to admire, artistically, in the primitive work than in the modern. A contemporary potter, Mary Louise McLaughlin, argued that in the decoration of ceramics, "we fall behind our aboriginal models, who in their simplicity never lost sight of the fitness of things, and whose work consequently ranks high in true artistic beauty."²² Candace Wheeler pointed out the admirable quality of the primitive applied arts, reminding visitors that "we are considering a new birth, a revival of ancient handicrafts."²³ Within a decade the popularity of Southwestern Indian pottery would confirm these opinions, as would the Rookwood Pottery Company's own predilection to decorate its wares with images of Indian potters, weavers, and basketmakers; other pottery companies would go as far as copying Indian ceramic forms and designs.²⁴ Turning to side-by-side examples of old and modern needlework, Wheeler noted with pleasure that the early work "was in no way diminished by this juxtaposition, since the ancient efforts "are precious . . . from their antiquity . . . from their methods, which have long been lost . . . from the use of materials of a purity and preciousness unknown to modern manufacture, and from a color of the subtlety . . . which no dyes can rival."²⁵ No one suggested that women's decorative arts had been improved by modern civilization.

²² McLaughlin, quoted in Weimann, p. 416. McLaughlin ran the Cincinnati Pottery Club and had invented a glazing method favored by the popular Rookwood Pottery.

²³ Candace Wheeler, "Applied Arts in the Woman's Building," Elliot, p. 59.

²⁴ Ellen Paul Denker and Bert Randall Denker, catalog entries 55 and 56, in Wendy Kaplan, The Art that is Life: The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987), pp. 170-171.

²⁵ Candace Wheeler, quoted in Weimann, p. 405.

This aesthetic preference for the primitive partly reflected what Karen Halttunen has documented as the growing tendency in women's magazines in the 1880s and 1890s to recommend arts and crafts (especially Indian artifacts) as decorative objects for the country home.²⁶ If one follows Halttunen in arguing that "the conviction that the things around us are reflections of our essential, idiosyncratic selves, and that our possession of them ensures the vitality and charm of our personality, has proved a potent force behind the twentieth-century culture of consumption," one might conclude that when the Indian artifacts entered the home, the decorator was making an identification between herself and the primitive artist.²⁷ Such a view reinforced the division between men's and women's labor seen elsewhere in the Fair, suggesting that men's and women's talents were different and that women's talents belonged to the past, men's to the future. In one way then, the aesthetic valuation of primitive work could be seen as a first step in raising the status of the women who produced that work. On the other hand, this valuation could also undermine women's work in fields other than the traditional applied arts.²⁸

²⁶ Karen Halttunen, "From Parlor to Living Room: Domestic Space, Interior Decoration, and the Culture of Personality," in Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920, ed. Simon Bronner (New York and London: Norton, 1989), p. 167.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

²⁸ Cosmopolitan followed this latter path, reserving special praise for the applied arts, even though it offered a generally negative review of the fine art works in the Gallery of Honor. See Ellen Henrotin, "An Outsider's View of the Woman's Exhibit," The Cosmopolitan (September 1893), quoted in Weimann, p. 319.

Inside the building, two decorative murals -- Primitive Woman by Mary MacMonnies, and Modern Woman by Mary Cassatt -- symbolized the building's confusion about the nature of women's present and historical contributions to society. Commissioned to recall the drudgery from which women had escaped and to represent the superior status enjoyed by the modern woman, these murals unintentionally idealized the primitive woman and raised questions about the relative power of the modern woman.²⁹ Mary MacMonnies represented the primitive woman in idealized, neo-classical manner.³⁰ Half-nude, the women in her three-panel mural that decorated the north end of the Main Hall, some forty-eight feet above the floor, "bear away the game" killed by a hunter (a "tawny giant"), "minister to his wants," make wine (for the man), carry water (woman as "the bearer of burdens"), bathe and care for children, drive an oxen, and sow grain. Elliot concluded that the mural "is a composition which commends itself to all those who understand and honor the idea for which our building stands."³¹ Elliot must have been referring to the artistic quality of the work, because

²⁹ For a thoughtful reading of these murals see Sund, pp. 458-65. In the main, I agree with Sund's argument that "the messages [the paintings' iconography] sent about woman's historical status, contemporary position, and goals for the future can be seen to have undermined the sorts of progressive agendas that fostered their creation, and conformed to traditionalist notions of womanhood ubiquitous at the the Fair" (459-60), but my interest is in the way these images elevated the position of primitive women. Given that primitive women were alive and well in America in the form of Indians, this elevation had real meaning to those Indians who had been repeatedly thwarted in their attempts to resist cultural extermination.

³⁰ Her husband, Frederick, was also an artist; his sculptures were featured at the Exposition.

³¹ The mural was fourteen feet high by fifty-eight feet wide, according to Weimann, pp. 202-203. Quotations from Elliot, p. 32.

MacMonnies intended the women in her mural to symbolize "the bearer of burdens, the toilers of the earth, the servants of man, and more than this, being without ambition, contented with their lot" (emphasis added).³² The purpose of the building was to demonstrate how far removed modern women were from primitive women, but MacMonnies may have created an image that was altogether too pleasing to the eye for such a message to come through.³³ Her mural received nothing but kind words, and no comments on its allegorical message. If the mural was supposed to represent the beastly nature of primitive woman's position, its pleasing colors and graceful figures obscured such a message; even Mrs. Palmer felt that the two murals depicted "The inspiration of woman's genius."³⁴ In fact, other murals in the building and throughout the White City portrayed women from earlier ages at work on traditional handicrafts, so it would have taken an unusually perceptive viewer to discern that MacMonnies intended to critique the labor status of earlier women.³⁵

³² Mary MacMonnies, interview by Eleanor Greatorex, Godey's Lady's Book, quoted in Weimann, pp. 206-207.

³³ Sund posits a possible semi-feminist reading of MacMonnies' mural but rejects it because she finds no evidence that any contemporary viewers made similar readings (460). I prefer to emphasize that no contemporary viewers seemed to echo MacMonnies' own reading and that those like Palmer offered ambiguous assessments that could refer to either aesthetic or iconographic qualities. Contemporary commentators' overwhelming emphasis on the mural's aesthetic qualities indicates a certain blindness to its message. Certainly, it did not provoke outrage over the condition of primitive woman.

³⁴ Palmer, quoted in Weimann, p. 214.

³⁵ See Banta, Weimann, Elliot, and any number of photo books of the Fair for descriptions and illustrations of these other images.

While Primitive Woman garnered praise as a work of art and generated no comment on its iconographic message, Modern Woman provoked hostility and confusion on both grounds.³⁶ Viewers objected to Cassatt's impressionistic style and puzzled over what her figures were supposed to represent. One would think that Elliot, who boasted that the women of 1893 "claim our inheritance, and are become workers, not cumberers of the earth," would have reserved her praise for Modern Woman.³⁷ In fact, Elliot gave much less attention to Mary Cassatt's mural, praising it only with the comment that "the border of the tympanum is very charming; the children quite beautifully painted."³⁸ In three panels, Cassatt depicted modern women as what seemed to be frivolous adolescents, chasing (with the ducks close behind) a nude flying Fame, picking apples, and "playing upon a stringed instrument, while another poses in one of the attitudes of the modern skirt-dance." While MacMonnies' women were "sturdy," large, adult figures, Cassatt's were fragile, small, and young (although fully clothed).³⁹ Actually, Cassatt's women were not quite so small or young, but they were proportionally smaller than MacMonnies'. More important, Cassatt's modern woman appeared to many viewers to have nothing to do. Frances Willard, a leading suffragist and vocal critic of the

³⁶ Banta notes that critics called MacMonnies' women "ideal" and Cassatt's "ugly" and "realistic" (542).

³⁷ Elliot, p. 23.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 32.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 32. Banta argues that female figures at the Fair, whether in painting or statuary, were uniformly large to suggest the vast power of the United States. Interestingly, she also notes that Charlotte Perkins Gilman criticized the damage done to race progress when women were kept "small," as Cassatt seemed to have done. See Banta, pp. 521-552 and 757, n24.

domestic ideal, proclaimed the mural "too trivial and below the dignity of a great occasion."⁴⁰ The Chicago Record critic, Henry B. Fuller, ironically found the painting "primitive" and objected to what seemed to be its spirit of "derision" (in the "cackling geese" chasing "three hideous girls").⁴¹ Cassatt had intended for her apple pickers to be read allegorically as "Young Women Plucking the Fruits of Knowledge and Science."⁴² The female figures, attired in contemporary Parisian fashions, were supposed to be visibly modern, but the nature of their "labor" was difficult to discern. Certainly unintentionally, Cassatt had pointed to a crucial irony of the Woman's Building: it was the primitive, not the modern woman who gave the most physical evidence of contributing to the progress of humankind.

OBJECT LESSONS IN DOMESTICITY

During the Congress of Women (May 15-22), the speakers at the Woman's Building who referred to the idea of social evolution were not all in agreement about the real and ideal roles of women in the past, the present, or the future. Indeed, the Woman's Building brought together women who opposed each other in many ways. Central among these debates was the

⁴⁰ On Willard's anti-domestic stance, see Elaine Hedges, Hearts and Hands: The Influence of Women and Quilts on American Society (San Francisco: The Quilt Digest Press, 1987), pp. 88-91. Willard's art criticism is quoted in Weimann, p. 314. Sund notes that some feminists at the Fair criticized the dress of the mural figures as impractical (462).

⁴¹ Henry Fuller, quoted in Weimann, pp. 316-318.

⁴² Mary Cassatt, quoted in Elaine Hedges and Ingrid Wendt, eds., In Her Own Image: Women Working in the Arts (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1980), pp. 52-53. Weimann also quotes from a letter to Mrs. Palmer in which Cassatt describes her "modern" intentions (200-201).

future of the domestic sphere. Some women at the Congress doubted the value and existence of a separate domestic sphere for all women. For example, even the relatively conservative President of the Board of Lady Managers, Bertha Palmer, opened the Congress with a speech that supported the "ideal" of a happy domestic sphere but insisted that in reality such a sphere was attainable only by the women of the elite classes; instead, Palmer presented the Woman's Building as a tribute to the working women of the world and as a spur to their acknowledgment as social and economic equals to men.⁴³ Women such as Palmer looked to the future for new public roles in areas formerly reserved for men.

But the seemingly conservative message about women's roles conveyed by the exhibits and murals in the Woman's Building was reinforced by those lecturers who examined the evolution of the modern woman from her primitive foremothers and, like Otis Mason, argued that men and women had separate and valuable roles to play in society. Like Mason, these women wanted recognition for the value of women's homemaking role, and they wanted that role to take on heightened importance and status in the new century. Their commitment to the ideal of the domestic sphere led them to sentimentalize primitive women's labor because they feared that in an age where women were beginning to work outside the home in traditionally male occupations, the status of domestic

⁴³ Many of the speeches given at the Congress of Women were collected in Mary Kavanaugh Oldham Eagle, ed., The Congress of Women Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U. S. A., 1893 (Chicago: American Publishing House, 1894; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1974.); Palmer's speech is on pp. 25-29.

work would decline. In addition, the "industries" which had once belonged to women were now in the hands of male industrialists. The primitive woman may have been savage, but at least neither she nor the men in her society had any doubts about the value of her work. Thus, although it is reasonable to argue that the Woman's Building presented an essentially conservative vision of women by glorifying the primitive domestic sphere, such an argument obscures the contradictions and radical implications in that glorification: defending the modern domestic sphere on the basis of its historical role could lead to defending the lifestyles of present-day primitive women.

The exhibits in the Woman's Building were supposed to reveal that women's contributions to the world had been important for a long time, but had not received the recognition they deserved. Mason proposed that from the study of woman's earliest history "it will be possible to reckon what the present owes to her and what should be her lines of progress to success in the future."⁴⁴ This goal fit well with the general intention of the organizers of the Columbian Exposition to display evidence of "progress," but it begged the question of what kind of future to read from the past. The publishers' preface to Elliot's Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building took the progressive position, noting that the "Exposition has afforded woman an unprecedented opportunity to present to the world a justification of her claim to be placed on complete equality with man."⁴⁵ Juliet Corson, in her paper "The Evolution of the Home" expressed the conservative position: "Through the oldest race-

⁴⁴ Mason, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Elliot, preface.

records we may trace the origin of home to the hearthfire kindled by women."⁴⁶

By putting the present domestic woman at the high point on an evolutionary scale, Mason and these women did two things at once. First, they established that women and more specifically the idea of the home had always been at the center of all cultures, however primitive. Second, by suggesting that the "peaceful arts" of the modern world -- meaning the basic industries -- had been originated or inspired by women's work, they could make a strong case for the benefits society would receive from the further evolution of the homemaker. But Mason and many of the women at the Fair wanted to extend women's rights and activities only so far as they could be tied to the established virtues of the homemaker. Mason argued that woman's contributions had come through her role as a home worker, and should continue in the same vein. Many of the speakers at the Congress accepted this theory. They defended their forays into the public sphere of politics and social policy on the grounds that they were simply extending their domestic virtues beyond the home, not competing with men on men's ground. To make their cases, these speakers described the benefits accrued to civilization through woman's historical work in the domestic sphere.

The idea that the central features of a modern industrialized society were established by primitive women was echoed by many speakers, who stressed that this fact had not received due recognition. Caroline Corbin, in a paper called "The Higher Womanhood," recommended to her audience that it "go with me to the Midway Plaisance and look at the Samoan house, the

⁴⁶ Juliet Corson, "The Evolution of the Home," *Eagle*, p. 714.

village of the South Sea Islanders" and then go to the Court of Honor to stand beneath "the majesty of its Statue of the Republic;" those who would follow her on this graphic journey of progress from primitivism to civilization would find that "one undivided half of all this achievement belongs to woman. It [progress] is immutably, undefaceably here, and it is an exhibit of woman's work beside which every other exhibit of woman's hand-craft in this Exposition, noble and beautiful as many of them are, is paltry and insignificant."⁴⁷ Corbin, a one-time suffragist who had come to renounce the drive for political equality, emphasized the spiritual and moral influence of women on the progress of civilization. Even though primitive "woman's hand-craft" had no place in the present, she obviously saw it as evidence of woman's role in civilization's progress.

Mary Hull, in "Woman and Household Labor," argued that "The home has done everything for the world and its civilization and industry, but somehow the working powers of the home have not received their share of attention from either man or woman." Noting that "The home has been the cradle of almost every industry," she lamented that while those industries were professionalized and systematized once they left the home, the present home lacked similar organization. A professional domestic scientist (she directed the Department of Domestic Arts at the Armour Institute, Chicago), Hull advocated the professional training of homemakers in order to give their housework the status of "labor" that would command men's respect. She chided those women who left the home, claiming that it was "not high genius, but feeble inability to cope with domestic government" that drove

⁴⁷ Caroline Corbin, "The Higher Womanhood," *Eagle*, p. 327.

them out. Only through professional training could housework once again become "the sacred intelligent foundation of all other arts." Hull's argument rested on the idea that the home was the historical foundation of modern civilization.⁴⁸

Electa Bullock nearly mirrored Mason's argument that women had been responsible for leading us into "the period of industrialism, when peoples settled down to the great occupations that dignify the most advanced nations,"⁴⁹ although she did not go as far back in human history:

We view the marvelous industrial institutions of the civilized world as they exist today with wonder, and when we pause for a few moments to trace the history of their gradual development back to their infancy, we invariably find that their creation, nourishment and first strength was the loving and patient work of the industrial mothers of the land.

While we point with justifiable pride to the proud position the manufactories occupy today, we do know that they are the outgrowth of the handcard, the old and revered spinning-wheel, and the family handloom, the knitting and sewing needles.⁵⁰

Not an advocate of a separate domestic sphere, Bullock pointed to the historical origins of modern industry only to claim that the progress of those industries would depend on women's continued involvement in them, an involvement that would necessarily take them outside the home. Like Mason though, she saw women as the leaders of civilization, and despite the

⁴⁸ Mary Hull, "Woman and Household Labor," *Eagle*, pp. 609-610.

⁴⁹ Mason, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Electa Bullock, "Industrial Women," *Eagle*, p. 510.

visible separation of modern women from modern industry, she maintained that "the women of America will lead society onward and upward, from civilization to civilization, through endless stages of progress."⁵¹

Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, dressed in handmade Irish clothing crafted by members of her Irish Home Industries Association, spoke about the "Encouragement of Home Industries" and praised the historical role of women's labor, claiming that the main point of the Exposition was to trace the evolution of our industries and arts from their primitive origins to their modern splendor. To her mind, "All the triumphs that civilization can boast of must be traced back to the ingenious contrivances of our forefathers, and especially of our foremothers under very adverse circumstances, and with very few resources." She argued that "it is women who, for the most part, invented the means of carrying on domestic industries, that men only took them up and developed them on a larger scale when they saw there was a profit to be made out of them." Like Bullock though, she traced the history of women's work back only so far; her "primitives" were Irish girls, forty of whom she brought with her to the Exposition to work in the Irish Village, which was the Midway Plaisance attraction located closest to the Woman's Building.⁵²

Juliet Corson, an advocate of domestic science, came the closest to Mason's position in her paper "The Evolution of the Home," which drew heavily upon the anthropological exhibits at the Exposition for its moral

⁵¹ Bullock, p. 511.

⁵² For her clothing, see Weimann, p. 409. Quotations are from Ishbel Aberdeen, "Encouragement of Home Industries," *Eagle*, pp. 743-744, 746.

lessons.⁵³ Corson opened her paper with a nod to the "hearth-fire kindled by women" of primitive times. She noted that visitors to the Ethnological exhibit in the United States Government Building could see how women once started these home-fires with the "Indian fire-drill." Taking examples from a number of primitive cultures -- Brahmans, Tasmanians, Onondaga Indians, Aztecs -- she argued that fire, of which "women have always been the custodians," is always linked with the early stages of religion. Thus woman's ability to control fire, the marker of the home, had always given her a position of sacred responsibility to her community.⁵⁴ Evidence of the ancient, noble history of motherhood was abundant at the Fair. Corson urged the mothers in her audience to "go presently through the stately avenues of our White City, from this Memorial Hall of the women of today to another, dedicated to the memories of our vanished American civilizations." Her recommended tour anticipated Mason's: from the goddess Liberty to the Peruvian mummy. In the Anthropological Building, she implored the mothers to gaze on the "relics" of these long dead Indian mothers, "poor shreds and patches of humanity, and yet so eloquent of mother-love, for who but a mother would have swathed those small bodies in softest feather cloth, and placed in the little hands food for that last long spirit-journey."⁵⁵ Corson's eulogy of these vanished Indian mothers led her to chide those observers who insisted on separating modern women from the "so-called

⁵³ Mason called the Exposition "one vast anthropological revelation." Quoted in Rydell, All the World's A Fair, p. 55.

⁵⁴ Juliet Corson, "The Evolution of Home," *Eagle*, p. 714.

⁵⁵ Corson, p. 715.

uncivilized races" (emphasis added). For Corson, any culture with loving mothers was civilized.

That Corson's vision of female civilization was domestic is apparent in her attention to the primary role of cooking. Corson found striking similarities among the cooking artifacts of the vanished civilizations on display in the Anthropological Building, the cooking demonstrations by the living examples of "semi-civilized peoples" on display in the Midway Plaisance, and the principles of modern domestic science. She concluded:

The fundamental principles of cookery are the same among all peoples; those are the best fed who have adhered to slow, moderate heat, and the long-continued process now advocated by modern science. . . This same modern science repeats the lessons learned by man when he lived closest to the heart of Mother Nature. . . This is only one of the parallels afforded by the latest discoveries among the ruined civilizations of this great continent.⁵⁶

The fitness of primitive cooking methods was convincingly demonstrated in the Woman's Building kitchen by Sarah Rorer who prepared "Zuni Indian dishes made with corn," the recipes of which had been given to her by Frank Hamilton Cushing, himself a white person who for a time preferred Indian culture to white.⁵⁷

Like Mason, Corson found much to admire in the domestic activities of these women of other races and times. Her emphasis on the gendered nature of the material culture in the Anthropological Building is striking;

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 717.

⁵⁷ Weimann, p. 459.

again and again she referred to the exhibits as evidence of woman's domestic role in civilization. She said: "Let us stand before the remains of this grandest of man's ruined supremacies, and yield the homage of a few short moments to the memories of those noble wives and mothers."⁵⁸ While most interpreters of the Columbian Exposition have argued that the Midway Plaisance had been separated from the White City in order to distance the "primitives" on display there from the "civilized" on display in the White City, Corson unapologetically linked primitive and civilized women; women's virtues seemed to transcend race, time, and place.⁵⁹ Corson's willingness to find such unqualified "nobility" in the women of other races foreshadowed the sympathetic interest in American Indian women that would grow in the next decades.

THE REVIVAL OF HOME INDUSTRIES (ARTS AND CRAFTS)

The glorification of woman's domestic role suggested reservations about "progress," reservations which were underlined in attempts to promote the domestic arts among primitive peoples. Elite white women became instrumental in promoting home industries, both as a way to raise the status of women's work and to raise the incomes of lower-class women living in nonindustrialized settings. The paradoxical implication that women could be civilized by practicing what were often ancient arts ultimately ensured that the so-called primitive women retained at least the material aspects of their

⁵⁸ Corson, p. 717.

⁵⁹ For this "separation" interpretation, see Rydell; Hoxie; and John Kasson, Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century (New York: Hill & Wang, 1978), pp. 17-28.

cultures. It also revealed that some white women perceived the domestic hearth, rather than the industrial factory, as the symbol of true civilization. Thus the primitive woman would paradoxically become more "savage" if she left her long-standing domestic duties and entered the modern industrialized world.

The basic civilizing impulse behind home industries promotion can be seen in Mary Petrie's paper, "Serving One Another." Concerned with how the rich could help the poor financially and morally, and disturbed by the moral effect of industrial production schemes that reduced workers to "machines" and thereby separated them even further from the elite classes, Petrie labored to set up programs that would train people from the working classes in the finer points of cookery, domestic economy, and home industries. She described the aim of one such program, the Home Arts and Industries Association (established in England, 1885), as "to train eye and hand and thus fit for many callings; to fill the idle hours of working people happily; to foster sympathetic intercourse between rich and poor, and to revive good old handicrafts." Why? Because as she demonstrated with the example of a "street arab" who enters the school once "just for a lark," he may come "again and yet again for the growing interest of the work, and it has its own quiet influence in civilizing him."⁶⁰ [emphasis added] Quite simply, if what women had made in the home had been the cornerstone of civilization, it made sense to try to keep the laboring masses civilized by encouraging them to continue to practice the domestic "arts and industries." Men and women like Petrie saw a real danger in the development of a

⁶⁰ Mary Petrie, "Serving One Another," *Eagle*, p. 653.

working class that was no longer bound to the home and its virtues; such workers were seen as no better than "savages." Richard Slotkin has argued that in late nineteenth-century America, the laboring classes became increasingly identified with the image of the savage Indian; the same kind of pairing seemed to be in Petrie's mind.⁶¹

Another Englishwoman, Ishbel Aberdeen, began her paper by arguing that "the triumphs of civilization" stemmed from women's home work. On this basis she reasoned that the handwork done in the home was often of superior quality to its machine-made descendents, and that the encouragement of such home industries promised income for women living in rural areas. But even if no profit was to be made, the home industries' value for "educational and moral training" was decisive.⁶² Noting that this training had a place even in industrialized countries like America, she imagined, "The young people who are taught to draw, carve and model and do carpentry will also surely wish to beautify their own homes and thus become good fathers and good mothers and good citizens."⁶³ In other words, one could civilize the laboring classes by training them in the domestic arts. This belief was shared by Mason, who wrote that the "characteristic struggle for beauty in every direction by every woman had a most reforming effect upon society."⁶⁴ As if to offer living proof of this, Aberdeen brought forty Irish girls with her; they were set up in the Irish Village, where they

⁶¹ Richard Slotkin, The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890 (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), pp. 477-498.

⁶² Aberdeen, p. 744.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 745.

⁶⁴ Mason, p. 187.

demonstrated their home industry skills much as the Samoans demonstrated theirs in the Pacific Islands village. It would obviously be a small step from civilizing the Irish through such industrial training to civilizing other primitive peoples through similar revivals of traditional craft arts.

Outside the Fair's limits, in the city of Chicago, Jane Addams championed the ability of an industrial education to civilize recent immigrants. In her Hull House she established a "Labor Museum" to bring recent immigrants into contact with "the inherited resources of their daily occupation."⁶⁵ Her concern was that the older immigrants were emotionally dislocated by the change of geography and culture, lost touch with the hand crafts that they had practiced in the Old Country, and thereby lost touch with the skills and values that might be passed on to their children. By displaying the "primitive" tools with which the immigrants had once woven, sewn, and spun, the Labor Museum demonstrated the connection between the handicrafts and the modern industries in which those immigrants now worked: "even the most casual observer [at the museum could] see that there is no break in orderly evolution if we look at history from the industrial standpoint."⁶⁶ Moreover, Addams saw this history as decided largely by women. The immigrants she described using the Labor Museum were nearly all women. She also perceived an "early sanctity and meaning" in the "household arts" that was worth recovering. In fact, Addams used the words "revive" and "recover" extensively to express the purpose of her Labor

⁶⁵ Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House (1910; New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 172.

⁶⁶ Addams, p. 173.

Museum.⁶⁷ She seemed to see the Labor Museum as a way for immigrants to recover and revive the domestic values of the Old Country and integrate them into a new culture. This program implied that modern America itself needed to recover similar values. Clearly ambivalent about progress, Addams described her response upon witnessing a traditional Jewish Passover:

Aside from the grave religious significance of the ceremony, my mind was filled with shifting pictures of woman's labor with which travel makes one familiar; the Indian woman grinding grain outside of their huts as they sing praises to the sun and rain; a file of white-clad Moorish women whom I had once seem waiting their turn at a well in Tangiers; south Italian women kneeling in a row along the stream and beating their wet clothes against the smooth white stones; the milking, the gardening, the marketing in thousands of hamlets, which are such direct expressions of the solicitude and affection at the basis of all family life.⁶⁸

In this passage Addams suggested a kind of moral solidarity in women's work in non-industrial societies. Yet, because those women had come to live in the most advanced industrial society in the world, Addams had to help them adjust.

As much as Addams admired the work of women immigrants, she perceived them as primitive. Just as Aberdeen exhibited Irish girls at the Midway Plaisance alongside South Pacific Islanders, so Addams stocked her

⁶⁷ Throughout Addams' book, these words appear with some frequency.

⁶⁸ Addams, pp. 175-176.

Labor Museum with examples of work from Irish, Italian, Danish, Filipino, and Navajo women; to these elite reformers, the Filipino and Italian woman were more alike than different.⁶⁹ Moreover, like Aberdeen and Petrie, Addams firmly believed that one of the primary purposes of Hull House and its Labor Museum was "to bring [immigrants] in contact with a better type of Americans."⁷⁰ (This was also a prominent theme among those working to assimilate American Indians.) The primitive European woman would become inspired by the example of the civilized American woman who, paradoxically, recommended the European woman's own primitive domestic arts as a civilizing tool. The immigrants needed civilizing, and these elite white women found that the best way to achieve that was by reintroducing them to the honest traditions of the Old World. If the New World had disrupted the immigrant family's home, Addams and her settlement movement sisters would restore the home and thereby keep America safe from the savagery of unchecked industrialization.

THE RETURN TO THE PRIMITIVE

The dislocations of the present and the uncertainties of the future led some women at the Congress to idealize the primitive woman's position in her culture. Conservative observers pointed to the more complete and fulfilling domestic sphere of the primitive woman, while feminists argued

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 177; Eileen Boris, Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America (Philadelphia: Temple Univ Press, 1986), p. 132. The display of Navajo looms is mentioned in Marion Foster Washburne, "A Labor Museum," Craftsman 6 (Sept. 1904): 577.

⁷⁰ Addams, p. 169.

that primitive women enjoyed greater equality within their cultures. Both positions gave white women compelling reasons to look with new interest at primitive women.

Some idealizations of primitive women came from white women who felt compelled to praise the glory of civilization, but also longed for simpler days when women's roles were more clearly defined. These idealizations could be relatively lukewarm, as was E.J. Ormsbee's observation that the Samoan people were "happy and contented" and her recommendation that they not be civilized much beyond the point to which the missionaries had already gotten them.⁷¹ But other speakers, including Amelia Howard, implied sharp criticisms of American feminism in their observations of other peoples. Travelling to North Africa, Howard found herself simultaneously repelled by and attracted to the lifestyle of the Moorish women, whom she found "happy and cheerful" because they "had no idea of the higher education, of the fads, isms, and ologies that make part of our lives." Howard asked, "are we any happier, any better women than these simple-minded creatures with no interests outside of their homes?"⁷² Juliet Corson also questioned the wisdom of women's agitation for a larger public role. Like Mason, she lovingly outlined the prominent role of women in earlier cultures. Of the Aztecs, she noted that "the domestic virtues of women were most highly esteemed."⁷³ Like Mason and Howard, Corson concluded her

⁷¹ E.J. Ormsbee, "Samoa -- Its People and their Customs," *Eagle*, p. 592.

⁷² Amelia Howard, "Moorish Women As I Found Them," *Eagle*, p. 468.

⁷³ Corson, p. 717.

paper with the strong suggestion that the modern woman was forgetting the historical source of her strength:

So far as women are concerned, if the test of their advancement be the degree of influence they exercise upon their age and the part they play in culture and progress, we may seriously ask ourselves in what respect we have raised the standard of womanly usefulness? And whether we are not in danger of losing sight of the homely virtues of wifehood and motherhood in our strife for public equality with men? . . . Without doubt it is sweet and proper to serve one's country in public; but what will result if only dull-witted ones are left to maintain the elevation of the home? In what shall we have excelled the women whose memories we have traced among the relics of their lost civilizations?⁷⁴

Howard and Corsen asked questions that could have strange and unexpected answers. Later generations of white women would ask similar questions and conclude that the best answer was to emulate the American Indians' lifestyle. (Or at least to get as close to it as possible through study or consumption of Indian goods.)⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 718.

⁷⁵ Recent scholarship has described how white women in the early twentieth century entered the anthropological field by studying Indian women in the American Southwest. See for example, Barbara A. Babcock and Nancy J. Parezo, eds., Daughters of the Desert: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest, 1880-1980 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); Nancy J. Parezo, ed., Hidden Scholars: Women Anthropologists and the Native American Southwest (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993). In suffragist circles, Indian societies were praised for their gender equality; Gail H. Landsman, "The 'Other' as Political Symbol: Images of Indians in the Woman Suffrage Movement," Ethnohistory 39:3 (Summer 1992): 247-84. For a recent argument in favor of looking to American Indian cultures for feminist models of society, see Paula

As early as 1890, at least one white woman had recommended that her fellow Americans take "Some Lessons from Barbarism."⁷⁶ Elaine Goodale (who in 1891 married the Sioux physician and author Charles A. Eastman) wrote that after several years of assimilation work among American Indians, she had "been unwillingly impressed by the fact that barbarism offers several points of evident superiority to our civilization."⁷⁷ For example, Indian clothing was more hygienic and practical, particularly women's dress, which boasted "ease and freedom, mental and moral," by its "fixed standard."⁷⁸ Other advantages of Indian life involved flexible housing, healthy outdoor living, scrupulous manners, and functionally efficient tools. Aside from women's dress, Goodale did not touch on gender issues, but her praise of barbarism stemmed from her explicit complaints about modern American society, with its "over-civilized people," class distinctions, "false standards, artificial distinctions, and ridiculous elaborations of purely conventional laws."⁷⁹ In short, she believed that civilization had recently become too civilized for its own good. Pointing to Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and Tolstoy, she argued that these "prophets of the new era" proposed reforms which "bore many of the familiar features of that effete 'barbarism'" which

Gunn Allen, "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism," The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986) 209-21.

⁷⁶ Elaine Goodale, "Some Lessons from Barbarism," Popular Science Monthly 38 (Nov. 1890): 82-86. For a good introduction to Goodale's early work, see Elaine Goodale, Sister to the Sioux: The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885-91, ed. Kay Graber (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978).

⁷⁷ Goodale, "Some Lessons," p. 82.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 85.

the Indian had been forced to "so painfully" discard.⁸⁰ For Goodale, the future was the past, an American Indian past.

Others could use primitive life more narrowly to criticize the modern division of labor between the sexes. Kirstine Fredericson, a Dane, opened her lecture, "Looking Backwards," by recasting feminists' demands for equality as a return to a traditional division of labor: "to my mind, the Woman's Rights' movement may as correctly be called conservative, for, in a certain sense, it means going back to a more simple arrangement of the relations between the sexes, which have been artificially separated by a differentiation, carried too far." Fredericson's complaint with the modern woman was epitomized in two almanac pictures of Indian life; the first showed the chief attired in all his finery followed by his wife carrying the entire household on her back, while the second showed the wife in all of her finery, followed by her husband carrying the household and leading the children. To Fredericson's mind, "the last situation was as little becoming to woman as the first," although the pictures "showed one side of the change which historic evolution has brought to woman." This change was undesirable, however. Describing the primitive separation of men's and women's work, still practiced among "Indians and Greenlanders," Fredericson rejected the idea that these women needed to be liberated: "Now these women are by no means subjugated. On the contrary, they are very independent, really much more so than their sisters in the city."⁸¹ She referred to Alice Fletcher, an American

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁸¹ Kirstine Fredericson, "Looking Backwards," *Eagle*, p. 237.

anthropologist, for confirmation that American Indian women were better off than their white civilized sisters.⁸²

Fredericsen's argument hinged on the idea that only in "work" did women have any real "influence." She wrote, "What makes woman independent and influential is real usefulness." The Indian woman did real, important work, equal in value to that of the man, and thus enjoyed equal status in the society. Yet Fredericsen was not using this observation as an excuse for women to reclaim domestic work, as Mason and Corson did. Rather, Fredericsen was pointing out that the more "civilized" societies had systematically excluded women from equal participation in work outside the strict confines of home. When a woman was allowed out, say to work in factories, "she only does the lower work, the supervision has gone out of her hands; if she wants it she will have to fight for it."⁸³ Thus, Fredericsen's complaint with the modern condition was not that it denigrated the importance of woman's domestic work, but that "civilization has a general tendency to subvert woman either into a handmaid of labor or into the queen of the drawing-room."⁸⁴ Fredericsen then invoked the elevated position of the primitive woman to spur the modern woman into working more vigorously for her equality in public affairs.

⁸² Fredericsen was referring to a speech Fletcher gave to the "first International Woman's Congress." Fletcher spoke before the International Council of Women in 1888 to describe Indian Women's rights; see Rayna Green, Women in American Indian Society, (Washington DC: Smithsonian, 1992), p. 77.

⁸³ Fredericsen, p. 238.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

In America, the possibility for close observation of primitive women in the form of American Indians heightened the probability that those so inclined could find much to admire among their "red sisters."⁸⁵ Clara McDiarmid, in her description of "Our Neighbors, the Alaskan Women," quoted approvingly from a historian who noted that "The woman's rights and her sphere and influence have reached a development among the Sitkans that would astonish the suffrage leaders of Wyoming and Washington Territories."⁸⁶ Nancy Parezo has noted that by the 1920s "the respect for women noticed [by female anthropologists] in Puebloan cultures was a definite lure to women who realized they were not treated with equality in their own society."⁸⁷ Yet, for the most part, the praise of American Indian cultures in the 1890s wavered uncertainly between either conservative defenses of women's special domestic virtues or progressive calls for women's equal rights. Occasionally, these contradictory views were held by the same person, as in the case of Elaine Goodale who touted barbarism but married an assimilated Indian. Gail Landsman, in her study of the woman suffrage movement and images of Indians, expressed the contradiction concisely: "The construction of Indian women's history . . . served simultaneously as a symbol of women's past power and natural rights

⁸⁵ William Leach has pointed out that the "simple-life movement" which swept America at the turn of the century was intimately connected to the field of anthropology; see Leach, Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 202-203.

⁸⁶ Clara McDiarmid, "Our Neighbors, The Alaskan Women," Eagle, p. 725.

⁸⁷ Parezo, Hidden Scholars, p. 356.

on the one hand, and as a validation of women's special 'civilizing' qualities, necessary to the contemporary goals of reform and American expansion, on the other."⁸⁸

THE IMAGE OF INDIANS IN THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT

As the 1893 Columbian Exposition indicated, the study, appreciation, and collecting of Indian arts were becoming popular and publicized activities for white women during the 1890s, and the members of the League could not have been unaware of these trends. Large city newspapers included frequent articles about Indian craft arts, women's magazines offered advice about how to decorate with such arts, books provided guides to collecting and identifying, and the Arts and Crafts Movement offered a theoretical defense of the "value" of primitive arts: they became to women what Eileen Boris has called "symbols of the self-expression possible within the family economy."⁸⁹ Indian pots, baskets, and blankets belonged in the long tradition of "women's arts" that had been so clearly and proudly demonstrated at the Columbian Exposition. No longer seen as tribal arts, they were family arts endowed with inherent moral value, a value which was confirmed by their popularity among highly "civilized" and respectable women of good breeding and taste, the very kind of women who were likely to organize and support efforts to help Indians. Thus the League could imagine that the promotion of Indian

⁸⁸ Landsman, p. 247.

⁸⁹ Boris, *Art and Labor*, p. 122. Boris offers a good analysis of women in the Arts and Crafts Movement. For a study that considers the relationship of women's clubs, the arts, and social activism, see Karen J. Blair, *The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994).

arts, which it had previously seen as vile symbols of degenerate savagery, actually strengthened the family unit, which was of course the goal of its assimilation work. What would change was the League's acceptance that Indian women's domestic virtues could also be traditional.

Leaders in the Arts and Crafts Movement embraced Indian arts, especially Southwestern blankets and ceramics, recommending them as models of inspiration and as decorative objects in the home. Eileen Boris argues that the prototypic Arts and Crafts home contained a mix of "traditional" objects from different cultures, the overall effect of which was supposed to be an anti-modern sensibility of "simplicity." In the pages of The Craftsman, other writers "praised the art, work, and lives of preindustrial peoples."⁹⁰ Gillian Moss notes that "Indian baskets or . . . baskets made in the Indian style, were used in Arts and Crafts interiors as waste containers, letter trays, and sewing baskets. Often they had no specific function within a room but were placed on tabletops or mantelpieces simply because of their association with techniques and the use of natural materials: reeds, wood splints, and plant components."⁹¹ A writer in 1896 marveled at one woman's collection of 130 baskets from twenty-eight different tribes which she had arranged as "unique decorations of her boudoir."⁹² Nellie Doubleday (a League member) had a large collection of baskets, and Candace Wheeler

⁹⁰ Eileen Boris, "Dreams of Brotherhood and Beauty" in The Art that is Life, p. 217.

⁹¹ Gillian Moss, untitled catalog entry number 57, in The Art that is Life, p. 171. The Indian basket collecting craze in the West was being reported in New York City newspapers as early as 1891; see "A California Fad," New York Daily Tribune, 25 Jan. 1891, p. 18.

⁹² "Indian Baskets," New York Daily Tribune, 6 Sept. 1896, p. 19.

lectured other women about the "modern uses" of native arts.⁹³ Gustav Stickley "recommended Indian rugs and Navajo blankets to turn any porch into a peaceful outdoor living room."⁹⁴ The Navajo blanket was a popular object, "prized for the fact that [it was] woven by native Americans on simple looms they made themselves."⁹⁵ That the League took advantage of these decorating tastes is apparent from League member Constance Goddard Du Bois's careful accounting of women who made multiple purchases of baskets from her.⁹⁶ Over the years, the League itself contacted several women who were known to collect Indian baskets.

The League's special concern for Indian women fit perfectly with a crucial aspect of the publicity given to Indian arts: that it was directed largely at women. This fact can be seen in the pages of the New York Daily Tribune, which between 1891 and 1903 placed nearly every article about Indian arts on the daily woman's page.⁹⁷ Candace Wheeler noted in 1901 that the drive to preserve Indian arts was being supported by women's clubs across the nation.⁹⁸ In New York City, for example, the General Federation of

⁹³ "Mrs. Seth Low a Leader," New York Daily Tribune, 20 Feb. 1902, p. 7; "Arts Not to be Lost," New York Daily Tribune, 8 April 1901, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Boris, "Dreams," in The Art that is Life, p. 217.

⁹⁵ Moss, untitled catalog entry number 208, in The Art that is Life, p. 384.

⁹⁶ Constance Goddard Du Bois, "Indian Workers and Records," Papers of Constance Goddard Du Bois, Huntington Free Library, Bronx, New York, Microfilm, Reel 4, #57.

⁹⁷ I have chosen the New York Daily Tribune rather than the Boston Transcript, for example, because unlike the Boston papers, the Tribune is conveniently indexed. In addition, articles by Sparhawk and about the ILL appeared in the Tribune, as did regular reports on the New York City branch of the WNIA.

⁹⁸ "Arts Not to be Lost," New York Daily Tribune, 8 April 1901, p. 5.

Women's Clubs ran the Woman's Exchange, a non-profit store carrying craft items made by working class women in their homes. In 1901 this Exchange generated much interest with its exhibit of Indian baskets collected in Washington by Mrs. Marion C. Pearsall who studied and promoted Indian basketry.⁹⁹ Karen Blair argues that clubwomen championed American-made craft arts because they appealed to such a wide range of constituents: those who sought to beautify the domestic sphere, those who wanted to provide economic relief for poor women and immigrants, those who supported new professional arts opportunities for women, and those who pined with nostalgic patriotism for an "American" art.¹⁰⁰ Thinking along these lines, which often intertwined, could lead one to conclude that Indian women were much like earlier American women in that they too shaped the domestic aesthetic with their own handiwork. One writer noticed this connection in 1891 when he remarked on the talent with which an Indian woman "in a vague, unconscious way adapts the pictures in her mind to the more practical needs of daily life," just as "our grandmothers wove blue and white linens into quilts, or as the same dear old ladies adapted nature in a less artistic way, in Rising Sun, Log Cabin, Pyramid and Crazy patterns [quilt patterns], for spare room comfortables."¹⁰¹ Constance Goddard Du Bois further implied that white American women had lost a degree of artistic expression; she described pre-contact Indian women "always busy with this beautiful art-work

⁹⁹ "Art of Indian Basketry," New York Daily Tribune, 17 Feb. 1901, p. 4 (II). For information on women's clubs and the promotion of craft arts, see Blair, The Torchbearers, p. 84.

¹⁰⁰ Blair, The Torchbearers, pp. 83-85.

¹⁰¹ "A California Fad," New York Daily Tribune, 25 Jan. 1891, p. 18.

[basketry] as American housewives in early days were with their spinning."¹⁰²

Connecting Indian women weavers with the traditional domestic sphere nudged one's response to Indian baskets into the realm of gender politics, because an appreciation of baskets might be taken to signify an advocacy of the domestic sphere and a criticism of suffragists who wanted to escape from the domestic sphere. J. Torrey Connor was well aware of this when he attributed Indian basketry's inevitable passing to the impossibility of "coaxing the indolent young Indian of this New Woman era to emulate her grandam's housewifely accomplishments."¹⁰³ Another writer, defending Estelle Reel's (she was the Superintendent of Indian Schools) industrial education curriculum (which included native arts), lashed out at women who deplored the limitations of the domestic sphere:

Do the elementary English branches and a thorough training as a housekeeper seem a pitiful education for an Indian girl in this day and generation when the woman's college is the fashion, and he is an old foggy who dares to suggest that the bachelor's degree is not the essential crown of the best American womanhood? How many of the best American women who made the college woman possible were just such intelligent housekeepers as that Indian girl would be?¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Du Bois, "Mission Indians," p. 36, PCGD, Reel 3, # 26.

¹⁰³ "Indian Baskets, New York Daily Tribune, 6 Sept. 1896, p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ "Industry and Indians," New York Daily Tribune, 6 Dec. 1899, p. 8.

Sparhawk, herself an advocate of domestic skills, would seize on this new interpretation of Indian women to explain why promoting their arts would fulfill the civilizing mission, for who was more civilized than the housewife?

But the image of the Indian woman was unstable, and it could just as easily mutate from housewife to feminist. The anthropologist and Indian reformer Alice Fletcher had revealed as long ago as the late 1880s that the "squaw drudge" stereotype was not entirely borne out by reality. A regular contributor to The Red Man, her support for Pratt's goals might have seemed at odds with her professional interest in recovering and documenting the details of Indian cultures.¹⁰⁵ In fact, she had addressed the Conference of Indian Commissioners in 1886, observing that few Indians returned to native costumes after returning from Eastern boarding schools and praising the WNIA for teaching "the young married couples how to live" by helping them build white-style homes on the reservations.¹⁰⁶ Fletcher was instrumental in developing a home-building program through the WNIA. Yet after overseeing the allotment of several reservations, she lost faith in many aspects of the assimilationist program.

Just as Fletcher's conviction in the effectiveness of allotment waned as her experience in the field grew, so too did her conviction that white culture could necessarily provide a better environment for Indian women. She keenly observed the position of Indian women, believing that her observations could have "a bearing on the 'woman question' in her own

¹⁰⁵ Fletcher became a regular contributor to the paper in Jan. 1887.

¹⁰⁶ Untitled article, The Morning Star, (Feb. 1886): 6. Meeting was on Jan. 21, 1886.

society."¹⁰⁷ One of the cherished ideas of the assimilationists had been that Indian women were degraded by tribal life and Indian men. As Fletcher's comments to the Indian Commissioners indicated, she initially held this view as well. But by 1889, while still writing for The Red Man, telltale signs appeared that she would eventually reverse her opinion on this issue. In a column written to answer frequent questions she received, Fletcher addressed a popular one about the position of women in tribes. She replied not that women were degraded or exploited, but that "women carried the clan" in many cases and "generally held the household property as their own." Moreover, "upon them devolved the industrial pursuits." More surprising, "in tribes having descent by the mother, women frequently held public office. The American Archives give instances of the interposition of the 'female governesses' in governmental and other matters."¹⁰⁸ Thus the Indian woman enjoyed political, economic, and social prestige that few white women could lay claim to themselves. The "savage" Indians appeared more civilized on the issue of gender relations than the culture to which they were supposed to assimilate.¹⁰⁹ A listener at her 1888 lecture on "The Legal Condition of Indian Women" was moved to write that "we all know women in civilized life who would gladly exchange conditions with their free sisters

¹⁰⁷ Mark, p. 145.

¹⁰⁸ "The Position of Indian Women," The Red Man (April 1889): 3.

¹⁰⁹ The issue of Indian women's gender equality is still discussed among scholars today; some hold to the idea of Indian matriarchies, while others argue that words such as "autonomy," "complementarity," and "egalitarianism" best describe the nature of gender in Indian societies. See, for example, Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman, eds., Women and Power in Native North America (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), especially pp. 230-249.

in savage life."¹¹⁰ Fletcher revisited the topic in a paper she delivered at the 1893 Columbian Exposition -- "Love Songs Among the Omaha Indians" -- which she hoped would belie the image of the Indian woman abused by her husband and illustrate "that the Indians were capable of expressing emotion."¹¹¹ Here was Sparhawk's redemptive love, expressed in native tongue.

In time, Fletcher's description of Indian women became more feminist. On October 27, 1902, readers of the New York Daily Tribune's regular "News and Views of Women" page faced the following lead headline: "Primitive Indian Women. Their independence greater than that of many present day sisters." Underneath was a report, with excerpts, of Alice Fletcher's recent paper before the International Congress of Americanists. In this paper Fletcher argued that the Indian woman enjoyed more equality in marriage than did the civilized woman because she "remained a distinct personality" and continued to own her own property, while she contributed equally to the family economy. Moreover, she "had many songs and religious rites of her own, and a definite recognition as an individual." Significantly, the Indian woman's position had eroded after contact, when Indian men took up farming, which shut the women inside where they were confined "to less remunerative work," and adopted white-style marriage in which the woman's "existence is merged in that of her husband."¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Caroline E. Merrick "Personal Rights of Indian Wives." The Woman's Journal (March 8, 1890): 78-79. Fletcher's lecture was before the Woman's Council.

¹¹¹ Mark, pp. 236-237.

¹¹² "Primitive Indian Women," New York Daily Tribune, 27 Oct. 1902, p. 5.

Sympathetic readers no doubt recalled an article from a week earlier which made a similar argument about the advantages enjoyed by Hopi Indian women. In a report about Mrs. G. L. Gate's recent initiation into a secret Hopi Indian women's society at Oraibi (Arizona), the writer noted that among the Hopis, labor was divided equally between men and women, with men doing some "feminine" tasks such as weaving and child care, and women doing some "masculine" tasks such as house building. In addition,

While the woman does not talk much about "suffrage" or "rights," she seems to have them, just the same. Not only are there several women's clubs, having their own kivas, or club houses, but there are also women chiefs, whose office is partly elective, partly hereditary. The office of chief is carried as a rule through the female line -- the oldest son of the chief's oldest sister becoming his successor.¹¹³

This image of Indian women not only challenged the old "squaw drudge" stereotypes but also raised the possibility that the domestic ideal would be a step backwards for the Indian woman.

Essentially, one could not separate the aesthetic beauty of Indian women's arts from the women themselves. George Wharton James, who wrote about Indian baskets and blankets and lectured on the topic in Boston, found little to fault in the women who produced such beauty:

Let the white woman who has scorned the 'rude, dirty, vulgar, brutal, savage woman' take the finest and highest accomplishments of her race in needlework or any other 'refined' art and place it side by side with the art manifested in

¹¹³ "In 'Hopi' Clubdom," New York Daily Tribune, 13 Oct. 1902, p. 5.

Indian basketry, and she may then, perhaps, begin to see how impertinent was her scorn, how ignorant her contempt.¹¹⁴

An honest examination of the Indian woman's work would uncover that she was not "ignorant, dull, stolid, brutal," but "sentinent, poetic, religious."¹¹⁵

Artist, housewife, independent New Woman -- these images and others could be held simultaneously, and it seems impossible to say that any one was dominant or even that there was much conscious competition between these images. The crucial point though is that they represented an "improvement" over the "squaw drudge" image, and as such challenged the assumptions on which total assimilation policies had previously been based. As the next chapter will show, the League had to face these implicit challenges from another front when its own field workers' descriptions of Indian life failed to confirm the old stereotypes.

¹¹⁴ George Wharton James, "Indian Handicrafts," Handicraft 1 (March 1903): 269-270. James lectured before the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts on Nov. 14, 1902; see "notes," Handicraft 1 (Dec. 1902): 228.

¹¹⁵ James, "Indian Handicrafts," p. 271.

CHAPTER 3

"WHAT I ASPIRED TO MAKE THEM":
FIELD WORKERS CONFRONT THE INDIANS

When the amateur anthropologist May Sheldon addressed her female audience at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, she prefaced her remarks about a recent trip to East Africa with the observation that "I found the people and conditions very much what I aspired to make them." In other words, one finds what one expects; if one expects savages, one will find savages. In Sheldon's case, she went with the expectation that Africans would not be as "savage" as most thought, and her expectations were confirmed. In terms of gender relations, her observations were especially uncritical: she reported that African women owned their own property and "enjoy[ed] exactly the same moral freedom and standard as the men." Sheldon also admitted that she travelled alone, with no white man, because she wanted to challenge conventional wisdom that such an expedition "was outside the limitation of woman's legitimate province."¹ Sparhawk was not at the Columbian Exposition, but she probably heard an earlier version of Sheldon's speech delivered at the May 1892 meeting of the New England Woman's Press

¹ May Sheldon, "An African Expedition," in Eagle, pp. 131-134; quotations from pp. 131, 133. In her speech to the NEWPA, she was even more specific about her feminist motivations, declaring that "if my husband had gone along it would have been his expedition and not mine at all"; quoted in Lord, p. 61. Sheldon was a member of the Women's Anthropological Society of America.

Association, just three months after she had given this audience her own lecture on "The Indian Question."² One wonders if Sparhawk imagined the extent to which the answer to her question would come to be reshaped by female field workers whose experiences in Indian communities stressed the two themes described by Sheldon: a self-consciousness about taking on men's tasks, and a rethinking of stereotypes about "primitive" peoples. The later these women entered the field, the more likely they were to comment explicitly on their dissatisfaction with established gender roles and to issue positive reports about Indian life.

Glenda Riley, in her study of women and Indians on the frontier has argued that "Rather than holding to the dark and dramatic picture presented them by myth and media, the women who went west frequently changed their minds to a more positive view of Indians."³ The change stemmed from the women's re-evaluation of their own image: as they found themselves performing and enjoying "men's" work, they realized that they "were not of value primarily as moral forces [and] there was no longer such a pressing need for them to emphasize the inferior aspects of Indian character."⁴ Over time, white women rejected negative stereotypes such as the "squaw drudge" image and even developed social relationships with Indians.⁵

When one looks at the field experiences of women connected with the League, it is impossible to chart a perfectly neat progression from domestic to

² Sparhawk had joined the NEWPA in March 1890 and remained an active member until her death. Lord, p. 52.

³ Glenda Riley, Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. xvi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp 141-142.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv.

feminist ideals, from expectations of cultural savagery to expectations of cultural virtue. One idea did not fully replace the other, and contradictory ideas often existed simultaneously. On the whole, however, these women in the field revealed an acute awareness of the challenges to gender and race ideals, of the possibility of transculturation. Contradictory attitudes toward these possibilities indicated that over time radical shifts of opinion could occur. In the 1880s, the missionary Mary C. Collins could proudly boast that her wards declared her "like an Indian," even as she remained committed to assimilating Indians. By 1908, however, two young field matrons could call themselves Indians as a way to lodge both a protest against the white ideal of true womanhood and a defense of Indian cultures. This chapter will analyze the field experiences of some of the women who to differing degrees were in contact with the League or with members of its executive committee. Because the chapter draws largely on published reports by field workers and on letters which in all likelihood were read at League or WNIA branch meetings, it seems reasonable to conclude that the ideas about Indian culture and gender roles contained therein entered the League's consciousness. To what extent the League debated or acted directly upon these ideas is impossible to determine with precision, but as the next chapter shows, the League adopted a more tolerant attitude toward Indian cultures at about the same time that those attitudes began being reported by field workers.

THE FIELD WORKERS

An organization such as the League involved four sets of people. Its vice-presidents gave it its status and authority, but few of them did more than

send in proxy votes at annual meeting. A second group consisted of the members and donors, some of whom occasionally attended meetings, but most of whom simply provided the financial support for the League's work. The executive committee comprised the third and most visible group; meeting once a month, these women and men determined how the League's resources were to be allocated. The fourth group was the smallest and in some ways the most important: the field workers to whom the League committed most of its resources and from whom it learned about conditions on the reservations.

Sparhawk's Indian novels often featured Indian agents' wives as central figures in the civilizing process, leading Indian women to industry by example and encouragement. For a young woman who hoped to work with Indians, this route had a big drawback, namely that one not only had to be married, but had to be married to someone likely to be appointed an Indian agent.⁶ For the single woman, becoming a missionary, a government Indian school teacher, or a "field matron" was a more certain route to the Indians' reservations. Not surprisingly then, several of the League's contacts were unmarried female missionaries and others were former missionaries who had become "field matrons" under a new program instituted by the Indian Office in 1891. Whether missionaries or field matrons, these women generally entered the field with assumptions about Indians that had been

⁶ In twenty-seven years, the League seems to have corresponded with only one wife of an Indian agent -- Mrs. Brennan of the Pine Ridge agency, South Dakota. In her occasional letters between 1903 and 1913 Mrs. Brennan revealed that she was fulfilling the "good wife" role as described in Sparhawk's novels, although she expressed a profound loneliness and desire for outside contact.

articulated by organizations such as the WNIA and by reformers such as Sparhawk. Indeed, organizations such as the WNIA and the League often supplemented or provided these women's salaries and even secured their positions. Once in the field, these women provided the sponsoring organizations with information about the Indians' living conditions.

Many of the League's first field contacts were missionaries from the Women's National Indian Association. The WNIA had a policy of sending women out to establish missionary posts on reservations which lacked hospitals or schools. After a few years, such posts would be turned over to whatever organized church showed interest in the mission. Although each of the WNIA missionaries examined here sent native arts to the League, these women were the least likely of the League's contacts to express much sympathy for the Indians' cultures or to admit any tolerance for Indian gender roles. They were, after all, committed to Christianizing and Americanizing the Indians among whom they worked. Because of their general antipathy to Indian cultures, their occasional expressions of respect for or toleration of Indian traditions take on that much more significance.⁷

Such expressions suggest that May Sheldon was only partially correct to say that one found what one expected: expectations could be somewhat undone by experience. Field matron Annie Beecher Scoville, when "brought face to face with the results of [her] own enthusiasm," found "the old Indian life with its tepees and long-haired horsemen more comely than the blighted

⁷ In Michael C. Coleman's study of Presbyterian missionaries' attitudes toward Indians, he found very little praise of any aspects of Indian culture, and only a few references to Indian arts (the one he quotes was made by a female missionary). Coleman, p. 115.

grain, faded calicoes, and squalid cabins that stand for civilization and your work" (Fig. 7).⁸ Another field matron, Clara D. True, declared that "the more one knows of the Indian as he really is, not as he appears to the tourist, the teacher, or the preacher," the more one realizes that "there is much that is beautiful in the so-called pagan religion" and that Indians' beliefs are "an inheritance from a people of higher thought than we have usually based our speculation upon."⁹ On the whole, however, these undoings were relatively minor and focused almost exclusively on Indian arts. The importance of even this little attention, however, was recognized by League member Nellie Doubleday who claimed that "many missionaries of liberal culture and broad sympathy have done all their limited means would allow to preserve the native industries, or there would be few extant to-day."¹⁰

When it came to evaluating gender roles among Indians, the three missionaries in this chapter were dead set against Indian men and women

⁸ Annie Beecher Scoville, "The Field Matron's Mission," Outlook 68 (Aug. 24, 1901): 975. Her grandfather was Henry Ward Beecher.

⁹ Clara D. True, "Experiences of a Woman Indian Agent," Outlook 92 (June 5, 1909): 336. Working for many years among Indians in New Mexico and California, True believed that years of neglect had "robbed" America of the literary and intellectual contribution the Indians could have made to the national culture. On the other hand, while a government school teacher at the Santa Clara Pueblo, True worked against the traditional Indians and supported the progressive Indians. Will Roscoe, The Zuni Man-Woman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), pp. 184-185, 226n. True was acquainted with League member Constance Goddard Du Bois, who included her among the twenty-six people to whom she sent a copy of her article on Diegueno burial ollas. Du Bois, "miscellany," PCGD, Reel 4, #52.

¹⁰ Mrs. F. N. Doubleday [Nellie Doubleday], Two Ways to Help the Indians (WNIA, 1901), p. 9. In his study of traders to the Navajos, Frank McNitt reports that a female missionary "influenced the style now identified as Teec-nos-pos weaving." McNitt, The Indian Traders (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 343.

performing tasks which they deemed were inappropriate for their respective sex. Simultaneously, however, these women missionaries reported, sometimes with pride, on their own successful performances of men's work. They appeared untroubled by this apparently contradictory attitude, but one wonders how it appeared to women with more feminist inclinations. Leslie A. Fleming and others have argued that female missionaries in Asia, working in relative isolation, not only developed warm bonds with native women but also experienced a broadening of their own sense of proper gender roles: forced to do "men's work," they began to redefine women's work.¹¹ The significance of this redefinition for the Indian reform movement is that it undercut the message of domesticity missionaries were supposed to communicate to Indian women. Moreover, it raised the implicit possibility that as women's roles in the Anglo-American world were broadening, they were becoming more like the roles that Indian women were already playing.

A second kind of woman associated with the League was the schoolteacher or the field matron, government-sponsored versions of the female missionary.¹² When various friends of the Indian first proposed the idea of government sponsored field matrons, they imagined that the presence

¹¹ Leslie A. Fleming, ed., Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia (Boulder, San Francisco, and London: Westview Press, 1989).

¹² For a study of the field matron, see Lisa Elizabeth Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love.'" See also, Emmerich, "'Civilization' and Transculturation: The Field Matron Program and Cross-Cultural Contact," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 15 (1991): 33-48; Emmerich, "'Right in the Midst of My Own People': Native American Women and the Field Matron Program," American Indian Quarterly 15 (Spring 1991): 201-216.

of white women on the Indian reservations would have a civilizing effect on Indian women who would be able to learn the skills and habits that would enable them to assimilate. In her study of the field matron program, Lisa Emmerich points to the importance of two factors that led to the program's genesis: on the one hand was women's post Civil War expansion of their reform activity. On the other hand was the fact that women's vigorous involvement in these various reform movements had legitimized the idea that women's special virtues could be brought to bear on public issues and had dispelled the notion that women were "weak and dependent creatures." When one further considers the overwhelmingly negative portrayal of Indian women as rigid traditionalists (evident in Sparhawk's novels, for example), one can see why the Office of Indian Affairs would accept the need to create a special program targeted at Indian women.¹³ Ready to answer this call were increasingly large numbers of women whom Emmerich characterizes as "committed to lives of activism in a uniquely feminine way."¹⁴ They would civilize through the domain of their homes.

While the field matrons were chosen because they embodied the ideals of true womanhood, once in the field they were also expected to be like pioneering women -- tough, resourceful, multi-talented, hard working, capable of doing a man's job.¹⁵ A missionary like Helen Clark may have lamented the effects of such work on Indian women, but Indian Commissioner Thomas Morgan looked to the examples of missionaries such

¹³ Emmerich, "To Respect and Love," pp. 1-14.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

as Clark to support his contention that field matrons would not only bring their feminine virtues to bear on the Indian problem but would also be exceptionally hard workers.¹⁶ A later commissioner, Francis Leupp, assured doubters that one field matron had been praised by an agent as having "a man's head on her," while another earned the Indians' judgement that "she was as good as a man."¹⁷ The irony, as Emmerich points out, was that hard working, unconventional white women were being sent out to transform hard working, unconventional Indian women into conventional domestic helpmeets.¹⁸ Inevitably, some conflicts would arise from this contradiction. Emmerich concludes that field matrons "exploited the autonomy inherent in their positions to make their work more relevant to the problems facing Native American women," partly by modifying their ideas of domesticity to fit actual circumstances (cooking over open fires, for example) and mainly by "emphasizing health care over domesticity."¹⁹ I would add that another particularly significant modification involved the encouragement of native arts, an encouragement that could be justified by the "woman's household arts" argument touted at the 1893 Columbian Exposition but which led inevitably to the preservation of tribal cultures.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁷ Francis E. Leupp, "Woman in the Indian Service," *Delineator* 75 (June 1910): 484-485.

¹⁸ Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love,'" p. 51. Valerie Sherer Mathes, in her study of WNIA activity among the Mission Indians of California has noted the same point, though she emphasizes that by trying to change the roles Indian women played, these women reformers had a destructive impact on Indian religion and tradition. Mathes, *Helen Hunt Jackson and Her Indian Reform Legacy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 160-161.

¹⁹ Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love,'" pp. 314-315.

Mason's Woman's Share in Primitive Culture provides another insight into understanding the role of the field matron and why that role might be inherently sympathetic to a positive view of Indian women's traditional roles. Mason liked to characterize the primitive woman as a "jack-at-all-trades," pointing out that she not only crafted nearly all of the utensils used by primitive peoples, but also took a great deal of the physical burdens of work on her shoulders. In essence, primitive woman had done all of the jobs which modern men now specialized in. As Mason put it, "The diversification of duties in well-regulated houses among the civilized nations produces the matron. The savage woman is really the ancestress and prototype of the modern housewife, and not of our factory specialists."²⁰ The field matron, because she was entering a field without white men, had to recapture the primitive woman's resourcefulness. Even though she was supposed to train Indian women to be "modern" housewives, the field matron's duties required her to be more like the primitive woman. Consider the extent and diversity of her official duties: Besides keeping a clean house, sewing, cooking, decorating, laundering, nursing, caring for animals, and organizing religious and social clubs, the field matron was expected to "give to the male members of the family kindly admonition as to the 'chores' and heavier kinds of work about the house which in civilized communities is

²⁰ Quoted in "Woman As an Inventor and Manufacturer," an unattributed review of Woman's Share in Primitive Culture by Otis T. Mason, Popular Science Monthly 47 (May 1895): 92. To this list could be added letter writing. Field matrons typically reported that a great deal of their time was occupied writing letters for Indians, usually complaining about various injustices.

generally done by men" [emphasis added].²¹ In reality, the field matrons gave more than admonitions; they actually demonstrated or taught this kind of work. Thus, in the act of trying to realign the division of labor among Indians so that it corresponded with white notions of men's and women's roles (which were of course being modified), the field matrons had to assume both male and female roles. That these women found fulfillment in such transformations is evident in the attention and pride they gave to reporting the range and difficulty of their unfamiliar work. But assuming such diverse roles made the field matrons unexpectedly similar to the Indian women. The field matron was a "jack-at-all-trades" just as the primitive woman was. If the field matron enjoyed being a jack-at-all-trades, then it stood to reason that the Indian woman did too. Why then should she be changed? Gradually, more and more matrons seemed to decide that she should not be changed, and they labored instead to improve her economic position by encouraging and marketing her native arts.

Finally, one is struck by the extent to which these women perceived their work as an "adventure" of sorts. Sparhawk's fictional Polly Blatchley, who "all her life had been active" and "restless," expressed this emotion when she declared that she wanted "'to get into the midst of things'" and so headed off to the Carlisle Indian School.²² Many of the women considered in this chapter expressed a similar delight in the freedom of activity, of adventure which they enjoyed in the west.

²¹ "Duties of Field Matron" as outlined on a "Report of Field Matron," a government report form found in the Papers of Constance Goddard Du Bois, Reel 3, #44.

²² Sparhawk, Chronicle of Conquest, pp. 70, 72-73.

These field workers provided the League with a constant flow of information about actual conditions on reservations, they proposed plans for developing industries among the Indians, and they significantly influenced and collaborated with the League's decision to promote Indian arts. Helen Clark, Lida Quimby, and Mrs. Mayhew offered baskets from Washington state, as did Mrs. Wynkoop, Constance Goddard Du Bois, Mary B. Watkins, Miss Chase, Mrs. Goodrich, Mamie Robinson, and Sophie R. Miller from California, and Anna J. Ritter from Arizona. Annie M. Sayre and Mary E. Dissette worked to establish weaving among the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, while Mary L. Eldridge did the same among the Navajo. Josephine Foard revived and influenced pottery making at the Laguna and Zuni Pueblos, New Mexico; an agent's wife at Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota hired a woman to teach basketry; the Reverend and Mrs. Walter C. Roe built the "Mohonk Lodge" at the Seger Colony, Oklahoma to support the Indian women in a beadwork industry; and many other women wrote to the League to describe the state of native arts industries at their reservations.²³ Subsequent chapters will examine these native arts industries in detail, but the following sketches of several key field workers associated with the League will analyze the similarities in these women's field experiences, particularly their independence and their growing acceptance and understanding of aspects of native cultures. It was this growing acceptance that would filter back to the League through reports and letters, influencing its decision to support the native arts which so many field workers praised. In addition, a

²³ Information from IIL, Record Books and Annual Reports, MHS.

few of these field workers added increasing evidence that some of the goals and methods of assimilation were misguided.

HELEN W. CLARK

In 1896 the League was contacted by Miss Helen W. Clark (1853-1937), missionary at the Spokane Reservation in Washington state. Two hundred and forty miles square, located in the north-central part of the state, the Spokane Reservation was mountainous and heavily forested, particularly unsuited to the kind of small farming that reformers hoped the Indians would practice. The 500 or so Indians on the reservation were no doubt relieved that their lands had not yet been allotted, but they could not have been pleased by their poverty, the scarcity of game, the encroachment of white settlers, and their failing crops. Into this setting in 1894, the WNIA had sent the forty-one-year-old Clark to work some kind of civilizing magic. Clark was given the task of establishing and running a school on the Lower Spokane for the Indians from Chief Lot's tribe, a position for which she had been prepared by her previous employment as a teacher in Huntingdon, Quebec, and as a missionary to Indians in Canada.²⁴ On January 1, 1895, Clark opened the door to her twenty by thirty foot log schoolhouse. An average of forty-nine children and adults, including the chief (who was Christianized but really wanted the school so that he would lose no more of the tribe's children to the

²⁴ Employment information from Clark's obituary in The Huntingdon Gleaner (Quebec), Dec. 22, 1937, clipping in the missionary files of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. For a good history of the Spokane Indians which also mentions Clark's activity, see Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown, The Spokane Indians: Children of the Sun (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970).

boarding schools, where sixteen of twenty-one children sent had died²⁵), attended regularly for some time. At a cost of \$600 per year, Clark did quite well according to the local agent.²⁶ In his 1895 report, the agent noted that she was "an indefatigable worker" who "not only works in the schoolroom, but out of it as well," a willingness that he found lacking in most teachers.²⁷ Unfortunately, success in the classroom did not mean much for the Indians' employment prospects, so Clark spent a year and a half in conversation with the League trying to develop first a lace and later a lumber industry for the Indians. These plans fell through, however, and in 1899 Clark moved.²⁸

In April of 1901 Clark contacted the League again, this time from Neah Bay in Washington state, a place from which she would become a significant supplier of Indian baskets over the next ten years.²⁹ Clark had moved from the center of the state to a tiny town on the far northwestern coast, where less than a thousand Makah, Ozette, Quileute, and Hoh Indians were gathered on a series of small reservations. Fishermen, these Indians took both sustenance and, in good years, profits from the sea. In this much wealthier community, Clark could give more attention to moral uplift and less to material uplift even as she encouraged the basket trade. Every Sunday morning and

²⁵ WNIA, Our Missions for the year 1895, p. 32.

²⁶ George H. Newman "Report of the Colville Agency" August 15, 1897, in Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1897 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), pp. 288-291. See also the 1895 report. (Hereafter cited as OIA, Annual Report, and year.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

²⁸ For a full discussion of these plans, see the next chapter. For the date of Clark's move, see Ruby and Brown, p. 215.

²⁹ III, Record Book II, May 2, 1901, p. 87, MHS.

evening, Clark conducted services in the Neah Bay Presbyterian church. During the remainder of the week she occupied herself by organizing Christian Endeavor and Loyal Legion societies for the young Indians; in the evenings, she ran a reading room. The superintendent in charge of the Neah Bay Agency reported that after five years Clark's influence was "shown by the moral advancement of the young people in the village." As evidence, the superintendent offered crime statistics for the year 1905: two cases of drunkenness, no illegal marriages or separations. On the down side, "chastity" was still "very low."³⁰ But by 1905 the custom of "potlatching" had been prohibited, and a fellow missionary could smile that "souls are ripening for the Paradise of God."³¹

As described in Chapter One, Clark strongly objected to what she perceived as the Indian woman's traditional married role as a squaw drudge. Clark saw no gender equity in an Indian woman doing "a man's work" or leading a "hard life," but in some ways this attitude put her at odds with the reality of her life in the field, where she not only did man's work, but took pride in doing so. The first WNIA report on Clark's activity at Spokane marvelled that although "house building is not the usual work of a woman missionary," Clark chinked, plastered, and built the staircases for the log

³⁰ Edwin Minor, "Report of Superintendent in Charge of Neah Bay Agency," in OIA, Annual Report (1905), pp. 350-351. Clark remained at Neah Bay until 1921, according to her obituary (she died Dec. 14, 1937 at the age of 84); see The Huntingdon Gleaner (Quebec), Dec. 22, 1937, clipping in the missionary files of the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. Presbyterian missionaries were usually appalled by what they perceived as Indians' loose sexual morals, which included easy divorce; see Coleman, p. 85.

³¹ Helen C. Clarke, "Neah Bay News," Home Mission Monthly 19 (Feb. 1905).

schoolhouse, leading Chief Lot to compliment her carpentry skills: "You will see a board in her hand, and before you can think, it is a cupboard."³² Her role in house building was similar to that of Pueblo and Hopi Indian women who plastered the adobe structures the men built, a division of labor than some white female observers commended.³³

A second kind of "hardship" that nearly every female field worker reported with pride was that of travelling alone over rough country to perform her duties. In one of her reports, Clark described a particularly difficult journey to check on the availability of fruit trees for the Indians. With the rivers swollen from the spring snow melts, Clark had to detour three miles from her usual two-mile walk to the river so that she could get a ferry. After a dangerous crossing, she found the road flooded with water, and so waded until it became impassable, then scaled a rock cliff, scrambled down the other side of the mountain, pole vaulted a raging brook, and finally arrived at her friends' home. The next day she retraced her steps and rested in preparation for two more such trips scheduled for the coming weeks. Such trips were "hard" she admitted, "but necessary, so God gives me strength according to my need."³⁴ Clark credited God's will for her ability to complete these journeys, but less religious-minded female field workers (discussed below) took credit themselves, happily comparing their abilities to men's.

Clark's unwillingness to claim her hardships as female triumphs in some ways put her at odds with the very editor of the volume to which she

³² WNIA, Our Missions for the year 1895, pp. 34-35.

³³ See, for example, "In 'Hopi' Clubdom," New York Daily Tribune 13 Oct. 1902, p. 5.

³⁴ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1897, pp. 18-20.

contributed an essay about Christianity and Indian women.³⁵ The editor, Mary O. Douthit, envisioned The Souvenir of Western Women as a testament to the equal role women had played in settling and civilizing the Pacific Northwest. Douthit's preface to the book emphasizes the "hardships" of the pioneers' journeys, on which the woman "marched side by side with man," and claims that in "courage and endurance, woman proved man's equal," as she did too in "her ability to cope with strenuous conditions." Moreover, in the Pacific Northwest, women not only claimed far greater property rights than elsewhere, but also enjoyed greater equality in professions and politics.³⁶

Clark gave no hint of sharing these feminist ideals, but her inclusion in the volume was logical because she could be seen as one of those women who tackled a man's job in the taming of the West. Whether Clark saw herself or her actions in this light is questionable. More important is the certainty that other women, like Douthit, were interpreting her life in this feminist paradigm. What this means is that we cannot judge Clark's life solely by the terms by which she imagined and described it. She may have looked around her small church and conceived of herself as a traditional woman guiding Indians to Christianity, but to others she may have seemed like an independent woman whose difficult work among the Indians pointed to her equality and whose promotion of the Indian basketry industry was a sign of her respect for tribal traditions.

³⁵ Helen Clark, "What Christianity Has Done for the Indian Woman," pp. 163-164.

³⁶ Douthit, Mary O., "Preface," in Souvenir of Western Women, ed. Mary O. Douthit (Portland, OR: Presses of Anderson and Duniway, 1905).

In point of fact, Clark's disparagement of the "heathen" past clashed with the general tenor of The Souvenir which opened with a cheery mention of the "Birdwoman" (Sacajawea) who opened a path West and closed with an essay on the same which argued that the unmatched "romance" of American Indians "blended with the picturesque figures of chieftains, orators, leaders, heroes, presents a living picture which throws a peculiar charm over the history and the scenes of the exploits of these natives of the Americas."³⁷ This romantic vision of Indians was echoed in a poem and photograph that were positioned opposite Clark's essay. Titled "Song of the Klootchman," this poem and the accompanying photograph presented a Neah Bay Indian woman in sentimental terms quite unlike those favored by Clark:

Cold blows the wind off Neah Bay shore,
 Yet softly the Klootchman sings.
 In its rustic cot the baby sleeps
 As the cradle swings and swings.

Does the Klootchman dream of olden days,
 Does she hope for her baby there
 In its swinging nest 'neath the old tree-top -
 Does she build it a future fair?

Ah no, methinks on Neah Bay shore
 Where the cradle swings and swings,

³⁷ "Sacajawea, the Birdwoman," in Souvenir of Western Women, p. 189.

The Klootchman ends her daily task,
 When the babe sleeps as she sings.³⁸

This poem is superimposed on a photograph of an Indian woman sitting beside a baby in a cradle suspended from a forked stick and attached by a string to her bare foot so that she could swing the cradle. Obviously a studio shot, the picture conveys an image of strong maternal devotion, the kind of image which Glenda Riley claims led white women to "change their views of American Indians."³⁹ Taken with the poem, the photograph expresses a romantic and deeply sympathetic vision of American Indian life, quite in contrast to that offered by Clark. Thus we should see Clark's ideas in the context of these antithetical images and texts that were becoming increasingly popular among American women.

MARY E. DISSETTE

Mary E. Dissette's work among the Zuni Indians of New Mexico nicely illustrates how strongly many missionaries connected proper gender roles with civilization and the extent to which Indian cultures could challenge those roles. Dissette struggled to root out all Zuni traditions which threatened her idea of proper gender roles, but in her struggle she found herself having to make awkward defenses for her own intrusion into men's

³⁸ Dennis S. Wagstaff, "Song of the Klootchman," in Souvenir of Western Women, p. 162.

³⁹ Riley, p. 217. The photograph is nearly identical to one reproduced in James Clifford, The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1988), p. 186. In that photograph one can see Franz Boas and George Hunt holding up a cloth backdrop for the scene.

roles. Moreover, she openly sought outside support for a revival of Zuni weaving, a skill which she seemed to be attempting to transfer from the traditional practitioners (Zuni men) to the women.

Working first as a missionary, Dissette became a paid employee of the Indian Office when her Zuni mission closed. Her active engagement with League affairs began in 1901, but her association with leading women of the reform movement was long-standing. As early as 1892, Merial Dorchester (the second president of the League) had unsuccessfully recommended Dissette for a government field matron position at the Zuni Reservation, where, since 1888, she had worked at a fairly large school established by the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions.⁴⁰ This school was a classic example of missionary education. Run by Dissette and her assistant, Miss Carrie B. Pond, the school reflected their express desire "to carry out their own ideas and see the effect of woman's work upon [the Indians]" without the interference of any male teachers.⁴¹ Interference was not an issue, since the nearest white men were ten miles away, the nearest white women twenty-five.

Dissette offered her young Indian pupils (their average age was seven) a domestic rather than an academic education. The school building itself reflected this domestic emphasis. A narrow hall divided the building into two rooms, one for food preparation, the other for sewing. Low blackboards

⁴⁰ Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love,'" pp. 66-67. See also, Jesse Green, ed., Cushing at Zuni: The Correspondence and Journals of Frank Hamilton Cushing, 1879-1884 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), p. 415n. The Dorchesters visited Zuni in 1892 and made a favorable impression on Dissette. See Home Mission Monthly 6 (Oct. 1892): 282.

⁴¹ F. H. Lauderdale, "The Zuni Indians and Their Schools," Iowa Historical Record (1895): 207-222. This article contains two long letters from Dissette, dated Feb. 15, 1892 and Jan. 1893.

circled the walls of each room, but in place of desks there were tables and chairs, presumably more suited to the sewing and ironing that constituted the bulk of the children's education. Working on the theory that academic lessons could be combined with domestic labor, Dissette would hear small groups recite their lessons in one room while in the other room the remaining children were kept busy ironing, sewing buttons, washing clothes, baking bread, or practicing repairs on rags. Only Tuesdays were entirely devoted to classroom instruction, and even then Dissette "generally put them [the students] through as fast as possible in order to get out our heavy mail." Children as young as four, "so small that they have to stand on boxes to reach the [wash] tubs," were put through this tedious curriculum.⁴² Anxious to civilize the Zunies through the development of good homemaking skills, Dissette lamented her inability to "visit the people and the pupils in their homes."⁴³

The Zuni Indians had good reason to be glad that Dissette's home visits were rare, for her attitude toward Zuni culture was exceptionally hostile and her expressions of disdain particularly offensive and intrusive. Although Dissette found the Zunis to be "very industrious" and to practice ceremonies that were analogous to civilized holidays, the zeal with which she tried to squash the influence of traditional Zunis led older tribe members to recall her with bitterness sixty years after she had left.⁴⁴ Horrified by the ceremonial

⁴² Dissette, quoted in Lauderdale, pp. 212-214; "Our Zuni Missionaries," Home Mission Monthly 9 (Feb. 1895), p. 80.

⁴³ Dissette, quoted in Lauderdale, p. 215. She also tried to force the Indians to cut their long hair. Green, p. 345.

⁴⁴ Home Mission Monthly 6 (Dec. 1891): 35-36; Will Roscoe, The Zuni Man-Woman (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), p. 118.

dances, Dissette refused to cancel school to let children attend, and when school let out, she and Miss Pond personally accompanied the girls to the dance to watch over and guard them from the "demoralizing influences" of the evening ceremonials, escorting them back to the mission house afterwards where they lectured the girls "on the subject of clean, wholesome amusements."⁴⁵

In 1897 the Board sold its Zuni school to the U.S. government, but Dissette, having given nine years of her life to the school, remained on as the principal, supervising an assistant teacher, a field matron, and the matron's assistant. Together these women taught the thirty-seven of the 347 children at the pueblo who regularly attended the school. In the agent's opinion, even these students attended only because the school offered a free lunch each day, and he believed that forced attendance was necessary. Still, C. E. Nordstrom, the agent who filed the 1897 report for the Pueblo agency, respected Dissette's knowledge (she knew every child in the pueblo by name) and her "indomitable resolution to succeed." In illustration of this spirit, Nordstrom recounted a recent episode in which the villagers, after becoming convinced that an elderly woman was a witch who had killed a prominent berdache (a man who dressed in women's clothing and did women's work), tortured her until she admitted it. Dissette, hearing of this several days after the event, realized that no one would take care of the woman, so she and the field matron (Miss May Faurote) nursed her back to health. Nordstrom then had the responsible priests arrested and they were freed only when they agreed to

⁴⁵ Home Mission Monthly 8 (June 1894): 183; Mary Dissette, "Dance of the Shalako," Home Mission Monthly 9 (Feb. 1895): 81-82

commit twenty-five children to the Indian school in Albuquerque. From this episode, Nordstrom concluded that the Pueblo people were unlikely to accept Christianity any time soon.⁴⁶

Dissette was much more optimistic, and in her long association with the League revealed various plans, large and small, to help the Zunis become industrious Christian citizens. Befitting her occupation as a teacher and her conviction that the Zuni Indians could be taught only "through their children," much of her correspondence with the League concerned children.⁴⁷ Often she would write near Christmas time to request colored paper or other decorative materials to brighten the children's celebration, a popular event that in the early 1890s had filled the little school with 120 Indian guests.⁴⁸ The League, however, took the most interest in her plan to develop a spinning and weaving industry among the Pueblo villages. First proposed in 1901, just as the League was getting interested in native arts industries, this plan involved the revival of Pueblo weaving traditions, although Dissette's own weaving inexperience required her to hire an old

⁴⁶ C. E. Nordstrom, "Report of Pueblo and Jicarilla Agency," August 16, 1897, in OIA, Annual Report (1897), pp. 195, 199-200; Nordstrom did not mention the connection with the berdache. Dissette agitated to have the responsible priests arrested, effectively weakening traditional authority in the Pueblo; see Green, p. 415n. For the best discussion of this episode, see Roscoe, pp. 111-119.

⁴⁷ Home Mission Monthly 6 (Oct. 1892): 282.

⁴⁸ Dissette, in Lauderdale, p. 218. Emmerich notes that Christmas was a very popular holiday among Indians (174). Perhaps more accurately, it was a popular holiday for the missionaries, field matrons, and their eastern supporters who all perceived the celebration as a crucial object lesson in Christianity. Dissette noted that the Indians had a ceremonial to correspond to each of the major civilized holidays except the most important one, Christmas.

Italian woman living nearby to teach her the craft. In the long term, Dissette hoped to house a weaving industry in each of the six nearby pueblos.⁴⁹

Dissette's knowledge of weaving may have been limited, but her plan suggested that after years in the field even a former missionary could rationalize a plan "to stimulate and revive" an industry from the Indians' savage past.⁵⁰ On the surface, her plan was especially remarkable given that in 1892 and 1893 she had written disparagingly about the "scientists" who had "taught the people that their most profitable crop is -- Antiquities."⁵¹ Yet here she was less than a decade later encouraging the Indians to create new antiquities.⁵² Scratch the surface, however, and Dissette's encouragement of native weaving looks to be an attempt to force the Zunis into appropriate gender roles. Equal in status and prestige, Zuni men and women divided their labor in ways that shocked many whites, particularly those committed to the ideal of the domestic sphere. Zuni women did a little weaving, but men

⁴⁹ IIL, Annual Report (1902), pp. 4-5. Dissette's plan specifically mentions the Zuni Pueblo, but it seems likely that she herself had taken a position at a different Pueblo school after 1900.

⁵⁰ IIL, Annual Report (1902), p. 5.

⁵¹ Dissette, quoted in Lauderdale, p. 216. Frank Cushing had tried to revive some of the old arts (for collecting purposes) while he was at Zuni in the 1880s. See Diane Fane, "New Questions for 'Old Things': The Brooklyn Museum's Zuni Collection," in The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting, ed. Janet Catherin Berlo (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), p. 67.

⁵² Dissette seems to have stayed in the Pueblo region through at least 1919, when the League sent her books for young people, presumably Indian students. See IIL Record Book IV, Jan 15, 1919, p. 34, MHS. In a personal communication, Margaret Jacobs says that Dissette taught at the Paguate Day School (Laguna Reservation) and at the Santo Domingo Pueblo in the 1910s before becoming a librarian at the Santa Fe Indian School in the 1920s. In the last part of that decade she moved to the Oklahoma Chilocco Indian School, dying finally in 1944.

wove the bulk of all cloth used by the Pueblo and sewed commercial fabrics into clothing.⁵³ That Dissette resisted this division is intimated by her pleasure in reporting that the annual school cleaning had been done by "Tsiunetsa and her mother" and two girls had arrived at school in "their new dresses which their mother had made."⁵⁴ Dissette's emphasis on the gender of these Indians makes sense when we realize that two years earlier she had complained that only the Zuni "berdaches" (men who wear women's clothing and do women's work) would hire out for domestic duty; the idea of hiring these men deeply offended her, although in a 1924 letter she recalled that one "berdache" had done some weaving for her.⁵⁵ Like the other white women profiled in this chapter, Dissette's isolation in the field required her to do "men's work" on occasion, but she complained that she did not have to wear men's clothes to do so.⁵⁶ Uncomfortable with gender roles other than those of her own heritage, Dissette determined to eradicate the berdache tradition. Doing so meant attacking Zuni traditions, such as the dances, which she suspected of being sexually immoral and therefore a barrier to proper gender roles. Will Roscoe argues that these attacks effectively disrupted Zuni society and lowered the status of Zuni women.⁵⁷ Dissette

⁵³ Roscoe, p. 18. Roscoe also points out the Zuni women owned their homes and could divorce easily. See also, Kate Peck Kent, Pueblo Indian Textiles: A Living Tradition (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1983), pp. 12-16, 19, 23, 28.

⁵⁴ Home Mission Monthly 9 (Nov. 1894). Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁵ Roscoe, pp. 23, 170. Letter was to Willard, March 3, 1924, in the Indian Rights Association Papers.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 170, 177.

quite likely imagined that promoting weaving, even traditional weaving, among Zuni women would help "civilize" Zuni society.⁵⁸

Apparently, similar rationalizations were occurring at many reservations, and while Sparhawk and others had warned in the 1880s that efforts to collect Indian folklore were dangerous because they might encourage Indians to think positively of their culture and thus resist assimilation, no such warnings now emerged.⁵⁹ This response is understandable. Part of the assimilationists' hostility to the folklorists and anthropologists of the 1880s was that they were "outsiders," people with no documented concern for the Indians' welfare. By contrast, missionaries and female government employees had all come to Indians through the Indian reform organizations; their motives were beyond reproach. Moreover, their experience in the field guaranteed that their approval of native arts was practical. By virtue of their double authority as reformers and practical experts on Indians, these female field workers could exert a tremendous influence on an organization such as the Indian Industries League.

MARY C. COLLINS

The missionary Mary C. Collins (1846-1920) served as a League vice-president until 1910 and occasionally received League aid for her work among

⁵⁸ On this point it is suggestive to consider Dissette's preoccupation with Zuni girls and Indian girls in general. She seems to have always had an "adopted" Indian girl (or several) living with her.

⁵⁹ The Morning Star 8 (Dec. 1887), p. 5, reported on the formation of the Folk Lore Society, and editorialized that those trying to "preserve" Indian "relics" should preserve them "as relics" and be careful not to "misguide the Indian in his march to join the great American procession."

the Sioux at Fort Yates, North Dakota. A year older than Sparhawk, Collins had begun her missionary career for the American Board of Missionaries in 1875, when instead of being sent overseas as she desired, she was assigned to the Dakota Territory where she would work among "those horrid Indians," as she initially imagined them.⁶⁰ After thirty years among the Sioux she learned to love them as extended family, and although she came to understand and respect many of their native virtues, she never fully relinquished the conviction that white culture was superior to Indian. What one does find in her work, however, are a powerful sense of independence and a genuine emotional bond with the Indians.

Never married, Collins recalled her childhood in terms that emphasized her independence: [I was] "full of life, enjoyed all the sports of the boys and girls, could ride and drive horses when I was five years old."⁶¹ These traits would serve her well at mission posts where she would spend much time apart from or in the company of only a few other white people and would do work that would otherwise fall to men. Occupied mainly in teaching domestic skills and doctoring the sick, Collins also helped develop farms, to which purpose the League in 1899 sent her twenty-five dollars for tools she could lend out to Indians.⁶² Despite laboring to establish white-style homes and communities, Collins herself preferred contact with the "wildest" Indians. In 1885, rather than staying at the boarding school in Oahe, she moved on to the Standing Rock where she could settle "right in the midst of

⁶⁰ Quoted in Louise P. Olsen, "Mary Clemintine Collins: Dacotah Missionary," North Dakota History 19 (Jan 1952): 60.

⁶¹ Olsen, p. 60.

⁶² ILL, Annual Report (1900), p. 6.

the wild people."⁶³ Here in her little log cabin on the Grand River, miles from any other whites, Collins roamed an area eighty miles long and forty wide.⁶⁴ These excursions to preach the gospel and tend to the sick took her through blizzards, fires, and other rough conditions, all of which she shrugged off, leading the Indians to respect her bravery.⁶⁵ "Robust, full chested . . . with features well defined and showing strength and determination," in person, Collins presented an imposing figure even before, as she put it, "I buckled on my armor, and strengthened myself for the contest."⁶⁶

Such strength led one Sioux man to proclaim, "you are like an Indian," and indeed, in her thirty years among the Sioux, Collins came to understand the Indians well enough that she identified with them.⁶⁷ But Collins' identification was uneasy. At times she would speak of her inability to "tear myself from my adopted home and people," point with pride to the fact that the Indians called her a "medicine woman," and mention offhandedly that she spoke the Indians' language.⁶⁸ She reportedly felt completely "safe" among the Indians, whom she trusted thoroughly.⁶⁹ At other times, however, she could say of herself, "Always kind, always true, always sympathetic, but never an Indian."⁷⁰ Yet, by 1887, Collins was so much an

⁶³ Quoted in Olsen, p. 64.

⁶⁴ Olsen, pp. 64-65.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 69, 63.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Olsen, p. 63.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 64.

⁶⁹ Ames, p. 86.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Olsen, p. 62.

Indian that when some white cowboys approached her cabin and asked her if she could speak English, she recalled, "I tried and I could."⁷¹ Not only were these cowboys uncertain if Collins was white, she had been speaking the Sioux language for so long that it had become her first language. By speaking Sioux, she was going against the general reform line, supported by Sparhawk and made official by the Indian Office in 1887, that Indians should be taught in English only; Collins was an ardent supporter of native language instruction.⁷² Thus her experiences in the field led her to a position quite different from that reached by New England reformers like Sparhawk. One can only surmise how much Collins and other women like her might have influenced Sparhawk's opinion on this and other topics, but by the 1900s, the League had taken a position that was far more accepting of native languages, openly recommending field matrons with native languages skills.

Though Collins left the field with a warning that missionary efforts must continue in order to prevent the Indians from backsliding into "old customs," she expressed a seemingly contradictory appreciation of some old values and customs, including arts. When Collins reflected on her thirty years among the Sioux, she emphasized traditional Indian virtues which had been relatively absent in Sparhawk's fiction: "I have recognized the good in their old lives, commending whenever and wherever I could their religious

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 73. Emphasis in original.

⁷² Coleman finds that Presbyterian missionaries were divided over whether the meaning of Christian texts could be adequately conveyed through Indian languages. He concludes that missionaries who used a native language did so with the belief that eventually it "could be discarded along with the rest of the past" (119); see Coleman, pp. 116-119. Sparhawk, in the 1880s, had written arguments against the retention of native languages, except in religious instruction.

fervor and their faithfulness to their promises, their dignity and their generosity, their bravery and their power of endurance, their teaching of their sons and daughters modesty and self-control."⁷³ By 1905 a range of assimilationist organizations were sounding these same sentiments, and in 1911 the first pan-Indian organization, the Society of American Indians, would put special emphasis on this commitment to a recognition of the virtues of the old life. By that time the League had already indicated its respect for aspects of the old life by promoting the production of native arts. Collins too had accepted the arts of the Sioux, apparently unconcerned that they represented the "old ways." Rather, she presented their arts as evidence of industriousness. Trapped on the road by a blizzard in January of 1887, Collins found time to save the quills from a porcupine that one of the men accompanying her had shot; obviously these quills would be used by the Indian women to decorate moccasins, jackets, and other leather objects.⁷⁴ That Collins encouraged such work is evident by her insistence that Indians who asked her for supplies should show their appreciation by giving her something in return; as a result she received carved wooden bowls, ledger drawings, and probably beadwork.⁷⁵ Her ready acceptance of ledger drawings is especially significant because it points both to how a native art was developed and to how that art could perpetuate tribal traditions, seemingly with the approval of missionaries. By accepting ledger drawings as payment for minor goods and services, Collins essentially helped ensure a "market"

⁷³ Quoted in Olsen, p. 80.

⁷⁴ Olsen, p. 69.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 79.

for Sioux art.⁷⁶ More important, because these drawings depicted Sioux history and traditions (including the sun and corn dances, which were reviled by Collins), they represented the Sioux Indians' determination to keep their culture alive.⁷⁷ When a good Christian missionary like Collins would accept such representations, it surely indicated to the artist that Sioux culture had value even to whites, despite what they might say. In Collins' contradictory response to native traditions, one can gauge the effect that such attitudes, multiplied by many field workers and conveyed to organizations such as the League, would have on assimilationist ideology.

MARY L. ELDRIDGE

Both the League and the Cambridge branch of the Massachusetts Indian Association lent many years of support to Mrs. Mary Louise Eldridge (1849-1933), missionary and later field matron among the Navajos at Jewett, in the San Juan valley of New Mexico, on the eastern edge of the Navajo reservation.⁷⁸ Eldridge was typical of most of the twenty-five field matrons appointed before 1896 in that she was unmarried (a widow), had a high school education, had been affiliated with a missionary organization, and had previously worked for the Indian service.⁷⁹ She was atypical in that she owned an 160 acre homestead abutting the Navajo reservation from which

⁷⁶ Collins' concern about such a market can be measured by a letter she wrote to the League in 1902 complaining about imitation Navajo blankets; mentioned in IIL Record Book II, Jan. 16, 1902, p. 107, MHS.

⁷⁷ Olsen, p. 80.

⁷⁸ Jewett later became known as Hogback.

⁷⁹ Characteristics identified by Emmerich, "To Respect and Love," pp. 96-101.

she donated property for the use of missionary societies and the League.⁸⁰ In Eldridge's forty-two year tenure in New Mexico, one finds evidence of personal independence and respect for the Navajo people and their weaving traditions.

In late October, 1891, Eldridge and her friend Miss Mary E. Raymond arrived in Jewett to work as missionaries for the Women's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist-Episcopal Church.⁸¹ Like many other women of her time, Eldridge had entered the Indian Service to support herself after the death of her husband (in the early 1880s), taking a position as matron and head nurse at the Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, and later working at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where she met Raymond. Together the two determined to become missionaries, with Eldridge handling the nursing responsibilities and Raymond the teaching.⁸² To supplement their meager income, Raymond became a government field matron in 1892, (recommended to that position by future League president Merial Dorchester and her husband⁸³), but married a local trader in 1893 and became sick the following year after having a child. When she died in 1894, Eldridge took over the field matron position, which she held until 1905; she continued to

⁸⁰ WNIA, Report of Missions for 1900-1901, p. 44. She donated five acres for the League's industrial building, and thirty-five for a WNIA hospital. Another forty acres went to the Methodist Woman's Home Missionary Society for a school; see Pauline G. Malehorn, "The Tender Plant: The History of the Navajo Methodist Mission, Farmington, New Mexico, 1891-1948," unpublished paper, pp. 11-12, located in the Farmington Museum, NM.

⁸¹ Malehorn, pp. 1-3; IIL, Annual Report (1898); Ames, p. 88.

⁸² Malehorn, pp. 2-4.

⁸³ Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love,'" p. 61. Raymond was single and in her early thirties.

work at various locations around Farmington until her death on March 23, 1933 at the age of eighty-three.⁸⁴

Day-to-day life in New Mexico was challenging for both the Navajos and the missionaries, and Eldridge's duties changed and expanded to fit the circumstances. She had "dreamed" of doing "a great work" for the Navajos by gathering them into "schools and churches," but she soon realized that they suffered from more immediate problems than educational and spiritual malaise: general poverty, disease, malnutrition when crops failed, and frequent abuses by encroaching whites.⁸⁵ Eldridge saw her mission as a field matron to encompass solutions to all of these situations. Writing to the Cambridge Indian Association, she described her work as being "that of a mother, teacher, adviser, and general helper to every Indian who is in need of care, instruction, advice, or help of any kind. If there is any work you think of that would not come under any of these heads, that also is Field Matron's work."⁸⁶ Together with a revolving cast of female missionaries and assistants, Eldridge supervised the construction of irrigation projects sponsored by the Cambridge branch of the Massachusetts Indian Association,

⁸⁴ Malehorn, pp. 5, 8, 26, 92. Emmerich, "'To Respect and Love,'" pp. 103-104; Ames, p. 91. Ames claims that Eldridge left the Fisk Home in Farmington in 1915, but her continued work among the Navajos is evidenced by the fact that in 1919 the League sent her money to relieve a Navajo flu epidemic. III, Record Book IV, Jan. 15, 1919, p. 34, MHS.

⁸⁵ Cambridge Indian Association, Annual Report for 1899 [newspaper clipping], Cambridge Indian Association Papers, Cambridge Historical Society, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Ames, p. 88.

put a ferry boat into service, set up a weaving industry, established a sorghum mill, and tended to the sick in the WNIA hospital.⁸⁷

Eldridge carried out her work in conditions that would have challenged many men. Her home was at Jewett, but she often travelled by horseback to distant families on the reservation who needed her help, camping out alone under the expansive New Mexico sky. The San Jaun Times reported in wonderment when soon after their arrival Eldridge and Raymond undertook a three-week horseback tour of the Navajo reservation simply to explore the country.⁸⁸ When the Indians required emergency supplies, Eldridge drove a team of horses and a heavy wagon to places as far away as Two Gray Hills, seventy miles distant.⁸⁹ After 1905, suffering from heart problems and sore feet, Eldridge had to get a lighter wagon but she still found the strength to spend an entire year in the mountains at Waro's Camp, living in a tent among the Indians who required medical aid.⁹⁰ Like other female field workers, Eldridge took pride in her independence and lamented that she had never learned carpentry so that she might contribute to the

⁸⁷ For descriptions of her work, see the IIL's Annual Reports, Ames's Cambridge Indian Association history, the Cambridge Indian Association Papers, the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and WNIA's Report of Missions for 1900-1901, pp. 44-45. Her helpers included Mary Tripp, Miss Gaines, and Mrs. H. G. Cole. Eldridge continued to receive support from the Massachusetts Indian Association and its Cambridge branch when in 1903 she established a second mission at Closiah, near Farmington; two years later she moved there permanently. See WNIA, The Missionary Report for 1903, p. 4, and WNIA, Missions of 1905, p. 21.

⁸⁸ Malehorn, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁹ Ames, p. 89. The WNIA ran a mission at Two Gray Hills from 1893 to 1904.

⁹⁰ Ames, pp. 89-91.

construction of the mission buildings.⁹¹ In 1897, Sparhawk and the League had found Eldridge so "overburdened with work" that they saw fit to pay the salary of a woman, Miss Edith M. Dabb, who would do her housework.⁹² This then was the irony of the field matron's mission: she was so busy doing work that might be characterized as "men's work" that her sponsors had to secure a "wife" for her.

Living and working so closely with Indians led women like Eldridge to defend staunchly the humanity and equality of peoples whom many at the time believed closer to animals than humans. Eldridge's assistant, Edith Dabb, described how socializing with Navajo men who wished her to make velvet or black silk shirts for them convinced her that "human nature is ever the same whether it be found in the drawing room or on the Navajo reservation."⁹³ Dabb's reference to "the drawing room," where one might observe the most "civilized" white Americans, drove home the point that Indians behaved no differently from those members of the better American classes. Eldridge consistently spoke well of the the Navajo, and she "never tired of praising the industry of the men 'under the ditch'; she compared them favorably with white men doing the same work, and [she] was enthusiastic over the crops they raised."⁹⁴ Her letters and annual reports were full of testimony to the Navajos' work ethic ("any Navajo will do more

⁹¹ Malehorn, p. 5.

⁹² III, Annual Report (1898). Dabb was later active in the New York branch of the YWCA. While at Jewett, Dabb was at least partially supported by the Presbyterian Woman's Home Board of Missions; see "Stations and Workers Among Indians," Home Mission Monthly 19 (Feb. 1905).

⁹³ Quoted in III, Annual Report (1901), p. 6.

⁹⁴ Ames, p. 88.

work in one day than three Italians"), artistic sensibilities, and intelligence.⁹⁵ She disapproved of the Navajos' use of medicine men, but otherwise gave little evidence that she found fault with their habits or character.

Eldridge was like many field matrons in that her work and attention seemed focused on improving the Navajos' material conditions rather than changing their way of life. The local Indian agent commented that "the material as well as the spiritual wants of the Indians have been attended to" by Eldridge.⁹⁶ In fact, though some of Eldridge's various assistants labored to bringing the gospel to the Navajos, she gave her attention to the Indians' physical and economic welfare. An old Navajo recalled that she had secured him a job as a government interpreter and had spent much of her time dispersing medicine; on the whole he felt she had done more for the Navajos in that vicinity than all the other white people put together.⁹⁷ The Methodist Society stopped funding her after 1900, largely because it wanted to heal spirits but she wanted to heal bodies.⁹⁸ Her subsequent involvement with the League revolved around various efforts to support Navajo weavers (see Chapter Five). As Eldridge described it, the Indians suffered because of poverty exacerbated by local whites and by government policy, not because of laziness.

In some respects, Eldridge's relatively non-judgmental response to Indian life was a harbinger of attitudes to come. Her Navajo assistant, Annie,

⁹⁵ WNIA, The Missionary Report for 1903, pp. 7-8.

⁹⁶ Constant Williams, quoted in Michael Warner, "Protestant Missionary Activity among the Navajo, 1890-1912," New Mexico Historical Review (1970): 216.

⁹⁷ Malehorn, p. 26.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

was pictured in a Cambridge Indian Association pamphlet wearing an impressive collection of native silver jewelry, and when Annie married an English trader in 1912, Eldridge declared that he was "quite a 'catch.'"⁹⁹ By 1906 even the Presbyterian Home Mission Monthly could include an article on the Navajos which pointed with interest to their native industries and their division of labor which gave men some responsibility for child care and gave women control over the "art of weaving," a "feminine accomplishment." The article's appreciation that "womanhood is held in reverence" among Navajo men shows that some of the key stereotypes about gender relations among Indians were being modified (and perhaps replaced with new ones).¹⁰⁰ Other early twentieth-century observers also reported that Navajo women had a lot of power, and in 1929 one called them "the stable center of Navajo life."¹⁰¹ The "high status for women" among the

⁹⁹ Cambridge Indian Association, Historical Sketch (Cambridge: Cambridge Indian Association, 1911), p. 7; Cambridge Indian Association, Annual Report for 1913 [newspaper clipping], CIAP, CHS.

¹⁰⁰ "Our Navajo Neighbors," Home Mission Monthly, 20 (Sept. 1906): 269-270. Eldridge did not always agree with this view of Navajo women, and in 1903 she spoke of the necessity of rescuing girls from ill-treatment at the hands of men; see WNIA, The Missionary Report for 1903, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, George Wharton James, Indian Blankets and Their Makers 1914 (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Co., 1934), p. 115. J. B. Moore noted that the women "are the dominant influence in the tribe," although he complained that because of their control of resources and their traditionalism, they were also "the heaviest handicap for their people in the race for progress." Moore, "How Shall We Aid The Navajo," The Indian Craftsman 1 (May 1909): 32. A longtime Indian agent to the Pueblos and Navajos agreed with this assessment that the women were more conservative than the men. Leo Crane, The Indians of the Enchanted Desert (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1925), p. 344. Quotation is from Mary Roberts Coolidge, The Rain-Makers: Indians of Arizona and New Mexico (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), p. 290.

Navajos has been confirmed by contemporary scholars.¹⁰² White women entering the Indian field closer to the turn of the century were far likelier to come with criticisms of their own culture and an open-minded interest in Indian cultures.

MISS CALFEE

Miss Calfee was the field matron and WNIA missionary among the Hualapai Indians in Arizona from 1895 to 1903. Several years before the League was interested in such work, she had suggested "bead work" as an industry to develop. Her contact with the League was minor (she wrote in 1901 to describe local native industries), but her WNIA reports point to the ways that field experiences could reshape women's self-identities. Hard journeying was a fact of life for the dedicated field matron, and Calfee's daily ten mile round trip (on horseback) to the Indian school in the heat of summer trimmed over forty pounds from her body.¹⁰³ She delighted in such hardships, however, and proudly recounted a ninety mile journey to investigate the agricultural prospects of a distant canyon. Escorted by Kate, an Indian woman whom she called her "right-hand man," Calfee attacked steep mountain ascents and descents with such steadfast bravery that her companion declared: "Miss Calfee, there is not another woman like you in the United States; you ride like a man where only a few men would go, and

¹⁰² Mary Shepardson, "The Gender Status of Navajo Women," in Women and Power in Native North America eds. Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), pp. 159-176. Quotation from p. 159.

¹⁰³ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1896, p. 10.

no one would care enough for us Indians to ride and be so tired like you do."¹⁰⁴ Calfee's evident pride in her accomplishments was echoed by female field workers around the country.

If Calfee was not above singing her own praises, neither did she shy from extolling the Indians' virtues. Although she admitted that the Indians were only "children" compared to the white race, she wholeheartedly agreed with the Massachusetts Indian Association's pronouncement that "the vigor and piquancy [of the Anglo-Saxon stock] will be enhanced, if a strong scion of the aboriginal Indian has been well introduced and wisely cultivated." Specifically, the future "composite man-fruit of America" would benefit from the Indians' "honesty, truthfulness and reverence."¹⁰⁵ As field workers observed and reported these traits, they added to the list, and by 1903 the Massachusetts Indian Association modified its claim to emphasize the Indians' artistic contribution to the nation, since "Indian basketry and pottery, and the Indian music" were the "only arts indigenous to our soil."¹⁰⁶

FLORA M. WATKINS AND MABEL COLLINS¹⁰⁷

A striking demonstration of how quickly attitudes toward native cultures could change is apparent in what happened at Keam's Canon, Arizona between 1892 and 1897. The WNIA gave its attention to the Moquis

¹⁰⁴ WNIA, Our Missions for the Year 1895, p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ WNIA, Missionary Report for 1903, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Although I have found no record that these women contacted the League, I have included them here because their reports were published by the WNIA and would likely have been read by many of the League's executive committee members.

at Keam's Canon in 1892 when the superintendent of the boarding school (R. P. Collins) and his wife appealed for help in educating the Indians children to "the superiority of the Christian religion over their own heathen ideas, habits and worship." In response, the WNIA established a mission and then turned it over to the Mennonite Missionary Board. In 1895, however, the WNIA built a second mission near another Moqui village some fourteen miles distant from the first. Here a government field matron, Miss E. O. Stilwell, and a missionary, Miss Louise A. Young, were expected to "dislodge" the superstitious ceremonials of the Moquis, particularly their Snake Dance.¹⁰⁸ Two years later the need for still another mission became apparent, and Superintendent Collins' sister, Mabel, and a field matron, Miss Flora M. Watkins, were sent to run a mission on the Second Mesa.

While Young and Stilwell, seven miles away, struggled with the "hostiles" (traditional Indians), Collins and Watkins settled in to a pleasant and seemingly sympathetic relationship with the traditional Indians. After only a half year, Watkins revealed that they were "becoming attached to our people and they seem to feel as if we belong to them." As proof, she described that since being invited to a baby-naming ceremony, the "priestess who had charge of things has been very friendly." As a "woman of a great deal of influence," her frequent visits to the mission house made life for Watkins and Collins much easier. They further gained the villagers' "good will" when, after many invitations, they attended a "Cachina [sic] dance." These stories included none of the ritual chastising that normally accompanied WNIA field workers' accounts of "superstitious" Indian ceremonies. The

¹⁰⁸ WNIA, Our Missions for the Year 1895, pp. 43-45.

women's uncritical attitude extended to the division of labor among the Indians. Although teaching the Indian women to make clothing, Collins and Watkins noted that the men did most of the sewing, spinning, and weaving, and they were delighted that two of the chiefs used the mission house to spin and card their wool. When the men saw their wives' first attempts at sewing, they "laughed and laughed," and "went into new ecstasies" over the poorly made sleeves. On the other hand, the men were pleased to see Watkins "play carpenter," declaring "It is lovely for you to build a house." (In Hopi culture, the women plastered the homes.) With this non-judgmental attitude, Watkins and Collins made their mission cottage a social center where Indians came to work on traditional crafts, borrow utensils, have their hair cut, get medical attention, eat, and gossip.¹⁰⁹ By 1900 the cottage was the center of a Hopi arts revival (blanket weaving and basketry) which Watkins and Collins happily oversaw.¹¹⁰

In contrast to Clark who scorned attempts to "regulate" Indian dances and ceremonies under the mistaken assumption that they were not entirely "evil," Watkins and Collins were more like the missionary at Hoopa, California who admitted that "many right religious ideas are mingled with superstitions."¹¹¹ In time, field workers and reformers would identify an increasingly broad spectrum of "right" ideas in Indian cultures.

MARY WATKINS AND CONSTANCE GODDARD DU BOIS

¹⁰⁹ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1897, pp. 40-41, 43-44.

¹¹⁰ WNIA, Report of Missions for 1900-1901, pp. 36-37

¹¹¹ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1897, p. 14; WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1896, p. 35.

Mary Brier's parents barely made it to California, their wagon train losing members as it crossed southern Utah and made the final last leg through blistering Death Valley. Even the Mexican bandits took pity and spared the lives of the starving party which had had to slaughter its own oxen, subsisting in the end on ox hide soup. The Reverend Brier surely thanked the lord when, soon after reaching the San Diego area, his wife safely gave birth to Mary.¹¹²

Mary seemed to inherit a life of voluntary hardship herself, marrying an older Welsh man, Morgan Watkins, whose Mexican mines never quite struck it rich, and whose perpetual ill health prompted him to move his family up into the rugged mountains behind San Diego.¹¹³ There, at Mesa Grande, Mary B. Watkins entered a new phase of her life in 1897. Her son Arthur grown, Watkins took a position in the government Indian School, and though she and Morgan barely eked out a living on their little ranch, she gave generously from her salary to the Mission Indians around her whose own poverty was life-threatening at times. For thirteen years, Watkins corresponded with League member Constance Goddard Du Bois, describing life at Mesa Grande for the Eastern benefactor who made life more bearable (and sometimes possible) for the Indians there, first by sending clothing and money, later through buying baskets and lobbying the government for land reforms. Watkins' correspondence is a chronicle of love, despair, and delight. In it we see how field work could transform a woman's view of Indians from

¹¹² Du Bois, "Notes on Campo (?)," PCGD, Reel 3, #40.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* Mary Watkins hoped to get rich from her husband's Mexican mine, but never did. See Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 2, 1897, PCGD, Reel 1.

paternalistic, to loving, to respectful. Watkins' philanthropic and later ethnological interest in the Mission Indians led her to a profound spiritual respect for the Indians' culture, and she eventually came to think of some as "poets." As a provider of baskets to the League, and as a collaborator in Du Bois's ethnological investigations, Watkins demands our attention because her experiences and attitudes found their way back to the eastern reform groups (her letters were read at monthly meetings). Likewise, Du Bois's writings about her summer experiences in Mesa Grande will be examined here as evidence of how eastern reformers' ideas could be shaped by their field experience.

Getting to Mesa Grande involved less hardship than crossing Death Valley, but when Du Bois visited in 1897, she felt thankful that she was "not a great coward as women go," because the thirty mile stage ride from the railroad terminus took her over steep and winding roads that tested her bravery and taxed the horse so much that the driver and his passenger had to walk one six mile up-hill stretch.¹¹⁴ At last she reached the broad mesa on which Watkins lived, next to the 206 Mission Indians who tended twenty-five acres of small garden plots, gazed longingly at another 150 acres of arable land and 1000 of grassland which they lacked the tools and livestock to make use of, and looked bitterly at the remaining 3,825 barren and rocky acres of their reservation, sixty miles from San Diego. Around their reservation, the

¹¹⁴ Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," pp. 1-3, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

choicest land, much of it illegally taken from the Indians, was settled by white farmers and ranchers.¹¹⁵

The reservation's economic hardship, and by extension its Indians, were mirrored in the landscape, a "savage" combination of alternating mesa and mountain, "jagged and forbidding, bare rocks and steep walled canons," "baked earth," and "brown fields" which Du Bois found nevertheless attractive: "There is something exquisitely alluring in the beauty of this desert scene, over which Nature as if to atone for her neglect in more practical endowment has thrown the saving grace of color, color pure and idealized, as if existent apart from the object."¹¹⁶ Du Bois linked this aesthetic of "pathetic beauty" with that of its native inhabitants:

I leave it to the student of aesthetics to explain the charm which dry brown fields of sunburnt grass, bare earth, treeless hills, weird cactus, sprawling sycamores, naked rocks which free from shame show the earth's most primitive form, unclothed by lichen, fern or grass, unshaded by trees, unwashed by fountains; a charm as much more tender, exquisite and subtle as lies in a mother's love for a deformed child. He who can not feel this beauty may prefer the winter which answers to our spring, when rain falls, grass grows and flowers bloom;

¹¹⁵ Du Bois, "Mission Indians," pp. 30, 35, PCGD, Reel 3, #26. Du Bois gave the population as 206, but in 1897 Watkins placed it at 160. See Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Sept. 3, 1897, PCGD, Reel 1. However, in a Nov. 26, 1906 letter to Du Bois, Watkins recalled the population when she arrived as being 206; by 1906 she claimed it stood at only 106.

¹¹⁶ Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," ["A Brush Church"], pp. 2-3, PCGD, Reel 2, # 23. This passage is heavily edited in the manuscript, but I give the original text here, without Du Bois's corrections.

but even then the mountains remain uncompromising facts which you may passionately love, or gracelessly ignore, according to your susceptibility to new impressions or your love of cast forms of thought. If you love the mountains you will love the Indians and for the same reason I hope that you will love them.¹¹⁷

Even without the final sentence, Du Bois's references to "primitive form," to the "unclothed," "unwashed," and "naked" landscape reveal that she imagined the Southern California landscape as an aesthetic extension of its primitive inhabitants ("deformed" children) which contrasted sharply with the civilized eastern landscape. Her comparison of the landscape to a "deformed child" seems lifted from Watkins' first letter to Du Bois in which, describing the poverty-stricken elderly Indians, she said: "My heart goes out to them as a mother's to a deformed child. I do not see the untidy garments, only the pitiful faces and loving eyes."¹¹⁸ Du Bois's borrowing of Watkins' metaphor reveals the way she aligned the Indians with their landscape. It is a "natural" landscape, like its inhabitants; in the spring "rain falls, grass grows and flowers bloom," apparently without the help of man's hand or "fountains." Still, she "loves" this landscape, and by extension the Indians it represents. And this love is not, she acknowledges, shared by all. Rather, it is a "mother's" love, strongly suggesting both that women are more likely to see beauty in that which falls outside the accepted standards of beauty and that they are more likely to love Indians. Moreover, she implies that learning to

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Aug. 16, 1897, PCGD, Reel 1.

love Indians requires that one be willing to give up old modes of thought. Thus she paints a symbiotic relationship between landscape, Indians, and women. Watkins wrote of herself, "I am like a landscape, all humps and depressions. Would that I could level up and become all that my conscience demands."¹¹⁹ One could easily substitute "Indian" for "I" in this passage, and it would read like a standard complaint about how the Indians needed to be refined. But in the Southern California landscape women could break out of "cast forms of thought" and learn to love Indians. Another Midwestern transplant to California, Mary Austin, who claimed that by getting to know the land, she got to know Indians.¹²⁰ Watkins and Du Bois would in fact have this response in Mesa Grande, where they moved farther away from older eastern ideas about women and Indians.

The first stereotype to go was that of the degraded Indian family life. In terms of the Indians' morals, Watkins felt "they have a higher sense of honor and right" than most white people.¹²¹ After Du Bois's first visit, she concluded that "there is very little immorality and woman may live with man without ceremony or church but she is faithful and does not go with others." Moreover, the children were obedient and "Husbands treat their wives with great kindness and consideration. The men do not make women

¹¹⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, March 8, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹²⁰ Mary Austin, The American Rhythm: Studies and Reexpressions of Amerindian Songs, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), p. 38. Austin moved to California in 1895.

¹²¹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Aug. 25, 1897, PCGD, Reel 1.

carry burdens or do any work outside her legitimate work."¹²² Though physically crude, the Indian home was "warm," the "family affection" deep.¹²³ Mesa Grande appeared to be free of squaw drudges (Fig. 8).

Watkins' living and working conditions at Mesa Grande were initially as primitive as the Indians'. The OIA imagined that its field matrons and schoolteachers would serve as examples of domesticity to the Indians around them, but the reality of such women's facilities did not always match the ideal. Even by 1900, the school building which Du Bois described as "dilapidated" in 1897 still had no glass windows, although one presumes that the skunks had been driven out of the attic.¹²⁴ Watkins' home met not even these standards. After Du Bois' first visit, during which the two women stayed in the schoolhouse, Watkins apologized that her "circumstances prevented the hospitality that I wished so much to offer you," but in 1899 found her living in a "ramada" (a brush house -- Fig. 9).¹²⁵ Not until 1902 did she get what she considered a respectable home of her own.¹²⁶

Watkins did not complain about living in a ramada, perhaps because the Indians themselves lived in similar structures and even built their churches from brush. These brush churches had especially impressed Du

¹²² Du Bois, "Notes Taken at Mesa Grande," PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

¹²³ Du Bois, untitled fragment, PCGD, Reel 6, #82.

¹²⁴ Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," ["Ella"], p. 6, PCGD, Reel 2, # 23; Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 3, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹²⁵ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Aug. 16, 1897, Aug. 7, 1899, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹²⁶ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 13, 1902, PCGD, Reel 1. This new two story house had a special room set aside for Du Bois to use when she visited.

Bois, who lovingly described their freshly woven "green boughs, through the interstices of which the late summer twilight sent a subdued religious light," as though through "stained glass windows."¹²⁷ The ramadas were convenient symbols not only of how the Indians lived close to nature but of how they worshipped close to nature. In her 1898 novel, A Soul in Bronze, Du Bois combined the ideas of home and church, using the same language as above to describe how light came into an Indian home, but adding some commentary about the effect such a building could have on a white person: "in such a hut, beneath such a sky, the world worn pessimist might forget his cares and learn new joy in living."¹²⁸ Du Bois writes "his," but in the novel white women alone discover this new joy in Indian country. Later in the novel the heroine, Dorthea, gets married in a brush church completely covered with blue lilac.¹²⁹ It is easy to imagine that Du Bois, and perhaps even Watkins herself, romanticized Watkins' time in the ramada as one of spiritual connection with the Southern California landscape and its natives.

At Mesa Grande, Mary Watkins lived and worked in an environment that in its ruggedness and remoteness made her a pioneer of sorts, and though she delighted in her garden and in gradual improvements to her home, Watkins was less enthusiastic about her domestic duties, preferring her "work" with the Indians to cleaning and cooking. Having a proper house seemed to bring Watkins more pain and work than contentment because it

¹²⁷ Du Bois, "Some Unknown Missions of California," Land of Sunshine 11 (Nov. 1899), pp. 318-320; Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," ["A Brush Church"], p. 3, PCGD, Reel 2, # 23.

¹²⁸ Du Bois, A Soul in Bronze: A Novel of Southern California (Chicago and New York: Herbert S. Stone & Co., 1900), p. 136.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

required that one be a housewife to many. "I have a hotel, cafe, orphan's home, and 'saints rest' rolled into one," she complained.¹³⁰ Assessing her days spent feeding, clothing, and writing letters for the Indians, she concluded that it was a "strenuous life I live."¹³¹ "I feel like a slave, rebellious," she declared in one of many letters lamenting the tedium of housework.¹³² This was indeed a rebellious attitude for one whose employers imagined woman's central field duty to be the teaching of domestic skills through instruction and example. But Watkins had no patience for such notions and openly criticized a white missionary and lace teacher who alienated the Indians with her obsessive criticisms of their housekeeping, remarking that "Her manners and neatness are lovely but not needed here."¹³³ Watkins often wrote Du Bois that she had "locked her door" so that she could find the peace and quiet to compose a letter to her friend. Fondly recalling a Sunday spent with Du Bois, Watkins blamed housework for preventing such Sundays from being more frequent: "It is the housework that intrudes its petty, weary cares and spoils our day. And now the dishes are waiting to be washed and supper and

¹³⁰ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 7, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹³¹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 4, 1903, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹³² Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 22, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2; Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 14, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹³³ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 22, 1906, Jan. 9, 1908, March 19, 1908, May 22, 1908, PCGD, Reel 2. When the missionary, Mrs. Brunson, arrived in 1906, Watkins said she liked her.

chamber."¹³⁴ Even a locked door could not give her the uninterrupted contact with her friend that she so desired.

But the Southern California landscape could give Watkins freedom from domestic slavery, and each year she looked forward to a summer visit from Du Bois during which the two of them would strike out alone (or with an Indian guide and interpreter) into the neighboring Indian communities, doing ethnological research by day and camping out at night. As the narrator in Du Bois's novel A Soul in Bronze says, "There is consolation in vast spaces where the soul can lose itself in a realization of the pettiness of life's grinding cares."¹³⁵ However rough the conditions, once free of white men and

¹³⁴ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Sept. 28, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1. Watkins' intense love for Du Bois made her capable, however, of idealizing the image of Du Bois as a housekeeper. Recalling the image of Du Bois doing laundry, Watkins wrote her, "Very sweet you looked and you seemed nearer to me than ever before. I almost wish that you and yours and babies had filled the years. You look such a sweet house mother" (Oct. 5, 1906). If we take "yours" to be Watkins or Du Bois's longtime companion, Dr. Caroline R. Conkey (Du Bois was unmarried), it seems that Watkins imagines an ideal world filled with only women and Indians. Watkins also wrote of the real-life counterpart of Antonio (the Indian hero in A Soul in Bronze) that he understood her better than her own son, and later she "adopted" an Indian boy.

¹³⁵ Du Bois, A Soul in Bronze, p. 256. In one of Du Bois's unpublished short stories, a young woman teaching at an Indian school receives a mysterious message in her notebook: "Through space, peace and the strength of the desert to you." This message, it turns out, was written by the teacher herself, "in a state of dual consciousness." Du Bois, "A Desert Flower," pp. 15-16, PCGD, Reel 2, #21. Du Bois and Watkins' response to the Southwestern desert mirrors that of women like Mary Austin and Mabel Dodge Luhan. In their study of women and Southwestern landscapes, Vera Norwood and Janice Monk conclude, "Anglo women who came to the Southwest in the first half of the twentieth century found in the landscape inspiration, identity, and energy that released their creativity or shaped their work." Monk and Norwood, "Conclusion," in The Desert is No Lady:

encamped in the Southern California landscape, both women basked in what Du Bois called "a compensating sweetness in independence."¹³⁶ Watkins praised the horse for its ability to take the women "wherever the spirit leads," and envied a Mrs. Laughlin who spent two weeks at nearby Campo and "had a byke [sic] and went alone where she pleased."¹³⁷ Each spring Watkins thought of Du Bois's arrival and the camping out it would bring, happily anticipating eating "out of a box," sleeping "on the ground," and "blister[ing] our noses."¹³⁸ Watkins wished that Du Bois would move permanently from "cold, shut-up, hot, stifling" Waterbury, Connecticut, to California where one could be outdoors all the time: "Freedom every day, summer and winter, is so good."¹³⁹ Freedom was not just the activity of camping but the place of the campsites: Indian back-country.

On such trips, the two women escaped from domesticity into the Indians' world, a world where the natural world and the spiritual world were one. On an August night in 1901, Du Bois and Watkins were encamped on a hilltop together with their Indian guide and interpreter, Ysidro, when they witnessed a spectacular meteor which turned out to be "Chaup," the supernatural hero of an important Mission Indian legend. After the meteor

Southwestern Landscapes in Women's Writing and Art, eds. Monk and Norwood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 225.

¹³⁶ Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," ["Ella"], p. 6, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

¹³⁷ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, May 30, 1900, April 7, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹³⁸ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 27, 1901, March 5, 1902, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹³⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 2, 1909, PCGD, Reel 2.

had flashed overhead in "a transcendency of glory," lighting up the night like day, Du Bois and Watkins were the "only two people in Southern California [who] had reason to regard it as the manifestation of a supernatural power made for their especial benefit; and if my friend Maria and I did not actually believe this, at least we considered its appearance at that time a very singular coincidence."¹⁴⁰ Camping out with Ysidro put the women in touch with an Indian view of the world which, even if they did not completely share, they alone among white people understood. What had begun four years earlier as journeys to alleviate the Indians' suffering became journeys toward understanding, and eventually toward transformation. Combining philanthropy and ethnology, Du Bois and Watkins helped the Mission Indians as they collected their myths and traditions. Alone in the field with their Indian informants, the women became increasingly enchanted with the deep spirituality of their Indian friends. In 1905 Watkins found herself on the road to Campo, sitting around the campfire listening to Narciso (an old Indian informant) tell stories and sing songs. Watkins, together with Narciso's girls and another Indian, "laughed at every thing and nothing, and I was a child, free to enjoy the earth."¹⁴¹ It would seem that Watkins meant

¹⁴⁰ Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folk-Lore. The Culture-Hero, Chaup," pp. 1-2, PCGD, Reel 3, # 25. The original title was "Mission Indian Folk-Lore. In Search of a Culture-Hero," which reflected Du Bois's claim that she and Watkins had been "wandering in search of a Culture hero" (2).

¹⁴¹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 4, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

that she was an Indian ("child"), and apparently she took great pleasure in this.¹⁴²

Watkins' pleasure in being a child revealed how far she had come since her first years at Mesa Grande when she imagined herself as the adult and the Indians as her "babies," "my poor children," or the "funny little brownies."¹⁴³ Common among many assimilationists, these terms implied that as a race in "childhood" the Indians had everything to learn from white "adults."¹⁴⁴ Watkins certainly demonstrated this attitude to varying degrees throughout her years at Mesa Grande, and while she never completely gave up her maternal self-image, she did come to believe that there were areas of Indian culture that did not require "maturing." Her receptivity to the Indians' view evidenced itself after a few years at Mesa Grande. As she said, "the longer I know them [Indians] the more I like them and understand them."¹⁴⁵ Du Bois, who spent only summers getting to know the Mission Indians, seconded Watkins' opinion: "no one could live among them for a time as I have done without seeing many evidences of superiority, and this chiefly among the old men who are typical of the past."¹⁴⁶ As it turned out, Du Bois gave Watkins the perfect opportunity to get to know the old Indians

¹⁴² A small sign of Watkins and Du Bois's transculturation can be seen in the pet names they soon adopted for each other: Maria and La Constancia. These were obviously their "Indian" names, since Spanish was the language spoken by most of the Indians.

¹⁴³ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Aug. 25, 1897, Sept. 8, 1898, Jan. 2, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1. (Quotations in reverse order of dates.)

¹⁴⁴ On Fletcher, see Mark, pp. 106-109.

¹⁴⁵ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 27, 1899, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁴⁶ Du Bois, "The Religion of the Luiseno and Diegueno Indians of Southern California," PCGD, Reel 2, #17.

better, first by distributing clothes and food to them, and then, beginning in 1898, by recording their stories, songs, and artifacts for Du Bois.

What Watkins discovered as she listened to the oldest men in the tribe was that these men clung to a past that compared quite favorably to the present. Watkins had been receptive to such a conclusion since her first year at Mesa Grande when she responded with sadness to a visiting nun's pronouncement that the Indians were so "modernized" that "they are not Indians": "I was pleased and sorry to hear her say this. As I know their past it was in many ways beautiful and, with the death of the few old men, it dies."¹⁴⁷ How beautiful Watkins did not realize until years later when she listened to an old Indian named Blue Heaven, "a wonderful story teller and singer," whom she declared "a poet and interpreter of Nature, not as we see it, but far beyond." Of an old Indian friend, Antonio, she said, "His songs have ennobled his nature and he too is a poet."¹⁴⁸ Listening on another occasion to such songs and the "beautiful thoughts" they communicated, Watkins was "fairly lost in [her] joy," and could happily proclaim, "My people are not beasts, but poets."¹⁴⁹ As poets with "wonderful art thought," the Indians surely did not require total assimilation, and Watkins filled her letters with regrets about the inevitable passing of the old life. Du Bois too came to respect Indian traditions, and while her first published reports about the Mission Indians had criticized those older Indians who still believed in their

¹⁴⁷ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Aug. 17, 1898, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁴⁸ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 4, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁴⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Oct. 3, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

own religion, she ended up becoming a staunch defender of Indian dances and religion.¹⁵⁰

In her years at Mesa Grande, Watkins witnessed the Indian population drop from 206 to 106, and though she generally felt resigned to the passing of the beautiful old life, she was determined to save what she could. On September 17, 1906, her favorite old man, Cinon Duro, finally died. His passing, and that of the past he symbolized, was mourned not just by Watkins, but by all the Indians at Mesa Grande. His granddaughter, Rosalie Nejo, wrote to Du Bois that everyone was saddened by the thought that the "beautiful life of the past is also buried with that brave old chief."¹⁵¹ Cinon was buried but not forgotten, at least not by Watkins, who two years later still thought frequently of that "grand old man," and faithfully tended the ivy she had planted on his grave, "that sacred spot."¹⁵² On the cross she had had built to mark the spot, an Indian phrase, learned by Watkins on one of her story-collecting evenings, hinted that Cinon's past was not entirely lost: "Hō mow, no som -- It is not yet finished."¹⁵³

MABEL REED AND MARY ARNOLD

¹⁵⁰ For her early attitude see Du Bois, "Some Unknown Missions of California," Land of Sunshine 11 (Nov. 1899), pp. 317-324; "A Fiesta at Mesa Grande," Land of Sunshine 12 (Jan. 1900), pp. 86-90; "The Song of Death," Southern Workman, [offprint, no date], PCGD, Reel 2, #16a.

¹⁵¹ Rosalie Nejo to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Oct. 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁵² Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, March 19, 1908, Feb. 2, 1909, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁵³ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 4, 1905, Jan. 21, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1; Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Oct. 5, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

The League's Annual Report for 1908-09 approvingly described the exploits of two "enthusiastic young workers" who had spent those two years as field matrons among the Karok Indians in Northern California. Unlike the missionaries of earlier generations, these young women entered the field determined, in their own words, "to find the best of the Indian ideals rather than to force our own." They discovered, for example, that Indians' cabins were dirty only because the Indians were imitating the poor models set by white settlers. In the case of cleanliness, the old ways were better: "In the old days the Indians bathed from top to toe twice daily in all weathers."¹⁵⁴ The annual report does not name these two young women, but they were Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed, and fortunately for us, they set down their experiences in weekly letters home, and in 1957 this account was published under the title In the Land of the Grasshopper Song.¹⁵⁵ An extraordinary account, it chronicles the happy transformation of two white women into "the Indian Mabel and the Indian Mary."¹⁵⁶ Rather than persuade the Indians to think and behave like themselves, Mabel and Mary found it far more reasonable and fulfilling to do the opposite. This attitude contrasted starkly with that officially recommended by the OIA, but it foretold the future of many white women's feelings about Indian culture.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in III, Annual Report for 1908-09 (1910), pp. 5-6.

¹⁵⁵ Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed, In the Land of the Grasshopper Song: Two Women in the Klamath River Indian Country in 1908-09 (1957. Reprint, Lincoln and Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). For information about the letters, see Arnold, "Foreword," The Grasshopper Song [typewritten manuscript], Mary Ellicott Arnold Papers, Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

¹⁵⁶ Arnold and Reed, p. 225.

Arnold and Reed's response to Indian culture demonstrated the enormous changes in attitudes toward the ideals of womanhood that had taken place since the field matron program had been established some fifteen years earlier. Arnold and Reed were each thirty-one years old in 1908, graduates of an eleven-month Cornell University agricultural program, and veterans of New York settlement house work.¹⁵⁷ Friends since the age of seven, they had vowed at sixteen to spend the rest of their lives together, a promise they kept.¹⁵⁸ Although they had been raised in New Jersey among apparently pious folk and were well connected with leading ladies in the Indian reform groups, their motivations for working among the Indians seemed radically different from those of their elders. They entered the rugged mountains of Northern California not as Victorian ladies but as young adventurers, eager to cast off the limitations imposed by their gender.

Their book offers a particularly trustworthy account of their experiences because it was written in the field over the two year period of their service and received little editing after the fact.¹⁵⁹ As a result, the women's responses to events and people reflect what they felt and thought at

¹⁵⁷ Arnold was born in 1876. Francis E. Leupp, "Woman in the Indian Service," *Delineator* 75 (June 1910), p. 550.

¹⁵⁸ Arnold, "Brief Autobiography of Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed," typewritten manuscript, MEAP. After their Indian work, the women went on to manage cafeterias, take courses at the University of California, and run consumer cooperatives for Nova Scotia miners and Maine lobster fisherman. Arnold died in 1968.

¹⁵⁹ Arnold and Reed, "foreword." Because the book was written in the field, much of it is in the present tense. It does seem, however, that the first chapter was written in the 1950s, and there are places in the text where Arnold seems to have added short passages. Arnold also left out some passages which appear in her typewritten manuscript *The Grasshopper Song*.

the moment rather than how they might have interpreted their experiences at a later date. The central thematic concerns that run through the narrative come from their immediate preoccupations and do not represent issues overlaid on their experience at some later date. Most important, the women's experiences were communicated through letters to the various women in Indian organizations who sent them money and supplies. One of these women, Cornelia Taber, was the president of the Northern California branch of the NIA and an executive committee member of the League from 1906 to 1915, and a vice-president until 1920; she sent the League baskets and probably forwarded the letters from which the League quoted in its annual report.¹⁶⁰

Reed and Arnold insisted on seeing their field matron appointment as an adventure rather than as a call to Christian duty. The League's Annual Report for 1908-9 introduced Reed and Arnold with the note that they had "asked to be given 'the hardest field in California.'"¹⁶¹ This request was placed at "Cousin" Annie Bidwell's ranch in the Sacramento Valley (Chico) where the Special Agent for California Indians, Mr. C. E. Kelsey, responded by offering them what he called "'the roughest field in the United States.'" Arnold imagined that "he expected us to refuse" but "it was the chance we

¹⁶⁰ One problem with the women's letters, however, is that they were sometimes slanted to appeal to their readers. Such letters got Arnold and Reed into trouble with their Indian friends who were unhappy to discover anecdotes about themselves in a Northern California Indian Association leaflet. Arnold and Reed realized that their letters to people in the Indian Association, some of which had been based on first impressions, were betrayals of their friendship with the Indians. Arnold, "The Leaflet," The Grasshopper Song, MEAP.

¹⁶¹ IIL, Annual Report for 1908-9 (1910), p. 5.

had been hoping for."¹⁶² This exchange points to Reed and Arnold's preoccupation with their gender and the expectations it brought with it. Kelsey seems to have imagined that field matrons would shy away from extremely rugged and "uncivilized" conditions, but these were just what Reed and Arnold sought. By calling it "a chance we had been hoping for," Reed implies that such chances were unavailable to women in New Jersey. Only in the still wild West might a woman own a ranch, as cousin Annie did, or better yet get on a horse (they expressed great pride in the development of their riding skills) and ride into Indian country. In short, Reed and Arnold sought a kind of physical "adventure" that was generally unavailable to women of the time but was increasingly satisfied by women's entry into physical activities previously reserved for men, such as bicycle riding.¹⁶³ The field matron position offered a paid adventure for women.

Reed and Arnold were indeed entering rough country. Mountainous, accessible only by horse, thinly populated, and divided by several large unbridged rivers, the interior of northern California was, and still is, a remote region of the country. As field matrons, Reed and Arnold settled not in the

¹⁶² Arnold and Reed, pp. 12-13. Arnold claimed that they did not make a good impression on Kelsey, who sent them to Northern California with malicious intent. On the other hand, when the women had the opportunity to share a canoe with Kelsey, they were unimpressed by his paddling skills. Mary Ellicott Arnold, The Karok Indians, 1908-1909, typewritten manuscript, MEAP. Annie Bidwell was a vice president of the WNIA. Mathes, "Nineteenth Century Women and Reform," p. 14.

¹⁶³ See Ellen Gruber Garvey, "Reframing the Bicycle: Advertising-Supported Magazines and Scorching Women," American Quarterly 47 (March 1995): 66-101. In The Grasshopper Song Arnold introduces the story as a "western," and in her "Brief Autobiography" she notes that they went to California with the idea of "adventuring." MEAP.

small white community at Somesbar, but at a smaller Indian rancheria, Kot-e-meen, just up-river. In time, this location proved too dull, so the women moved farther up the opposite side of the Klamath River to Happy Camp. Here they were four days from the nearest railroad. This was not "ladies" country, but Reed and Arnold did not mind, especially considering that they were "the most talked-of individuals in two hundred miles."¹⁶⁴ Indeed, they revelled in being "on the trail" after being "cooped up so long" in their little home (Fig. 10).¹⁶⁵ They definitely preferred adventurous pursuits to domestic ones.

That Reed and Arnold self-consciously imagined their job as an adventure is evident from their frequent references to the popular myths and images of the wild West which they debunked on a regular basis. Arnold's preconceptions about half-breeds turned out to be off the mark and she realized the books from which they came "were just written to sell."¹⁶⁶ Physically, the wagons and buildings were quite ordinary compared to what one sees "in pictures of the West."¹⁶⁷ With some disappointment, they concluded after several months that despite Kelsey's claim that they were in the "roughest place" in the United States, what they discovered was not "like the westerns you read in books and magazines." True, people killed each other occasionally or were attacked by wild animals, but at nothing like the "terrific pace" in western novels.¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, when the women

¹⁶⁴ Arnold and Reed, p. 47.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

returned east to Plainfield, New Jersey for a two week visit, they went as "Westerners" and delighted in their "discolored saddle bags," riding boots, clanking spurs, and sombreros, with "gingham dresses modestly disposed between."¹⁶⁹ As much as their experiences debunked Western myths, they also confirmed the women as real Westerners, a role they exulted in playing, and despite New Jersey's advantage of ice cream, they were eager to return to their rustic home on the Klamath River.

Lisa Emmerich's study of field matrons indicates that for some women, prolonged contact with Indian culture led to a greater respect for and understanding of it.¹⁷⁰ Reed and Arnold differ in that they seem to have gone to Indian country with this attitude already in place. In their opinions about Indian marriage, divorce, justice, religion, music, and medicine, Arnold and Reed strayed decidedly from the official matron line as it had been originally conceived.

When Arnold and Reed arrived in Northern California, they harbored reservations about their ideological suitability as field matrons. Mr. Kyselka, the Indian Agent at Hoopa, gave them his understanding of their duties: "I think the Government's idea in appointing field matrons is that women will have a civilizing influence. . . . As much as possible you want to elevate them and introduce white standards."¹⁷¹ But Reed and Arnold questioned their own fitness as field matrons from the beginning and laughed at the idea that they were "ladies." On the way to their post they met Mrs. Mayhew, the field

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹⁷⁰ In addition to her dissertation, see Emmerich, "'Civilization' and Transculturation," pp. 33-48.

¹⁷¹ Arnold and Reed, p. 24.

matron for Witchpec, just down river. A "small, stout, active woman," Mrs. Mayhew struck Arnold as quite different from themselves in temperament and ability. Arnold's use of short declarative statements to describe Mayhew's description of her work gives us a vivid image of a no-nonsense woman who lacked a sense of humor, an impression confirmed by a photograph that shows her sitting primly in her home, hands in her lap, her large hat secured with a long white scarf (behind her is a table with a large display of Indian baskets). Mabel in her cowboy hat and Mary in her round rubber hat felt that "the Government had evidently made a mistake when they appointed us as field matrons."¹⁷²

Initially Arnold and Reed tried to act like the ladies they were supposed to be, but soon regretted such proper behavior as in the time they unknowingly passed up the splendid opportunity to eat bear meat because their host had not provided them with knives and forks.¹⁷³ Moreover, as "ladies" they received a cold shoulder both from the rougher white residents of Somesbar where they had been directed to work and from the few Indians they had met. Arnold admitted that they were "beginning to think that we were not the right people for this country."¹⁷⁴ After a month of sitting around Somesbar (which had no Indian residents), they decided to move to the nearby Indian rancheria of Kot-e-meen, but Mabel insisted that they find a new way to present themselves: "No one thinks much of women in this country. And no one likes them. And missionaries are worse. We simply

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 16, 27.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 40.

can't be missionaries. And government agents are worst of all. No wonder people won't look at us or speak to us. But schoolmarms are safe."¹⁷⁵ So they became schoolmarms and gave up even pretending to represent the other roles.

At Kot-e-meen, Arnold and Reed settled into a comfortable friendship with an Indian family that most assuredly did not conform to the model advocated by most field matrons, but which met with the hearty approval of these unorthodox schoolmarms. Essie, a petite, English speaking full-blood Indian woman, lived next door to Reed and Arnold with her two husbands, Mart and Les, and her son from still another marriage.¹⁷⁶ Worse, Essie had a "bad" reputation, having kicked the half-breed sheriff Frank Offield in the crotch, in public.¹⁷⁷ Arnold rationalized that "if Mart and Essie and Les are all satisfied, it really does seem as though it were their own personal concern," although she laughingly admitted to being a "little doubtful" as to "whether we were upholding the standards Mr. Kyselka, the Indian agent at Hoopa, had talked about when he sent us up into Indian country." Schoolmarms' standards were clearly different: ". . . we couldn't help being impressed by the way Essie carried off the situation. Socially, she put her two husbands on the map. It is plain that her abilities are not confined to downing Frank Offield before a scandalized audience."¹⁷⁸

Their admiration for Essie's "abilities" centered on her power, not only to hold two husbands but to solve problems imaginatively. When Mart

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 60.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

began spending too much money on whiskey, Essie showed him the error of his ways by earning some money panning gold, buying whiskey, and consuming nothing but whiskey for a week until Mart feared for her health (and missed her cooking) and gave up the bottle.¹⁷⁹ This was an unladylike but effective solution. Moreover, Essie refused to be a burden-bearing wife: she always rode the horse and made her husbands carry the load.¹⁸⁰ Reed and Arnold approved, noting that unlike back East, "on the Rivers, masculine qualifications certainly do sing out, and . . . men are valuable," so Essie was wise to get three for herself, and they were even wiser to attach themselves to Essie "and so enjoy the blessings of all three with no embarrassment and none of the problems."¹⁸¹

Accepting Essie's marital status might be chalked up to pragmatic necessity, but Arnold and Reed went even further and uncritically accepted the Indian custom of paying for marriages and divorces. Essie described marriage in the old days as being quite "strict" in terms of rules. A man had to pay a certain amount to marry a woman, and double that if he did not want to support her family. If either wanted a divorce, the woman had to pay him back the money; if she did not, the children kept his name.¹⁸² Reed and Arnold seemed particularly sympathetic to Essie's cousin's opinion that Indian marriage was better than white marriage because a white wife had to "stay home all day and cook," while an Indian wife could "take her baby on

179 Ibid., p. 57.

180 Ibid., p. 64.

181 Ibid., p. 68.

182 Ibid., pp. 59-60.

her back when she want to, and go along trail."¹⁸³ This idea must have resonated with them since they preferred to live their own lives with this same freedom. Indeed, again and again they literally took to the "trail" when life became too dull; of the four photos of themselves that they included in the book, two show them riding "on the trail" [this is the caption], and the other two show them saddling their horses. "On the trail" seemed a kind of metaphor for the freedom women had only in Indian society. Clearly, they identified with the Indian women's sense of independence. Over time, Arnold and Reed learned all about Essie's three marriages, and though Arnold clearly found the topic amusing, she never moralized about it.

Arnold found the Indian justice system similarly amusing but quite sensible. She joked that "from what they tell us, killing people in this country is very expensive." Simply shooting at someone cost twenty-five dollars; a hit cost fifty dollars, and "if you are unfortunate enough to kill him, his relatives demand one hundred dollars."¹⁸⁴ In their time on the Rivers, Arnold and Reed found this justice system fair and efficient, especially since Indians were scrupulous about honoring it. Whites were not so enamored with Indian justice, and raised particular indignation at the idea of paying for marriage. One white man spoke to Reed and Arnold about giving the Indians the "benefits of the law [white law]," to which Reed had this private response: "It is not quite clear in our minds just what the benefits of the law are here on the Rivers, but as white women and field matrons and

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

representatives of the Government, we tried to look sympathetic."¹⁸⁵ They did not act sympathetic, however, noting for example that they thought the Government's hunting laws vastly inferior to the Indians' which stipulated only that one eat what one killed.¹⁸⁶

As schoolmarms, Arnold and Reed felt no obsessive compulsion to Christianize the Indians, historically one of the primary duties of white women. True, Arnold admitted, Bishop Moreland evidently "considers us members of his flock and has sent us forty Bibles," but she described their "relations with the bishop and his forty Bibles" as "somewhat tenuous."¹⁸⁷ Arnold smirked that she and Reed "were once considered the somewhat heathen members of the Episcopal Church of Somerville, New Jersey," a judgment perhaps validated by the foul language Reed used when she had trouble with her horse.¹⁸⁸ Yet, after a few months at Kot-e-meen the schoolmarms received a small shock when the lumber they ordered for a dining room table and an extra chair came with the deliveryman's expectation that they were going to use it to build Sunday school benches, as that was the rumor going around the Rivers.¹⁸⁹ They had had no such plans, but the fact that the Indians expected that white women would naturally start a Sunday school and be conversant in Christianity shows how familiar they were with the ideals of true womanhood, even if they did not emulate them

185 Ibid., p. 188.

186 Ibid., p. 98.

187 Ibid., pp. 51, 108.

188 Ibid., pp. 86, 89.

189 Ibid., p. 74.

themselves and, as it turned out, had their own reasons for wanting a Sunday school.

Reed and Arnold made a successful go of their Sunday school, but it is unlikely that old-style field matrons would have conducted one quite so tolerant of the Indian habits which Christianity was supposed to supplant. Each Sunday the schoolmarms dutifully led their flock through loud and boisterous renditions of a few of the hymns from the twenty Episcopal hymnbooks provided by Bishop Moreland, but they made up new words to replace those the Indians found impossible to pronounce. Arnold laughed: "The Lord Bishop better not try visiting this parish. He will think something is the matter with his hearing."¹⁹⁰ Aside from reading a passage or two from the Bible, they apparently did nothing in the way of proselytizing.¹⁹¹ Rather, the Indians used Sunday school as a way to get together for traditional Indian entertainments such as singing, drumming, dancing, and gambling. Arnold seemed quite aware that the Christian part of Sunday school was only part of the draw: "It was after our part of the Sunday school was over and we were wondering what to do next that Essie came into the picture. She said there was a drum 'over to their house' and that Les should go and get it." Arnold's emphasis on "our part" indicated her perfect awareness that the Indians had an equal (or greater) part in defining the shape and purpose of the Sunday school. (Indeed, the school was the Indians' idea.) The first Sunday concluded with a long round of Indian drumming and singing, leading

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 173.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 90-92.

Arnold to declare "a success."¹⁹² When a later Sunday school session led into an extended day of drumming, singing, and stick gambling, Reed and Arnold watched entranced until well after the sun set, and they much regretted that their paltry government salary had left them no money to gamble with themselves.¹⁹³ They winked at the Indians' obvious subversion of the purpose of the Sunday school, their use of it as a legitimate "cover" for practicing their traditional culture.¹⁹⁴

When the field matron program was initiated in 1890, Indian music was near the top of the list of practices which the matrons were to discourage, but in 1908 Arnold and Reed's acceptance of such heathenish tunes was in keeping with recent policy directives from the Indian Office. In Commissioner Leupp's annual report for 1905, he remarked that he had "taken steps for the preservation, through the schools, of what is best in Indian music." Criticizing the "mistaken zeal of certain teachers to smother everything distinctively aboriginal in the young," he justified the preservation and encouragement of Indian music both on the grounds that scholars were beginning to study the rich, but quickly disappearing, body of Indian music and on the theory that the cultivation of such music helped the Indian youths take pride in their "ancestry," much as German-Americans sang songs from their fatherland. In his view, such ancestral pride made neither the German-American nor the Indian any "less patriotic an

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89. In The Grasshopper Song (MEAP) Arnold is even more explicit about the anxiety she and Reed felt about having to conduct Sunday school and the relief they felt when Essie took over.

¹⁹³ Arnold and Reed, pp. 106-109.

¹⁹⁴ Although most of these Indians were only half or a quarter Indian, they were clearly committed to the idea that they were Indian.

American."¹⁹⁵ Reed and Arnold showed no inclination to discourage their neighbors' music, and on the contrary often made their home a setting for it. Soon after the women settled in Kot-e-meen, Les made their porch his favorite spot for his drumming.¹⁹⁶ Essie made a point of teaching Reed and Arnold how to sing some Indian love songs, and although the music was initially incomprehensible to their ears and difficult for their throats, they eventually decided that "some of the songs were delightful," even "lovely and very moving." As Arnold said, "It caught hold of you and did something to you."¹⁹⁷ They accepted Indian music for the pleasure it gave them and their Indian friends.

Perhaps their most surprising divergence from official field matron policy was their casual attitude toward traditional forms of healing. Emmerich points out that field matrons quickly learned that their central tasks would be as nurses and doctors to the Indians. In this capacity, they came into conflict with the "medicine men" whose remedies smacked too much of heathen superstition. Matron's reports often commented on their frustration with the Indians' resistance to the practices of modern medicine. Reed and Arnold, having little knowledge themselves of modern medicine

¹⁹⁵ OIA, Annual Report (1905), pp. 12-13. Leupp imagined that Indian school marching bands would soon be playing native tunes. Leupp's opinion was shared by others and reflected a broadening interest in Indian arts. See, for example, Natalie Curtis, The Indians' Book: An Offering by the American Indians of Indian Lore, Musical and Narrative, to Form a Record of the Songs and Legends of Their Race (1907. Reprint, New York: Dover, 1968). In this book and in other articles and speeches Curtis praised and defended Indians' artistic talents.

¹⁹⁶ Arnold and Reed, p. 54.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 58, 61.

(they once "cured" a patient with what turned out to be hair tonic), found little to criticize in Indian methods. As Arnold acknowledged sadly when a new year brought an increase in sickness, "We are not born medicine men." On the other hand, the problem with medicine men was "that they can only cure you when the auspices are favorable," although they would not charge if a cure failed.¹⁹⁸ Rather than spurning traditional practices, Arnold and Reed indicated that they understood that they stemmed from a period before Indians had been afflicted by white people's diseases.¹⁹⁹ When the schoolmarms rode to Hoopa with Essie, they happily made a sidetrip to gather a medicinal fern that would protect them against "apruan" (devils) on the journey.²⁰⁰ In general, Arnold recorded Indian medicinal practices and beliefs with mild amusement, but never scorn.

Not least of Reed and Arnold's appreciation of Indian culture was their love of Indian baskets. They included a photograph of their friend Annie posed in front of some of the "beautiful baskets" she had woven (Fig. 11), and from their first days on the river they observed that "Indian women on the Klamath are skilled basket makers and have a feeling for design."²⁰¹ Their Indian friends routinely gave them baskets as presents, and soon they had a large collection carefully arranged on the wall of their home.²⁰² Obviously knowledgeable about basket collecting, they declared Karok basket makers the

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 127, 172, 212-213.

equal of Alaskan weavers.²⁰³ Their appreciation was more than aesthetic, however. They marvelled that Indian women actually used these beautiful baskets on a daily basis for cooking and carrying.²⁰⁴ They also revealed that their own decorative use of baskets was scorned by some Indian women who had "no time for the lighter things of life, like decoration," and sneered that "if you have enough money . . . it will make anything look pretty."²⁰⁵ This was a rare reminder of the cultural gulf that Reed and Arnold generally tried to ignore.

Reed and Arnold's sympathy for Indian culture seemed to come from a dual desire to escape their roles as women and as white people. Again and again they emphasized the pleasure they took in their relations with the Indians who treated them as friends rather than as official representatives of white womanhood. As Arnold remarked, "the Indians do not take us at all seriously." By contrast, to white men such as the nearby Government foresters they were "not only white women," but "ladies -- the kind who have Sunday schools, and never say a bad word, and rustle around in a lot of silk petticoats." These white men "cling to what we ought to be as womenkind" and look past their "divided skirts and Stetson hats." The Indians accepted without question that Arnold and Reed would do "such unladylike things as ride rails and cross rivers," but in front of these white men they had to "act as though" they were "two perfect ladies."²⁰⁶ Arnold implicitly criticized the larger white culture for insisting on making distinctions by race and gender.

203 Ibid., p. 213.

204 Ibid., pp. 117, 120.

205 Ibid., p. 172.

206 Ibid., p. 181.

She and Reed obviously rejected such distinctions and happily embraced the Indians' social customs.

Arnold and Reed's growing comfort with their Indian neighbors can be charted both by Arnold's gradual use of more and more Indian words in the narrative and by her increasingly more frequent comments to the effect that she and Reed had "become" Indian. The first step in becoming accepted members of the Indian community was to learn proper behavior. Describing their graceful reception of a stranger, Arnold recalled that "when we had first come to Kot-e-meen, our manners were very bad. We talked too much. We lacked reserve and dignity. We were much too polite. Now we knew how to behave."²⁰⁷ Arnold's natural sense of humor turned out to be popular with the Indians who appreciated the ability to laugh at oneself and others. As their Indian vocabulary grew, they began to mix Indian words into their English. In time, Reed and Arnold felt "very much at home with Indians," so much so that they believed the Indians no longer perceived them as white.²⁰⁸ Reed even experimented with wearing her long hair in the style of the Indian women, with two long braids hanging down in front, secured at the ends with beads and ornaments.²⁰⁹ Writing about a Christmas party, Arnold commented on the reason for its success: "These were our own people. They were our friends and it was their Christmas tree. They could be as gay and as Indian as they chose, without any loss of dignity, because we had been adopted by I-ees and were not white any longer but Indians like

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 110.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

²⁰⁹ Arnold, The Grasshopper Song, MEAP.

themselves."²¹⁰ Reed and Arnold felt the change in themselves, observing that when they returned to New Jersey "it may be that our skin will have become a trifle dark, that we will have high cheek bones, and will have turned into real live Indians."²¹¹ In a moment of greater seriousness, Arnold confided that "suddenly we did not feel white at all. We felt Indian . . ."212

The white schoolmarms' transculturation seemed directly connected to their feminist consciousness. They went into the Klamath River region with definite reservations about their own culture, particularly its restrictions on women. At Kot-e-meen and I-ees, on horseback, fording dangerous rivers, they discovered a group of people who both accepted them for who they were -- bold, high-humored, caring women -- rather than for whom they appeared to be -- white "ladies" -- and shared their love of adventure, of life really. Quite early in their two-year stay, they reflected on their rather puzzling preference for full-blood Indians. Arnold put it succinctly:

Crossing the river in the dugout wasn't an adventure to Mart [a quarter-blood Indian], as it was to Essie and Les [full-blood Indians] and ourselves. It was a chore. Of course we were fond of Mart, but when you came right down to it we would much rather go off for the day with Essie and Les. With them we always felt glad we were alive and were living in the Indian village of Kot-e-meen. And our spirits went up as we thought of crossing the river or riding the trail. White people

²¹⁰ Arnold and Reed, p. 212.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 173.

were all very well. We were white ourselves. But white people were dull, after you had lived with Indians.²¹³

Arnold and Reed's account of their two years on the Rivers is riddled with gloried descriptions of themselves "crossing the river or riding the trail." The adventure and freedom that each represented were available to white women in 1908 in Indian country. So by the end of two years, these two women had no reservations about declaring themselves "Indians."

CONCLUSION

Sheldon had remarked about her trip to Africa that one finds what one expects, and the experiences of the women in this chapter partly bear out that thesis. The missionaries were looking for heathenism and found it in spades. Eldridge was looking for downtrodden Indians who needed help, and she found them. Reed and Arnold sought and found adventure. Yet, all of these women also found more than they expected. Established categories of male/female and white/Indian were challenged, questioned, sometimes overturned, but always tested on a daily basis. The range of the women's transculturation varied widely, but all of the women shared a respect for (or at least interest in) the Indian women's artistry. The later the women entered the field, the stronger their impression of this artistic talent and the more likely they were to attribute other virtues to Indian culture as well. As the Columbian Exposition had indicated, by 1893 white American women were poised for a favorable appraisal of primitive woman's culture. As the twentieth century drew near, this attitude was reinforced in many ways.

²¹³ Ibid., p. 63.

Given the timing, the Indian Industries League, with its special concern for the industries of Indian women, could hardly avoid becoming interested in native arts. The next chapter will chart the League's growing involvement in that area.

CHAPTER 4

"WORK IS POWER": THE LEAGUE COMMITS TO NATIVE INDUSTRIES¹

When the Indian Industries League organized in 1893, it intended to promote "civilized" industries. Committed to a vision of evolutionary social progress, the League firmly believed that Indians could be integrated into American society only after they received an education and mastered a proficiency in civilized industries such as carpentry, dress making, harness making, blacksmithing, and farming. In the development of these industries, the League planned to be a spur, supporting individual efforts where it could and drawing public interest to such efforts as a way to modify white Americans' view of Indians as racially incapable of equality with whites. But the League's efforts in this direction were sporadic, limited in scale, and generally unsuccessful. For a number of reasons, by 1900 it had almost entirely abandoned the project of developing civilized industries.

As the League shifted its attention away from civilized industries and toward the promotion of Indian arts, it began selling Indian goods in Boston and the greater New England region. In justifying these sales, the League effectively revised some long-standing attitudes toward Indian culture and assimilation held by Indian reform organizations. Some of those revisions directly affected how the League dealt with older Indians and how it

¹ Quotation from an 1894 statement by Sibyl Carter, quoted in Duncan, p. 31.

perceived allotment laws, issues which this chapter will consider. As the history of the League's involvement with native arts will show, the League agonized over the conflict between assimilation and the promotion of Indian arts, but never rejected the goal of total equality between whites and Indians or accepted the notion that Indians were racially inferior and therefore incapable of assimilation. This is important evidence that reformers did not "give up" on the fundamental goal of assimilation -- equality -- after 1900, even if their actions might give that impression.

THE LEAGUE'S EARLY YEARS -- THE FAILURE OF CIVILIZED INDUSTRIES

An overview of the League's efforts to develop civilized industries highlights why this project failed and exposes the compelling internal factors which made the option of promoting native industries particularly appealing: the League's financial resources were too limited to fund any but the smallest-scale industrial projects; the executive committee members' knowledge of civilized industries was limited, as was that of the field workers who were to oversee these industries; men usually managed civilized industries, but the League's field contacts were women; the development of civilized industries which often employed men rather than women was logically at odds with the League's desire to help Indian women; the League's fundraising network consisted mainly of women, and they seemed most interested in funding work clearly directed at women; and finally, there appeared to be little public enthusiasm for this line of work.

Underlying all of these factors was an unspoken but important issue: the League had emerged from an era in which groups like the WNIA had been trying to make Indian women properly "domestic," home oriented. Pushing Indian women to enter the labor market as wage laborers was acceptable if they earned their wages in properly domestic fields such as housekeeping, but no one had broached the possibility that Indian women might become factory workers. But what did the League mean by "industries"? If it meant simply teaching civilized domestic duties, it offered little more than what the WNIA was already doing. Such a focus would hardly justify its separate existence. On the other hand, if by "industries" it meant mining, sawmills, and textile mills, it was either missing its target group (Indian women) or implying that they should enter traditionally masculine industries. The League would eventually extricate itself from this troubling position by recasting primitive industries as women's industries, arguing that they were forerunners of modern men's industries, and presenting them as made in and for the domestic sphere. Before that, however, it had to discover first hand why civilized industries and Indian women were a bad fit.

In its first three years, the League's executive committee entertained numerous requests for aid, but the money it doled out was insignificant by most measures, dispersed to individual Indians or white field workers.² This

² For examples of requests, see: III, Record Book I, entries for 1895 and 1896, pp. 49, 51, 53, 62, 72, 81, MHS. Mary Eldridge, a field matron who ran a mission among the Navajo Indians at Jewett, in San Juan County, New Mexico, was among the major recipients and would be for many years to come. In 1895, she received twenty-five dollars worth of medical supplies, and \$100 in general aid. Sybil Carter was another major recipient, getting

general disbursement pattern continued through the late 1890s. In no way could the League claim that it had made either a significant contribution to the development of civilized industries or any impact in the attempt to "assimilate the Indian into national life" or "break up" the "tribal affinities," two of the main goals stated in the League's charter.

In their more sober moments, Sparhawk and her friends must have recognized that they controlled no more resources than the Indians they were trying to help. With little ready cash (the League's average annual income through 1899 was about \$400), the executive committee spent its time trying to identify causes for which it could concentrate its fundraising efforts. As the committee worked through each proposal, dogged by doubts and uncertainties, it realized that small-scale manufacturing industries required substantial capital and managerial skills, neither of which the League or its field workers had in any great quantity. By 1900 the League had proposed, debated, and discarded plans to establish civilized industries among Indians in three geographic regions -- Jewett, New Mexico; Spokane, Washington; and the Hualapai Reservation, Arizona -- where three women who had been WNIA missionaries offered to start, respectively, a sawmill, a steam-powered industries building, and a mining/wood cutting operation.

\$102.56 which had been specially raised to support her lace-making industry in Minnesota. Funds for individual Indians were distributed through Sparhawk: fifty dollars for the Cornelius sisters and twenty five dollars for the continuing education of an Indian, John Pattee, who was training to become an instructor of carpentry at an Indian school in Oregon. Mary G. Fisk, Treasurer's Report, Jan. 15, 1896, IIL, Record Book I, inserted on p. 68; and IIL, Record Book I, Nov. 22, 1894, p. 44, MHS.

Mary Eldridge, the field matron at Jewett, New Mexico, had received some funds for agricultural and medicinal purposes,³ but in December of 1896 she fielded a plan to develop a weaving industry among the Navajos, a plan that not only focused on women but also seemed to fulfill the League's industry mission. Eldridge proposed "introducing looms among a few of the more advanced Navajos," a scheme that met with Daniel Dorchester's hearty approval because "Mrs. Dorchester had been deeply interested in this project."⁴ He too had a special interest in the Navajos, writing in his 1893 Superintendent of Indian Schools report about the "toils of the Navajo women, in preparing wool, weaving blankets in slow, rude looms, and tending their flocks."⁵ Eager to alleviate the weavers' toil, Dorchester was already looking into the cost of such machines, optimistic that he could get

³ Eldridge first came to the committee's attention in a letter that Sparhawk read on Feb. 14, 1895. In this letter Eldridge spoke of the Navajo Indians' need for farming tools and seeds so that they could plant crops; see III, Record Book I, Feb. 14, 1895, p. 51, MHS. In typical Sparhawk fashion, she immediately moved that fifty dollars be sent for this purpose. Cooler heads prevailed, and some investigation later showed that government funds were available for this purpose. Still, this request fit the kind of "industry" -- farming -- that the League had in mind when it formed, and two months later the committee voted to send Eldridge \$100 to pay a Rev. Howard Antes who would, they felt, be especially good at teaching farming techniques to the Navajos; see III, Record Book I, March 14, 1895, p. 54, MHS. Although such a donation hardly constituted the meaningful support of civilized industries, the Cambridge Indian Association, which shared many members with the League, was simultaneously raising funds for an irrigation ditch at Jewett.

⁴ III, Record Book I, Dec. 3, 1896, pp. 82-83, MHS. The phrase "more advanced Navajos" is ironic because the more advanced weavers would have been those women with the best knowledge of Navajo traditions -- the Indians least acculturated.

⁵ Daniel Dorchester, reprinted in Lend a Hand 20 (1893): 233.

them at reduced rates.⁶ Nothing came of his investigations, but by June of 1897, Eldridge offered the League a revised version of her project: she proposed to build a steam-powered industry room complete with a grist mill, two knitting machines, and two looms.⁷ One and a half stories high with a basement and an elevator to raise wool to the attic, this 100 x 40 foot building was estimated by Eldridge to require \$2,500.⁸ Considering that this was more money than the League had raised in four years combined, some committee members balked. Sparhawk, as usual, was optimistic, asking rhetorically "if anything in Indian work can be more favorable?" But Edward Abbott pointed out the danger of committing to such a large project if Eldridge should be taken ill, a possibility that had deprived the League of several members since its inception. Instead, the committee voted to advise Eldridge to begin on a smaller scale, to prepare a leaflet to raise funds for her work, to give her seventy-five dollars so that she could hire a housekeeper to give her more free time both for her "personal work among the sick, among the Indian women weaving their rugs" and to supervise the Navajo men in their use of a recently constructed irrigation ditch.⁹ The committee also secured (for forty dollars) and sent her a knitting machine which it hoped would prove useful to the Indians who were eager to work but had nothing to do.¹⁰ In December

⁶ IIL, Record Book I, Dec. 3, 1896, p. 82, MHS.

⁷ *Ibid.*, June 16, 1897, p. 99, MHS.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 3, 1897, p. 102, MHS.

⁹ *Ibid.*, June 16, 1897, pp. 99-100; *ibid.*, Oct. 7, 1897, p. 102; *ibid.*, Nov. 4, 1897, p. 102, MHS. The quotation about Eldridge's work comes from the IIL Annual Report for 1897 (1898). His fear proved prescient given that in October Eldridge wrote about a recent illness, although she stayed in New Mexico through at least 1919 and outlived Abbott, who died in 1908.

¹⁰ IIL Annual Report for 1897 (1898).

of 1897, the League wrote her that the industrial building undertaking was beyond its means to fund; ironically, this letter crossed one from her in which she admitted that the project was beyond her abilities to manage.¹¹

Sparhawk urged the committee to push ahead with a smaller version of Eldridge's plan, certain that she was worthy of support. Abbott again resisted even the construction of a small building on a portion (five acres) of Eldridge's own property, warning about "the uncertainty of Mrs. Eldridge's stay among the Navajo, and the somewhat nomadic tendency of far Western people in general, so that a city to-day might be deserted tomorrow."¹² Six months later, at the June 2, 1898 executive committee meeting, Sparhawk reported having raised \$152 toward "the building of a room for starting on a very small scale the woolen industry among the Navajo Indians now in the charge of Mary L. Eldridge."¹³ This smaller scale project would feature hand, not power looms, and thus was closer to the primitive idea of industry than to the advanced civilized idea. Only the roof over their heads would make these Navajo weavers any different from Navajo weavers of the past, who had traditionally woven outdoors on looms strung between two trees or posts.¹⁴

¹¹ ILL, Record Book I, Dec. 3, 1897, p. 102; *ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1898, p. 108, MHS.

¹² *Ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1898, p. 108. Sparhawk won this fight, and Abbott skipped the annual meeting later that month, sending his resignation and claiming too many other pressing duties. *Ibid.*, Jan. 19, 1898, p. 112, MHS.

¹³ *Ibid.*, June 2, 1898, p. 118, MHS.

¹⁴ Charles Avery Amsden, Navajo Weaving: Its Technic and History (1934. Reprint, 1949. New York: Dover, 1991), pp. 37-47; George Wharton James, Indian Blankets and Their Makers (1914. Reprint, Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1934), pp. 103-115.

Thus we see how several factors pushed the League away from plans for a relatively large scale industrial plant that would introduce civilized notions of industry to a much smaller project that supported existing primitive industries. The steam-powered industrial room turned out to be too expensive for the League to fund and too complex for Eldridge to manage. Some committee members expressed nervousness about committing to such a large project without ironclad guarantees that the woman proposing it would stick around to run it. One also wonders if some members and potential donors harbored fears that a woman was not qualified to oversee a seemingly masculine endeavor. On this point it is suggestive to consider the substantial financial assistance (several thousand dollars) that Eldridge received from the WNIA and its branches to build and staff hospitals among the Navajos; medical care better fit the prevailing stereotypes of women's natural abilities -- managing an industrial plant did not.¹⁵ And finally, while the steam powered industrial building seemed to benefit Indian men (i.e., the grist mill) as well as Indian women, the smaller-scale industrial room with its hand looms, sewing machines, and cookstove, was clearly intended for Indian women alone.

In early 1896, Sibyl Carter, whose lace work projects the League had supported, put the League in contact with the WNIA missionary at the Spokane, Washington reservation, Miss Helen W. Clark, who after some

¹⁵ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1897, p. 12; WNIA The Report of Missions for 1900, pp. 18-23; WNIA, Report of Missions for 1900-1901, pp. 14-16, 44-46. The Cambridge Indian Association (which had many cross members in the League) was one of the few WNIA branches to fund projects other than hospitals or missions. For Eldridge, the CIA funded an irrigation project, a river ferry, a sorghum mill, and numerous farming implements.

discussion about starting a lace industry proposed instead to buy a sawmill for the Spokane Indians.¹⁶ The Indians were to use the nearby timber resources to supply the lumber for building a new church and "homes to be refuges from sin."¹⁷ Numerous inquiries into sawmill costs occupied the League for a full year, but eventually came to naught in the summer of 1897 because the money needed was too great, Clark's ability to manage the affair was questionable, and "it seemed that it [a sawmill] might be a danger rather than a help to the Indians at present."¹⁸ Thus Clark's sawmill plan fell through for many of the same reasons that Eldridge's industrial building would fail after it. A few years later Clark moved to Neah Bay, Washington and became one of the League's major suppliers of Indian baskets, just as Eldridge went on to become an important contact in the Navajo rug weaving industry.

A third short-lived industrial plan for the Hualapai Indians of Arizona petered out for similar reasons, but like the other two plans planted the seed of a native industry. In 1896, at the prompting of a field matron, the League spent several months examining the possibility of starting some kind of industry among the Hualapais Indians of Arizona. The Massachusetts Indian Association had supported Miss Calfee, the field matron at the Hualapai mission, since 1894.¹⁹ The resident agent, Mr. Henry Ewing suggested mining or wood hauling; the field matron, Miss Calfee, proposed "bead work." Mining was deemed too expensive for the League to underwrite, too

¹⁶ IIL, Record Book I, Jan. 9, 1896, p. 65; *ibid*, June 4, 1896, pp. 78-79, MHS.

¹⁷ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1896, p. 15.

¹⁸ IIL, Record Book I, April 1, 1897, p. 96, MHS.

¹⁹ WNIA, Our Missions for the Year 1895, p. 25.

uncertain, and too likely to arouse the "jealousy" of local whites. Just after the League had decided to loan the Hualapais \$200 for a wagon and horses for a woodcutting business, it discovered that the government had already supplied these. Bead work would not be seriously considered until a few years later.²⁰

In retreat, the committee turned to the Indians themselves and discovered native forms of industry that suited its purposes perfectly: they were inexpensive to implement, they benefitted Indian women primarily, they were "teachable," and they could raise funds for the IIL. They also promised real financial benefit for the Indians themselves, one of the great failures of assimilation efforts having been the inability to establish reliable sources of income on the reservations. In her private notes from an early trip to Mesa Grande, Du Bois calculated that an Indian woman might weave twelve baskets a year, earning three dollars for each, no terrific sum but more than the woman would earn otherwise.²¹ Perhaps best of all, these native industries fell within the committee members' province of knowledge. One might not know how to grade lumber, but one could tell a beautiful basket from a plain one. A decade's worth of Arts and Crafts Movement publicity had given many white Americans both an aesthetic appreciation of and a consumer desire for primitive arts. This market could be exploited if organizations such as the League would transfer the Indian goods to where they could be sold. Beginning in 1900, the League would sell Indian arts to

²⁰ IIL, Record Book, I, Jan. 9, 1896, p. 62; *ibid*, April 2, 1896, p. 71; *ibid*, June 4, 1896, pp. 77-78, MHS.

²¹ Du Bois, "Notes Taken at Mesa Grande," PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

take advantage of this trend. The first steps in this new direction were urged by several field contacts and prominent League members who articulated justifications for promoting native arts such as bead work, basket weaving, pottery making, and blanket weaving on the grounds that these industries would relieve the Indians' economic distress. But the pragmatic defense of Indian arts could lead to a broader defense of Indian culture and critique of modern American civilization.

"TO TEACH OUR INDIANS HONEST SELF-SUPPORT BY ANY HONORABLE MEANS"

The decision to support and sell Indian arts made good practical sense because one of the major problems faced by Indian organizations was the difficulty of raising money.²² By selling Indian arts, the League could raise money through means other than donations and membership fees. The League had set subscriptions fees at one dollar per year for whites, fifty cents for Indians. The limitations of this fundraising method are apparent when one examines a typical year prior to the shift to selling arts. With 109 white and thirty-eight Indian members by January of 1895, the League was not exactly rolling in money, even with additional donations that brought the total balance to \$170. By May of the same year, eighty-five dollars of that total had already been distributed.²³ Obviously, effective fundraising would be crucial if the League hoped to do much more than simply publicize the need

²² Wanken notes that "from 1888 through 1896, the [Massachusetts Indian] Association's biggest worry was money." Wanken, pp. 120-121.

²³ Figures taken from "Treasurer's Reports" pinned to pages of IIL, Record Book I, MHS.

for Indian industries. Some additional memberships could probably be gained by inducing well-known Indian reformers to speak publicly on the organization's behalf, but there were limits to this method of fundraising.²⁴ Sparhawk suggested the organization of fundraising "entertainments," but the executive committee decided for the moment to focus on "appeals," some of which could be made at League "Jubilees" and "parlor meetings."²⁵

Selling Indians' arts was not an entirely novel concept for Indian reform groups. Even Richard Pratt had found it expedient to encourage his Plains Indian prisoners' industriousness by letting them sell ledger drawings, bows and arrows, and other Indian curios they made while imprisoned in Florida in 1875.²⁶ The WNIA's annual reports from the 1890s indicate scattered instances of branch associations raising funds by holding sales of Indian goods which presumably had been sent by the missionaries they supported. In 1893 the Brooklyn Association outlined a "plan for an Indian encampment at which the ladies would be in Indian dress, and sell, from Indian baskets, articles of Indian manufacture."²⁷ The Superintendent of Indian Schools William N. Hailmann (1894-1898) had recommended native arts as part of the Indian schools' curriculum, and he further suggested that if students were paid for their productions they would learn important

²⁴ IIL, Record Book I, Feb. 14, 1895, p. 52, MHS. Capt. Wotherspoon, Bishop Gilbert, and Sybil Carter were mentioned as possible speakers in the Feb. 14, 1895 meeting of the Executive Committee.

²⁵ IIL, Record Book I, April, 18, 1895, p. 56; *ibid*, Feb. 14, 1895, p. 52, MHS.

²⁶ Pratt, pp. 119, 126, 148, 157-62, 184.

²⁷ WNIA, Report of the Annual Meeting of the Women's National Indian Association, Dec. 6th and 7th, 1893, Papers of the Women's National Indian Association in the Huntington Free Library, microfilm, reel 1.

economic lessons.²⁸ In 1896 the Redlands (Southern California) branch of the WNIA reported \$100 given to the "Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and the Coahuillas of California, through selling their baskets, laces, and vases."²⁹ League members Nellie Doubleday and Du Bois had experience selling Indian goods through their WNIA branch associations. The Hampton Institute (Virginia) began to teach native arts in 1899 and to sell the students' work in the school's gift shop.³⁰ And by 1901 even Sparhawk's fellow New England Women's Press Association members affirmed their support of Indians by dressing in Indian costumes, dancing Indian dances, and displaying Indian baskets and handicrafts at Boston's Colonial Festival.³¹

The idea of selling Indian goods first caught the League's imagination at the same 1899 meeting at which Sparhawk read Eldridge's report that the Navajo industries room was finished. Sparhawk closed that meeting with a letter from Mrs. Walter C. Roe of the Seger Colony, Oklahoma "in regard to an industry already opened there."³² With a \$1,200 gift solicited at the 1898 Mohonk Conference, Mrs. Roe and her husband had built the "Mohonk Lodge" as a "home, hospital, and workshop" for the Indians. An unusual feature of this Lodge, however, was its "Industrial Room," in which Indian women did traditional bead work which the Roes then sold (Fig. 12). Conceived by Mrs. Roe, supervised by a field matron, and intended for the

²⁸ Dorothy W. Hewes, "Those First Good Years of Indian Education: 1894 to 1898," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 5 (1981): 71.

²⁹ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1896, p. 49, PWNIA, Reel 3.

³⁰ Donal F. Lindsey, Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923 (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), p. 183.

³¹ Lord, pp. 143-144.

³² IIL, Record Book II, Oct. 30, 1899, p. 33, MHS.

economic uplift of Indian women, this was the kind of industry which interested the League.³³ At the following meeting Sparhawk introduced a discussion of the Mohonk Lodge, prefacing it with the observation that the withdrawal of the Indians' rations made some means of self-support especially necessary. The treasurer, Miss Alberta M. Houghton, then reported that Mrs. Roe had sent beaded bags and moccasins for a Cambridge Indian Association sale. The committee applauded "Mrs. Roe's efforts to make Indians individually take up such work as they were capable of doing," and it voted to have Sparhawk make a fund raising appeal for "industrial work" at the Seger Colony.³⁴

The phrase "as they were capable of doing" lends credence to Frederick Hoxie's argument that by 1900 reformers had lowered their assessment of Indians' capabilities. Indeed, some observers praised Superintendent of Indian Schools Estelle Reel's decision to de-emphasize academic subjects in favor of an industrial education which she believed better suited to the Indians' racial ability; these observers believed that Indians would have to live in isolation from white communities for a long time before they would

³³ Walter C. Roe, "The Mohonk Lodge: An Experiment in Indian Work," Outlook 68 (May 18, 1901): 176-179. This article noted that Roe was a vice-president of the Indian Industries League and gave the League's mailing address. Roe was the pastor at the Indian Mission Church in Colony, OK, where he and his wife had settled in 1897; see his obituary, "Friend of Indian," Outlook 103 (April 12, 1913): 789-790. The Seger Colony was under the supervision of John H. Seger; see Jack T. Rairdon, "John Homer Seger: The Practical Indian Educator," Chronicles of Oklahoma 34 (Summer 1956): 203-216; and John H. Seger, Early Days Among the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians ed. Stanley Vestal (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956). Roe was a vice-president of the League from 1901 until his death.

³⁴ ILL, Record Book II, Nov. 2, 1899, p. 35, MHS.

"evolve" to the whites' stage of civilization.³⁵ Others sought to preserve Indian traditions and arts separate from white culture, indefinitely.³⁶ Moreover, Sparhawk's annual report for 1899 described the Roes' work at great length without mentioning bead work, seemingly an indication that she felt slightly uncomfortable supporting native industries. She quoted Mrs. Roe as writing that "the real work before us" is "to teach our Indians honest self-support by any honorable means," and Sparhawk appealed for money to support "this work," but she avoided naming it, instead giving the strong impression that this work would be along the lines of what the young Indians had been taught at boarding schools.³⁷

At issue was whether "native" industries were really "civilized" industries. If not, their fostering would obviously delay the Indians' assimilation. The League had been founded on the conviction that "the acquirement and practice of useful arts and industries are necessary to the civilization and elevation of the Indians in this country." Underlying this conviction was the implicit assumption that Indian cultures lacked arts and industries. Indeed the League charter stated that "no industries exist" on

³⁵ "Industry and Indians," New York Daily Tribune, 6 Dec. 1899, p. 8. The attempt to give Indians an industrial education paralleled that by Booker T. Washington and others on behalf of African Americans. The Hampton Institute offered an industrial education to both Indians and African Americans.

³⁶ See, for example, Frederick Mosen, "The Destruction of Our Indians: What Civilization is Doing to Extinguish an Ancient and Highly Intelligent Race by Taking Away its Arts, Industries and Religion," Craftsman 11 (March 1907): 683-691. A Norwegian immigrant, Mosen had photographed Southwestern Indians for nearly twenty years.

³⁷ III, Annual Report (1900), pp. 6-7. As Secretary, Sparhawk wrote and signed the reports.

Indian reservations.³⁸ But the League's annual reports for 1900 and 1901 referred again and again to "native industries." One might argue that the word "native" revealed that Sparhawk and her friends perceived a qualitative difference between white and Indian industries, and that the League encouraged these native industries only because they were "industries in the line of their [the Indians'] aptitudes," as the League charter said. By 1900, however, the League appeared eager to elevate the Indians' aptitudes. Sparhawk attributed inherent artistic ability to the Indian which validated the League's new line of reform work: "Quickness and keenness of observation, artistic perceptions, power of attention and aptitude in execution this race has in a wonderful degree. We must give it an opportunity."³⁹

What one really sees in the League's new efforts is that the Indians' dire economic straights coincided with a New England market demand for Indian artifacts that made the production of native industries sensible and expedient. As Sparhawk remarked in the next year's annual report, "To these women the sale of these articles means actual food." She argued that these Indians lived "too far removed from our civilization" to earn wages in any other way. Of the Navajo weavers, she asked rhetorically, "Is it not wise to help them to a just reward of their industry and their native ability?"⁴⁰ A

³⁸ Quotations from the League charter, III, Annual Report (1900), p. 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 8. The Navajos around Eldridge's mission were not actually "far removed" from civilization, if civilization meant white settlements. Only twenty miles from Farmington, the mission had a small school which enrolled both white and Indian pupils. During the economic hardships of the 1890s, Eldridge reported that many Indians hired out to white ranchers. Malehorn, p. 9.

⁴⁰ III, Annual Report (1901), p. 7.

1902 appeal to establish "a market for Indian basket, blanket, bead and lace work" came under the headline, "To relieve suffering of Indians - Work undertaken by Indian Industries League of Boston."⁴¹ Relief through dignified labor was demonstrated by the Indian who "danced with delight when a pottery kiln that promised work was built at his New-Mexican home."⁴² Variations of this defense continued to appear in annual reports for several years. In 1904, obviously somewhat uneasy about what might be perceived by League subscribers as an abandonment of the ideal of Indian equality, sensitive to the charge that primitive industries did not offer a road into mainstream American life, and aware that Reel's interest in industrial training reflected her belief that Indians were not capable of rapid assimilation, Sparhawk again justified the sale of Indian goods as a temporary relief effort and reiterated that the League's ultimate goal was still to raise the Indians to a position of equality: "The Indians must be helped in selling their beadwork and basketry and in whatever way relieves their present distress which is acute. But if they are ever to eat bread with the white man, they must fight their way to it with white man's industries."⁴³

⁴¹ New York Tribune, 8 June 1902, p. 2 (II).

⁴² Sparhawk, "Helping the Red Man," New York Tribune, 2 Dec. 1899, p. 7. As always, Sparhawk was careful to remark that the best strategy for boarding school-educated Indians was still to settle "a few hundred miles away" from their parents so that they could earn a "good living by honest industry."

⁴³ IIL, Annual Report (1904). Some of Reel's supporters applauded her programs because they seemed designed to keep Indians away from whites. See, for example, "Industry and Indians," New York Tribune, 6 Dec. 1899, p. 8.

The remarkable thing is not that devoted assimilationists would lower their hopes for the skills Indians could learn (after all, as Mrs. Roe wrote, most of "her" Indians were older and had not attended schools where such skills could be learned), but that they would care so much about Indian welfare that they would backtrack on their often-stated goal to "stamp out the Indian in the Indian." In terms of the League's work, the embracement of native industries revealed a pragmatic but ultimately laudatory change in philosophy.⁴⁴ No longer were the ills of reservation life blamed on the Indians' refusal to give up their old ways; rather, the League began to recognize the truth in what Du Bois said again and again: "Poverty is the great cause of degradation."⁴⁵

The Reverend Walter C. Roe was remarkably forthcoming about how the Mohonk Lodge's work derived from a rejection of old reform attitudes. He implied that many reform ideas had been concocted by people who did not really "know" Indians, claiming that "Years of intimate association with these people [Indians] have grounded in us the idea that the underlying mistake of our National policy toward the Indian has been the attempt to crush the Indian out of him."⁴⁶ What might have been achieved, he wondered, if we had "treated the Indian more sympathetically as to his ideas, customs, arts,

⁴⁴ If Sparhawk and her friends had fought native industries with the same zeal with which reformers had lobbied for the Dawes Act, the loss for Indians and ultimately for America would have been incalculable, not least because many of the native arts now in museums across the country were made and collected between the 1890s and World War I.

⁴⁵ See, for example, Du Bois, "Notes Taken at Mesa Grande," PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

⁴⁶ Roe, p. 178.

and even his dress and prejudices?"⁴⁷ Not fully prepared to make "a broader application of this principle," the Roes nevertheless "put [themselves] into the place of [their] Indian sister" when searching for an appropriate industry to foster, and "decided in favor of the bead-work, as against either laundry-work or lace-making," reasoning that the former was "a beautiful art" while the latter two were despised by the Indian women.⁴⁸ The opportunity to revive their bead work drew Indian women into the Mohonk Lodge where perhaps they might also admire the civilized furnishings.

Native arts, as it turned out, also attracted the public to the League's cause. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians and their bead work at the Mohonk Lodge drew sympathetic responses from about a third of the fifteen people Sparhawk appealed to for funds, and by June of 1900 the League was able to send Mrs. Roe ninety dollars.⁴⁹ More moccasins and "other specimens of Indian work" soon arrived in Boston, and these too were exhibited for sale.⁵⁰ The sheer quantity of goods received was too large to move by small parlor sales, and by November of 1900, President Lockwood had arranged with the Henry H. Tuttle Company (a shoe store) to take seven hundred dollars worth of "moccasins, bags," and other Indian bead work for sale at its store on the corner of Washington and Winter Streets, Boston.⁵¹ A month later the League was able to forward the Reverend and Mrs. Roe \$262

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 178-179.

⁴⁹ ILL, Record Book II, Feb. 1, 1900 p. 46; *ibid*, June 7, 1900, p. 57, MHS.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, June 7, 1900, p. 60, MHS.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1900, p. 63, MHS. Address from ILL, Annual Report (1901), p. 7.

from advances paid by the Tuttle Co.⁵² The League had found an industry to support, and Boston consumers seemed eager to help it. In the Annual Report for 1900, Sparhawk waxed eloquent about this "native work of great skill and beauty" crafted by the "Indian camp women," and she advised "the parents who allow their children to be barefoot in preference to cramping their feet in boots [to] look up these moccasins."⁵³ The League marketed this bead work on its aesthetic beauty, utility, and philanthropic value.

DOUBLEDAY, DU BOIS, AND THE BASKET INDUSTRY

By the end of 1900, the League was well on its way to fully committing itself to the promotion of Indian arts. Two League members, one from New York and the other from Connecticut, wrote extensively about why and how native arts should be fostered. Their arguments went beyond philanthropy. Both women defended Indian culture from charges that it was "savage," and in their advocacy of Indian arts they openly challenged certain assimilationist goals.

A deciding factor in the League's decision shift toward native industries seems to have been a letter from Nellie Blanchan De Graff Doubleday (wife of Frank Nelson Doubleday, the New York publisher) describing the advantages of taking up the Indian basketry industry.⁵⁴ A

⁵² ILL, Record Book II, Nov. 1, 1900, p. 67; Treasurer's Report, Nov. 1900, MHS.

⁵³ ILL, Annual Report (1901), p. 7.

⁵⁴ Nellie Doubleday was born in 1865 and died in 1918. For biographical information, see the following: National Cyclopedia of American Biography 1913 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1967), p. 400; Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography

dues-paying member of the League since 1896, Doubleday came to the executive committee's attention in October of 1900 when it was in the middle of arranging for the Boston sale of the Mohonk Lodge bead work. In a letter from her New York home, Doubleday urged the committee to examine the "opportunities and advantages of the basket industry for the Indians."

Intrigued by Doubleday's suggestion, the committee voted to make her a member of the executive committee and requested her "to look into this industry and report upon the prospects of success should the League undertake it; also to see if there was any financial opening for the work."⁵⁵ Doubleday's quick response by the next meeting (November 1900) indicated that she had already given the industry some thought. She reported that she had raised the topic at the Mohonk conference and had secured a promise from William A. Jones, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to put her in touch with Estelle Reel, the new Superintendent of Indian Schools, to discuss the possibility of teaching basket making in the government schools. Reel, who joined the League's executive committee in December 1902, would prove sympathetic to this plan, as would the Commissioner himself, who wrote to the League in January of 1901 and offered his office's support for the

Vol. 5 (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 392; Herbert H. Welker, "Doubleday, Neltje Blanchan De Graff," in Notable American Women, 1607-1950 Vol. 1, ed. Edward T. James (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 508-509; Beverly Seaton, "Nellie Blanchan De Graff Doubleday," in American Women Writers ed. Lina Mainiero (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1979), pp. 536-538.

⁵⁵ III, Record Book II, Oct. 4, 1900, p. 60, MHS. Doubleday remained on the executive committee through 1912, and although she never attended a single meeting, she corresponded with some regularity and clearly served as an important contact, guiding the League toward money and people.

development of a basket industry among the Indians.⁵⁶ Recognizing that its mission had been newly defined, and optimistic that "it [League] may be given sufficient money to extend that work quite beyond the plans now formulated," early in 1901 the League decided to sever its affiliation with the National Indian Association [previously the WNIA] to prevent the possibility that its expected newfound riches might be diverted to NIA purposes.⁵⁷

In four articles published between 1901 and 1903, Nellie Doubleday not only gave practical advice about how to develop basketry industries, but also laid out a defense of why reformers should redirect their energies toward native arts.⁵⁸ Doubleday acknowledged that the promotion of native arts seemed contrary to some of the main goals of late nineteenth-century Indian reform work, but she argued that total assimilation was misguided both

⁵⁶ IIL, Record Book II, Dec. 4, 1902, p. 135; *ibid*, Jan. 3, 1901, p. 68, MHS. Reel remained on the executive committee through 1910. Given Jones's limited first hand knowledge of Indians (his was a political appointment), one wonders what kind of advice he had to offer. Frederick Hoxie points out that during Jones's 1897-1905 tenure, he oversaw the allotment of "hundreds of thousands of acres" and helped usher in a new era of diminished respect for Indian land rights. His simultaneous toleration of forced allotments and basket industry development reflects what Hoxie describes as his overriding desire to "remain a man without enemies" by trying to please all parties, however incompatible their demands. See Hoxie, pp. 152-153.

⁵⁷ IIL, Record Book II, Feb. 7, 1901 ("special meeting"), pp. 74-78, MHS. The League seems to have expected that Doubleday, a wealthy woman, would donate substantial funds; she never did.

⁵⁸ The first of these articles, Two Ways to Help the Indian, was reprinted in some newspapers, including the Cambridge Tribune. Doubleday's appeal to support native industries apparently moved the Cambridge Indian Association in that direction, as it made its first purchases of Indian arts in 1901. Cambridge Indian Association, Record Book IV May 8, 1901, p. 264, MHS; Cambridge Indian Association, Annual Report for 1901, CIAP, CHS.

because it falsely posited Anglo-Saxon culture as superior to Indian and because it robbed Indians and white Americans of important cultural resources. On the contrary, she firmly believed that the position of Indians could be raised through the encouragement of their arts. Additional new goals were to be considered too. By casting Indian arts as women's work, she suggested that a kind of gender allegiance demanded their preservation. Also important was the fact that in Indian women's art resided most of the cultural history of Indian tribes; encouraging the preservation of such art would ensure the preservation of a great store of knowledge that would otherwise vanish. Finally, Indian art, if encouraged, might reach unprecedented aesthetic heights and precipitate a new American art.⁵⁹

On the practical side, Doubleday explained how her fellow white women could throw themselves into preserving the arts of Indian women. In the field, missionaries and field matrons could encourage the production of Indian arts, purchase those arts, and send them east. In the east, women could buy and sell Indian arts through their various organizations, encourage department stores to carry Indian goods, offer prizes to young Indian girls who created the finest baskets in the "traditional" styles, write articles for

⁵⁹ Mrs. F. N. Doubleday [Nellie Doubleday], Two Ways to Help the Indian, National Indian Association, 1901; Neltje Blanchan [Nellie Doubleday], "What the Basket Means to the Indian," Everybody's Magazine 5 (1901): 561-570 -- this article appeared with the same title as the final chapter in Mary White, How To Make Baskets 1902 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1972); Mrs. N. DeG. Doubleday [Nellie Doubleday], Our Industrial Work, National Indian Association, 1903. A fourth article, "Indian Industrial Development," Outlook 67 (Jan. 12, 1901): 101-102, is unattributed, but Du Bois confirms that it is a version of Two Ways to Help the Indian. Du Bois, "Problem in Ethics," PCGD, Reel 5, #72.

newspapers and magazines, "manage" Indian arts through organizations such as the Indian Industries League, and demand that the government revise its Indian education policies to include the teaching of native arts.⁶⁰ If white women rather than white traders could organize and manage the production and sale of Indian arts, the effect would be to not only provide spiritual and financial benefit to the artist but also raise money (on the profits of sales) for further Indian work. Doubleday claimed that in New York City NIA branches had sold \$18,000 worth of Indian goods, and she explained how in a year and a half an initial seventy-five dollar investment in Indian baskets could be turned over until it reached \$250.⁶¹

At some level, Doubleday recognized that teaching and encouraging native arts would essentially help preserve the very Indian culture which only a decade earlier had been seen as both a barrier to assimilation and a symbol of savagery. In an article titled "What the Basket Means to the Indian," Doubleday was quite forthright about the cultural meaning of native arts. Here she opened with the observation that "the intellectual and spiritual aspirations of the race [Indian]" were expressed "chiefly through the artistic handicrafts of the women."⁶² She also argued that the Indian basket was "the most expressive vehicle of the tribe's individuality, the embodiment of its mythology and folk-lore, tradition, history, poetry, art, and spiritual aspiration."⁶³ Of special interest here is her forgoing of the catchall "Indian"

⁶⁰ Doubleday, Two Ways, pp. 15-18; Doubleday, Our Industrial Work, pp. 6-11.

⁶¹ Doubleday, Our Industrial Work, pp. 3, 7.

⁶² [Doubleday], "What the Basket," p. 561.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 561.

in favor of "tribal," seeming recognition that there were many Indian cultures. As reformers accepted this idea, they became less eager to apply blanket policies (such as the Dawes Act) to all Indians.

On the Indian question, Doubleday agreed with the Indian arts popularizer Charles F. Lummis that forced assimilation was, as Pratt claimed, the fastest way to kill the Indian, not just metaphorically but literally. In an 1899 article Lummis quoted approvingly from a teacher who pointed out that those tribes who had given their children to boarding schools and tried to assimilate were dying out, while those that had struggled to maintain their tribal identity had actually grown in numbers during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ Lummis and others believed that Indian policy had been misguided and destructive in its attempts to break up tribal and family bonds. Doubleday urged reformers to recognize that forced allotment was predicated on a false impression that Indian men headed households, when in fact Indian women were the heads of their families and already did most of the "industrious" work.⁶⁵ Being thus closer on the evolutionary scale to civilized white Americans, Indian women should be the focus of most industry-developing attention.⁶⁶ Doubleday's 1901 pamphlet for the National Indian Association, Two Ways to Help the Indians, reflected this growing belief and argued that partial assimilation which allowed Indians to

⁶⁴ Charles F. Lummis, Land of Sunshine 12 (March 1900): 244, quoted in Turbese Lummis Fiske and Keith Lummis, Charles F. Lummis: The Man and His West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), p. 113.

⁶⁵ Doubleday, Our Industrial Work, pp. 1-2.

⁶⁶ It is interesting to consider the possibility that these white women hoped that Indian women would be able to maintain control of their industries in a way that white women had not.

develop their own native industries would best benefit both Indians and the rest of the nation.

Though opposed to assimilation ideology, Doubleday was not clearly a cultural relativist. She appeared to believe that Anglo Americans were racially superior to Indians, "a weaker, subject race" partly characterized by "ignorance and barbarism," and that Indians had "lines of natural aptitude" which were lower than similar white lines; and she consistently described Indians as "primitive" and whites as "civilized."⁶⁷ Simultaneously, however, she chastised whites for the ethnocentric assumption "that we have everything to teach, not only the Indian, but the Chinese, Phillipines, Cubans, Porto Ricans, Hawaiians, and nothing to learn from them -- that they have nothing worthy to contribute to our civilization."⁶⁸ While retaining the categories of savage and civilized, Doubleday could seemingly reverse them, pointing to the basketry exhibits in the New York Museum of Natural History as evidence that "the women whose skill could turn out such marvelous productions had something to teach the savages [white school children learning basket weaving] in the East."⁶⁹ Such a sentiment seems tinged with the implication that Indian women were only at the child's level on the evolutionary scale, and there is admittedly a strong evolutionary component to Doubleday's thinking, but she also wrote of the "sisterhood of the human race" and insisted that the Indian weaver was an "artist" whose work could be compared favorably with "a piece of bronze or a painting" and who could

⁶⁷ Doubleday, Two Ways, p. 12.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Doubleday, Our Industrial Work, p. 5.

inject "a new direction, a fresh impulse" into "our national art."⁷⁰ The Massachusetts Indian Association picked up on this idea, and two years later it was reporting that "the nation is awakening to a perception of the artistic power of this fine race, and to care for the Indian basketry and pottery, and the Indian music, as possibly the only arts indigenous to our soil."⁷¹

These slippery and contradictory evaluations of "primitive" and "civilized" tempt the reader to emphasize one or the other, to conclude that the essence of Doubleday's position was that because Indians were racially inferior to whites, total assimilation was impossible, and a partial assimilation that stressed the Indians' natural aptitude for rustic crafts would allow the Indian to find his "natural" place in America's racial hierarchy. On the other hand, one might interpret her position as being that of a cultural relativist who denied the racial inferiority of Indians and argued that Indian and white cultures could and should exist side-by-side with no attempt to describe one as "better" than the other. Such interpretations, however, would miss the centrality in Doubleday's argument of the basket as an object made by women. By looking at her focus on the Indian basket, one can discover the core issues of her argument and make sense of the her otherwise seemingly contradictory use of "primitive" and "savage."

Quite simply, Doubleday's argument against total assimilation stemmed from her understanding of recent studies of the role of primitive woman in the development of civilization. She pointed to the ways that recent studies of primitive women had changed long-accepted assessments of

⁷⁰ [Doubleday], "What the Basket," pp. 561, 570.

⁷¹ WNIA, Missionary Report for 1903, WNIA Papers.

Indian culture. Primitive women, she argued, were now recognized as natural "artists" from whose work all modern industries originated. The Indian woman should be encouraged in those arts which had been shown to be the foundations of civilization: "With a more scientific appreciation of primitive woman's contribution to modern civilization, must come a sympathetic interest in the handicrafts of our Indian women."⁷² Directed to an audience of white women, her support of Indian women's arts revealed a belief that modern women had been cut off from that tradition and denied access to the "civilized" industries which white men ran. In this view, the preservation of Indian women's art symbolized a revival of women's creative power.

Doubleday subscribed to the theory of social evolution, but she perceived this evolution as having powerful gendered components. Primitive women had invented every element of "civilization," but men had stolen the patents and now controlled "civilized" cultures. In short, a primitive culture was one where women had power; a civilized culture was one where women had no power: "Primitive woman was ever the constructive element in society, the home-maker, the conserver of industry and thrift, the manufacturer, . . . the inventor of many crafts, the mother of the arts, the nurse of religion." Take weaving, for example: "at the point where primitive women left off, civilized men, at a comparatively recent date, were able to take the work from their hands, apply machinery to it, and convert the manufacture of textiles into one of the great staples of commerce for the world." Doubleday seemed to accept this evolution, saying that

⁷² [Doubleday], "What the Basket," p. 561.

"through the same phases of development all races of mankind must pass"⁷³ and implying that the encouragement of Indian women in their native industries would allow the Indians to naturally develop their arts to the point where Indian men could take over and, like the white men before them, develop larger organized industries. Doubleday briefly implied that such an evolution would take place, but her actual recommendations about how to encourage Indian arts showed a strong desire to look backwards and revive old arts rather than "modernize" those arts. Everything, in fact, should be done to prevent the modernization which inevitably meant their decline.

At the center of Doubleday's argument was a newfound conviction that Indian women had historically been both industrious and artistic, but that those traits had been crushed by white reformers. The first settlers found Indians practicing "many handicrafts which indicated intelligence, adaptability, art feeling and finger skill quite remarkable in an aboriginal people."⁷⁴ But instead of supporting these native industries, whites had tried unsuccessfully to turn Indians to white industries. Fellow female reformers such as Sibyl Carter did not escape Doubleday's censure. She wrote (anonymously) that lace making was "a product evolved to meet the requirements of European aristocracy," not the needs of "aboriginal women upon a Minnesota reservation!"⁷⁵ Worse, whites had corrupted native industries by trying to "improve" them: "I have failed to find one [native

⁷³ Ibid., p. 561.

⁷⁴ Doubleday, Two Ways, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁵ [Doubleday], "Indian Industrial Development," p. 101. Doubleday's criticism of lace making seems wrongheaded, given that the Indian lace makers not only produced exceptionally fine and often innovative work but also sold it at a relatively good profit. Duncan, p. 35.

industry] -- where one still exists -- which has not deteriorated since our boasted civilization came in contact with it."⁷⁶ This sounds like a classic conflict between the primitive and the civilized, but it is actually a conflict between women and men. Given that men produced everything in modern civilized culture, the blame for "our [white women's] over-conventional, inartistic houses" could be laid at men's feet.⁷⁷ As Doubleday observed, the "beauty" one finds in Indian women's baskets and other household arts could never be replicated by modern women.⁷⁸ Indeed, even the Indian woman stood poised to forgo this beauty as the "trader" (male) "brought cheap tinware and crockery" to replace Indian baskets.⁷⁹ His action implied the tragic loss of the rich tribal heritage encoded in the baskets.⁸⁰ The modern "civilized" white woman could make no such claim for her own limited handiwork because it had been almost entirely replaced by the soulless machine-made products of men. As Doubleday's friend Du Bois wrote of modern woman's domestic role: "Alas for sentiment, that the domestic hearth should be replaced by the hot air furnace, steam heater or hot water radiator, all invented, set up, and manipulated by men."⁸¹ On the aesthetic side, Doubleday made similar observations: "How repulsively ugly are the civilized cook's machine-made kitchen utensils compared with those hand-

⁷⁶ Doubleday, Two Ways, p. 6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁸ [Doubleday], "What the Basket," p. 561.

⁷⁹ Doubleday, Two Ways, p. 14.

⁸⁰ [Doubleday], "What the Basket," p. 561.

⁸¹ Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," p. 4, PCGD, Microfilm Reel 3, #32.

wrought vessels in which the Indian woman delights!"⁸² Doubleday was apparently sorry to have lived through this particular phase of evolution and its accompanying loss of domestic "delight," and she seemed determined to prevent its happening to Indian women as well. The irony, however, was that both women belonged to organizations (WNIA branches) that only a decade earlier had been trying to persuade Indian women to adopt the trappings of the modern domestic home.

Doubleday's elevation of the craftswoman should also be understood in the context of the era's Indian curio trade, both in the ways that she mirrored general trends and in the ways that she departed from them. Doubleday's descriptions of the Indian basket weaver drew on the romance and nostalgia surrounding the Indians' noble past but they also called attention to the Indian women's present poverty. Marvin Cohodas, in his study of the Wahoie Indian weaver Louisa Keyser and her white patrons, argues that the work of turn-of-the-century whites writing about Indian arts "is generally based on evolutionist schemes, arts and crafts ideals, and attempts to confine Native Americans within both ennobling and degrading stereotypes." Cohodas follows Eileen Boris in seeing white women as particularly interested in Indian women's arts and the social context in which they were produced, and he draws our attention to the then-popular notion that baskets opened a window to a time when people lived in closer harmony with nature. He also notes efforts to present the individual artist as both "exceptional and traditional," and to interpret the symbolic meaning of her designs according to prevailing romantic stereotypes of the noble Plains

⁸² [Doubleday], "What the Basket," p. 567.

Indian warrior culture. Finally, promoters of Indian baskets were careful to market the wares as "an ideal and poetic form of traditional art" completely divorced from the present poverty in which the Indian artist lived and worked. Emphasizing the romantic "traditional" quality of the Indians' baskets deflected attention from the troubling reality of their present condition, a reality which many white Americans blamed on the Indians themselves; in the past Indians had been "noble," but now they were "lazy." Buying baskets put one in contact with the noble past.⁸³

Though obviously a part of this curio-selling culture, Doubleday was set apart from it because of her underlying concern with the Indians' present condition. True, she romanticized an Indian past and emphasized the Indians' closeness to nature, but she did so to suggest a way to alleviate the present poverty of Indian women. If these women could tap into their cultural heritage and revive their arts before they were lost, "the rising generation of Indians will advance in thrift and prosperity far beyond any of its predecessors."⁸⁴ Baskets should be bought for philanthropic as well as aesthetic and practical reasons. Even the crude, unattractive baskets made by less-skilled Indian weavers should be purchased to encourage their industry.⁸⁵ This theme of encouragement regardless of quality was followed by the League and by women in the field, as will subsequently be shown.

⁸³ Marvin Cohodas, "Louisa Keyser and the Cohns: Mythmaking and Basket Making in the American West," in The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting ed. Janet Catherine Berlo (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), pp. 88, 90, 102, 111, 113, 117.

⁸⁴ Doubleday, Our Industrial Work, p. 11.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7; Doubleday, Two Ways, p. 17.

Doubleday had been working with the League for several years, when in 1903 her friend Du Bois, a member of the League's executive committee since 1901, persuaded it to cooperate with her efforts on behalf of the Mission Indian basket industry (Figs. 13, 14).⁸⁶ Du Bois was president of the Waterbury branch of the Connecticut Indian Association; she was also the published author of an Indian reform novel and an amateur anthropologist.⁸⁷ Since 1897 she had supported Watkins' Indian work at Mesa Grande. Boasting impeccable reform credentials and equipped with expert knowledge of the Mission Indians, Du Bois guided the League in its support of several field matrons among the Mission Indians, provided it with baskets, and alerted it to land issues facing the Mission Indians.

Du Bois offers an excellent person in whom to analyze the combination of an anthropological and philanthropic perspective on Indian women's arts, a perspective she both delivered in lectures and published papers and recorded in unpublished manuscripts. More so than Doubleday, she acknowledged the anthropological and at times anti-assimilationist roots of her concern with preserving Indian basketry. Du Bois's lectures are especially important because they were addressed to women's clubs and therefore give us some sense of how the promotion of native arts was "sold" to elite eastern women, the lectures being accompanied by basket sales.

Being a student of anthropological theory and an amateur field researcher, Du Bois liked to open her lectures on Mission Indians by

⁸⁶ III, Record Book II, May 7, 1903, p. 152, MHS; III, Annual Report (1904).

⁸⁷ Besides her Indian novel, Du Bois had authored several other novels on non-Indian topics.

anchoring her ideas in the authority of anthropology. References to leading anthropologists such as "Prof. Otis Tufton Mason of the Smithsonian" established her as a knowledgeable authority and indicated that she was addressing an audience perhaps unfamiliar with Mason but certain to recognize the importance of anyone connected with the Smithsonian.⁸⁸ Even when Du Bois did not begin a lecture with ethnological references, she always worked them in at some pivotal point in her argument. In short, her lectures, although literary and entertaining, were calculated to impress on intellectual rather than solely sentimental grounds. On this token she surely succeeded, if her friends' assessments of her are to be believed. Watkins "grew tall" with the pride of association when a local Indian agent remarked that Du Bois was "a recognized power and authority" in the Indian field.⁸⁹ Charles F. Lummis opined that aside from Alice Fletcher, Du Bois was the "only American woman I know who ought to be rated in such a list [membership of the Southwest Branch of the Archaeological Institute of America] by virtue of personal achievement."⁹⁰ Another friend and research associate, Ed H. Davis, described her as "the greatest brain force that he has

⁸⁸ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 1, PCGD, Reel 3, #38. This lecture appears to have been written around 1905. It includes margin notes indicating when baskets would be displayed to the audience. Du Bois corresponded with Mason.

⁸⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 6, 1901, PCGD, Reel 1.

⁹⁰ Charles F. Lummis to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 12, 1908[9?], Charles F. Lummis Papers, Southwest Museum. Courtesy of the Southwest Museum.

met in a woman."⁹¹ Watkins agreed and insisted as well that Du Bois's "pen" was "a masculine one in strength of lines and finish."⁹²

For Du Bois, anthropology held the power to combat negative stereotypes about Indians, including some which other reformers themselves had held. In "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," Du Bois began with a nod to the "humanizing" influence of anthropology, which when popularized could counteract the "race hatred and worse than that, race scorn, which is founded on ignorance and prejudice."⁹³ Scientific study of Indians had "given breadth and vigor to our ideals concerning their [the Indians'] uplifting and betterment."⁹⁴ Specifically, ethnologists had revised false stereotypes that had shaped Indian policy for the past century. In her lecture "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians" she made a case for the idea that Indians were industrious, not lazy, and that their women's arts could be accurately categorized as "art." Ethnology had corrected the stereotype that Indians were "a naturally indolent race, disinclined to work of itself" by documenting the actual toil which survival had necessitated; the fact that this toil had been undertaken with beautifully decorated handicrafts "which [had been] raise[d] from drudgery to art" proved that Indians had "love of work

⁹¹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Oct. 14, 1903, PCGD, Reel 1. Watkins also feared that Du Bois's constant use of all her brain power was partly to blame for her persistent suffering from "nerve strain."

⁹² Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 22, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁹³ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 1, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

⁹⁴ Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folklore: The Culture Hero, Chaup," p. 25, PCGD, Reel 3, #25.

and pride in successful production."⁹⁵ Policy measures intended to "make" the Indian "industrious" were obviously flawed unless they recognized that the Indians already had their own industries.

Du Bois's goal in many of these lectures was to promote the idea that white women should support the development of native arts industries.⁹⁶ Reiterating a common theme from field workers' letters, Du Bois pushed the idea that the Indian women would earn more money from their arts if Indian associations bought their work, thereby eliminating the large profit dealers and traders wrung from the Indians.⁹⁷ When Du Bois suggested to her Waterbury Indian Association that it patronize Indian weavers, she claimed that traders paid seventy-five cents for baskets they resold for five dollars.⁹⁸ If the Indians could see most of this profit, their financial situation would greatly improve. Motivated by philanthropic feelings, women like Watkins bought both poor and fine quality baskets at relatively high prices, paying, as

⁹⁵ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," p. 1, PCGD, Reel 3, #38a.

⁹⁶ While she was able to promote anthropology in her lectures to reformers, she was unable to promote reform in her articles for anthropologists. Alfred Kroeber, editing the manuscript of one such article, crossed out a paragraph about basketry in which Du Bois mentioned its economic importance and her efforts to develop a market for it. See "Transcripts of Lowell Bean's Tape-Recorded Comments on the Constance Goddard Du Bois Papers at the Huntington Free Library," p. 8, PCGD, Reel 1, #4.

⁹⁷ The League jealously guarded information about its basket suppliers, protecting its own revenue sources by refusing to answer queries from people who wished to buy directly from the Indians. III, Record Book III Sept. 28, 1905, p. 54, MHS.

⁹⁸ Du Bois, "Mission Indians," p. 36, PCGD, Reel 3, #26. In 1901 the Connecticut Indian Association voted to revive basket weaving in California; Du Bois, "Miscellany I," PCGD, Reel 3, #43.

Watkins said, "with the idea of help more than the profit idea."⁹⁹ Du Bois encouraged her basket lecture audiences to buy with the same spirit. Indeed, she sold in that spirit, paying an average of three dollars for each basket, selling them for only slightly more and sometimes at a loss.¹⁰⁰

Despite (or perhaps because of) her background in ethnology, Du Bois willingly used the myth of the "vanishing" Indian to evoke sympathy for the Indian artist and drum up basket sales. Commentators had long warned that Indian arts were on the verge of extinction. In 1896, J. Torrey Conner predicted the end within "a few years hence."¹⁰¹ About ten years later, as Du Bois drew her lecture on symbolism in Indian basketry to a close, she referred to the baskets set out for sale in the next room and urged her audience to view their purchase as "a real art investment" sure to be repaid because "In a hundred years the whole of the Indian past, full of beauty and value as it was, will be forever dead."¹⁰² In an earlier published article, she opened with the dire warning that "Within a generation it [basketry] must die as an art with the death of the last old woman who practices it."¹⁰³ It was true that the population of the Mission Indians from whom Du Bois got her baskets had been declining throughout the nineteenth century, but many of the weavers who supplied her with baskets were young Indian women, a fact she did not mention in her lecture or article. Instead, she preferred to emphasize that the

⁹⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Mary Du Bois, May 30, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁰⁰ Du Bois, "Indian Workers and Record," PCGD, Reel 4, #57.

¹⁰¹ "Indian Baskets," New York Daily Tribune, 6 Sept. 1896, p. 19.

¹⁰² Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 14, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

¹⁰³ Du Bois, "Manzanita Basketry, A Revival," The Papoose 1 (June 1903): 21.

baskets were "genuinely primitive," and when she displayed a specimen made by an old Indian woman, she was sure to note this, drawing attention to the idea that beautiful specimens such as these would not be available forever. In the article about the Manzanita basket makers, she ended with a similar sales pitch: "It [the "artistic impulse"] will die with them, and collectors who wish to possess a genuine Manzanita basket bought at first hand must purchase now."¹⁰⁴ Such pitches became a staple of subsequent promoters of Indian arts.¹⁰⁵

What would disappear from the baskets was something reformers themselves had labored to eradicate -- "Indianness." Du Bois's ethnological studies of the Mission Indians convinced her that the baskets reflected the tribes' mythological and religious knowledge; without that knowledge, young weavers might imitate the style but could never capture the meaning of the old baskets.¹⁰⁶ She said, "It is useless to talk of preserving the art, for though

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ In 1929, one writer urged her readers to buy Navajo rugs because they "will constantly increase in value as the Indians cease to weave." Mary Roberts Coolidge, The Rain-Makers: Indians of Arizona and New Mexico (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), p. 285. Even today, the fear that Indian arts will die with the present practitioners is repeated (and rebutted). See, for example, National Museum of the American Indian, All Roads are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), pp. 82, 197.

¹⁰⁶ For example in one Indian story she discovered the mythological origins of basket making, and in the rattle-snake dance she perceived the important role of gift baskets in preventing snake bites. Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folklore: The Culture Hero, Chaupe," p. 7, PCGD, Reel 3, #25; Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," p. 27, PCGD, Reel 2, #23. In a lecture she quoted Alice Fletcher on the relation of Indian songs to stories, as if to imply that an analogous relationship could be found between Indians' baskets and stories: "The story is always founded upon a dramatic circumstance in which at some point the emotion is forced to find a means of

the mechanism of the work can be learned" by the younger generation, its "native expression in form, adornment, and purpose in ornamentation must be lost within twenty years."¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately "our false sense of education" had discouraged the younger Indians from learning their ancient traditions, which threatened to die with the elders.¹⁰⁸ The "pernicious influence" of many whites on Indian arts was like a "lurking infection of smallpox."¹⁰⁹

The destruction of Indian culture ranked with the destruction of the Indians themselves; death could afflict body and soul (culture). In an 1898 letter to Estelle Reel, the new Superintendent of Indian Schools, Du Bois decried the government Indian school system which tried "to educate the Indian out of existence." She took issue with an education designed to break up the tribes and thereby extinguish Indian culture.¹¹⁰ She complained that educators had "robbed" the Indian of "his Past": "With mistaken zeal the younger Indians are taught the white man's language, the white man's

expression beyond the limitation of words alone and the song is the result." Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folklore: The Culture Hero, Chaup," p. 6, PCGD, Reel 3, #25. In another lecture she made the connection explicit: "As every Indian song was part of a story and sometimes remains after the story is lost, so every symbol [in basket weaving] has its connection with a story which may never now be known to us." Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 6, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

¹⁰⁷ Du Bois, "The Value of California Indian Baskets," PCGD, Reel 5, #70. Originally, Du Bois had written "ten" years, but that must have seemed too dramatic.

¹⁰⁸ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," pp. 5-6, PCGD, Reel 3, #38. Almost identical wording appears in Du Bois, "Religious Ceremonies and Myths of the Mission Indians," *American Anthropologist* 7 (1905): 620.

¹⁰⁹ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," unpublished lecture, p. 7, PCGD, Reel 3, #38A; Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," pp. 11-12, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

¹¹⁰ Draft of a letter from Constance Goddard Du Bois to Estelle Reel, July 1898, PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

history, the history of the nations of the world -- but they are encouraged, even forced, to forget the history, language, myths, traditions, religious ideals of their tribe." Such an education left Indians "lonely at heart, bereft of an association dear to humanity."¹¹¹ And it would reduce an art to a commercial enterprise, surviving "as a business, fostered by the white man and taught to the young in Indian schools and other centers of industry."¹¹²

Undoubtedly a good sales strategy, her use of the vanishing Indian rhetoric must be considered against the reality of her work for the Mission Indians. There she and the League had joined forces to support two young Indian women who as government field matrons were encouraging the old and young Indians in remote villages (including the Manzanita) to produce baskets for the market.¹¹³ Other white women in the same area were teaching and reviving basketry, while traders and collectors added their own stimulus. Watkins wrote of one skilled weaver, Maria Antonia, who supported her three children by basket sales; and in a list of thirty-seven weavers from whom she bought, Watkins identified only nine as over forty

¹¹¹ Du Bois, untitled and undated manuscript, PCGD, Reel 6, #82.

¹¹² Du Bois, "Manzanita Basketry," p. 21. For a similar view by another writer, see, "Art of Indian Basketry," New York Daily Tribune, 17 Feb. 1901, p. 4 (II).

¹¹³ Rosalie Nejo was to do the buying, and her friend Frances La Chappa was to "instruct in better work and prettier." Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Sept. 29, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1. Watkins claimed that Rosalie could "teach basketry as well as I can and buy with more discretion." Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 5, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1. See the IIL's annual reports for mentions of its support of Nejo and La Chappa.

years old.¹¹⁴ The basket weaving skill was not vanishing, and Du Bois had to know it since much of her energy went into preserving it. She advocated the construction of day schools to preserve Indian communities, suggested the government pay Indians for their art, and worked to protect native arts from white influences.¹¹⁵ Thus we need to read the vanishing Indian rhetoric here (and likely in many other reformers' work) as a calculated emotional appeal that had some truth in the sense that old Indians were dying, but was being counteracted by the reformers' efforts to ensure both that the younger generation would not lose these skills and that Indians would not be driven off their land or starved to death. On these counts, the League followed Du Bois's lead.

AN "OPENING": WOMEN IN THE FIELD RESPOND

Doubleday and Du Bois provided the League with the arguments to justify its excursions into buying, selling, and promoting Indian arts, but it was in the experiences of field workers that these arguments were transformed into policy. Sparhawk and her fellow committee members may have known little about industrial machinery, but neither were they particularly knowledgeable about native arts. To increase their knowledge, they corresponded with field workers and read articles about Indian basketry

¹¹⁴ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 5, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1. Du Bois, "Indian Workers and Record," PCGD, Reel 4, #57.

¹¹⁵ Draft of a letter from Constance Goddard Du Bois to Estelle Reel, July 1898, PCGD, Reel 5, #63; Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 12, PCGD, Reel 3, #38. The "traditional" designs which Du Bois and others wanted to protect had in many cases been developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Cohodas, p. 90.

in contemporary magazines.¹¹⁶ Doubleday persuaded Commissioner William Jones to ask all female field matrons, missionaries, and teachers to provide the League with information about the state of native industries at their respective reservations.¹¹⁷ In these communications the lines between philanthropy and ethnology became blurred. Helping the Indians depended increasingly on one's ability to "understand" the Indians, something that could be done only through ethnology, which Du Bois claimed could get one past "our surface view" of Indian culture.¹¹⁸ As field workers communicated with the League about the realities of these industries, they swayed it to reconsider long-standing attitudes toward old Indians, Indian traditions, and land use. The old Indian hag of Sparhawk's novels now became a valuable repository of basketry skills and a coveted teacher of the young; young, educated Indian women were directed to return to the reservations to revive, not suppress, traditions; and forced allotment, once the ultimate goal of the Indian reformers, now was opposed for its destruction of tribal lands on which important basket-making material grew. Essentially, what Doubleday and Du Bois preached, the League found to be true in practice: if baskets

¹¹⁶ Among the magazines consulted was The Papoose, a short-lived (1901-1903) journal that promoted Indian craft arts. Published in New York by the Hyde brothers [the Hyde Exploring Expedition], this journal included an article by Constance Goddard Du Bois on the Manzanita basketry revival.

¹¹⁷ Letter from Jones to Sparhawk, Feb. 8, 1901, quoted in III, Record Book II, March 7, 1901, p. 81, MHS.

¹¹⁸ Draft of letter from Constance Goddard Du Bois to Estelle Reel, July 1898, PCGD, Reel 5, #63. Doubleday's article about Indian basketry implicitly seconded this opinion, drawing freely from anthropological studies and referring approvingly to the way a "more scientific appreciation" of primitive women gives one a "sympathetic" view of Indian art. [Doubleday], "What the Basket," p. 561.

symbolized the heart of Indian cultures, then the "authentic" baskets that sold best could be made only if Indian cultures were preserved.

One of the first things the League learned was that "Indian" did not adequately specify the arts made by American Indians. The category of "Indian" had to be abandoned in favor of tribal names that more accurately reflected the diversity of native arts traditions. The League's initial tendency had been to see beadwork, basketry, and weaving as general industries that could be promoted among all Indians. The executive committee did not completely understand (or accept) that these arts stemmed from tribal traditions and were not easily transferable from one tribe to another. For example, a committee of Sparhawk, Alberta M. Houghton, Lockwood, Doubleday, and Montague Chamberlain looked into the "advisability of establishing basket making" at Eldridge's industrial room, apparently unaware that the Navajos had a limited basket weaving tradition and that their baskets were used mainly for ceremonial purposes.¹¹⁹ Later it supported the development of weaving among the Pueblo Indians, who despite their historic weaving skills had become much more expert in pottery by the late nineteenth century.¹²⁰ As late as 1903 it made an even bigger error, recommending that the wife of the Pine Ridge (South Dakota) Indian agent try to establish a basket industry rather than bead work among the Indians when, in fact, the Plains Indians had a rich tradition of bead work, none of basketry.¹²¹ Du Bois had remarked in 1898 that the central problem

119 III, Record Book II, Jan. 3, 1901, p. 69, MHS.

120 III, Record Book II, Jan. 1, 1903, p. 138, MHS.

121 III, Record Book II, April 2, 1903, pp. 148-149, MHS.

with government Indian policy had been that its uniformity failed to account for the reality that "conditions are so different in different parts of the country."¹²² The League was learning firsthand the truth of Du Bois's assessment.

One might have expected the League to peruse the many anthropological reports of the time to come to some understanding of native industries, but instead the League turned initially to other women. Within the first five months of 1901, the League had heard from and responded to thirteen matrons from as many different Indian agencies. Each woman was sent an outline of the work the League hoped to do and asked for further "details of basketry, bead work or pottery where these had been mentioned."¹²³ In this way, the League gradually became a kind of clearing house for information about native industries. From 1901 on, the League's monthly meetings included the reading of letters from various women in the field who described native arts the local Indians were practicing and often requested information about how to sell these products. Jones offered to appoint two field matrons named by the League, and he answered inquiries about the character and experience of field workers who applied to the League for aid.¹²⁴ One such field matron, Mrs. Lida W. Quimby of Olympia, Washington, received Jones's enthusiastic permission to "devote a good deal

¹²² Draft of letter from Constance Goddard Du Bois to Estelle Reel, July 1898, PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

¹²³ IIL, Record Book II, March 7, 1901, p. 81, MHS.

¹²⁴ Jones to Sparhawk, March 25, 1901, reported in IIL, Record Book II, April 4, 1901, p. 84, MHS.

of time and attention to co-operation with the League in promoting the basket industry there."¹²⁵

Through this network of field matrons, missionaries, and teachers, the League learned which tribes made baskets, how much the baskets sold for, how the baskets were made, how long they took to make, and how to judge a fine basket. By the end of 1901, fifteen different female field workers, most from the Southwest, had contacted the League; about half of these would become regular suppliers of baskets and information. In the following years, more women would be added to this list, until finally the League could claim field correspondents from many of the major centers of Indian basketry: the Pacific Northwest; Hoopa, California; Southern California; Pima, Arizona.

The field correspondents included Helen Clark, the missionary who had once tried to establish lace making and a saw mill among the Spokane Indians, but was now in Neah Bay, Washington, where she had discovered Indian basketry. In April of 1901, after being out of contact with the League since her sawmill plan fell through, Clark sent a collection of "beautiful specimens" of basketry which so delighted the executive committee that it voted to send her seventy-five dollars (later reduced to fifty) toward the purchase and forwarding of more such baskets.¹²⁶ By June, this second installment had been sent on to the Brooklyn Indian Association to fill part of a \$120 order that it had requested through the League the previous month.¹²⁷ At this stage in the League's work, such purchases were justified largely as

¹²⁵ Jones to Sparhawk, Oct. 22, 1901, reported in IIL, Record Book II, Nov. 7, 1901, pp. 97-98, MHS.

¹²⁶ IIL, Record Book II, May 2, 1901, p. 87, MHS.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, June 6, 1901, p. 89, MHS.

measures to alleviate pressing poverty, in this case caused by a poor fishing season.¹²⁸ But Clark continued to send baskets and receive money from the League, as did other women in the field: Mrs. Watkins (Mesa Grande, CA), Miss Wynkoop (Pima reservation, Arizona), and Mrs. Goodrich (California).¹²⁹ As late as 1907, the League's record books describe receiving letters from new field matrons about the state of native industries, and the League continued to receive baskets for several years after that.¹³⁰

One of the important aspects of all this correspondence was that it confirmed the feasibility of stimulating native industries. The executive committee's response to the first batch of field workers' letters indicates the degree to which its decision to promote native industries reflected the perception that native industries were an "opportunity" not just for the Indians but for the League as well: "The committee expressed pleasure at the amount of industry which these letters reported on the part of the Indians, a state of affairs encouraging further efforts, and instructed the secretary to thank the commissioner for the opportunities opened through the co-operation of these matrons."¹³¹ President Lockwood reported that during the summer of 1901 the "League had been prospecting [emphasis added] in regard to future work and had found on many sides opportunities which it had no funds to make use of."¹³² The League's record books use the word "open"

128 "To Relieve Sufferings of Indians," New York Daily Tribune, 8 June 1902, p. 2 (II).

129 III, Record Book II, March 6, 1902, p. 114, MHS.

130 III, Record Book III, May 29, 1907, p. 118, MHS.

131 III, Record Book II, March 7, 1901, p. 82, MHS.

132 *Ibid.*, Oct. 3, 1901, p. 93, MHS.

repeatedly in connection with native industries in the sense of "looking for openings" or "opening" an industry. Somewhat disturbingly, this rhetoric reveals the degree to which the League imagined Indians as "raw resources" which it could "mine" for its own benefit. True, the Indian artisans would profit when the League "opened" an industry in their tribe, but so too would the League, which was sensitive about the image it presented to other Indian reform organizations. Sparhawk reported peevishly that the 1901 Mohonk conference gave barely five minutes to an account of the League's work and that the general impression among participants was that "the League was not doing much."¹³³ Lace making had been proved by Sibyl Carter to be quite remunerative for Indian women, and the League gave it occasional support, but one gets the impression that Carter had a firm claim on any successes associated with that industry.¹³⁴ The new opportunities in native arts, however, promised to give the League its own prominent image.

The League probably perceived Indian industries as "opportunities" because they had existed for some time without any other reform organization fully recognizing their potential. When the League spoke of "opening" the native industries, it meant opening an eastern market for them -- the industries already existed to varying extents on some Indian reservations, and as the League discovered from its field correspondents, they were already being developed and encouraged, sometimes by missionaries or field matrons themselves. The League heard from the field matron at Keams

¹³³ Ibid., Nov. 7, 1901, p. 96, MHS.

¹³⁴ Carter had expanded her work since 1890, and in 1904 the Sibyl Carter Indian Lace Association was started. Duncan, p. 29.

Canyon, Arizona (Moqui) where four years earlier the WNIA's missionary report included the information that the Indians used the mission cottage to weave baskets and belts, make moccasins, and spin wool.¹³⁵ This was the kind of information the WNIA ignored, but which the League would pounce on, recognizing in it an "opportunity" for an "opening," although the opportunity was slightly illusory, since the arts were already being made for the commercial curio trade, especially among the Indians of the Southwest. One WNIA missionary, who had first contacted the League in 1899 about the "artistic talent" of an Indian she knew and the "absence of opportunity for him," reported in 1904 and 1905 that she saved time and money for the Apache and Mojave Indians near her Scottsdale, Arizona post by advancing money to the Indian weavers and taking their baskets to Phoenix to sell; in one year she had bought over \$1,000 worth of baskets.¹³⁶ Another field matron from the Phoenix area wrote several times with information about "a young Indian [Hopi] Trader, the first example of Indian enterprise," who might be able to supply the League with Indian goods.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ WNIA, Our Missionary Report for 1897, pp. 40-41; IIL, Record Book II, March 7, 1901, p. 81, MHS. The field matron was Sarah E. Abbott.

¹³⁶ IIL, Record Book II, Jan. 4, 1900, p. 41, MHS; NIA, Missions of 1904; NIA, Missions of 1905, pp. 10-11. The missionary, Mrs. McGill, later became a field matron, but she does not seem to have supplied the League with any baskets before 1907, despite corresponding with it.

¹³⁷ This woman was Anna J. Ritter, who had been a government schoolteacher among the Indians in La Jolla, CA in 1895; La Jolla information from Mathes, Helen Hunt Jackson, p. 147. For Ritter's communications with the League, see IIL Record Book II, March 7, 1901, p. 81; *ibid*, May 2, 1901, pp. 87-88; *ibid*, June 6, 1901, p. 89; *ibid*, Oct. 3, 1901, pp. 94-95, MHS. The League provided Ritter with ten dollars to award in prize money to the best Indian basketmakers.

The impact of a field worker's testimony and experience can be seen in the case of the Mission Indian basket industry. Du Bois's interest in Indian baskets was inspired by Watkins' experience as an Indian school teacher at Mesa Grande. Apparently in response to Du Bois's question about how best to aid the Mission Indians, Watkins recommended "buying baskets" as her first choice as a way to "foster self respect and ideas of self help."¹³⁸ In a follow-up letter to Goddard's sister Mary, Watkins revealed that by 1900 she had already been buying Indian baskets for nearly four years, reselling them to collectors, and she assured Mary Du Bois that she too would "soon learn to grade them." Besides encouragement, Watkins also offered knowledge, describing the materials from which the baskets were woven and dyed, their price range, and the amount of time it took to weave one (several weeks, even for a small basket).¹³⁹ By mid-1900 she had become Du Bois's basket supplier, and by 1901 she would be sending baskets to the League as well. Over the years she also tried to assist the Indian men in producing wood carvings and woven mats for the market (Fig. 15).

In 1905 the League expanded the range of native arts it supported. It entertained a recommendation from a field matron, Miss Josephine Foard,

¹³⁸ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, March 19, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1. In this letter Watkins introduced Du Bois to Rosalie Nejo, the young Indian woman whom the League would later sponsor as a field matron; in 1900 she was making baskets for sale. In Helen Hunt Jackson, Mathes details the involvement of the WNIA and the Connecticut Indian Association (of which Du Bois's Waterbury Indian Association was a branch) in various efforts (including attempts to purchase land) to aid the Mission Indians;

¹³⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Mary Delafield Du Bois, March 23, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1.

that a market be opened in the east for Zuni pottery (which she claimed to have "taught them to fire"), and was soon buying the pottery she sent.¹⁴⁰ Believing that industry was "better for Indians than sending them boxes," Foard pressed ahead with efforts to develop wares strong enough to withstand transcontinental shipment; she also tried to secure individual recognition for the Indian artists, giving their names next to each pot on her price list.¹⁴¹ With the League's help, Foard secured a field matron position so that she could work with the old women at the Laguna Pueblo to develop firing and glazing techniques which would make their pottery stronger, waterproof, and less susceptible to smudging (Fig. 16). Of her success in this endeavor, Leupp said that "No man could have brought this about; it required a woman's knowledge of women to do it."¹⁴² Desirous to travel and promote the industry, Foard interested the BSAC, together with the Twentieth Century Club, in having her lecture on her work, and although this plan seemed to fall through, she did address the New York National Society of Craftsmen.¹⁴³ Still, she stayed in contact with the League for several years, sending it pottery and pitching a plan to open an "Indian Tea Room" in Boston which would feature Laguna Pueblo-made "sugar-bowls,

¹⁴⁰ IIL, Record Book III, Feb. 23, 1905, p. 43; *ibid*, May 25, 1905, p. 51, MHS. Foard was from Long Island.

¹⁴¹ Quotation from IIL, Annual Report (1906); IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 7.

¹⁴² IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 7. Leupp, p. 550. Leupp apparently knew and approved of Foard's intention to concentrate her energies on the pottery industry.

¹⁴³ IIL, Record Book III, March 1, 1906, p. 71; *ibid*, Dec. 6, 1906, pp. 98-99, MHS.

cream-pitchers and candlesticks."¹⁴⁴ The sample sugar bowls she sent proved unserviceable because they were not glazed on the inside, but they "sold readily" at the League's store.¹⁴⁵ The tea room never materialized, and Foard wrote in early 1911 that she was leaving her work at Laguna; four years later she resigned from the League.¹⁴⁶

TEACHERS

Encouraging native industries, particularly basketry, raised the problem of who was to teach them, and as older Indian women emerged as the best teachers, negative stereotypes about "traditional" Indians had to be revised. The field matrons were supposed to be experts in domestic industries, but those like Foard who had specialized arts training were rare. Yet, a number of white women in the field had learned basket making, either in east coast arts and crafts clubs or from the Indians themselves, and they taught the craft, as did Indian School teachers after the Indian Office decided to back basketry. But aesthetic considerations -- Indian baskets had to look "Indian" if they were to sell -- made Indian women themselves the best teachers. The League and other Indian reformers liked to pretend that only old women knew how to weave baskets, but letters from the field indicate that younger Indian women, even returned students, were learning the craft. Moreover, some of these young Indian women became basketry teachers; the League supported

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Feb. 5, 1909, p. 177, MHS.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., May 7, 1909, p. 185; *ibid.*, Jan. 7, 1910, p. 197, MHS.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Feb. 7, 1910, p. 205; *ibid.*, May 5, 1911, p. 231; IIL, Record Book IV, Jan. 20, 1915, p. 2, MHS.

two such young women who worked among the Mission Indians at Campo, California.¹⁴⁷

From the Indian Office, Superintendent Reel and Commissioner Jones smiled on the League's basketry activity, encouraging and aiding it where possible, especially by introducing the study of basketry into the Indian schools. Doubleday had secured this support at the 1900 Mohonk conference where Jones had promised her that "he would send Miss Reel to confer with her and arrange to put the teaching of basket making into the schools."¹⁴⁸ Du Bois reached Reel as well, and Watkins crowed about the turn of events: "You have raised quite an excitement in Gov't circles about the basket industry and it is to be taught in the schools. Is that funny?"¹⁴⁹ In her annual report for the year ended June 1905, Reel reiterated her determination to extend school curricula to include the teaching of native industries (with special emphasis on "maintaining the high artistic standards" which made

¹⁴⁷ Whether Indian or white, however, the commonality among these teachers was that they were all women. Even the white men who collected, traded, and publicized baskets clearly believed that white women enjoyed some kind of gender sympathy with their dark "sisters" which better fit them for instructing Indian women, and there is no evidence to suggest that basket making was ever taught to Indian men or boys. For the most part, Indian art was woman's art.

¹⁴⁸ Doubleday to Sparhawk, described in III, Record Book II, Nov. 1, 1900, p. 62, MHS.

¹⁴⁹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, May 8, 1901, PCGD, Reel 1. Watkins later amended her opinion of Reel, no doubt because Reel's stress on industrial education for Indians openly questioned the Indians' intellectual abilities. Watkins wrote Du Bois that she hoped "Miss Reel will be permitted to reel herself off the spool for I think that she is just about as necessary to Indian affairs as the lovely lady on the bow of the steamer." Mary Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 21, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

such work famous); she argued that this program made sense not only because it helped students perfect the arts on whose sale the Indians depended, but also because the Arts and Crafts Movement had inspired the revival of handicrafts in industrial schools and progressive educational institutions such as the Dewey School in Chicago.¹⁵⁰ Commissioner Leupp seconded Reel's views, saying, "I wish all that is artistic and original in an Indian child brought out -- not smothered."¹⁵¹

But who would teach an Indian art such as basketry? Ironically, the first answer was white women. At some level this made sense because the Arts and Crafts Movement had generated an interest in basket weaving, a tradition among colonial New England women, and the League could draw from white women in this field who wanted to take their craft to the Indians. Thus, in 1901 Nellie Doubleday recommended two "skilled women" for field matron positions: Miss Effendorf of Brooklyn, "skilled in basketry and weaving" for the Navajo, and Miss Mary White of Bay Ridge for the Pima reservation.¹⁵² Watkins taught basketry on occasion, although she admitted that her young Indian protegee Rosalie Nejo possessed far more talent as an artist, instructor, and critic.¹⁵³

More commonly, however, white field workers merely tried to encourage basketry, praising patterns they deemed "authentic" and criticizing

¹⁵⁰ OIA, Annual Report (1905), pp. 439-440.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 408.

¹⁵² IIL, Record Book II, April 4, 1901, p. 85, MHS. This may be the same Mary White (1869-1952) who wrote a book, How to Make Baskets, to which Doubleday had contributed a chapter on Indian baskets.

¹⁵³ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 5, 1904, CGDP, Reel 1.

those which seemed tainted by white influence. The irony of a white person with little knowledge of Indian culture telling an Indian that her baskets were not "Indian" was lost on these women who seemed comfortable making such evaluations, especially among young weavers. Mamie Robinson, the white field matron at Campo (California), would buy whatever the weavers brought her, but unhappy with a particular design, she told the weavers "not to attempt this pattern again but make the old designs." Her aesthetic judgments reached beyond simply separating the old from the new, as evidenced when she advised a twenty-two-year-old weaver that "if she had put the figure upside down or used for the bottom what she had for the top that it would have made a prettier basket."¹⁵⁴ Assisting in this cause, Doubleday recommended and funded prizes through the League to reward the best examples of native baskets made with traditional designs and colored with natural dyes.¹⁵⁵ The executive committee members expressed unbridled delight as these prize specimens arrived.¹⁵⁶ White women may not have been skilled teachers, but with the power of their dollars they could be significant influences on the development of basket art by dictating which designs would be bought.

The demand in Boston was not for baskets made by Indians, but for baskets which looked like they had been made by Indians. Older Indian

¹⁵⁴ Mamie Robinson to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 3, 1907, March 1, 1907, CGDP, Reel 2.

¹⁵⁵ Prizes went to four fields: Mesa Grande (Mrs. Mary Watkins); the Phoenix Indian School; Olympia, WA (Mrs. Lida W. Quimby, matron); and Toreva, AZ (Anna J. Ritter, matron). IIL, Record Book II, Oct. 3, 1901, p. 95, MHS.

¹⁵⁶ IIL, Record Book II, Feb. 6, 1902, p. 112, MHS.

women were of course best qualified to teach the basket-making skills that the market demanded, and in time the League recognized this. When Mrs. Brennan from the Pine Ridge reservation, South Dakota wrote in 1903 to request travel fare for Miss Whittemore, a teacher at Bishop Hare's school, so that she "might instruct the Indian school teachers [at Pine Ridge] in basketry," the League responded in the negative. Why not, they suggested, see "whether there were not some old Indian women able to teach basketry to the younger ones."¹⁵⁷ This was an extraordinary recommendation, one that demonstrated the profound change in attitude toward traditional Indians that had come over Sparhawk and her friends. Old Indian women had been the worst villains in Sparhawk's novels, marked by ugliness, and thoroughly committed to forcing young returned Indians back into the evil traditional ways. Yet, here the League was holding them up as teachers to be sought out and supported, encouraging the very kind of contact with the younger generation which people such as Sparhawk had previously seen as the most serious problem with reservations.

The League's recommendation also tacitly approved of a measure of Indian self-determination -- it eliminated the need not only for Whittemore but also for the white teachers; essentially, the Indians were to be given complete control of the creative aspects of the industry. Candace Wheeler, a leader in the arts and crafts movement, had advocated such control in 1901: "It is most important that the Indian women, the aged squaws who know how to do the oldtime work, be the teachers among the young people of their

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, April 2, 1903, p. 149, MHS. The League eventually agreed to fund Miss Whittemore, probably because no Sioux woman knew how to make baskets.

own tribes."¹⁵⁸ Reel pointed with pride to the native artisans employed as arts teachers at Indian schools in New Mexico and Oklahoma, and she "respectfully recommended that at [other] such schools native instructors be employed who are capable of teaching these arts in their native purity."¹⁵⁹ These native instructors were often graduates of the schools in which they taught; an 1899 Hampton graduate, Arizona Swayney, taught "Native industries" at Hampton for several years before she went to South Carolina to start similar classes for white and black children.¹⁶⁰ By 1906 even the Carlisle Indian School had hired an Indian arts teacher, Angel De Cora, and by 1910 League vice-president Warren King Moorehead admitted that "the Carlisle school . . . is pushing such industries more intelligently and energetically than they have been handled before."¹⁶¹ A speaker at the first meeting of the Society of American Indians (1911) proposed that an organization be created

¹⁵⁸ "Arts Not to be Lost," New York Daily Tribune, 8 April 1901, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ OIA, Annual Report (1905), pp. 440-441. How many Indian school superintendents actually hired native arts teachers is a question I am unable to answer. Gustav Stickley, the Arts and Crafts leader, related an emotional debate he had with Mr. J. S. Spear, the Indians school superintendent at Fort Yuma, CA, regarding the benefits of fostering Indian arts; in Spear's opinion, such arts belonged in museums, not classrooms. Gustav Stickley, "The Colorado Desert and California," Craftsman 6 (June 1904): 245.

¹⁶⁰ Hollis B. Frissell, "Report of Hampton (VA.) Normal and Agricultural Institute," June, 30, 1905, in OIA, Annual Report (1905), p. 440.

¹⁶¹ De Cora (Winnebago) and her husband William Deitz (Sioux) taught Indian arts at Carlisle until 1915; De Cora wrote several articles after 1907 arguing that Indians needed to retain their arts and resist assimilationist education. Quotation from Warren King Moorehead to John Lockwood, Nov. 14, 1910, Warren King Moorehead Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, box 33.

to censor inferior Indian arts and "to insist upon the manufacture of the real article."¹⁶²

The desire to see young Indian women enter the basketry industry led to the approval of contact between old and young Indians, which was sometimes recolored with domestic overtones to make it more palatable. When Ella Collins (Banner, California) sent the League six baskets in 1904, her accompanying letter to describe who had made them showed the good effect that producing these baskets had on familial connections. Three had been woven by Angela Norte, an eighty-year-old woman whose son travelled great distances to collect the grass for her baskets. Norte's twelve-year-old granddaughter, who over the past six years had learned basket weaving at her knee while on vacations from boarding school, made two others, and the final basket was the product of a twenty-five-year-old widow with a baby boy.¹⁶³ With a woman's domestic art -- basketry -- at its center, this story is about the fostering of familial rather than tribal traditions. Angela Norte is emphasized as a grandmother and mother whose son and granddaughter help her construct something that facilitates contact with white people; unlike the crones in Sparhawk's novels who force returned students to resume tribal traditions which will shut them off from the white world,

¹⁶² Quoted in Peter Nabkov, ed., Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992 (New York: Viking, 1991), p. 284. The speaker was Miss Laura Cornelius, who in 1904 had asked the League to find someone to sponsor her college education (she went to Stanford after a Cambridge woman loaned her \$600). Laura M. Cornelius to John S. Lockwood, Nov. 29, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1; John S. Lockwood to Constance Goddard Du Bois, June 8, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁶³ Ella Collins to Frances Campbell Sparhawk, May 25, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1.

Norte pulls her offspring toward industry and beauty which will help them prosper in the white world. The young widow's basket making helps her earn a living; she draws on a tradition that offers support. Once the Indians' traditions could be re-imagined as "industrious," they no longer threatened the American way of life.

In Doubleday's 1901 NIA pamphlet she too cast the relationship between young weavers and their old teachers as being in the domestic tradition long advocated by associations such as the WNIA. She suggested that the entire "returned student" conflict with tribal elders would disappear under her plan: "Instead of the cruel alienation of sympathy, existing under the present methods, parents and children will find at least one bond between them in the revival of home industries, a link binding what was good in the old, with the inevitable new."¹⁶⁴ Here she emphasized the native arts as "home industries," sidestepping the fact that they were expressions of native cultures. Even so, her choice of the "returned student" issue must be read with the knowledge that old Indians had long been seen by WNIA members as barriers to assimilation because they clung to their "evil" old ways. Apparently, those old Indian ways were no longer considered evil if they were marketable. Doubleday even worried that the impending deaths of the "old squaws" threatened to spell the end for many arts.¹⁶⁵ Among the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, Josephine Foard, with the League's support, worked closely with the old women to develop their pottery industry.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Doubleday, *Two Ways*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13; Doubleday, "Indian Industrial Development," p. 102.

¹⁶⁶ Leupp, "Woman in the Indian Service," p. 550.

The important lesson was that some central goals of assimilation -- equality, financial stability, domestic harmony -- were apparently compatible with the retention of traditional cultural practices. One sees this in the story of the League's support of two Indian assistant field matrons who taught basketry and assisted the white field matron, Mamie Robinson, at Campo, California from 1904 to 1909. Graduates of the Sherman Institute (an Indian boarding school in Riverside, California), Rosalie Nejo and Frances La Chappa were favorites of Watkins, who in 1897 described Nejo as "a girl who is as neat and clean as a white girl" and "has pretty manners too, and is as quiet and good as a little nun."¹⁶⁷ Later she would write approvingly of the women's "wonderful, quiet indifference" and admit that she felt "cheap and poor in the presence of their quiet, earnest, passionless lives."¹⁶⁸ (In contrast to Watkins' depiction, John Lockwood recalled that La Chappa was extremely popular among the young Indian men, refusing marriage proposals at the rate of one a week when he visited in 1904.¹⁶⁹) Watkins had remarked on Rosalie's baskets as early as 1900, sending one to Du Bois, and by 1904 she could recommend both women as better able to teach and promote basketry than herself.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Aug. 25, 1897, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁶⁸ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, June 6, 1903, Nov. 17, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁶⁹ John Lockwood to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 4, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁷⁰ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, March 19, 1900, PCGD, Reel 1.

When Nejo and La Chappa expressed an interest in working among their people, perhaps as government teachers, Watkins enthusiastically supported their ambitions and enlisted the help of Du Bois and the League. In September 1904 Watkins outlined her plan whereby La Chappa and Rosalie would accompany a field matron to Campo, receiving a full salary between them (sixty dollars a month) to be supplemented with thirty dollars a month raised by the League and the Sequoya League.¹⁷¹ The League offered direct financial support during 1905 (although only a quarter of the \$400 Watkins hoped for) and thereafter continued to buy baskets from Campo.

The plan almost fell through when it appeared that a white woman would take La Chappa's place, a possibility that outraged Watkins for reasons that probably would have surprised those who had initiated the field matron program back in the early 1890s. In Watkins' view, La Chappa came recommended not for her domestic skills but for her knowledge of the Indians she would be helping. The very fact that she was not totally assimilated, that she still spoke the Diegueno language and could weave baskets, made her right for the job. Watkins bristled at the notion that a white woman would make a better field matron: "I am sure that neither of the girls would remain alone as they would consider it a gross insult to place a white woman who is ignorant of language, manners, everything in their stead."¹⁷² Watkins' belief that white teachers needed to "understand" their

¹⁷¹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Sept. 20, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1. The Sequoya League had been formed in 1902 by Charles Lummis and George Bird Grinnell; like the League, it tried to foster native arts. By 1907, it was defunct.

¹⁷² Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 4, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1. Nejo spoke Spanish as well.

Indian charges was shared by some educators in the Indian Service; W. H. Winslow, superintendent of the Genoa Indian School in Nebraska, argued that Indian School teachers should receive special training in a tribe's "history, tradition, folklore, and handiwork" before entering the field.¹⁷³

Though Watkins eventually approved of the white field matron, Mamie Robinson, who was officially in charge, she maintained that Nejo and La Chappa, who "instruct[ed] in better [basket] work and prettier," made the mission a success: "The two girls will of course do the work, but the Matron is necessary in order to save the girls from insult or slander."¹⁷⁴ Protect from whom Watkins did not say, but her comment indicates that it was unusual for young Indian women to be field matrons.¹⁷⁵ Later Watkins would point to Nejo as "the heart of the work there," an opinion arrived at no doubt partly because of her close relationship with Nejo, who often spent vacations at her home, had handled Watkins' correspondence when she was away, and was the granddaughter of Cinon Duro, Watkins' main (and favorite) informant.¹⁷⁶ Nejo and La Chappa did good work in the basketry field, and when they sent Watkins a few baskets as gifts in May 1906, she could not bring herself to sell them and give the proceeds to the San Francisco quake victims

¹⁷³ OIA, Annual Report (1905), p. 410.

¹⁷⁴ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Sept. 20, 1904, Jan. 21, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁷⁵ Nejo and La Chappa had been hired during a brief period (1895-1905) in which slightly more than half of the thirty-four Indian women hired between 1895 and 1927 joined the service; Indian women made up only 8 percent of the total field matron corps between 1895 and 1927. Emmerich, "Native American Women and the Field Matron Program," p. 203.

¹⁷⁶ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, March 24, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1.

(as she intended), but determined to keep them for herself, the only baskets she had ever kept, and the "finest, most exquisitely woven" she had ever held.¹⁷⁷ Certainly Nejo enjoyed much closer relations with the basket makers than did Robinson, who thought that the Indian women had stopped weaving baskets in fall 1906 because their harvest had been so good that they did not need any extra money; she referred to the complaints of the new trader, Mr. Johnson, that he had been offered only a few poorly-woven baskets.¹⁷⁸ Nejo, however, offered a different reason for the apparent decline in baskets: the Indians missed the old trader and "hated" Mr. Johnson.¹⁷⁹ The fact that by 1908 several young weavers at Campo were producing fine work suggests that Nejo and La Chappa were excellent teachers.¹⁸⁰

In late 1908 Nejo moved to the Phoenix Indian School where she trained, with La Chappa, to become a nurse.¹⁸¹ Thus these two women personified the "new" kind of Indian which the League and others imagined would emerge with a more enlightened and sensitive attitude toward Indian

¹⁷⁷ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, May 1, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁷⁸ Mamie Robinson to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 14, 1906, Jan. 10, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁷⁹ Rosalie Nejo to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Oct. 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁸⁰ Mamie Robinson to Constance Goddard Du Bois, June 19, 1908, PCGD, Reel 2; *ibid.*, August 3, 1908.

¹⁸¹ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 31, 1908, Feb. 2, 1909, PCGD, Reel 2. La Chappa appears to have left Campo sometime in 1907. Emmerich claims that Nejo and La Chappa left in 1909 because of criticisms resulting from an intertribal conflict. Watkins's correspondence, however, definitely indicates that Nejo, La Chappa, and Robinson had left Campo by September 1908. By March 1909, a new matron, Lucy Redmond, had taken over at Campo. Emmerich, "Native American Women and the Field Matron Program," p. 210.

cultures. Assimilated in the sense of speaking and writing English, practicing modern medicine, moving with social graces that put whites at ease, working in "white" occupations, and negotiating the white American "system," these Indian women nevertheless retained their native language, practiced their native arts, and enjoyed their tribal mythology. Du Bois had used Nejo as her interpreter during some of her ethnological researches among the Mission Indians, and both Nejo and La Chappa expressed great interest in Du Bois's fictionalized account of Mission Indian myths and ceremonies, "The Raven of Capistrano: A True Wonder Tale."¹⁸² This was the future that some in the League began to imagine -- one where Indians could participate in America's national life on equal footing with whites, yet hold on to traditional cultures, which, more and more, white people were beginning to value.

Angel De Cora, the Carlisle School Indian arts instructor, neatly articulated this vision of accommodation and revival centered around Indian arts. She attacked those earlier educators who had "made every effort to convince the Indian that any custom or habit that was not familiar to the white man showed savagery and degradation."¹⁸³ As proof to the contrary, she held up the Indian woman, who "untaught and unhampered by the

¹⁸² Published serially in Out West, May to December, 1907. Mamie Robinson reported that La Chappa wrote her that she was "very much interested as that story is not all new to her." Mamie Robinson to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 10, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2. See also, Mamie Robinson to Du Bois, n.d. [summer 1907], PCGD, Reel 4, #49, in which she wrote that Nejo had enjoyed the first installment.

¹⁸³ Angel De Cora, "Native Indian Art," Southern Workman 36 (Oct. 1907): 527. A footnote indicates that this article had been read as a lecture "before the Department of Indian Education at the annual convention of the National Educational Association, held at Los Angeles, Cal., July 8-12, 1907." The Southern Workman was a publication of the Hampton Institute.

white man's ideas of art, [made] beautiful and intricate designs on her pottery, baskets, and beaded articles, which show the inborn talent."¹⁸⁴ Civilization, by its introduction of garish aniline dyes made some Indian arts appear "barbaric and crude," when in fact the Indian woman's vegetable dyes had produced more pleasing color combinations. De Cora was pleased to discover, however, that among the Carlisle students she was able to awaken "Indian instincts" that had "lain dormant," repressed by the the white educational system.¹⁸⁵ In the future, she imagined, instructors like herself would facilitate "the adaptation of Indian art to modern usages."¹⁸⁶ Thus De Cora and the League labored to revive traditional Indian arts which in the new reform paradigm were recast as powerful civilizing agents. Mistaken about the savagery of Indian arts, reformers faced the possibility that other Indian traditions might be equally civilized or valuable.

RETHINKING ALLOTMENT

Indian baskets gained their authenticity partly from the materials from which they were constructed, and the need to protect those natural resources led to some significant modifications of reformers' attitudes toward Indian land use. The tribal or communal use of land had been the target of the 1887 Dawes Act which sought to divide reservations into individual 160 acre allotments, turning Indians into individual land owners. No such tradition of individual property rights existed among Indians, and many resisted the

¹⁸⁴ De Cora, p. 527.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 528.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 527.

effort to break up tribal land holdings. The League had clung to the goal of breaking up the reservations, relaxing its position only after it understood how it affected the production of native arts. As Watkins explained to Du Bois, a significant barrier to the viability of the basket industry was the scarcity of the raw materials, a scarcity directly affected by land use policy. The appropriate grasses were difficult to find, partly because white ranchers' cattle were allowed to roam over Indian lands, and partly because they grew only in select spots, often as far as twenty miles away from the weavers.¹⁸⁷ Logically, the only way to assure continued access to these natural resources was to retain the concept of tribal land holdings; if the land on which grasses grew was allotted to an individual Indian or sold as "surplus" land to whites, the grass could be lost forever to the tribe, and the basket industry would disappear.

The League faced this issue in 1902 when it found itself searching for a way to prevent the allotment of Quinault Indian reservation lands (Olympia, Washington) on which grew grass used in basket making. Mrs. Lida W. Quimby and Mrs. Mayhew, the two field matrons who served this community of a few hundred Indians, alerted the League to the fact that the reservation was being allotted and expressed their strong feeling that "the lands on which are the patches of this grass found in the interior of the forests should be preserved from settlement by the whites and held by the Indians."¹⁸⁸ The League acted quickly to protect this important basketry

¹⁸⁷ Mary B. Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, April 24, 1901, Dec. 19, 1901, PCGD, Reel 1. See also Ella Collins to Frances Sparhawk, May 25, 1904, PCGD, Reel 1.

¹⁸⁸ IIL, Record Book II, Feb. 6, 1902, p. 110, MHS.

resource. Sparhawk wrote the acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs in an effort to get him to "reserve this land from allotment," but though he "thought the matter an important one," he saw no way that the League "could obtain possession of these lands" except by purchasing them.¹⁸⁹ Further letters from the acting commissioner indicated that his office would make "provisions . . . to reserve these grass lands for purchase by the League in the interest of the Indians," but outright purchase was beyond the League's means and it referred the matter to the Indian Rights Association's attention.¹⁹⁰ Here the initiative seems to have died. What is significant, however, is the willingness to preserve tribal lands for a traditional tribal use. Allotment was supposed to be the crowning triumph of the assimilationist movement, yet here were key figures in the movement working against allotment.

There were actually precedents for such conversions. Alice Fletcher's faith in the allotment panacea had been jolted by her unpleasant experience trying to allot the Nez Perce Reservation (Idaho) in 1889. Here she found active resistance and allotment guidelines unsuitable to the nature of the Indians' land. Three years later she was done but done in, exhausted by her effort and troubled by the resistance she had met. In 1897 she received another shock when she revisited the Omaha reservation (which she had also allotted) only to find that allotment had led to a retrenchment of the

¹⁸⁹ Sparhawk correspondence with acting commissioner A. C. Tonner, described at the March 6, 1902 and May 1, 1902 executive committee meetings, III, Record Book II, pp. 114-116, MHS.

¹⁹⁰ Tonner to Sparhawk, March 25 and May 26, 1902, described in III, Record Book II, June 5, 1902, p. 121, MHS. The Quinault land episode never received any attention in the League's annual reports.

traditionalists and in time to peyotism, a religion with a hallucinogenic sacrament. Faced with the obvious failure of her long-held conviction that allotment was the path to civilization, Fletcher began to rethink her ideas. Joan Mark argues that after this episode she began to understand "the need for connection with one's past, the need for roots," and although she "never lost her conviction that the Indians were as capable as whites, that they could compete successfully with whites if they wanted to, and that they should be invited to share the best that white society had to offer," she withdrew her active support for assimilationist organizations and refocused on her anthropology which kept her in closer and more sympathetic contact with the traditions of the Indians.¹⁹¹

Few reformers went as far as Du Bois, however, who privately concluded that a central advantage of Indian culture was one the assimilationists had labored to dismantle: communal land holdings. Du Bois criticized American individualism which had produced a "white man's civilization" with "classes, and masses and social problems of his own inventing." The white man, with his "social system, crushed between the upper and the nether millstone . . . the Indian whom he scorns, vilifies and robs; but who might teach him lessons of value not only ethnological but moral, if he could stoop to ponder them."¹⁹² These moral lessons revolved around Indian notions of property. Du Bois questioned the morality of individualized property holding. It was, she felt, an "enlightened selfishness

¹⁹¹ Mark, pp. 265-277; quotes from pp. 267, 269. Even in 1887, Fletcher was working to protect Indian sites for scientific study, a preservationist streak that did not mesh neatly with assimilation; see Mark, pp. 142-143.

¹⁹² Du Bois, "Indian Summer in California," p. 32, PCGD, Reel 2, # 23.

which we call civilization, that disregard of the rights of others which makes it possible for a man to keep his good things for himself."¹⁹³ The Indians found such an attitude "strangely deplorable," and Du Bois's field workers often reported that her gifts of food and clothing, although intended for individual Indians, were inevitably shared with the entire tribe.¹⁹⁴ In some ways, this sharing of resources matched, on a smaller scale, what Du Bois and all of her eastern friends were doing with their own resources, and Du Bois felt that American society would have to progress thousands of years "towards the highest socialism before we can regain that sense of human brotherhood essential to the tribal relation."¹⁹⁵ Du Bois recognized that such theories meant that forced allotment was wrong, and she quoted approvingly from George Bird Grinnell to show how in the tribal view of land, the current occupants were only "tenants" who had to protect the land for future generations.¹⁹⁶ Du Bois implied that by preserving an old way of life (tribal landholdings), a future could be insured.

"TWO STORIES TOO HIGH UP": SUCCESS AND FAILURE AS AN INDIAN GOODS SELLER¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹⁹⁴ See for example, Lucy R. Redmond to Constance Goddard Du Bois, March 26, 1909, PCGD, Reel 2.

¹⁹⁵ Du Bois, "Indian Summer in California," p. 29, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁹⁷ Quotation comes from one of many discussions about the relative merits of various locations for the League's Indian store. Second floor properties, without sidewalk-level display windows were recognized as undesirable, but for economic reasons the League usually had to settle for such locations. III, Record Book III, April 3, 1908, p. 152, MHS.

Since the League's support of field workers usually took the form of purchasing Indian goods from them, it became by default a seller of Indian goods. Increasingly optimistic and ambitious, the League steadily increased its sales and promotional efforts through the first decade of the twentieth century. Donations and sales rose while the range of arts supported grew. Indian goods placed in Boston stores expanded to include Pueblo pottery and Navajo silverwork and blankets.¹⁹⁸ By December 1906 the League's experience inspired it to look into renting its own salesroom.¹⁹⁹ Yet, broadscale success continued to elude the organization. It was easy to write that Indians could become self-supporting through their industries; it was more difficult for the League itself to become self-supporting through the sale of those Indian goods.

By the end of 1901, the League had expended \$237 on Indian goods, sold \$263 worth of the same, collected an \$8.65 commission on the Tuttle Store's sale of beadwork, and arranged for the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts to take Indian goods for sale on commission at its store. In its annual report, the League promised that "these native industries will bring beautiful basketry and other Indian work to a discriminating public," although it insisted that its primary goal was still "through his [Indian's] native arts and crafts, or by any other art, craft, trade or profession, to make him self-respecting and respected, and upon a plane with other citizens."²⁰⁰ Sales were becoming a major part

¹⁹⁸ III, Record Book III, May 25, 1905, p. 51; *ibid*, Sept. 28, 1905, p. 51, MHS. Sylvester Baxter, "Handicraft, and its Extension, at Ipswich," Handicraft 1 (Feb. 1903), p. 256.

¹⁹⁹ III, Record Book III, Dec. 27, 1906, pp. 101-102, MHS.

²⁰⁰ III, Annual Report (1902), pp. 9-10.

of the League's activity, because they supported its central mission of stimulating industries overseen by field workers such as Eldridge and the Roes. Yet, the League was still not settled on its official identity, even as it led reform organizations in the native industries field.²⁰¹ It took several years of buying and selling native arts before the League firmly identified this activity as it "definite work" for the future.

As the League increased its stock of baskets and other Indian goods, a pressing issue for 1902 became how to dispose of them. The salesroom of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts was apparently too small to handle the increasing volume of goods, so the committee explored the possibility of joining with the Massachusetts Indian Association in renting its own salesroom. One member suggested selling Indian goods at seaside resorts during the summer.²⁰² By November Lockwood had arranged for T. W.

²⁰¹ Some consternation developed in mid-1901 when Nellie Doubleday accepted the position of chairman on the newly formed National Indian Association's [previously "Women's National Indian Association"] Department of Indian Industries. In that position, she pursued parallel avenues for the NIA, reporting at its October 1901 executive board meeting that some branches were using donated clothes and gifts as prizes to encourage the use of native dyes in basket making, and that John Wanamaker had an agent who purchased \$5,000 worth of Indian goods for his New York stores. By 1902, however, the NIA's Department of Indian Industries had a new chairman, and its activity seemed to decline dramatically. By contrast, the League's activity continued to surge. See WNIA, Minutes of the Executive Board and Annual Meetings of the Women's National Indian Association, May 16, 1901, p. 272, PWNIA, Reel 1, #4; *ibid.*, Oct. 22, 1901, p. 275; *ibid.*, Dec. 30, 1902, p. 289; IIL, Record Book II, June 6, 1901, p. 91, MHS. See also a display advertisement in Brush and Pencil 7 (Dec. 1900) for the Indian Goods Department at the Marshall Field and Co. (Chicago).

²⁰² IIL, Record Book II, Jan. 16, 1902, p. 106; *ibid.*, May 1, 1902, p. 118, MHS.

Preston to take baskets and beadwork on consignment at his Indian Store on Boylston Street in Boston.²⁰³ Sales at private gatherings, parlor meetings, and public events such as the November Mechanics Fair were still the League's mainstay, however, and continued to be through 1906.²⁰⁴ Without a reliable sales outlet, the League's income from Indian goods remained fairly static, hovering between \$200 and \$400 annually until 1906, but its annual donations had risen from fourteen dollars in 1897, to \$254 in 1900, to over \$400 by 1905.²⁰⁵

Despite the relative ease with which the League found field workers eager to send native arts, by 1903 it had still not substantially increased its total yearly income much above the \$1,000 mark, and frustrated with its inability to support all of the opportunities that came its way, it pondered its future. Meeting in November, the executive committee considered the options of merging with the Massachusetts Indian Association (a branch of the NIA) or dissolving and giving its treasury to the MIA with the understanding that it be used to maintain an Indian industrial department. Frank Wood offered his opinion that "the Indian question was fast disappearing as a question," but it was met with protest all around.²⁰⁶ The new year (1904) began with news that the MIA did not care to take on the responsibility of an industrial department, and discussion centered on the League's need to find a "definite work" to focus on. As members offered their suggestions, discussion centered

²⁰³ Ibid., Nov. 6, 1902, p. 133, MHS.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., Dec. 4, 1902, p. 136, MHS.

²⁰⁵ See Treasurer's annual reports in IIL Annual Reports for the years 1897-1906.

²⁰⁶ IIL, Record Book II, Nov. 5, 1903, pp. 162-164, MHS.

on Du Bois's work with the Mission Indians of California and her success in selling their baskets (\$400 worth in the previous year). Alberta Houghton mentioned that the Women's Educational and Industrial Union (WEIU) would take on commission all the baskets the League could provide. Finally, the idea of buying and selling Indian arts emerged as the League's "definite work." Mowry, Montague Chamberlain, and Lockwood all favored this work and promised to get more personally involved.²⁰⁷ By February, Chamberlain had arranged for the WEIU to provide the League with a prominent showcase (in its Cambridge store) at a ten percent commission on all sales; Mr. Preston had also asked for the right to bid on any baskets for his Indian Store on Boylston Street.²⁰⁸

For several years the League continued to sell goods by parcelling them out to various stores; finally, in early 1907 the League opened its own salesroom at 9 Hamilton Place, across the street from the Park Street Church in Boston. Open every week day from ten to two, the store offered consumers a full range of Indian goods.²⁰⁹ Writing to Du Bois in January 1907, Lockwood explained that a shortage of cash on hand limited the store to mostly items on consignment, but he hoped that the store would improve the funding situation.²¹⁰ His hopes were partly borne out because even after subtracting the twenty dollars per month rent, sales for 1907 nearly tripled those of any previous year (\$1,201). This figure was especially remarkable

²⁰⁷ Ibid., May 7, 1903, p. 152; IIL, Record Book III, Jan. 7, 1904, pp. 1-4, MHS

²⁰⁸ IIL, Record Book III, Feb. 4, 1904, p. 9, MHS.

²⁰⁹ IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 9.

²¹⁰ John Lockwood to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 13, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

when one considers the factors against success: the salesroom was on a second floor and lacked a show window, the Cambridge Indian Association started buying baskets directly from the Indians rather than through the League, and the League experienced problems with its source for Navajo blankets, which were especially desirable to consumers.²¹¹ On the other hand, the shop still held \$1,196 worth of stock at the end of the year.

Keen to increase sales, the League explored the possibility of moving to a more desirable location, and, swayed by the advantages of having a show window on the street, in December 1907 moved to the back room of a bookstore at 15A Beacon Street. Alberta Houghton recommended treating the new store like "a business enterprise," striving for \$250 in sales per month.²¹² To meet this goal, the League advertised special sales, sought out less expensive baskets (in the one dollar range) and smaller blankets (suitable for pillow covers), and trimmed costs by reducing the store's hours during the summer and the saleswoman's weekly salary from eight to six dollars.²¹³ But the new store's 1908 sales of \$1,754 did not reach the \$250 per month goal.²¹⁴ Nevertheless, the League's newfound visibility helped it raise \$683 in donations, and its December sales of \$500 could have been increased if it had not run out of the inexpensive baskets and blankets which sold best.²¹⁵ When one further considers the financial depression of 1908, and the fact that

²¹¹ IIL, Record Book III, Sept. 26, 1907, p. 120; *ibid*, Oct. 31, 1907, p. 123, MHS.

²¹² *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1908, p. 144, MHS.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 14, 1908, p. 141; *ibid*, March 6, 1908, p. 146; *ibid*, June 5, 1908, p. 159, MHS.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1907, p. 130, MHS.

²¹⁵ IIL, Annual Report (1908), p. 5.

the League had to move for a third time in April 1908 to avoid a rent increase, this time to a second floor store at 2A Park Street, the League's limited success was impressive.²¹⁶ In 1909 the salesroom closed for the summer, and in December it moved downstairs where it could take advantage of a display window and brought in \$1,000 worth of business for the holiday season, twice the previous year's total.²¹⁷ At \$200 a month rent, however, this new location had to be abandoned when sales inevitably dipped at the start of the new year.

Although 1909 had been a good year, with total sales topping \$2,500, this apparent success belied the frenetic efforts that had ensured it. Committee members exploited their friendship networks, selling Indian goods at their holiday haunts, showing goods in their own homes, parcelling out small lots to the WEIU, taking Navajo rugs to the annual Mohonk Indian conference, placing other blankets with the Daedalus Arts and Crafts Club (Philadelphia), trying to get table space at various Boston events, and offering to sell blankets and baskets on commission at Women's Clubs meetings.²¹⁸ Lockwood complained that the effort of "examining, marking, and shipping" the goods during the summer "has nearly killed me!"²¹⁹

²¹⁶ ILL, Record Book III, March 6, 1908, p. 146; *ibid*, April 3, 1908, pp. 149, 152; *ibid*, May 1, 1908, p. 153, MHS. Mrs. Coolidge's gloomy assessment in April of the "darker financial times" ahead for the country was struck from the record book.

²¹⁷ ILL, Annual Report for 1908-1909 (1910), pp. 4-5.

²¹⁸ ILL, Record Book III, entries for 1908 and 1909, MHS.

²¹⁹ John Lockwood to Warren King Moorehead, July 20, 1909, WKMP, OHS, Box 33.

Recognizing the inherent instability of such a sales strategy, Warren King Moorehead announced at the December 1909 meeting that as a member of the Bureau of Indian Commissioners, he hoped to pressure the government into establishing a "Bureau of Indian Arts and Industries" with himself as director; in that position he planned to use government resources to secure Indian goods and distribute them through outlets in the major eastern cities and Chicago.²²⁰ This plan would have enabled the League to continue its work at a much broader scope without having to handle all sales by itself. When this plan fell through, the executive committee seemed drained of energy, voting in November 1910 to hold a final Christmas sale at the Twentieth Century Club and then sell the remainder of its stock to the Carlisle Indian School Shop.²²¹ Occasional small sales were held over the next few years, and in 1916 a bold Navajo rug industry plan was fielded, but like so many before it, it too ran aground, fouled by war demand for raw wool which eliminated the cost-effectiveness of weaving. Thus after 1910 the League never really regained its focus on Indian industries, meeting instead to discuss new injustices perpetrated against the Indians, raise small amounts of money for faithful friends such as Eldridge, and mourn the increasingly frequent passing of an old member.

²²⁰ III, Record Book III, Dec. 3, 1909, p. 195, MHS. This plan is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

²²¹ III, Record Book III, Nov. 11, 1910, p. 219, MHS; III, Annual Report for 1910-11 (1912), p. 4. John Lockwood to Warren King Moorehead, Dec. 15, 1910, WKMP, OHS, Box 33.

Idealism probably hurt the League's decade-long struggle to turn Indian industries into a self-supporting business venture. The League proudly bought its goods directly from field matrons and missionaries (its dealings with a Navajo trader were accidental) and encouraged those women to pay more than collectors and traders would, on the theory that commercial traders were "sharks" who cheated the Indian women out of a fair price.²²² The effect of this philanthropic business attitude is clear in Bu Bois's accounts which show that she often charged less than she paid for her baskets.²²³ The League too was forced to mark down its prices to clear out its inventory. In the League's unintentional dealings with a Navajo trader, it probably overpaid for blankets. As a result, its prices were perceived as too high, although Houghton noted that if one took into account the superior quality of the League's goods, they were actually a better bargain than those offered by the commercial Indian Store on Boylston Street.²²⁴ Dedicated to encouraging both industry and excellence, the League bought even inferior articles, which had to be marketed on emotional appeal. Simultaneously, it discouraged inexpensive, poorly made "curio" baskets which might actually have sold more readily. Yet without significant capital, neither could the League purchase the most expensive articles which might have attracted wealthy collectors. Nevertheless, as the next chapter will show, the League deserves qualified credit for assisting native arts revivals and anticipating the goals and

²²² This image of traders was mentioned in nearly every article about Indian baskets that I have read.

²²³ See, for example, Du Bois, "Indian Workers and Records," in which she records selling a shipment of baskets (probably in 1904) at a five dollar loss; PCGD, Reel 4, # 57.

²²⁴ III, Record Book III, Feb. 14, 1908, p. 142, MHS.

methods of a new generation of Indian reform organizations started in the 1920s.

CHAPTER 5

THE LEAGUE AND THE NAVAJO RUG INDUSTRY

As the railroads opened the American Southwest to tourists at the end of the nineteenth century, the traders on the Navajo and Pueblo reservations discovered a growing market for Indian arts, especially for Navajo blankets and Pueblo pottery. Popularized through the writings of men like Charles Lummis and George Wharton James, the Southwestern desert, with its striking landscapes and primitive inhabitants, became a new tourist stop for some, a permanent destination for others.¹ Travel entrepreneurs such as Fred Harvey (Santa Fe Railway) promoted the Southwest as "Indian country" and encouraged their customers to purchase Indian crafts arts to take home as souvenirs (Fig. 17). By 1902 Harvey was building large hotels in Southwestern Indian motifs and complementing them with salesrooms that

¹ Earl Pomeroy, In Search of the Golden West: The Tourist in America (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1957), pp. 159-166. For studies of the artists' colonies that developed in Taos and Santa Fe, see Laura M. Bickerstaff, Pioneer Artists of Taos (revised edition, Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1983); Van Deren Coke, Taos and Santa Fe: The Artist's Environment, 1882-1942 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1963); Charles Eldredge, ed., Art in New Mexico, 1900-1945: Paths to Taos and Santa Fe (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, 1986); Arrell Morgan Gibson, The Santa Fe and Taos Colonies: Age of the Muses, 1900-1942 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983). For contemporary works that popularized the Southwest, see George Wharton James, Old Missions and Mission Indians of California (Los Angeles: B.R. Baumgardt & Co., 1895); George Wharton James, Through Ramona's Country (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1913).

carried extensive collections of high-quality Indian arts.² To fill these salesrooms, he contracted with the Indian traders who had the best access to the Indian weavers and potters.³

Navajo Indian women had previously woven blankets for personal use and for intertribal and Spanish-American trade, but the traders had changed the shape of weaving both through the introduction of cheaper factory-made blankets and by the sale of commercial dyes and yarns; the factory-made blankets reduced the need to weave blankets for personal use, allowing women to weave for the market, while the commercial dyes and yarns made the weaving easier and more colorful. The traders and railroads were to play a further role in changing Navajo weaving by creating new standards for quality and design. The tourist wanted rugs, not blankets, so the weavings became heavier. If these rugs were to be useable, they had also to be durable and aesthetically pleasing, so the traders began insisting that weavers use only top quality wool, avoid cotton warps, and follow the basic color schemes and patterns that buyers preferred. The "Eyedazzlers" (multicolored blankets made possible by commercially pre-dyed and spun yarns) that many weavers had made between 1880 and the 1890s were deemed too gaudy for

² Harvey's architect, designer, and interior decorator from 1902-1941 was Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter (1869-1958). See Babcock and Parezo, Daughters of the Desert, pp. 217-219. A fascinating history of the women who staffed Harvey's Western hotels and trains can be had in Lesley Poling-Kempes, The Harvey Girls: Women Who Opened the West (New York: Paragon House, 1989). The wife of Harvey executive John Huckel had become a big collector of Indian arts even before the company opened its Indian Department. Poling-Kempes, p. 148.

³ Fred Harvey contracted with the trader Lorenzo Hubbell for rugs of specified quality and design in 1900. Amsden, p. 190.

refined consumers. To assure uniform quality, the trader Lorenzo Hubbell commissioned the artist E. A. Burbank to paint blanket patterns which he then hung in his post and showed to weavers. The traders claimed to be stimulating and directing the Navajo rug industry for the benefit of the Indians, but they were of course major beneficiaries of this industry and did all they could to control and promote it.⁴

When the Indian Industries League stepped into this field in 1897, it did so from different motivations than those of the traders and seemingly with little knowledge of the scope or history of the Navajo weaving industry. Its first contact in Navajo land was a field matron, not a trader, and her interest was in simply enabling the nearby impoverished Indian women to weave, not in dictating what or how to do so. Lacking the raw wool and implements with which to weave but not the knowledge, these Indian women were to be helped with financial assistance from the League. Within a few years, however, the League became more familiar with the Navajo rug market, and realizing that clean and well-dyed wool separated the more expensive rugs from the cheaper, it focused attention on supplying better dyes and arranging to clean wool. Here the League's activity intersected with the needs of the traders who themselves sought better quality dyes and cleaner

⁴ For good discussions of the traders' influence on Navajo weaving, see Marian E. Rodee, Old Navajo Rugs: Their Development from 1900 to 1940 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981), pp. 4-6, 65-66; Frank McNitt, The Indian Traders (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962); and Robert W. Volk, "Barter, Blankets, and Bracelets: The Role of the Trader in the Navajo Textile and Silverwork Industries, 1868-1930," American Indian Culture and Research Journal 12 (1988): 39-63. For two classic works, see George Wharton James, Indian Blankets and Their Makers (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1920); and Amsden, Navajo Weaving.

wool to meet their customers' increasingly sophisticated tastes. Unwittingly, the League entered into an alliance with a major trader's wife, Mrs. Marion Moore, from 1905 to 1908, providing her with dyes researched and developed by the League and with implements to clean and process wool. By the time it realized it was cooperating with a trader (long perceived to be an enemy of the Indians' interests), the League had made a significant contribution to the development of the weaving arts around Moore's Crystal (New Mexico) trading post. Continuing its researches into dyes, the League experimented with a plan to have raw native wool shipped to Boston for cleaning and dyeing, returning it to New Mexico to be woven into rugs, and then selling these rugs in Boston. During the 1910s, the League lent its support to an effort to involve the federal government in providing authenticity seals to protect the labor of Indian weavers, unsuccessfully lobbied for the creation of a federal Bureau of Indian Arts and Industries to promote Navajo weaving, and established a large League-run fund that would sponsor the Navajo weaving industry and give recognition to individual weavers.

The history of the League's involvement with Navajo weaving reveals a growing willingness to revive and preserve "traditional" Navajo arts knowledge, a willingness usually attributed to the next generation of Indian reformers who arrived in the Southwest in the late 1910s and early 1920s. In researching old dyes and designs, encouraging old Indian women to pass on their weaving knowledge, opening new markets for Navajo rugs, lobbying for government support of weavers, and trying to create a system that would recognize individual weavers, the League from 1898 to 1915 did exactly what a new groups of reformers in the 1920s thought they were the first to attempt.

The League should thus be credited with initiating experiments that were later duplicated (with more success) by private and public interests in the Southwest.

MARY ELDRIDGE AND THE NAVAJO INDUSTRIAL ROOM

In 1896 Mary Eldridge, the field matron at Jewett, New Mexico, first presented the League with a plan to develop a weaving industry among the Navajos, an idea which she had floated locally in 1894.⁵ Her proposal underwent several revisions before the League finally decided to support an industries room at Jewett in which Indian women could weave rugs and practice other domestic arts (Fig. 18). This rug weaving scheme moved ahead with the full support of members like Mrs. Fisk who mentioned that at the 1897 Mohonk conference there had been some discussion of Navajo weaving.⁶ If she believed that Navajo blankets would become a popular topic in the near future, she was right.

It would be wrong, however, to claim that the League members abruptly committed themselves to the promotion of a native industry. Considering that only a few years earlier, many had not been completely clear about where the Navajos lived, it seems likely that even by 1898 they were still not certain just what Eldridge meant by "weaving."⁷ When Sparhawk

⁵ March 1, 1894 article from The San Juan Times, quoted in Malehorn, p. 6. IIL, Record Book I, Dec. 3, 1896, pp. 82-83, MHS.

⁶ IIL, Record Book I, Dec. 3, 1897, p. 106, MHS.

⁷ At the April 18, 1895 meeting, after Eldridge first contacted the League in regard to the development of Navajo farms, Abbott requested that Sparhawk locate a map of the Navajo Indian country. IIL, Record Book I, April 18, 1895, p. 56, MHS.

went to raise money for the weaving room in the summer of 1898, Philip H. Garrett pledged \$100 with the understanding that "the weavings [would] become more and more [manufactured] by our modern machinery as this could be introduced." The executive committee seemed agreeable to the condition and voted to erect a building "for the development of the woolen industry among the Navajos, using their present method of blanket weaving, and as rapidly as possible leading to the modern methods and looking to the enlargement of this work into a permanent industry."⁸ Within five years the League would be working to prevent (or more accurately, regulate) the introduction of modern methods into the weaving industry (particularly of cheap modern dyes), but in 1898 it had an imperfect knowledge of the Indian blanket market and "modernization" sounded good. What mattered was the building. So seriously did the executive committee take this matter that in December 1898 the Indian Industries League incorporated so that it could become the legal owner of the five acres on which Eldridge was to erect her industries building.⁹ Steam power was out, but when the building was finally completed in 1899, it was equipped with a cooking stove and two brand new Singer sewing machines.¹⁰

The original intent was for the Navajo "industrial room" to be a building which could promote New England-style industry; the Navajos were to learn weaving and sewing skills and proper work habits. Under a real roof,

⁸ IIL, Record Book I, June 2, 1898, p. 119, MHS.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1898, p. 124, MHS. The League paid one dollar for the transfer of the property in February 1899.

¹⁰ IIL, Record Book II, May 4, 1899, p. 23; *ibid.*, June 1, 1899, pp. 24-25; at the Oct. 30, 1899 meeting, it was announced that the building of the industrial room was complete, (p. 32), MHS.

with Christian direction, the Navajo women would become industrious. In both her fundraising appeals and in the League's Annual Report for 1899, Sparhawk described the industrial room in a way that played down its role as a rug weaving room:

The room is not merely for the weaving of their old-time Navajo rugs, so justly famous, but its purpose is expressly to be a place of initiation for these women into work of many kinds, and into our ways of doing work; and to lead them up to modern methods of weaving; also, as far as possible, to teach them to exchange their present desultory methods of work for that regularity necessary to wage-earners.¹¹

The report went on to describe the joy with which the nearby Indian women discovered this room made especially for them. It tried to create the impression that the Indian women were eager to emerge from some kind of cultural darkness into the light of Christian domesticity. It presented the industrial room as essentially complementary to the field matron's domestic mission, adding only the idea that in it the Indian women should become "wage-earners."

Unbeknownst to the League, Eldridge's industrial room was perfectly situated to take advantage of geographic, personal, and historical factors affecting the Navajo blanket trade. Eldridge had located her mission right

¹¹ ILL, Annual Report (1900), p. 5. In an appeal in the New York Tribune, Sparhawk requested \$250 so that Eldridge could "employ them in weaving the Navajo rugs, but she added that the greater part of the work would be teaching the Indians sewing and weaving skills of a white variety which "would enable them to use the wool of their sheep more profitably than at present"; "Indian Industries League," New York Tribune, 9 Nov. 1898, p. 9.

next to Henry Hull's trading post, the oldest in the San Juan Valley, and in October 1899, just after the industrial room opened, Eldridge's daughter Ruth married Hull's nephew, Harry Baldwin, who then bought his uncle's post.¹² The possibility of developing and perhaps even controlling the blanket trade had occurred to Eldridge as early as 1894 when she and Mary Raymond (who had married a trader in 1892) looked into building a weaving room and opening a store that could trade goods to the Navajo weavers, presumably in a non-profit manner.¹³ After Raymond's untimely death, Ruth's fortuitous marriage to an established trader seemed to give new life to the development of a fair blanket trade.

Eldridge's industrial room was also opening at the end of a decade of severe economic hardship for the Navajos and during a time when the wage-earning potential of blanket weaving was greater than ever. The Navajo blanket trade had been mainly intertribal until the 1880s, when the railroad brought white consumers to the Southwest, but even then the Navajos funnelled only a small percentage of their blankets through white traders such as Henry Hull. On the other hand, the volume of raw wool trade increased some twenty-fold between 1875 and 1890; goat skins and sheep pelts likewise became popular trade items.¹⁴ Although the Navajos were primarily herders, trading sheep and goat products for other foodstuffs, when

¹² Malehorn, pp. 3, 18. Hull's post was probably built in the 1880s according to McNitt, p. 294. McNitt refers to him as "Hank" Hull.

¹³ Malehorn, p. 6. Mary Raymond married T.M.F. Whyte; she died in 1894.

¹⁴ Garrick Bailey and Roberta Glenn Bailey, A History of the Navajos: The Reservation Years (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1986), pp. 50-62.

Eldridge arrived in Jewett in 1891, she hoped to aid the Navajos in farming land along the San Jaun Valley which was rapidly being settled by whites. Unfortunately, events in the next few years wreaked havoc on both herding and farming. Drought in 1893 destroyed grazing lands and dried up water sources, while the Panic of 1893 lowered wool prices and raised foodstuffs costs. An unusually harsh winter in 1894-95 further depleted Navajo herds, and a repetition in 1898-99 offset any recovery. A drought from 1900 to 1902, and a grasshopper plague in 1901 capped a decade of severe livestock losses.¹⁵ During the same time, white-run trading posts began to replace intertribal trade networks, cutting off a large outlet for Navajo blankets, which had lost favor among Indians as machine-made blankets became more popular.¹⁶ Low wool prices, economic hardship, and declining trade demand made the Navajo weavers particularly receptive to offers of "help" from people such as Eldridge who provided wool, a place to weave, and the promise of a market for finished blankets. Eldridge and the Indian Industries League were on the cutting edge of a tremendous boom in the production of Navajo rugs for sale to whites that began near the turn of the century.

Probably unaware of the economic and historical context of Navajo weaving, the League was nevertheless happy to describe the weaving of Navajo rugs as "industry," and in so doing took a step toward accepting the propriety of encouraging the Navajos to look into their past for better weaving methods and materials. The League soon discovered that Navajo

¹⁵ Bailey and Bailey, pp. 94-104. The grasshopper plague is reported in Malehorn, p. 21.

¹⁶ Bailey and Bailey, pp. 147-150.

blankets were most saleable when made by traditional native methods; collectors scorned those made with modern yarns and dyes.¹⁷ As soon as Eldridge finished the building, she asked the League to see if it could locate a source of "bayeta," an old red trade cloth that the Navajo weavers had raveled and used to create beautiful reds in their blankets during the classic period of Navajo weaving (1822-1880).¹⁸ By committing to the Navajo industrial room, the League had placed itself in the paradoxical situation whereby it would have to preserve and even revive native practices if it hoped to promote Indian industry.

Sparhawk's annual report of League activity for the year 1900 revealed a sharper understanding of the new path on which the League had set itself, and it offered a rationalization for this seeming departure from the League's original mission. The report opened with a short history of the Navajo blanket which acknowledged the opening of the railways through the Southwest as the spur that had catapulted the blanket from a "necessity" that sheltered one from the elements to a "rug" which "stands forth as one of the things fittest to survive time or changing fashions." The note that the rugs' colors were fadeproof "if they are native dyes" further indicated that the League's knowledge of Navajo weaving was growing. Eldridge also made the

¹⁷ Factory looms were not capable of duplicating Navajo rug designs. See James, Indian Blankets, pp. 162-163.

¹⁸ ILL, Record Book II, Oct. 30, 1899, p. 31, MHS. Eldridge was unsure of this cloth's name -- she referred to it as "bietta or vietta." This indicates that her knowledge of the cloth came from speaking with Indians, or perhaps with traders. It is also possible that Eldridge read Charles Lummis's description of Navajo blankets (in his magazine, The Land of Sunshine, 1896), in which he referred to both "balleta" and "vayeta" (see James, Indian Blankets, p. 26).

League aware of the Navajos' silversmithing skills, and the entire report for 1900 was devoted to descriptions of the League's work in these and other fields of native industry. The report closed with a promise to "open a market for beautiful native Indian work."¹⁹

How far to trust the claims and promises of the field workers who would oversee these native markets was a problem that the League faced almost immediately, as doubts about Eldridge's industrial room emerged in 1901. Eldridge had come to the League well-recommended, being known personally by the Dorchesters and supported both by the Cambridge Indian Association and by the Connecticut Indian Association, whose representative, Mrs. Fisk, was a regular attendee of the League's executive committee meetings. A government field matron, Eldridge was known by the Navajo agent who testified to her qualifications in each of his annual reports.

Nevertheless, questions about the future of Eldridge's industrial room followed reports that it was no longer being used for industrial purposes. At the February 6, 1902 executive committee meeting, Sparhawk reported that a recent letter from Eldridge claimed that "the Indian women were not now weaving rugs in the room as they could earn more money doing that at home."²⁰ This report would seem consistent with the realities of Navajo weaving; one imagines that Eldridge may have found it more efficient to let the women use the spinning and weaving equipment in their own homes where they could watch their families while they wove as time allowed. The kind of factory work environment the industrial room was meant to promote

¹⁹ ILL, Annual Report (1901), pp. 5, 8.

²⁰ ILL, Record Book II, Feb. 6, 1902, p. 111, MHS.

was probably inconsistent with the actual needs of the Navajo women. The League did not seem ready, however, to confront the obvious conflict between trying to promote native arts and modern industrial work habits at the same time. All it perceived was an empty industrial room. When Eldridge requested window shades for the room, the committee seemed to suspect that this improvement had little to do with industrial training; it did not even vote on her request.²¹ In November, its suspicions were confirmed: Eldridge wrote to say that she was moving eighteen miles downriver to open a new mission; she also reported that the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions had been storing medical supplies in the industrial room and wished to buy it and the five acres on which it sat. In the ensuing discussion, the committee admitted that the room had not been the hoped-for success, but blamed the failure not on the Indians but rather on "the absence of a leader there, since things had gone well while Miss Dabb was in charge." The League decided to allow Eldridge to take the League's equipment with her to her new location.²²

From this experience the League learned that the success of its projects depended largely on the commitment of the field worker(s) and on the noninterference of other organizations (a concern which the League had already demonstrated by separating from the WNIA and later would reaffirm by refusing to join with the MIA).

²¹ *Ibid.*, May 1, 1902, p. 118, MHS.

²² *Ibid.*, Nov. 6, 1902, pp. 131-132, MHS. Edith M. Dabb was Eldridge's assistant who oversaw activities in the industrial room.

In 1904 the League finally faced the need to assess field conditions. Houghton suggested that President Lockwood take a summer tour through New Mexico, Arizona, and California to evaluate conditions in the field. With her pledge that the Cambridge Indian Association would help pay for his trip, and Sara Hooper's promise that the MIA would contribute as well, Lockwood was sent on his way.²³ Eventually, the Connecticut Indian Association and the Salem branch of the MIA also contributed to the \$900 cost of the journey. The League's Annual Report for 1904 explained why this trip was necessary:

. . . endeavors to do efficient work upon fields where this is sadly needed have always proved that the League was standing at the short end of the lever and had to struggle with the want of sight and hearing and knowledge incident to long distance and imperfect communications. For this reason it was determined that in no way could it better gain the information so much needed than by sending out its president to look over what portion of the Indian field he could and to bring back facts upon which to build its work.²⁴

Upon his return, Lockwood shared his information with the many other New England Indian Associations.

The perceived need for Lockwood's trip offers a vivid picture of the relative isolation and ignorance from which these eastern Indian organizations operated. Their members were mostly women, many older,

²³ III, Record Book III, May 3, 1904, pp. 21-22, MHS.

²⁴ III, Annual Report (1905).

and while some had been to Indian country at some point in their lives, most depended on lectures, letters from the field, and published accounts for their knowledge of the actual conditions on the Indian reservations. As the League's disappointment with Eldridge's industrial room had shown, without direct knowledge of the field, an organization could sink time and money into projects which might have little chance of success. Field workers' opinions were obviously self-interested and offered little in the way of comparative knowledge. A field matron in Yuma, Arizona might describe wonderful opportunities for native industries in her area, but who could tell if the opportunities were actually any better there than at any other field? Only by sending someone to tour all the fields of interest could an organization such as the League allocate its resources with any degree of certainty.

Happily, Lockwood reported back that all was well in New Mexico, at least in terms of Eldridge's work. Eldridge and her assistant, Miss Gaines, had moved across the river to Shiprock to continue their work (the rest of the workers from the Methodist Mission moved to a new site closer to Farmington).²⁵ Lockwood praised Eldridge and her good relations with the Indians, noting that she always kept one room in her four room adobe house open for them. The Cambridge Ditch, the "pride of that section [of the reservation] and the model of other ditches," supplied water for alfalfa, squashes, melon, beans, and other crops.²⁶

²⁵ Malehorn, pp. 25-26.

²⁶ III, Record Book III, Nov. 3, 1904, pp. 27-28, MHS. Quotation from III, Annual Report (1905). Bailey and Bailey note, however, that the farms along the San Juan were small, really little more than oversized gardens that

Forced from her field matron position by a dispute with the local Indian agent, Eldridge moved nearer to Farmington in 1905. Here, she and her new assistant, Miss Gaines, continued to receive occasional support from the League for industrial work. Miss Gaines' monthly thirty-five dollar salary for 1906 came with the stipulation that she would do only industrial work and send the League monthly reports detailing this work. The League kept its end of the bargain, but the record books show no monthly reports from Gaines' side, and in December 1906 her salary was cut off.²⁷ After that the League offered only occasional support, and over the next decade Eldridge sent the League an occasional shipment of Indian goods, information about the rug industry and leading figures in it, updates on her work, and requests for flood and famine relief.

MARION MOORE, THE CRYSTAL WEAVERS, AND DYESTUFFS

Eldridge moved just as Mrs. Marion Moore contacted the League and offered her expert knowledge in the promotion of Navajo arts. Given the relatively disappointing results of Eldridge's industrial work, it is no wonder that the League enthusiastically refocused its energies on a bold new wool dyeing and cleaning project that this woman, who had lived in Navajo country for ten years and had expert knowledge of the industry, offered to supervise. The League's good relationship with Mrs. Moore continued until 1908 (it survived in strained form a few years longer) when she was exposed

provided mainly subsistence foods and an occasional small surplus to supplement money earned from sheep herding (143).

²⁷ IIL, Record Book III, Sept. 28, 1905, p. 52; *ibid*, Dec. 27, 1906, p. 101, MHS.

as the wife of an Indian trader, John B. Moore, but in that time the League developed from a bumbling patron of an ill-defined industrial room to a fairly expert provider of new dyes and wool cleaning processes that could take advantage of consumers' increasingly sophisticated aesthetic demands. The League's relationship with Moore may not have benefitted Indians in exactly the way it imagined it would, but the evidence suggests that it did help shape the Navajo rug industry by reinforcing already emerging trends to improve dyes and cleaning processes and standardize rug quality.

When Marion Moore wrote to Sparhawk in April of 1905, the winter snows were just melting from the 8,000 foot pass on the western side of the Chuska Mountain range in northwestern New Mexico where she and her husband ran a trading post they had bought in 1897 (they had started as part owners in 1896). Named Crystal for the nearby spring, this remote trading post languished through heavy winters that slowed business. A savvy entrepreneur, John B. Moore had two years earlier developed an illustrated mail-order catalog for his Navajo rugs. Following the marketing example set by Sears Roebuck Co., Montgomery Ward, and the Navajo trader C. N. Cotton, Moore tried to reach those consumers who by virtue of geography could not reach him.²⁸ Probably with an interest in broadening their market,

²⁸ Marian Rodee, "Introduction," in J. B. Moore, The Catalogues of Fine Navajo Blankets, Rugs, Ceremonial Baskets, Silverware, Jewelry and Curios (Originally published between 1903 and 1911. Reprint, Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing Inc., 1987), pp. 1-4. See also Ernie Bulow's introduction to J. B. Moore, The Navajo (1911. Reprint, Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing Inc., 1986). For an analysis of Moore's influence on Navajo rug design, see Rodee, Old Navajo Rugs. On C. N. Cotton, see Lestor L. Williams, C.N. Cotton and His Navajo Blankets (Albuquerque: Avanyu Publishing Inc., 1989).

Marion Moore advised Sparhawk of the Navajo blankets for sale at Crystal and sent her samples of silverwork which she hoped the League could sell.²⁹ She did not send one of her husband's beautifully illustrated catalogs, nor did she mention that she was a trader's wife.

Moore skillfully fed both the League's thirst for knowledge about Navajo industries and its hunger to expand its work. In her next letter she expressed her desire to help the League sell baskets and gain new members, implying that she could easily arouse interest in the League among her Navajo neighbors. She also mentioned that she would be happy to take orders for blankets.³⁰ Sparhawk had undoubtedly sent Moore a copy of the League's annual report for 1904 which began with the notice that the League had recently "arranged with the [Women's Educational and] Industrial Union of Boston for the sale of Indian baskets" and noted in its treasurer's report that the League had spent \$224.52 on Indian goods.³¹ The same report described Lockwood's recent and expensive trip to New Mexico and lamented the difficulty of getting good information from the field. If Moore guessed that the League would not be sending Lockwood out again anytime soon to check up on new field informants, she was correct. With the kind of deviousness characteristic of the villains in Sparhawk's novels, Moore probably realized that she could represent herself as a hard-laboring field worker, committed to the Indians' welfare and extremely knowledgeable

²⁹ IIL, Record Book III, April 28, 1905, p. 49, MHS.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, May 25, 1905, p. 50, MHS. Given the timing of Moore's letter, just after the failure of Eldridge's Industrial Room, it is tempting to speculate that agent Shelton notified the Moores about the League, encouraging them to take a kind of "revenge" on it for his pleasure and their profit.

³¹ IIL, Annual Report (1905).

about their arts, who could "help" the League encourage these poor Indian artisans by sending their work back east to Boston to be sold for the Indians' benefit. Given the detail of her knowledge and the quality of the Indian goods she sent, the League would have little reason to doubt she was who she claimed to be. The League fell hard for her act, approving the purchase of the silver she sent and arranging after the summer break to have her send blankets on approval to be put on sale at the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts salesroom.³²

In her letters Moore appealed to the League's concern for the Indians' welfare. Excerpts of these letters were reprinted in the annual report for 1905, half of which was devoted to information from Moore. Referred to only as "a worker who has lived ten years on the Navajo Indian reservation," she is quoted as a sympathetic expert on the Indians' condition: "I know hundreds of these people and their life stories. I know the good in them, and also their faults and their needs. The first of these needs is work and a living wage for it." She represented herself as a pious Christian who ran a Sunday school for the "few old and middle-aged squaws, the burden bearers and hopeless ones who listen eagerly to anything I tell them of God and the life beyond the grave." She spoke sadly of their "cruelly hard and barren" lives, of their "continual struggle to provide food enough to keep them alive." The League could greatly alleviate their suffering, she said, if it would provide the Indian weavers with good spinning wheels to twist warp, and with large tubs and boilers in which to wash and dye the wool. These implements "would

³² III, Record Book III, May 25, 1905, p. 50; *ibid*, Sept. 28, 1905, p. 51, MHS.

be a tremendous benefit and help to the women, and double their capacity," which would mean that they could stay free of debt and avoid "starving all through the winter months if they cannot get credit at the stores, which some of them cannot."³³ Moore's sentiments appealed perfectly to the League's members. She portrayed herself as sensitive, sympathetic, Christian, and resourceful. She painted the Indians as oppressed but fundamentally hard working and good people who would rise in the world if provided with a few basic needs which would allow them to become more industrious. And she drew attention again and again to the fact that these weavers were women.

Equally important, however, Moore offered definite and detailed suggestions about how to improve the Navajo rug industry, partly by dictating to the weavers what colors to use and partly by supplying the weavers with cleaning and dyeing implements. Almost immediately, she got the League's executive committee interested in the topic of appropriate dyes. The railroad had brought to the weavers a wide variety of cheap, garish aniline dyes that discriminating traders and collectors loathed not only because they found the "Eyedazzler" blankets woven from them aesthetically unpleasing, but because the colors faded and changed easily.³⁴ Under pressure from large buyers like Fred Harvey, these traders used their considerable influence to discourage the use of such dyes. J. B. Moore was particularly keen on this issue, and he advised readers of his 1903 catalog that only white, red, black, navy, and gray could be found in ninety-five percent of

³³ III, Annual Report (1906).

³⁴ The fading was partly the fault of the cheap dyes and partly the fault of dirty wool which would not hold the dyes unless properly cleaned. Volk, p. 48.

his blankets; those with "a little" orange, green, or yellow were available by special request only. As he explained: "I have no purples, magentas, browns, etc., to send any one. Faulty colors make inferior blankets, and all second and first grades will be in good and perfect colors."³⁵ Despite his pretensions of quality control, however, reliable dyes were not widely available, even to traders, and his catalog promised only certain colors, not specific dye quality.

Of the colors used by Moore's weavers, good quality reds seemed to have been particularly hard to come by, and this proved to be an area where the League was able to provide great help. Navajo weavers particularly liked red, and in the classic period of Navajo weaving (1822-1880) they obtained a fine red from "bayeta" trade blankets which were made from an expensive, silky, natural-dyed English wool. The weavers unravelled these trade cloths and rewove the yarn into their own blankets.³⁶ The problem in 1905, when Moore wrote the League, seemed to be that bayeta was no longer available in New Mexico. Amsden reports that the trader C. N. Cotton told him that he recalled receiving bolts of bayeta stamped "Barcelona, Spain" during the 1880s and that other traders claimed to have sold the cloth until 1890, but its use certainly declined after 1880 when the price of bayeta became too high. Amsden theorizes that after that time the so-called bayeta was actually an inferior, aniline-dyed New England wool.³⁷ Moore informed the League that

³⁵ J. B. Moore, *The Catalogues*, p. 23. Moore's claim to have no browns must have been a mistake. Brown was one of the natural colors of which collectors approved, and his catalog shows several blankets with brown in them.

³⁶ Rodee, *Old Navajo Rugs*, p. 3; Amsden, p. 141. This red dye came from a beetle parasite indigenous to Mexico and Central America.

³⁷ Bailey and Bailey, p. 52; Amsden, pp. 141-142.

the red in Navajo blankets "had never been a vegetable dye" but had been obtained from bayeta, and that "grey was the natural color of the wool and brown and blue were vegetable dyes."³⁸

Moore asked the League to help her secure an inexpensive, reliable red dye for the Navajos.³⁹ Moore must have mentioned that the bayeta came from Spain, because at the January 1906 executive committee meeting, Lockwood reported that in correspondence with Mrs. Moore and Professor Thorpe of MIT, he had located bayeta cloth in Spain and the dye used for it.⁴⁰ This exchange surely suggests that Moore, like C. N. Cotton, believed bayeta came from Spain. Amsden argues that while the cloth may have come through Spain, it definitely originated in England.⁴¹ This, in fact, was what Lockwood discovered when he wrote to the United States consul-general in Spain. Cochineal, the red dye, had indeed been made in Spain, but by 1906 it was "exceedingly expensive and in disuse generally and is not now an article of commerce in the United States." Lockwood learned that "all the best quality of dyes in the market used on the highest priced goods and those most durable in color are aniline, but aniline of the best quality, very different from the diluted and adulterated dyes generally sold by traders to the Indians."⁴² With the "co-operation of distinguished chemists and practical dyers," the League secured 1,800 pounds of "some absolutely reliable dyes in scarlet, navy

³⁸ IIL, Record Book III, Sept. 28, 1905, p. 51, MHS.

³⁹ Ironically, back in 1899 Eldridge had made a similar request to locate bayeta, but the League had taken no action.

⁴⁰ IIL, Record Book III, Jan. 17, 1906, p. 67, MHS.

⁴¹ Amsden, p. 141.

⁴² IIL, Record Book III, March 1, 1906, p. 70, MHS. Quotations are from IIL, Annual Report, (1907), p. 5.

blue, black and the celebrated indigo blue" and in the summer of 1906 sent them (and mordants) along to Mrs. Moore to be resold to the Navajo weavers.⁴³ These dyes offered not only quality but economy: where the Navajos had paid two dollars a pound for "poor quality and worthless" dyes, they would now get a good dye for sixty-five or seventy-five cents a pound.⁴⁴

The impact of these new dyes on the blankets woven under the Moores' supervision was surely significant. The League sent dyes in 1906 (and probably in 1907), but Moore likely stockpiled these dyes and rationed them out over the next few years to his best weavers. In 1903 Moore described a few of his blankets as having "natural colors," but identified most as "dyed blankets."⁴⁵ Clearly, he was sensitive to the issue of natural versus aniline dyes, and since Mrs. Moore's correspondence in 1905 indicates a need for good quality dyes, it seems safe to assume that prior to 1906, the dyes used around Crystal were either natural or cheap aniline. Essentially, Moore's 1903 catalog is voluble about colors, but mostly silent on dyes, indicating that he did not have high-quality dyes. By contrast, his 1911 catalog brags that his best quality rugs are dyed "with a very superior and different dye . . . than that used in the trade woven rugs."⁴⁶ Whether or not these were League dyes, one cannot say with certainty. Lockwood, however, believed that he could perceive a difference between the first rugs Moore sent the League and those she sent

⁴³ ILL, Annual Report, 1907, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁴ John S. Lockwood to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Feb. 8, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁴⁵ Moore, The Catalogues, pp. 11-13.

⁴⁶ Moore, The Catalogues, p. 54. In this catalog (1911), "blankets" have become "rugs," a change made to reflect the actual use to which most consumers put these weavings.

after he had provided her with new dyes: "Some of the rugs colored with the League dyes were very handsome."⁴⁷ My guess is that the League's supply of dyes was large enough to last Moore several years. Moore's catalog indicates that only "some" of his rugs were of absolute top quality, and these had the "finest colors." He likely parceled out the best dyes only to the best weavers, and since this group was small, one imagines that the dyes would last for some time.⁴⁸

The cleanliness of the weavers' wool definitely improved because of the League's aid to the Moores. Scant water supplies and inadequate facilities made cleaning native wool a difficult and time-consuming process, one that the Navajos had never bothered to undertake until white traders began to demand it sometime around the turn of the century. Cleaning had become more necessary because the quality of native wool was declining, becoming greasier and more difficult to dye. The Navajos' original stock of sheep, which they had stolen from the Pueblo Indians, were taken during their internment at Bosque Redondo during the 1860s, and then replaced with Churros when they returned to the reservation in 1869. As these new herds interbred, they produced sheep with a coarser wool that was more difficult to spin. The situation was worsened by the government's introductions of Merinos in the 1880s; when Merinos bred with Churros, the result was a greasy wool that would not take colors evenly, causing streaking in the blankets. The quality of the wool declined steadily through the 1890s, and the government responded by introducing new varieties of sheep in 1903, but

⁴⁷ ILL, Record Book III, May 29, 1907, p. 117, MHS.

⁴⁸ Moore, The Catalogues, p. 57.

although these sheep (Rambouillets) had a longer fleece, it was still greasy, and thus cleaning the wool became increasingly important in the early decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁹

Moore's 1903 catalog does not mention the issue of cleanliness, but his wife's correspondence with the League indicates that it had become a problem by 1905, if not earlier. Marion Moore described the Indians' lack of appropriate tubs in which to clean and dye their wool, imploring that "If these things could be given to them . . . they would be a tremendous benefit and help to the women, and double their working capacity."⁵⁰ A special appeal in the Boston Transcript raised thirty dollars to aid in this project, and by the end of 1906 the League had sent Moore washing utensils, a spinning wheel, a stove, tents in which the Indians could weave, silversmith's tools, and two weaving frames, all at a total cost of \$173.⁵¹ A Mrs. Lewis E. Barnes also sent a spinning wheel at her own expense, and the president of Bryn Mawr sent twelve dollars separately.⁵² Moore rejected an additional offer of a commercial carding machine (which had been donated to the League).⁵³ In his 1911 catalog, Moore lamented the problem of dirty or greasy wool and

⁴⁹ Amsden, pp. 33-35, 77, 200; Rodee, Old Navajo Rugs, pp. 11-14; Bailey and Bailey, pp.37-39, 128-130.

⁵⁰ Quotation from IIL, Annual Report (1906).

⁵¹ IIL, Record Book III, March 1, 1906, p. 70; *ibid*, Oct. 25, 1906, p.95, MHS; IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 11. She also received twenty-five dollars for a hay baler. This appeal was reprinted as a three page illustrated pamphlet in July 1906 (Sparhawk, Navajo Rug Appeal).

⁵² IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 6; IIL, Record Book III, Dec. 6, 1906, p. 99, MHS.

⁵³ IIL, Record Book III, April 26, 1906, p. 79; *ibid*, Oct. 25, 1906, p. 95, MHS.

emphasized that the highest quality rugs were those with the cleanest wool.⁵⁴ Thus it seems reasonable to conclude that the League's donations aided at least a few weavers in producing higher quality, more expensive rugs.

From the League's point of view, its donations also aided a pet goal -- the improvement of the condition of Indian women. Mrs. Moore took pains to brush her appeals for aid with vivid images of the pitiful lives of the Navajo women and the redemptive power of their weaving; she portrayed weaving as an act of spiritual and physical sacrifice. She told of a woman who labored five months on a single exceptionally beautiful blanket, "weaving a few saddle blankets in the meantime to buy food with." With this anecdote Moore evoked the image of an artist, working for a higher purpose and bearing poverty for the sake of beauty. Every weaver had to endure the "slow, painful process" of spinning the warp: "the poor squaw's fingers are all worn out and bleeding long before the warp is anyways finished."⁵⁵ By emphasizing the painful labor from which these beautiful blankets were produced, Mrs. Moore cast the Indian women as hard working and worthy of relief, but she also invested their work with a spiritual power. These women wove not just to feed their families, but also (apparently) to satisfy some interior craving for a life more beautiful than their own. The splendid colors and designs of their best weaving contrasted starkly with the bleakness of their own lives, symbolized by the "old coal oil can" in which they washed and dyed their wool and the poverty of their "homes": "They (the Navajos) have no homes, anyhow . . . nothing but an old cotton quilt or two, a black tin

⁵⁴ Moore, The Catalogues, p. 56.

⁵⁵ III, Annual Report (1906).

coffee-pot and fry-pan, and a brush camp under a cedar or pinon tree, made of three or four branches of pine or pinon."⁵⁶ By making the weaving process easier, the League could alleviate the Navajo women's poverty and enable them to continue to be artists.

By providing Mrs. Moore with a number of "walled apartment tents," the League imagined that it was giving these Navajo weavers better homes. As Sparhawk wrote, "The tents will be clean and lighted and airy, and at this place [near the Moores] the sanitary conditions are perfect."⁵⁷ Mrs. Moore had written that it would be a great advantage to the women if they had tents to weave under, because otherwise they had to weave in the open air (Fig. 19). If these tents were placed near Moore's home (in what Sparhawk referred to as the "colony"), they would encourage the women to gather around her and would "replace in part 'their [the Indians'] dark and dirty hogans.'" Set in "healthful pine woods with good water in the neighborhood," these tents would provide decent homes for the women's families (whom Moore claimed travelled together when one went somewhere for even temporary work), and their proximity to Mrs. Moore would presumably let her set a good example.⁵⁸

In addition to tents, the League also sent small portable looms designed both to ease the burden of weaving and make the rugs easier to sell, smaller and less expensive rugs being more popular (Fig. 20). The looms would mean

⁵⁶ Mrs. Moore letter, quoted in IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 6.

⁵⁷ Sparhawk, Navajo Rug Appeal, p. 1.

⁵⁸ IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 6; IIL, Record Book III, April 26, 1906, p. 80, MHS. One also imagines that having the weavers close at hand would make them more likely to buy items at the trading post.

"better wages and more comfort in living" for the weavers. At the same time, though, "great care is taken in no way to interfere with the weaving itself which must be exactly as they have always done it and do it now."⁵⁹

Perhaps best of all, the League believed that its association with Mrs. Moore was putting the Navajo women in contact with the wider world. Mrs. Moore kept her initial promise to encourage the weavers to join the League, and nine of them had become members by 1906, thirteen by 1907. The skill of some of these weavers can be seen in Moore's catalogs, where the finest blankets are accompanied by the artist's name: Dug-gau-eth-lun bi Dazhie, Bi-leen Al-pi, Hastin Dug-agh-eth-lun Be-Ahd, and Yeh-del-spah-bi-Mah (Figs. 21, 22).⁶⁰ When Moore sent the League blankets, she apparently included the weavers' names, because when one blanket remained unsold after the 1906 Christmas season, the League decided to buy it "to show the Indians that the League was interested in them even if they were not members."⁶¹ Those Indians who were members received even more encouragement: Yedelsbah Tinnah received fifteen dollars for house-building expenses when she married Ysa Bega.⁶² Du Bois sent her five dollars as well, and Tinnah wrote a short thank you note that testified to Mrs. Moore's kindness and promised a

⁵⁹ Sparhawk, Navajo Rug Appeal, p. 1. The weaving frames had been designed by a chemical engineer friend of Lockwoods. See IIL, Record Book III, May 31, 1906, p. 87, MHS.

⁶⁰ Moore, The Catalogues, pp. 35, 59, 65, 68 (and elsewhere). These names appear in undated catalogs and the 1911 catalog; the 1903 catalog does not name individual weavers. Other names in the League's subscriber list seem quite close to those in Moore's catalog and may have been misspelled in the process of transcription.

⁶¹ IIL, Record Book III, Dec. 27, 1906, p. 101, MHS.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Dec. 6, 1906, p. 99, MHS.

"nice rug" in appreciation.⁶³ This kind of personalization of League aid surely gave it the sense that its work was grounded in reality and was positively affecting individual Indians.

The happy relationship between Mrs. Moore and the League began to show signs of strain by 1907. Lockwood wrote to Du Bois on January 28, 1907 to complain that although Moore had had the League dyes for six months, she had not, despite repeated requests, provided the League with any "rugs [made] from our own dye."⁶⁴ The League had just elevated Moore to a position on the 1907 executive committee when a further misunderstanding about the League's dyes appeared. Moore responded angrily to her mistaken belief that the League considered itself the owner of its dyes even after it had sold them to her; in "a short, dignified reply" Sparhawk said that "the words 'League dyes' meant simply in the sense of having discovered them and put them on the market."⁶⁵ Bad feelings and perhaps suspicions had been aroused by this exchange, and when the archaeologist Warren King Moorehead joined the League in May 1907, he took it upon himself to investigate Mrs. Moore. The curator of the Museum at Phillips Academy, and the veteran of an archaeological expedition to New Mexico, Moorehead likely had a much sharper knowledge of Indian arts and their sources than

⁶³ Yedelsbah Tinnah to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 2, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁶⁴ John S. Lockwood to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 28, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁶⁵ IIL, Record Book III, Jan. 31, 1907, p. 107; *ibid*, Feb. 28, 1907, pp. 109-110, MHS.

did other League members.⁶⁶ At the November 1907 League meeting, he announced that his inquiries with Matthew K. Sniffen (of the Indian Rights Association) revealed that Mrs. Moore was married to a trader who had made \$20,000 in his line of business. Moorehead also believed that Mrs. Moore's blankets were overpriced.⁶⁷ The obvious concern was that Moore was making a hefty personal profit on the rug sales.

Clearly shocked by this knowledge, but still hopeful that there had been some misunderstanding, the executive committee began its own investigations to see if Mrs. Moore was indeed the missionary they had believed her to be. Houghton wrote to Miss Whittemore, the representative of the Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church, but she had no information about Mrs. Moore. Simultaneously, Sparhawk tried to determine if Mrs. Moore had actually started a Navajo Indian Industries League as she claimed. Sparhawk wrote to ask for a list of the officers, a tally of its members, and any information about other Leagues in the area.⁶⁸ While they waited for a reply, the committee decided to drop any mention of Mrs. Moore from the Annual Report for 1908, thinking it unwise "to tell people outside that we had been so mistaken."⁶⁹ Tensions heightened when

⁶⁶ Moorehead had previously been the curator of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. He accepted the Andover position in 1901. See John W. Weatherford, "Warren King Moorehead And His Papers," in Ohio Historical Quarterly 65 (April 1956), p. 180.

⁶⁷ III, Record Book III, Nov. 22, 1907, p. 128, MHS. Recognizing Moorehead's value to the League, the executive committee voted to change its meeting times to the first Friday of the month so that Moorehead could attend.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1908, p. 132, MHS.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Jan. 15, 1908, p. 133, MHS.

a crossed letter from Mrs. Moore announced the impending arrival of two more blankets and reported on her ill health. Sparhawk urged that the League "settle matters with Mrs. Moore lest she become too ill and Mr. Moore come in," but the committee granted a bit more time to considering the matter.⁷⁰ Sparhawk's fear of Mr. Moore reveals the committee members' sentimental belief that women were fundamentally good, but men were corrupt; Mr. Moore, as the trader, became the villain, and Mrs. Moore a perhaps innocent pawn with good intentions but a bad husband. In March Mrs. Moore wrote with assurances that the Navajo League was "a small organization of Indians in her community and has also a few White members," and that she believed "in its future."⁷¹ Temporarily reassured, the League more or less dropped the issue until November 1909 when Moore wrote about her "recent trip to Europe as a gift of the women back of the Navajo League." This was too much to ignore, and "the question as to their being any Navajo League" was again raised. Moorehead promised to get the Board of Indian Commissioners to look into the matter, and Lockwood noted that the National Indian Association intended to remove Mrs. Moore's name from its list of missionaries.⁷² Finally, in May of 1911, Lockwood confirmed the awful truth: there was no record of Marion Moore's missionary work among the Navajos.⁷³ At the next meeting, the executive committee voted fifteen dollars toward the removal of dying apparatus from the home of Mrs.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Feb. 7, 1908, p. 138, MHS. Sparhawk, giving no reason, resigned as secretary at this same meeting. Possibly her role in facilitating the Moore alliance prompted this move.

⁷¹ Ibid., March 6, 1908, p. 148, MHS.

⁷² Ibid., Nov. 5, 1909, p. 190, MHS.

⁷³ Ibid., May 5, 1911, p. 231, MHS.

Moore.⁷⁴ The League had been duped. (The Moores abandoned their trading post in the fall of 1911 because of some unspecified scandal.⁷⁵)

However embarrassing, the League's adventure with the Moores pointed to how closely the interests of traders and reformers had become aligned. Mrs. Moore may have misrepresented herself, but her concerns about Navajo weaving perfectly matched those of the League. Both wanted to improve the quality of the weaving and develop the market for the finished rugs. Both sought to replace cheap aniline dyes with higher quality ones, to provide means of cleaning the native wool, to encourage the recovery and retention of certain blanket designs, to speed the weaving process, to encourage the weaving of high quality and saleable rugs, and to open a market for these rugs on the east coast. Other traders on the Navajo reservation shared these concerns. The fundamental difference between these traders and the League was that the traders made a lot more money. As Moore said in his 1911 catalog:

Not the least part of my satisfaction in what has been accomplished, is the greatly increased prosperity and better conditions of life that has come to the people among whom I live and work, as their earning power has grown. But, I am no philanthropist and must disclaim any philanthropic motives for my part in it. I saw, or at least believed that I

⁷⁴ Ibid., June 2, 1911, p. 232, MHS. Interestingly, the record books refer consistently to Mrs. Moore alone, as if to preserve the fiction that the League's business had been solely with her, not with her husband as well.

⁷⁵ McNitt, p. 256. If McNitt knew the nature of this scandal, he did not say. His only comment is that Moore was "not responsible" for it. The timing of his departure seems suspiciously linked to the League's investigations.

saw, in their dormant skill and patience a business opportunity, provided they could be aroused, encouraged and led on to do their best; and a market for their product could be established.⁷⁶

The financial benefit to the Indians was, as the League hoped, significant: Moore claimed to have paid \$13,000 to his weavers between 1910 and 1911.⁷⁷ And according to the Indian Office's statistics, Navajo weaving income had risen from \$50,000 in 1899 to around \$300,000 in 1903 to \$675,000 in 1911.⁷⁸ If Moore played as large a role in increasing this market as he claimed and as most historians have agreed (McNitt counts him as one of six traders who significantly improved the quality of Navajo weaving⁷⁹), then the League definitely deserves a share of this credit, especially for providing him with superior dyes. Thus as distasteful as the League's support of the Moores may have been, it probably did help Navajo women increase their income. What was good for traders was, in some sense, good for Indians.

MORE TRADERS, BOLDER PLANS

The League flew from Mrs. Moore right into the arms of two more traders. One, Mrs. Reitz, was the wife of a former partner of John B. Moore's, and the other, R. F. F. Simpson, was a trader of exceedingly low moral

⁷⁶ Moore, The Catalogues, p. 53. Moore had also professed his concern for the Indians' welfare and future in an earlier article. See J. B. Moore, "How Shall We Aid The Navajo?" Indian Craftsman 1 (May 1909): 29-38.

⁷⁷ Moore to Assistant Commissioner F. H. Abbott, Sept. 2, 1911, quoted in McNitt, p. 254.

⁷⁸ Figures from Bailey and Bailey, pp. 151-152.

⁷⁹ McNitt, p. 257.

standards. Both, however, willingly participated in a new League scheme to have native wool sent to Boston where it could be washed and dyed, then sent back to New Mexico where weavers would turn it into quality rugs which would then make the long train ride back to the League's Boston salesroom. Improbably complex, this plan made sense if one considered that it both saved the Indian women the labor and inconvenience of washing and dyeing (which everyone agreed was difficult because of their limited resources) and preserved a crucial element of the Navajo rug -- the native wool. The cynic might argue that it also enabled a trader such as Simpson to ship his own wool (he had large sheep herds) to be cleaned and dyed, sell it to the Indian women, and still be able to legitimately claim that his blankets were woven from "native" wool. Lockwood had first hatched this idea in 1906 when he had tried, unsuccessfully, to get Mrs. Moore to ship him some raw wool.⁸⁰ Casting about for another player, Lockwood located one just as the Moore scandal was breaking. In January 1907 Lockwood determined to "arrange with Eldridge . . . to do our Navajo work"; Eldridge seemed like a safer partner than the alluring but disappointing Moore.⁸¹ At the May 1907 meeting, Lockwood announced that Mr. R. F. F. Simpson of New Mexico had agreed to his wool dyeing/cleaning proposal and would turn said wool into two-dollar rugs.⁸² At last the League appeared to have a reliable source of inexpensive high quality rugs.

⁸⁰ III, Record Book III, Sept. 27, 1906, p. 89; *ibid*, Oct. 25, 1906, p. 95, MHS.

⁸¹ John S. Lockwood to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 28, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁸² III, Record Book III, May 29, 1907, p. 116, MHS.

If the League had known more about Dick Simpson, it might have been less jubilant. A tall, thin, good looking forty-four-year-old Englishman, Simpson had his generosity and good cheer to recommend him to those who traded at his post in the Gallegos Canyon, fourteen miles southeast of where the San Juan River passed Farmington. On the other hand, he was a notoriously heavy drinker and was eventually married four times, twice to Indians. The Navajos called him "Mr. Talk," and he had no problem talking his way into Lockwood's good graces.⁸³ Lockwood praised Simpson's "ability and integrity," recommending him as "being the right man for the work we wanted of him."⁸⁴ He gushed about his exacting standards and his refusal to buy any but the best rugs, and he predicted that "we had reason to expect fine Navajo rugs this autumn." Even Simpson's Navajo wife, Yana-pah, received the approbation of being "one of the most skilled of the weavers" (which in fact she was, before she died in 1912).⁸⁵ Moorehead approved of Simpson largely because he charged less for his blankets than Mrs. Moore did, meaning that the League would have more money to reinvest in the industry.⁸⁶ It was settled then, and \$105 for wool from Simpson was appropriated.⁸⁷

When Simpson's wool, which had been shipped on Oct. 11, 1907, had not arrived by February of 1908, Lockwood started to worry. The delay turned

⁸³ McNitt, pp. 295-296.

⁸⁴ IIL, Record Book III, Sept. 26, 1907, p. 119, MHS.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, May 29, 1907, p. 117, MHS. Yana-pah's name in McNitt, p. 298. Soon after her death, Simpson married Eldridge's Navajo assistant and interpreter, Annie.

⁸⁶ IIL, Record Book III, Nov. 22, 1907, p. 128, MHS.

⁸⁷ Treasurer's annual report for 1907, IIL, Record Book III, inserted on p. 133; mention of amount also on p. 142, MHS.

out to have been the railroad's fault, but in the meantime Lockwood had done a bit of checking on Simpson and come to the alarming conclusion that he had "intemperate habits." Eldridge hurried to the defense of her neighbor (in the Western sense), and wrote that she "believed in Mr. Simpson's good intentions toward the League;" despite his drinking, he was, in Eldridge's opinion, "a great big-hearted fellow" and "very good to the Indians."⁸⁸ Good intentions or not, Lockwood feared another Moore fiasco, and despite Moorehead's warm endorsement of Simpson's clerk, Mr. Wallace, Simpson himself was never again mentioned in connection with the League.⁸⁹ Instead, the League cleaned and dyed the 400 pounds of wool it had bought from Simpson and sent them to Mrs. Reitz at Two Gray Hills, a woman who had received Eldridge's strong recommendation.⁹⁰

It is difficult to believe that Lockwood did not know that Mrs. Reitz was a trader's wife, since Eldridge had written about "the Reitz's" in the context of a growing demand for rugs, but he likely was unaware that Joe Reitz had briefly been John Moore's partner at Crystal in 1896.⁹¹ Joe Reitz's passion, however, was alcohol, not Navajo rugs, and he had spent nearly a decade after his Crystal experience in Albuquerque, driving a beer wagon. Finally, in 1904, Mrs. Reitz, believing that Joe needed to get off the wagon to get on it,

⁸⁸ III, Record Book III, March 6, 1908, p. 147, MHS; Cambridge Indian Association, Annual Report for 1913 [newspaper clipping], CIAP, CHS.

⁸⁹ III, Record Book III, April 3, 1908, p. 151, MHS.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, Nov. 6, 1908, p.166; *ibid*, March 6, 1908, p. 147, MHS.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, March 6, 1908, p. 147, MHS; McNitt, p. 252.

persuaded him to buy the Two Gray Hills trading post, certain that the austere desert environment would bring him to his senses.⁹²

This trading post in a barren valley on the east side of the Chuska Mountains bought and sold mainly coarse, unexceptional blankets.⁹³ McNitt argues that the rugs made around Two Gray Hills remained inferior until Reitz was joined by Ed Davies in 1909 (he bought the post in 1912) who collaborated with George Bloomfield (who bought a nearby post in 1911) to develop the Two Gray Hills rug style that remains famous to this day: a bordered design with a central diamond pattern, woven in soft earth tones of beige, gray, black, brown, and white.⁹⁴ Rodee argues that the Two Gray Hills style owes something to "the early Crystal rugs," especially in its use of similar border patterns and oriental rug motifs.⁹⁵ Both agree that the development of quality weaving at Two Gray Hills was a slow process, directed by Davies and Bloomfield.

The Two Gray Hills style may not have fully emerged until the latter 1910s, but the Reitz's desire to improve the local weaving quality was evident by 1908. In that year, Mrs. Reitz received 400 pounds of League-cleaned and dyed wool, probably enough to make 200 of the small, pillow-sized rugs that

⁹² McNitt, p. 259.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 257, 259. While the post sat in a barren valley, the surrounding mountains drew an above-average amount of rain, providing the local Navajos with good water, timber, pasture, and game. Amsden, p. 195.

⁹⁴ McNitt, p. 259; Rodee, pp. 57-58.

⁹⁵ Rodee, *Old Navajo Rugs*, p. 58. McNitt, however, believes that the Crystal influence disappeared after the early 1920s (261). Amsden also reports that several traders told him that The Two Gray Hills rug was inspired by Moore's example at Crystal (195).

the League felt were the easiest to sell.⁹⁶ The colors (red, blue, and black) were not those that would later distinguish the Two Gray Hills style, but the concern about quality definitely preceded the arrival of Davies and Bloomfield. Moreover, executive committee member J. Weston Allen reported that on his trip to Navajo country in early 1913, he found the "best rugs" at Two Gray Hills, evidence that the quality of rugs had developed rapidly.⁹⁷

The League's relationship with Reitz seems to have been brief, and the time-consuming and complicated shipping and reshipping involved with Lockwood's plan was inefficient. Before long, Lockwood had contacted a fourth trader, Eldridge's son-in-law Harry Baldwin of Jewett, to see if he would take League dyes and clean and dye wool on the spot.⁹⁸ The League no longer appeared reluctant to work with traders to improve the weaving industry, but neither had it had any long-term success in these alliances. The Baldwin proposal came to nothing, and the League began to cast around for a different way to help the Navajo weavers. Its new sense of purpose and direction came from Warren King Moorehead, one of the few League vice-presidents who actually attended the monthly meetings.

⁹⁶ ILL, Record Book III, Oct. 2, 1908, p.164; *ibid*, Nov. 6, 1908, p. 166, MHS.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 8, 1914, p. 265, MHS.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, March 5, 1909, p. 181, MHS. McNitt says that Baldwin took over the Jewett post (also known as Hogback) in 1900; he was still there by 1911 (294, 346). The facts that Eldridge's daughter married Baldwin and that she knew the Simpsons and Reitzs, suggest that she worked willingly (and the League knowingly) with traders after the Moore incident.

"OUR 'REACH EXCEEDS' OUR 'GRASP'"⁹⁹

Warren King Moorehead (1866-1939) was the only archaeologist on the League's rolls, and was, I believe, the only professional archaeologist or anthropologist in a prominent position on any Indian reform organization prior to 1911.¹⁰⁰ Though Moorehead dug up Indians' bones for a living, his passion was the plight of living Indians. As a staunch defender of Indian cultures, he did not abide by the spurious theory that anthropologists wanted to protect Indians only so they could study them.¹⁰¹ Yet, his opinions about Indian culture were much closer to those of Mabel Reed and Mary Arnold than to Sparhawk's: he fought forced allotments, he supported Indian dances and other religious customs, and he defended even peyote use.¹⁰² A tuberculosis survivor, he was also passionate about eliminating this disease from Indian schools.¹⁰³ His successes, however, were limited. When the 1928 Meriam report (The Problem of Indian Administration) was published,

⁹⁹ III, Annual Report for 1908-1909 (1910), p. 8

¹⁰⁰ The Society of American Indians (1911) included the anthropologist Arthur C. Parker, but I do not believe that any other national organizations could claim scientists until the 1920s when a handful of new organizations were formed. Alice Fletcher was a respected speaker at the Lake Mohonk conferences in the 1880s, but after 1900, disillusioned with the assimilationist project, she stayed away from politics (see Mark, pp. 267-8). She did, however, become a League vice-president in 1916 and remained in that position through 1921. Constance Goddard Du Bois was of course a League executive committee member, but her ethnological research was "amateur" in the sense that she was neither professionally trained nor officially connected with any research institution, although she did receive research grants from the University of California at Berkeley and the Museum of Natural History in New York.

¹⁰¹ Weatherford, pp. 183-184.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 182-186.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

and among other recommendations included a call to preserve native arts, Moorehead ground his teeth: "One of the aggravating features of our 'Indian System' is the doing again, by new people what has already been done by others."¹⁰⁴ Surely he was reflecting, in part, on what he had done with the Indian Industries League between 1907 and 1915.

Moorehead thought big, consistently proposing plans designed to aid Indians at more than a narrow local level and simultaneously scheming to increase the League's power. When, in 1907, he became a regular participant at the League's executive committee meetings, he pushed the League into a more active role than it had previously taken. Disturbed by the League's relatively lackluster promotional efforts, he suggested a nationwide marketing strategy aimed at a well-defined market segment. Rather than halfheartedly pursuing an informal information-sharing policy with the OIA, Moorehead proposed the establishment of a federal Bureau of Indian Arts and Industries, of which he would be the head. Not content with the little prestige and power that the League brought him, he successfully lobbied for his appointment to the Board of Indian Commissioners. Recognizing the sales limitations of a single Boston Indian goods store, he dreamed of partnerships with large department stores in each of the major eastern cities. In short, Moorehead brought to the League a bold and forward-thinking vision for promoting Navajo weaving and Indian arts in general. Ultimately unsuccessful because of the political and economic climate of the times, Moorehead's plans nevertheless anticipated the future.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted (no source given) in Weatherford, p. 189; Brookings Institution, Institute for Government Research, The Problem of Indian Administration (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).

More than any other League member, Moorehead recognized that the market for Navajo rugs would have to be enlarged beyond Boston and a few summer resort areas where people sympathetic to the Indian reform movement gathered. His first proposal was that the League send out 25,000 informational slips to all the museum collectors and curio dealers in the country. This method, he said, "made the best kind of advertising because it went among persons likely to respond."¹⁰⁵ A sound direct-marketing campaign, it was undone by its unfortunate coinciding with the economic panic of 1907, the effect of which was still being felt in April of 1908 when executive committee member Mrs. Elizabeth Coolidge opined that "the outlook for the country promises darker financial times."¹⁰⁶ It was an inopportune time to strike up interest in the purchase of luxuries such as Navajo blankets.

Unfazed by the economic climate, Moorehead networked energetically to draw attention to the Navajo rug industry and the League's work. He went to the Fall 1908 Mohonk Conference with a supply of rugs, selling all seventy-one dollars worth, and receiving both orders for more and a promise from Hugh Smiley to help him sell rugs during the summer.¹⁰⁷ Emboldened by his success and the enthusiasm of his new contacts, Moorehead announced at the League's December 1908 meeting that he was seeking a vacant position on the Board of Indian Commissioners which he

¹⁰⁵ IIL, Record Book III, Sept. 26, 1907, p. 120, MHS.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Jan. 15, 1908, p. 135; *ibid*, April 3, 1908, p. 152, MHS.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Oct. 2, 1908, p. 154; *ibid*, Nov. 6, 1908, p. 167, MHS. Albert K. Smiley was a League vice-president and a co-founder of the Mohonk Conference.

hoped to use to fund trips west so that he could buy blankets for the League directly from the Indians at a lower cost; the League sent a letter of support, and later that month Theodore Roosevelt appointed Moorehead to the coveted position. He immediately conveyed to the executive committee his intention to ask the commissioners to support the building up and improving of Navajo industries among the San Juan River and to arrange for a system whereby the Indians could ship their goods "directly to some large Eastern market, preferably the League."¹⁰⁸ Moorehead foresaw, though, that the little League store would not be able to handle large quantities of rugs, and he recommended finding "outlets for goods through some large department stores in the principal cities."¹⁰⁹

Finding no material support among the commissioners for his Navajo industries plan, Moorehead turned his attention to the Indian Office itself, recommending that the government establish a Bureau of Indian Arts and Industries of which he would be the director. Given four or five employees with an "ethnological" knowledge of Indians, he believed that he could greatly increase the quality and production of Indian arts as well as improve their flow to the market.¹¹⁰ The Bureau's focus would be primarily on

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Dec. 4, 1908, p. 170; *ibid.*, Jan. 1, 1909, p. 172; *ibid.*, Feb. 5, 1909, p. 178, MHS. Moorehead's timing was good; Bailey and Bailey note that in 1908 Navajos in the San Juan region earned most of their income through rug sales (152).

¹⁰⁹ III, Record Book III, Jan. 7, 1910, p. 199, MHS.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Dec. 3, 1909, p. 195, MHS. Warren King Moorehead to Robert G. Valentine (Commissioner of Indian Affairs), April 6, 1910, Warren King Moorehead Papers, Box 42, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. Here again Moorehead anticipated the ideas of later Indian reformers such as Oliver La Farge, who asked for a "wedding between ethnology and politics"; see Oliver La Farge, Raw Material (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 181.

Navajo weaving. Moorehead wished to avoid making the Bureau an "arts and crafts affair" that would push for collector quality rugs. Rather, he wanted to encourage weavers to work "in the old way," letting "the Indians make without trying to change or suggest or anything of that sort."¹¹¹ Giving the Indians this control over their art would require getting the older Indians interested in "making rugs and baskets again," which was fine with Moorehead who was convinced that assimilation and allotment destroyed Indians. As he wrote Commissioner Valentine, "protection is the essential thing" for Indians.¹¹²

Moorehead disagreed with Lockwood over the degree to which the planned Bureau should promote better dyes. He felt Lockwood's dye schemes were too complicated and expensive. Lockwood imagined going personally "to the Navajo Country to establish a few stations where wool could be properly scoured and dyed. These plants could then be left in charge of some intelligent Indian, if possible, otherwise with an employee or Field Matron at Indian Agencies."¹¹³ Moorehead and Lockwood did agree, however, that a big part of the Bureau's success would depend on educating the Indians about the market possibilities for their arts, and as Lockwood's wool processing idea

¹¹¹ Warren King Moorehead to John Lockwood, March 7, 1910, WKMP, Box 33, OHS. His disclaimer about "collector quality rugs" is curious since collectors coveted rugs made in the "old way." Perhaps he meant that Indians should be allowed to follow their own aesthetic inclinations, as they once had.

¹¹² IIL, Record Book III, March, 4, 1910, p. 208, MHS. Warren King Moorehead to Robert G. Valentine (Commissioner of Indian Affairs), April 6, 1910, WKMP, Box 42, OHS.

¹¹³ Quotation from IIL, Annual Report for 1908-09 (1910), p. 7. George Wharton James praised the League's efforts to introduce better dyes and authenticity seals. James, Indian Blankets, p. 66.

indicates, both men wanted to give the Indians greater control over the production and sale of their rugs. By contracting directly with the League (under the Bureau's auspices), a non-profit organization, the Navajos would be eliminating the trader (and his profits) from the rug industry.

Moorehead desperately wanted the Bureau plan to succeed because "what he wished chiefly was the power to go out to the Navajo Country, with our Secretary [E. May Caldwell], to do something to bring this about."¹¹⁴ Without government authority, Moorehead recognized that his influence would be slight. Unfortunately, by the end of 1910 it became clear that the government Bureau would not materialize.¹¹⁵ At the same time, the League had to close its Boston store and sell its remaining stock.¹¹⁶ When the League closed its salesroom in 1910, it had vowed not to reopen it "until the government assisted."¹¹⁷ Without a permanent store, the League conducted occasional informal sales, but its drive to support Indian arts had been significantly stalled. Moorehead outlined the bleak future: "If the League could have been helped by the Indian Office, and the great Bureau of Industries instituted, the League would have become a dominant factor in perpetuating Indian arts. [But the failure to do so] leaves the League to fight single handed."¹¹⁸ The last gasp for a few years came in October 1911 when

¹¹⁴ IIL, Record Book III, March 4, 1910, p. 208, MHS.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Dec. 2, 1910, p. 221, MHS.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Jan. 7, 1911, p. 222, MHS.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Jan. 18, 1911, p. 225, MHS.

¹¹⁸ Warren King Moorehead to John Lockwood, Nov. 14, 1910, WKMP, Box 33, OHS.

Lockwood tried to interest Katharine Drexel in establishing a place where weavers could dye and clean their wool.¹¹⁹

The League's interest and optimism were renewed after J. Weston Allen's trip to New Mexico in early 1913. He returned with good news about Agent Shelton's annual Shiprock Fair at which traders exhibited their best rugs and the Indians thus "saw work from many different sections and could compare their own with others." Shelton and Allen discussed a plan proposed by Charles Davis in 1912 to guarantee rug quality by introducing a system of government tags that would certify quality and authenticity.¹²⁰ Allen also found that traders were agreeable to the sale of better dyes, if they were not too expensive. He theorized that a system of government prizes for artistic excellence would also benefit the rug industry.¹²¹

Spotty meeting attendance during 1913 and 1914 slowed the League's response to Allen's findings, but by 1915 a new Navajo rug industry plan had emerged, this time one that would require less government support. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells tentatively promised to fund the establishment of dyeing and scouring plants in the Indian schools at Shiprock, New Mexico and Fort Defiance, Arizona. Here the Indians

¹¹⁹ IIL, Record Book III, Oct. 6, 1911, p. 234, MHS. Drexel had established a mission at a trading post in Cienega Amarilla, New Mexico which she had bought in 1901. McNitt, p. 250.

¹²⁰ IIL, Record Book III, May 1, 1913, p. 258, MHS. Davis was an Indian Office employee. His plan went into effect, with mixed results, for a few years beginning in 1914. For a description, see Robert Fay Schrader, The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), p. 8.

¹²¹ IIL, Record Book III, May 1, 1913, p. 258, MHS. See also McNitt, p. 345. Shelton had run the annual fair since 1909.

(teachers and students) would be taught how to dye and clean wool "in a thoroughly scientific way," using the German-made dyes the League had developed years earlier. The government would provide all funds for setting up this industry, but because it had no authority to purchase rugs made by Indians, the League would buy all of the rugs produced from this treated wool, distributing them to one large dry-goods or carpet house in each of five or six major cities. In addition, the rugs would "bear a Government seal, stating that they are made of clean wool and that the colors are fast dyes. Each blanket will bear the name of the weaver, and what has, perhaps, seldom if ever happened to a Navajo weaver, it is hoped that she will get in addition to the fair price paid on delivery of her work, an additional dividend on the rugs" sold.¹²² Scheduled to take effect in the fall of 1916, this plan never got off the ground because the World War boosted the value of raw wool, making rug weaving unnecessary and unprofitable.¹²³ Rug production declined during the war, and after rising briefly around 1920, fell for the rest of the decade.¹²⁴ With the failure of this plan, the League basically ceased to exist, meeting occasionally in its final few years, but doing and deciding nothing of importance.¹²⁵

The League's activity during the Moorehead years anticipated almost exactly similar actions that would be taken by concerned individuals, organizations, and institutions during the 1920s and 1930s and would

¹²² IIL, Record Book IV, Jan. 19, 1916, [secretary's typewritten report for 1915, insert], p. 13, MHS; IIL, Annual Report for the Year 1915 (1916).

¹²³ IIL, Record Book IV, Jan. 16, 1918, p. 28, MHS.

¹²⁴ Bailey and Bailey, p. 152.

¹²⁵ Under Moorehead's direction, the League did spearhead investigations into abuses in Oklahoma and at the White Earth Reservation.

culminate in the 1935 establishment of a federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board.¹²⁶ After 1920 a number of new organizations formed in response to the government's failure to protect Indians' cultural and political rights and to protest its apparent abandonment of policy designed to promote equality.¹²⁷ In Chicago in 1923, the Grand Council Fire of American Indians was organized to revive Indian traditions; a few years later it would demand, "Put in every school Indian blankets, baskets, pottery."¹²⁸ The annual Inter-Tribal Ceremonial and Fair was established in Gallup, New Mexico in 1922 to share Indian traditions and arts with whites.¹²⁹ The decline of Navajo weaving in the 1920s coincided with the arrival in New Mexico of large numbers of Easterners drawn by the growing artists' colonies at Taos and Santa Fe. Fascinated by Indians and their arts, these newcomers determined that the quality of Navajo weaving had slipped. They feared that without immediate attention to the revival of traditional dyes and designs, the rug

¹²⁶ Schrader, The Indian Arts and Crafts Board. For studies of the people involved in the revival of Southwestern arts see, for example, Beatrice Chauvenet, Hewett and Friends: A Biography of Santa Fe's Vibrant Era (1983); Eldredge; Gibson; Molly H. Mullin, "Consuming the American Southwest: Culture, Art, and Difference" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1993); Rushing, Native American Art and the New York Avant-Garde; Babcock and Parezo, eds., Daughters of the Desert.

¹²⁷ For example, in a 1921 Office of Indian Affairs bulletin, "Educating the Indian," elaborate justifications were made for a curriculum which featured mostly domestic and industrial instruction, eliminating "non-essentials" such as academic lessons in "ratios and average, approximations, divisibility, foreign money, metric system, partial payments" and so on (4). Such an education did not even pretend to prepare Indians to negotiate the world off their reservation.

¹²⁸ The American Indian, Feb. 1927; *ibid*, June 1928.

¹²⁹ Coolidge, p. 151. Molly Mullin dedicates a chapter of her dissertation to this Fair.

industry would degenerate beyond recovery. Mary Cabot Wheelwright, a Bostonian member of the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs (founded 1922), visited New Mexico in 1920, became interested in Navajo rugs, convinced one trader to encourage his weavers to use native vegetable dyes, and paid top money for these rugs which she then resold in her Boston Indian art shop.¹³⁰ Another EAIA member, Amelia White, opened an Indian arts store in New York City in 1922.¹³¹ In 1925 concerned New Mexicans founded the Indian Arts Fund (Santa Fe) to preserve Indian arts.¹³²

Like the League before it, in the early 1930s the National Association on Indian Affairs (previously the Eastern Association on Indian Affairs) researched the "old" colors used in blankets and contacted Lucy C. Cabot of Boston who got Walter Heintz at Dupont to help her prepare some inexpensive but high-quality modern equivalents.¹³³ Revival enthusiasts lamented that until recently every Pueblo Indian was "nearly an artist," but had since been reduced to selling shoddy tourist wares.¹³⁴ As if these similarities were not enough, in 1929 the Indian Defense Association (another organization formed in the early 1920s) proposed an OIA arts and crafts corporation that would promote the production and sale of native arts and supply authenticity seals.¹³⁵ Finally, in 1935, Moorehead's twenty-five year old dream of a federal department devoted to the promotion of native

130 Amsden, pp. 223-225.

131 Schrader, p. 14.

132 Schrader, p. 34.

133 Amsden, pp. 225-229.

134 Coolidge, p. 91.

135 Schrader, p. 29.

arts became a reality when Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier instituted the Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

CONCLUSION

If the League hoped to open a market for Indian arts, it would have to follow the traders' example and encourage the Indians to revive old styles and, as much as possible, persist in the use of old materials. Paradoxically, the Indians could develop a modern arts industry only by embracing their past; consumers wanted their Indian goods to be recognizably Indian. A well-woven rug was not enough; it also had to "look" Indian. Even Eldridge recognized this, and in a 1906 letter to the League she recommended:

Be sure to have some of the oldtime diagonal weave. There are only a few women now who can do that weaving. Blankets are very scarce now; the traders cannot get enough on this side of the reservation to fill the orders, and I think as the Indians get to farming more and more the supply will be getting shorter and shorter, and such an industry as the League proposes may be the means of 'saving the fittest.'¹³⁶

Here were reversals: seeking out old Indians to preserve the past; seeing farming, the supposed goal of allotment, as a threat to Indian prosperity; and imagining the "fittest" Indians to be those most connected with their traditions. Conscious of its awkward position, the League assured its members that

while trying to lead needy Indians into self-support and to open a market for their native arts, [it] has no belief in limiting Indians to

¹³⁶ Eldridge letter, quoted in IIL, Annual Report (1907), p. 9.

native arts, but hopes to see them side by side with the white man in all arts and industries and professions, American citizens with American opportunities to the full, and sharing American life.¹³⁷

The League may not have wanted to "limit" Indians to native arts, but by 1922 it and its members had constructed an elaborate explanation of the inherent value of those arts.

¹³⁷ ILL, Annual Report (1907), pp. 9-10.

CHAPTER 6

"AN OPEN GATEWAY INTO THE LOST EDEN OF THE SOUL":
CONSTANCE GODDARD DU BOIS AND HER REASSESSMENT OF THE
CIVILIZING PROJECT

This final chapter will turn to the life and work of Constance Goddard Du Bois, examining her deep intellectual engagement with the implications of the promotion of Indian arts, an activity the League officially represented as philanthropic, but which Du Bois's writings reveal as much more. In just over a decade of helping and studying Indians, Du Bois developed an interrelated set of ideas about Indians, their arts, their place in American society, and the future of white American women. In the process, she came to question a range of widely accepted beliefs about the superiority of Western culture, beliefs which had undergirded the assimilationist project. She raised issues and took positions echoed by artists and scholars today who write about gender, power, and art in American Indian cultures. To highlight these similarities, the chapter will interweave Du Bois's ideas with those expressed by other students of Indian culture, including a group of American Indian artists and leaders who have written about the collections in the National Museum of the American Indian.¹ Four themes will be touched upon: the

¹ National Museum of the American Indian, All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994); Tom Hill and Richard W. Hill Sr., eds., Creation's

idea of the Indian artist as an individual, the way in which Indian art empowers women, the "truth" of the mythic world view implicit in Indian art, and the power of art as a conservator of Indian cultures.

"THE MOST EXPRESSIVE VEHICLE OF THEIR INDIVIDUALITY"

The recognition of Indian artists as individual artists is a twentieth-century development. Not until the 1920s and 1930s did Indian arts such as weaving and pottery become strongly connected with the names of individual Indian artists.² Moreover, it has been argued that while a few of the early traders individualized the occasional Indian artist for marketing purposes, "it remained to the scholars to plumb the real meaning of artistic individuality in arts American cultures."³ Du Bois was exploring this individuality from quite early on.

Du Bois's strong reform roots dictated that her interest be precisely in individual Indians. The League itself stated one of its two objects to be "to open individual opportunities of work to individual Indians." This attention to the individual Indian was reiterated in the nature of Du Bois's aid to the Mission Indians. Every barrel of clothing, every dollar sent, benefitted a specific Indian; in her letters, Watkins named each Indian beneficiary and described exactly what each had received. Du Bois expressed frustration with those who eschewed her requests for aid for individual Indians on the theory

Journey: Native American Identity and Belief (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

² Janet Catherine Berlo, "Introduction," in The Early Years of Native American Art History: The Politics of Scholarship and Collecting, ed. Berlo (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

that attention should be focused instead on larger structural change efforts.⁴ Not surprisingly, then, Du Bois wrote of Indian art as individual art. Du Bois had recognized individual Indian artists, both literary and visual, as far back as 1899. In a manuscript about Indian literature, she praised several Indian authors, and mentioned the visual work of Angel De Cora.⁵

Du Bois linked the primitive woman's creativity to her individuality. The primitive woman, she believed, "stood alone, a self-poised individuality, expressing herself in her work, capable of doing that which she had to do, inventing, creating, expanding her methods."⁶ One could see this individuality in the primitive woman's baskets, no two of which were identical. The interpretation of symbolism in baskets was difficult because the civilized observers "have so lost the individual consciousness" that they tried to "generalize" about the symbols, assigning to each a permanent rather than an individual meaning.⁷ The "real meaning" of the symbols, however, was personal, known in its specifics only by the individual weaver; one might find several weavers using similar designs, but each weaver made subtle modifications to these designs or recombined them, imparting to her baskets "a truly artistic sense of freedom in invention."⁸ Another contemporary student of Indian baskets wrote that the weaver "inscribes upon them

⁴ Constance Goddard Du Bois to Charles F. Lummis, Feb. 17, 1902, Charles F. Lummis Papers, Southwestern Museum.

⁵ Du Bois, "The Entrance Upon Literature of the North American Indian," PCGD, Reel 5, #67; Du Bois, untitled manuscript, PCGD, Reel 6, #82.

⁶ Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," p. 5, PCGD, Reel 3, #23.

⁷ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 4, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

[baskets] her personal translation of the world lying around her."⁹ A modern weaver agrees: "Ultimately, only the weaver knows what is going on with a particular basket."¹⁰ Again and again, Du Bois dwelt on the connection between individuality and the "art impulse" which civilization tended to crush.¹¹ The primitive artist, whom Du Bois usually refers to as a "she," "wrought to her own satisfaction, and was thus most completely an artist."¹² She "acknowledge[d] no tutor but Nature and the indwelling sense of what [was] fit and proper for her work."¹³

For those who worried that baskets made by younger Indians, who had been tainted by civilization's influence, would be only superficially "Indian" and therefore worth nothing to the collector, Du Bois insisted on the individual weaver's creative adaptability. She noted that despite the aesthetic value of the old baskets, some of the new baskets had "gained rather than lost from the commercial impulse."¹⁴ Du Bois offered an anecdote that proved both the danger of white influence and the resiliency of the Indian artist, her ability to overcome the misguided aesthetic suggestions of ignorant white people. A schoolteacher at a remote Mission Indian village persuaded the

⁹ Irene Sargent, "Indian Basketry: Its Structure and Decoration," Craftsman 7 (Dec. 1904): 333.

¹⁰ Susan Billy, "So the Spirit Can Move Freely," All Roads Are Good, p. 204.

¹¹ Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folklore: The Culture Hero, Chaup," p. 32, PCGD, Reel 3, #25.

¹² Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," p. 7, PCGD, Reel 3, #23.

¹³ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," p. 3, PCGD, Reel 3, #38a.

¹⁴ Du Bois, "Manzanita Basketry, A Revival," The Papoose 1 (June 1903), p. 24.

resident weavers to copy the "fantastically crudely colored scrap baskets" he remembered from New England. The resulting baskets were "ugly and uninteresting" and the "false idea" of these baskets lurked in the region for some time, a "fatal loss in their art." But one woman, "a true Indian artist," like an oyster making a pearl from a grain of sand "shaped the new idea into a thing of beauty." Unable to connect Indian symbolism with the alien New England form, the weaver "chose the very identical design that would harmonize with it," in this case "an idealized figure of a generic goblet." Du Bois appraised the resulting basket as "a unique example of the Indian art instinct, feeling after truth in design."¹⁵ In this story, Du Bois uneasily resolved the apparent contradiction that an Indian woman could be on the one hand a "true artist" and on the other easily susceptible to having her art corrupted.

"WIFE, MOTHER, AND ARTIST"¹⁶

When Du Bois reviewed Otis T. Mason's Woman's Share in Primitive Culture, she recognized that it held a troubling, if unstated, prophecy of women's future. As a patron and student of American Indian art, she saw visual evidence that the modern woman had lost the "innate artistic sense" her primitive sisters enjoyed.¹⁷ In fact, modern woman had lost control of a whole range of arts and industries still practiced by American Indian women,

¹⁵ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," pp. 12-13, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

¹⁶ D. Y. Begay, "A Weaver's Point of View," All Roads Are Good, p. 82.

¹⁷ Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," PCGD, Reel 3, #32. This review appears to have been written in 1899 or shortly thereafter.

until even the modern woman's "domestic hearth" was "all invented, set up, and manipulated by men."¹⁸ Why had this happened? Why did men rather than women control the entire range of arts and industries which Mason credited primitive woman with having invented? Quite simply, Du Bois answered, because men had organized and cooperated while each woman continued to pursue her work independently, as an "artist."¹⁹ Modern women, then, must "imitate" men in their cooperation, or "perish as drones in a hive, no longer to be wholly fed by others." Du Bois ruled out the attractive life of the primitive woman as an alternative for modern women, but her lament of its passing spoke to white women's discontent with their modern condition: ". . . let us cast an appreciative glance at the beginnings of things when it was permissible for each individual to be himself [*sic*]; and let us glorify the faithful skill of the lonely primitive toiler."²⁰ The Woman's Building had presented women, modern and primitive, as individual artists, but in 1899 Du Bois saw that artistry and all it represented only in woman's past, represented by Indian women's present.

Du Bois connected Indian basketry with its rich cultural context to argue that modern white women had disproportionately lost "individual creative power" in the evolution of society. Du Bois credited her appreciation of the primitive woman to "the new interest manifested in ethnology and the technique of primitive industry," particularly by Mason's book.²¹ Du Bois argued that "in the changing processes of evolution there must be loss as well

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

as gain,"²² and that this loss had been in the area of "creative ability" and had disproportionately affected women.²³ Addressing a woman's club, she asked her audience, "Have you ever stopped to think of what we have lost as women in the upward advance[?] Progress in civilization must entail some loss, as progress in evolution does. . . . the loss, I mean, of native technical ability and of individual creative power."²⁴ The "qualities of courage, self-expression, original invention, insight into the visible workings of Nature, sincerity and fidelity to an idea" are "found, perhaps, in an ignorant old Indian basketmaker; while the average society woman may possess not one of them."²⁵

Thus the encouragement of Indian women's basketry expressed the discontents of white women with their own present condition. Vicariously, through promoting and buying baskets, these women could recapture their own vanished past. Du Bois waffled on how white women should approach their own present condition, arguing in one place that they needed to follow men's lead and organize themselves but arguing elsewhere that they should beat an aesthetic retreat from the over-organization of modern civilization, following the lead of Indian women. Regardless, her assessment of primitive woman's achievements points to a connection between cultural feminism

²² Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," p. 13, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

²³ Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," p. 1, PCGD, Reel 3, #32. Elsewhere she uses the phrase "individual creative power."

²⁴ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," p. 2, PCGD, Reel 3, #38.

²⁵ Du Bois, "The Indian Woman as Craftswoman," *Craftsman* 6 (July 1904): 391.

and cultural primitivism which has not been widely noted, and it indicates that Du Bois's influence on the League's native industry development had larger cultural meanings. Today, leading Indian feminist theorists such as Paula Gunn Allen couch their arguments for the superiority of Indian culture in the terms used by Du Bois and popularized by the collection and study of Indian women's arts.²⁶

Several historians have drawn attention to how female anthropologists and archaeologists at the turn of the century were drawn to the Indian cultures because they perceived the women in them to have more power.²⁷ Catharine Oglesby suggested that "the Pueblo woman is a possessor of the home, where the husband is but a guest who may remain only until she chooses to wrap his belongings in a bundle and set it on a doorstep."²⁸ In 1922, the anthropologist Elsie Clews Parson wrote a short story, "Waiyautitsa of Zuni, New Mexico," which focused on a little girl and all that she could expect in the context of gender roles as she matured into a Zuni woman; according to the story, her restrictions will be similar to those white women face, but her freedoms will be different and better.²⁹ Mary Austin and numerous other women looked to Indian women's lives as models of a new kind of female liberation. Melody Graulich says Austin

²⁶ Paula Gunn Allen, The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

²⁷ Parezo, Hidden Scholars.

²⁸ Catharine Oglesby, Modern Primitive Arts of Mexico, Guatemala and the Southwest (1939. Reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), p. 11.

²⁹ Elsie Clews Parson, ed., American Indian Life (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1922).

learned from Indian women the meaning and motions of work, which led her to understand what it meant to be an artist. Because they were able to merge the domestic life with the self-expressive life of the artist, because they lived so close to nature, which informed their art, because they seemed to unite culture and nature, these women -- she called them "chiseras" - had a powerful influence on Austin.³⁰

On the other hand, though Austin "never undervalued women's culture, she did recognize the limitations of 'women's sphere' and argued that women should have choices in their lives."³¹ Du Bois too expressed qualified envy for the artistic richness of Indian woman's domestic sphere.

The Indian woman's artistic impulse was all the more enviable because it exhibited itself in her everyday work. As she invented the various industries (ceramics, weaving, architecture, etc.), primitive woman also developed aesthetics of form and design.³² Since the Indian woman was a primitive woman, her work too should be appreciated as art: "Indian art and industry are so closely allied as to be almost synonymous terms."³³ This view would be repeated by many subsequent observers; in 1939 Catherine Oglesby wrote that "Indian art is simple, functional and above all alive" in the sense of being used in the home.³⁴ Female Indian artists today continue

³⁰ Melody Graulich, "Afterword," Mary Austin, Earth Horizon (1932; repr., Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), p. 387.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

³² Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," p. 2, PCGD, Reel 3, #32.

³³ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," p. 3, PCGD, Reel 3, #38a.

³⁴ Oglesby, p. 15.

to stress the connection between their art and their everyday lives as mothers and wives. Rina Swentzell prefers Indian pottery to much studio work because making the former is "an especially feminine activity" done while cooking and taking care of the kids.³⁵ Making pottery is "part of the act of just living."³⁶ D. Y. Begay, a Navajo weaver, says that weaving is "part of a woman's activities," though she admits it is hard to balance her "three me's -- to be wife, mother, and artist."³⁷ Unfortunately, few people in the nineteenth-century Indian reform movement had recognized either that Indian women had their own industries or that they were artists. As a result, their skills were being ignored and allowed to die out, their artistic sensibilities becoming tainted by false civilized ideas.³⁸

When the works of the primitive woman artist were compared to those of the modern artist, civilization appeared to have lost. Where Indians fed, clothed, and sheltered themselves with the products of "artistic industry," the modern workman toiled mindlessly in a "degraded commercialism," producing nothing worthy of the name "art." The civilized artist was too closely bound by conventions to produce truly "original" work or to take real "pleasure" in his work. Incapable of "the real expression of his individuality," any attempt at originality was just a "grotesque" and

³⁵ Rina Swentzell, "The Sense of Process," All Roads Are Good, pp. 32, 34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³⁷ D. Y. Begay, "A Weaver's Point of View," All Roads Are Good, pp. 82, 84.

³⁸ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," p. 7, PCGD, Reel 3, #38a.

"exaggerated" version of the many ideas "forced upon him" through his art training.³⁹

The civilized woman, however, had suffered the loss of both the workman and the artist, for she had once combined the two. Where the Indian woman decorated her baskets with "meaning," working "from Nature" and evolving "forms from her own intelligence," the white woman "can not do anything without copying." Having "absolutely lost the power of individual expression," white women "live all [their] lives surrounded by ugly and meaningless things." In Du Bois's opinion, "the contrasted status of the modern and the primitive woman" was to the disadvantage of the former. The modern woman had not only lost her "art instinct" but had also been separated from "her chosen work," it having been taken over entirely by men.⁴⁰ The textile and ceramic arts were now directed by men, and even the domestic hearth was entirely the product of men's machines. Like so many of the speakers at the 1893 World's Fair, Du Bois lamented the apparent decline in the status of the modern woman, and she groped for its cause and solution.

Introduced by Charles Lummis to Charlotte Perkins Stetson's [Gilman's] work, Du Bois read Women and Economics (1898) soon after it was published and reported that she "enjoyed it immensely, agreed with most of it."⁴¹ According to Gilman, men had organized themselves while women

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ Du Bois, "The Symbolism of Indian Basketry," pp. 2-3, PCGD, Reel 3, #38; Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," pp. 2-3, PCGD, Reel 3, #32.

⁴¹ Constance Goddard Du Bois to Charles F. Lummis, May 25, 1899, Charles F. Lummis Papers, Southwest Museum. Charlotte Perkins Gilman,

had remained independent, isolated, gradually giving up each of their industries.⁴² Despite this loss, the primitive past and the independent women in it held little attraction for Gilman. "Progress" was all-important, and that progress would mean that women would have to move out of the home and out of unhealthy individualism. In Du Bois's review of Mason's book, she referred approvingly to "the evil conditions which Charlotte Perkins Stetson so forcibly describes as resulting from her [woman's] abandonment of her early place as bearer of half the burden of toil in the primitive community," and she followed Gilman in arguing that "women have now everywhere set themselves to the new and unfamiliar task of organization."⁴³ But her enthusiasm for women's co-operative efforts was much more restrained than Gilman's and diverged in crucial respects from Gilman's position.

Where Gilman saw women weakened and enslaved by individualism, Du Bois saw them creatively empowered by it, at least within the context of tribal cultures which still existed. She reminded her audiences that Indian cultures affirmed the individual:

"we should remember that it is one of the losses involved in civilization [originally, "improvement"], all advance being relative, that with us the individual is crushed almost into non-existence, by

Women and Economics (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Co., 1898). For a good discussion of Gilman and other cultural feminism theorists, see Josephine Donovan, Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism (New York: Continuum, 1992).

⁴² Mason had noted that "In co-operation women have always been weak. Even as beasts of burden they seldom worked in pairs" (160).

⁴³ Du Bois, "Primitive Woman and Her Modern Sister," p. 8, PCGD, Reel 3, #32. Gilman, p. 166.

every device of our modern methods. In the natural [originally, "primitive"] life the individual is supreme. This is the whole secret of the superiority of primitive art; and it seems evident that in time an inevitable [originally, "a healthy"] reaction will lead us back out from the unhealthy [last page missing]."⁴⁴

The preservation of tribal cultures seemed to guarantee not only that Indian women would avoid their civilized sisters' loss, but that white women would have available for their study a working model of their own past and perhaps of their future.⁴⁵

Du Bois waxed eloquent about the individuality of expression in the Indian woman's basket, even while she warned that it was that very individuality that had allowed men to organize and usurp all of the practical and fine arts. Still, her recommendation that women organize themselves so that they could compete with men seemed an uneasy solution. White women might, however, organize themselves around the issue of Indian women's art, saving and glorifying it in a way that would both help Indian women and elevate the image of women in general. White women on the East coast could promote, sell, and buy Indian women's arts, thereby surrounding themselves with symbols of women's historical creative power. In time, many of these white women would move to the West and especially to the Southwest, immersing themselves in the study of Indian cultures and

⁴⁴ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," p. 8, PCGD, Reel 3, #38a.

⁴⁵ In Paula Gunn Allen's writings about Indian women, she posits what she call the "red roots of white feminism," a set of Indian ideas about society which "provided the basis for all the dreams of liberation that characterize the modern world." Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, pp. 214, 220.

thus vicariously recapturing a past that they imagined as richer than their own present; in the desert these women could regain their individuality.

Paradoxically, this preservation of the Indian woman's individuality required enormous organization: women's clubs, reform organizations, the federal government, educational institutions, scientific organizations, museums, and arts societies all enabled women to find the professional support necessary for them to undertake this relocation, realize a revival of native arts, and refashion their own selves.⁴⁶ From this activity would arise a more fully articulated respect for primitive cultures and their conception of gender roles. Writing nearly a hundred years after the Columbian Exposition, American Indian scholar Paula Gunn Allen was able to say directly and succinctly what those women of Du Bois's era were only beginning to become self-conscious of: "the [Indian] tribes see women variously, but they do not question the power of femininity."⁴⁷

"BELIEF IN UNSEEN FORCES"⁴⁸

Dedicated to preserving the primitive creativity of Indian women, Du Bois not surprisingly came to argue that white women (and men) too should look to the past, not only to encourage the protection of Indian cultures but also to elevate the creativity and spirituality of white Americans. She acknowledged that "we could not return to primitive life," but insisted that

⁴⁶ See Mullin, Parezo, and Babcock for studies of these women.

⁴⁷ Allen, The Sacred Hoop, p. 44.

⁴⁸ Richard W. Hill, Sr., "Epilogue: Art Through Indian Eyes," Creation's Journey, p. 238.

we "might retain some of the virtues of primitive life."⁴⁹ Some of these virtues were intellectual and spiritual:

Let us strive to regain our early heritage of freedom in thought and mind; the precious boon of originality which is fast becoming lost to us; the glorification of the individual which is well-nigh impossible in our high-pressure modern life. Let us make our outings into the forest, not with nature-study leaflets for a guide, but with the Beloved of the Trees to whisper to our consciousness, and the Beings of Water to guide our journeyings. A return to the primitive may be for many of us an open gateway into the lost Eden of the soul.⁵⁰

The study and consumption of Indian art also promised to invigorate the American arts, giving "glimpses and promptings which may flower for us into an American art-epoch."⁵¹ In the Indians' world view, Du Bois detected not superstition, but spiritual truths.

Du Bois's researches into Mission Indian mythology convinced her that Indians apprehended religious truths with a directness that eluded most whites, while her study of Indian baskets exposed the Indians' richer vein of artistic creativity. She cast civilization as having dulled people's sense of connectedness with the natural world and with each other. By contrast, Indians apprehended truth directly from nature:

⁴⁹ Du Bois, "Studies of Mission Indians," PCGD, Reel 6, #82.

⁵⁰ Du Bois, "A Preliminary Account of the Mission Indians," p. 10, PCGD, Reel 3, #31. A slightly different version of this appears in a notebook, PCGD, Reel 6, #73.

⁵¹ Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folklore: The Culture Hero, Chaup," p. 25, PCGD, Reel 3, #25.

We do not see Nature as the Indian sees it. We have sentiment but it does not sink very deep into many of us. To us a tree is a tree. To the Indian it is something else. To them all nature is animate. You read books and the books talk to you. But the trees talk to us.⁵²

Modern man had forgotten the good things that had been lost in the process of evolution, but the Indian "can still interpret our past for us." Du Bois urged modern Americans to revisit their own psychological and cultural past through the study of Indians, and in so doing enrich America's national art: "The fresh fields of oral tradition, legend and song borrowed from the Indian might reinforce our literature; the unspoiled fancies might fertilize our art."⁵³

Some would argue that Du Bois's rush to discourage the pernicious influences of white civilization on Indian culture reflected a broader American conviction that Indians were incapable of becoming civilized. Her regret for the vanishing Indian might suggest that she accepted new theories of race and culture which "locked" the races into various levels of civilization. But Du Bois clung to the idea of social evolution; she did not question the possibility that Indians could assimilate. Rather, she deeply doubted the accepted belief that progress was an unmitigated good, for Indians, whites, or women. A cultural primitivist, she idealized Indian culture and criticized her own. Cultural primitivism by itself was nothing new in America, but coming from an Indian reformer was unusual indeed.

⁵² Du Bois, untitled and undated manuscript, PCGD, Reel 5, # 63.

⁵³ Du Bois, untitled and undated manuscript, PCGD, Reel 6, # 73.

Fundamental to Du Bois's assessments of Indian arts was her acceptance of the idea that Indian culture represented an earlier stage of civilization. Culturally, the Indian was presently where the white Euro-American had been several millennia ago. Just as her friend Watkins referred to the elderly Mission Indians as her "babies," Du Bois wrote of Indians being in the "childhood of a race."⁵⁴ In its constant "asking Why," the Indian mind was like "the childish mind," differing, however, in the act of actually answering its questions; like every race in its early stages, the Indian was "one" with Nature, "cognizant of her [powers], meanings [and] moods" in a way that civilized man no longer was.⁵⁵ The Indians' arts and ceremonies were directly inspired by nature; for example, a "wailing chant . . . began like the sighing of the wind in the trees. Its minor cadences were reminiscent of the very music of nature herself, the noise of the elements, the voices of the waves, the language of the beasts of the forest."⁵⁶ On her first trip to Mesa Grande, she noted that the "soft native language [was] like twittering of birds."⁵⁷ Du Bois imagined that if "Indian civilization had been left to evolve, undisturbed," it would have developed and repeated "in kind and thought not in quality the early Greek epoch."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Du Bois, "Art and Industry Among the Mission Indians," unpublished lecture, p. 1, PCGD, Reel 3, #38A.

⁵⁵ Du Bois, "The Return to the Primitive," p. 1, PCGD, Reel 3, #37. In the manuscript, "powers" has been crossed out, "meanings" and "moods" written in the margins.

⁵⁶ Du Bois, *A Soul in Bronze*, p. 215.

⁵⁷ Du Bois, "Notes from Mesa Grande," PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

⁵⁸ Du Bois, "Mission Indian Folklore: The Culture Hero, Chaup," manuscript, p. 13, PCGD, Reel 3, #25.

This view of race, culture, and evolution had been widely held by Indian reformers in the late nineteenth century, and undergirded their assimilationist policies. Indians could be assimilated because the civilizing process could be speeded up. Du Bois shared this conviction. Her observations of the Mission Indians indicated their ability to assimilate Christianity and other trappings of "civilization." She also worked closely with one Indian man (her primary interpreter) to help him through the bureaucratic red tape to get a clear title to his homestead, individual home ownership being a central goal of the assimilation movement.

But although Du Bois accepted the theoretical possibility of rapid assimilation, her practical experience led her to question the assumption that "civilization" was an unqualified "good" for either whites or Indians. On the Indian side, she discovered that "assimilated" Indians were not welcome in the larger racist white society, nor were they able to apply their new knowledge on reservations. An assimilationist education effectively "destroy[ed] the tribal organization" and the "home," leaving Indians without a functional community.⁵⁹ For whites, the evolution of society, she believed, had cost it a degree of artistic skill, religious truth, and social cohesion which Indian cultures still had.

Du Bois's cultural primitivism evolved naturally from frustration with white people's automatic assumption that by virtue of their race they were more civilized than Indians. In her 1898 novel A Soul in Bronze, she expressed the familiar reform complaint that the term "civilized" could hardly be used to describe the whites of low morals and character who lived

⁵⁹ Du Bois, draft of letter to Estelle Reel, July 1898, PCGD, Reel 5, #63.

near and preyed off of Indian communities. As the schoolteacher (modeled on Watkins) in A Soul in Bronze says, "the Indian's virtues are all his own; his vices those of the white man."⁶⁰ The novel's hero, a perfectly assimilated Indian who surpasses white men in intelligence and virtue, stands as an example of how quickly Indians could become "civilized." In this scheme the idea of civilization still held preeminence, and Indians, while perhaps naturally less "savage" than their worst white neighbors, were nevertheless presented as having no traditions worthy of retention. The Indian past meant savage superstition, not primitive civilization. Her earliest published articles about the Mission Indians described their religious festivals and praised their Christian behavior, but criticized the old men who danced the old dances after the Christian part of the fiesta was over.⁶¹ Prior to 1900, her reform activity revolved mostly around sending money and clothing to the Indians, publicizing their needs, and affirming their humanity.

But summers at Mesa Grande put Du Bois on ever more friendly terms with Cinon Duro, an old chief and a primary informant about Diegueno mythology, and in time she became a convert to his Indian world view (Fig. 23). As chief, Cinon was responsible for performing the key religious ceremonies of his tribe. Over the years Du Bois gained his trust and he shared

⁶⁰ Du Bois, A Soul in Bronze, p. 206.

⁶¹ Du Bois, "Some Unknown Missions of California," Land of Sunshine 11 (Nov. 1899): 317-324; Du Bois, "A Fiesta at Mesa Grande," Land of Sunshine 12 (Jan. 1900): 86-90. Du Bois wrote a fictional story of an old Indian shaman who came to accept the superior power of Christianity; "The Song of Death," Southern Workman [offprint, no date], pp. 230-236, PCGD, Reel 2, #16a.

his knowledge with her, permitting her to record his songs and stories. Populated with ravens, owls, flies, animals of all kind and supernatural events, these songs and stories excited Du Bois's intellectual curiosity. They were the raw stuff out of which she was building her anthropological career. But for Cinon, the knowledge he shared was about a real world. His stories were true. As a story teller, though, he was also an artist, and here the boundaries between fiction and reality blurred. A contemporary Indian has written that "shamans were perhaps the original artists, for they pursued their beliefs into new ways of knowing, ritually transforming themselves from one shape or form of being into another to travel to the spirit world."⁶² To understand the objects produced by Indian artists, Tom Hill Sr. has written, "requires an imaginative and empathic mind, an openness to the philosophies behind the objects' creation"; one has "to be open to belief in unseen forces. You have to understand the spirit world of the artist in order to see how an object reflects that world."⁶³

Graced with an open mind, Du Bois penetrated Cinon's stories to the spirit world they reflected and declared what she found to be "truth." Here she anticipated Carl Jung, who visited the Pueblo Indians and concluded that "Their religious conceptions are not theories to them . . . but facts, as important and moving as the corresponding external realities."⁶⁴ Du Bois recognized this as well:

⁶² Tom Hill, "Vision and Virtuosity," *Creation's Journey*, p. 106.

⁶³ Richard W. Hill Sr., "Epilogue," pp. 237-238.

⁶⁴ C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, recorded and edited by Aniela Jaffe, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage, 1963), p. 250.

At the risk of being cast forth from all communion with scientists, I must maintain that there is such a thing as mythic truth. I am justly indignant when unreflecting persons class these old beliefs as 'fiction.' That is truth which, as an explanation of the facts of existence of the natural world, is reverently received and piously maintained by thoughtful human beings. . . . To collect them [Indian myths] in this spirit [as truth] is to enjoy a mental enlargement, a projection of the self into a world beyond our Twentieth Century thinking.⁶⁵

Scientific truth was vulnerable on several counts. First, the universe was too large for one to "classify and coordinate the facts" in such a way to "explain it"; in this endeavor, whites, not Indians, were "like little children casting pebbles to gauge the depths of the ocean." Second, scientific theories "built by one generation are overturned by the researches of the next," making any claims to truth patently false.⁶⁶ Third, scientists provide people with answers, "stunting the imagination," preventing people from having to reason and think on their own, as Indians do.⁶⁷ Finally, Indian myths, as art, revealed "the truth which lies in art, in poetry, in the unsounded deeps of human nature."⁶⁸ Armed with scientific apparatus -- notebooks, pencil, camera, recording device -- Du Bois uncovered spiritual truths which would never make it into her published ethnological reports.

⁶⁵ Du Bois, "Star Myths of the Mission Indians," PCGD, Reel 6, #77. This unpublished manuscript appears to have been written after her published article on mortuary ollas (1907).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Du Bois, untitled manuscript, PCGD, Reel 6, #73.

⁶⁸ Du Bois, untitled manuscript, PCGD, Reel 6, #79.

If there was truth in "fiction," however, why not use the medium of fiction to express the truths in Indian myths? Jolted by the accidental death of Cinon, Du Bois took the final months of 1906 to commit his knowledge to paper.⁶⁹ The result was "The Raven of Capistrano: A True Wonder Tale," a story of a young Indian's tutelage in Luisenos religion at the knee of an old shaman, Ramon (Cinon). Published serially in Out West between May and December 1907, the story was Du Bois's affirmation of her respect for Cinon's ideas:

This Wonder Tale is true in the sense that everything contained in it which is out of the ordinary is founded on the truth as held by generations of rational human beings; which, as Carlyle teaches, gives verity and value to ideas. . . . so closely has the original Indian conception been followed that truth, rather than fiction, may be claimed as the result.⁷⁰

Readers who discovered talking stones and animals, self-propelled ollas, and parallel dream worlds may have found this statement difficult to believe.

The hero of "The Raven" is Jose, a seventeen-year-old Indian who hides with Ramon to escape being sent off to the Carlisle school. When

⁶⁹ Cinon died on September 17, 1906. By November 16 Du Bois had finished fifty-three pages of "The Raven," and on December fifth she completed the story; Du Bois, "Date Book for 1906," PCGD, Reel 4, # 51. She offered the story to several publishers, but none was interested; Century Co. to Du Bois, April 12, 1907 and Doubleday Page and Co. to Du Bois, June 3, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2. Cinon's accident (he fell off his wagon) occurred because he was rushing to see her before she left Mesa Grande for the summer. In "The Raven" Ramon (Cinon) takes a similar fall rushing to warn Jose; and, like Cinon, he lingers for three weeks.

⁷⁰ Du Bois, preface, "The Raven of Capistrano: A True Wonder Tale," Out West 26 (May 1907): 430.

Ramon hears that a stone spoke to Jose and promised him that "the raven will teach you," he embraces Jose like a son and vows to educate him "in the learnings of the past" and initiate him into the secret ceremonial knowledge as his own successor.⁷¹ Jose is the chosen student because he has "the seeing eye" and for him "nature was the book he had earliest learned to read."⁷² Jose's selection makes sense according to a contemporary Cahuilla Indian (closely related to Cinon's tribe) who claims that a shaman or tribal leader was chosen on the basis of his "special quality" or "innate abilities," not on hereditary factors.⁷³ With his "seeing eye" and through the influence of a ceremonial pipe, Jose enters a dream world and recovers sacred knowledge, preparing himself to become the "chief and priest, religious teacher and poet composer" that he would so naturally have been in the "old Indian days."⁷⁴ The possibility of recovering sacred knowledge in this manner is affirmed by Indians today. An old Pomo basket weaver told her young student that "the lost songs would come through at another time in the future, they will come through to the young people in their dreams. The songs aren't gone -- they may be in the rocks now, or somewhere down by the river, or someplace. . . . they are just waiting for the right person to bring them out again."⁷⁵ In many respects, Du Bois was this right person.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 433; *ibid.*, 27 (July 1907), p. 57.

⁷² Ibid., 26 (June 1907): 538-539.

⁷³ Richard Milanovich, "Beauty in the Desert," All Roads Are Good, p. 63.

⁷⁴ Du Bois, "The Raven of Capistrano: A True Wonder Tale," Out West 27 (Aug. 1907), p. 157.

⁷⁵ Billy, p. 206.

Jose's dream journeys are represented in "The Raven" as actual events, as reality rather than hallucinations. One student of Indian ceremonial literature claims that white observers never penetrated beyond their Western interpretations of such dream journeys as metaphoric or psychological, but Du Bois seems to have accepted that there was a separate reality accessible through dreams.⁷⁶ In addition, she recognized that such ceremonial stories, as "sacred," were more than religious but held actual "power." Again, this is an understanding posited by some of today's scholars.⁷⁷

Mythic truths lived only so long, however, as people believed them, and here was the tragedy in Du Bois's wonder tale. The power of the spirit world had been weakened by the skepticism of the young Indians educated to scorn both the old ways and the old men who still believed in them. Sadly, the Indians now believed in the white man's power: money.⁷⁸ Du Bois faced this problem when her young Indian interpreters would editorialize about the impossibility of the old men's stories: "Alas, for the blight of modern skepticism before which the flowers of fancy fade frost-bitten."⁷⁹ Cinon took Du Bois into his confidence because the young people were not interested in his knowledge and because he wanted Du Bois to record the "pure truth as his father taught him" so that it would never be "lost or forgotten."⁸⁰ Du Bois

⁷⁶ Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, p. 71. A contemporary Jungian analyst (Robert Bosnak), who studied with Australian aboriginal shamans, has recently written about the "reality" of the dream world. "The Very Real World of Dreams," *Boston Globe*, 26 Feb. 1996, p. 63.

⁷⁷ Allen, *The Sacred Hoop*, pp. 72-73.

⁷⁸ Du Bois, "The Raven of Capistrano: A True Wonder Tale," *Out West* 27 (Oct. 1907): 349.

⁷⁹ Du Bois, untitled manuscript, PCGD, Reel 2, #17.

⁸⁰ Du Bois, "Cinon Duro," pp. 13, 15, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

wrote these truths down, but the "Raven's" Ramon dies and the hero, Jose, loses his belief and decides to follow the white man's path, spelling the end of the "dead past."⁸¹

"THE ARTIST IS THE BRIDGE BUILDER"⁸²

If "The Raven" had been a true wonder tale, the past would not have died with Ramon. Rather, Du Bois would have acknowledged that the past was embodied in the baskets, myths, and other objects she collected and was even sought out by young Indians she knew. Although Ramon's sacred rituals failed to extinguish the ceremonial dance bonfire because the people no longer believed in the ceremony's power, Watkins wrote to Du Bois that at a ceremonial dance held in Cinon's honor, "the fire was danced out, truly, truly."⁸³ When the young Indians Rosalie Nejo and Frances La Chappa read "The Raven," they found the story "not all new."⁸⁴ On the first anniversary of Cinon's death, the Indians lit hundreds of candles by his grave.⁸⁵ Today many of the desert Indian tribes of Southern California are federally recognized, still very much alive and still protective of their ceremonies.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Du Bois, "The Raven of Capistrano: A True Wonder Tale," Out West 27 (Dec. 1907): 529, 531.

⁸² Richard W. Hill, Sr., "Epilogue," p. 234.

⁸³ Mary Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 22, 1906, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁸⁴ Mamie Robinson to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Nov. 10, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁸⁵ Ed Davis to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Dec. 17, 1907, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁸⁶ Milanovich, pp. 60, 64.

The past does not die when connected to the present through the medium of art. A contemporary Indian observes that "art teaches about ancient world views, as well as modern realities. It bridges differences. And the artist is the bridge-builder."⁸⁷ These bridges can be crossed by Indians and whites. Nearly two years after Cinon's death, Watkins wrote of "The Raven" that she was "very happy that our dear hermanito [Cinon] could live again, that the thousands could become acquainted with his beautiful thoughts and character."⁸⁸ Among the desert Indians themselves there is hope that the collections in institutions such as the National Museum of the American Indians will help those "trying to restore the pride of being Indian and pass that pride along to our children." To aid this task Richard Milanovich illustrated his essay with objects from the museum which could have been collected by Du Bois herself: a photo of a Mission Indian home taken by her associate Ed H. Davis, a pair of Diegueno sandals, an olla, a milkweed burden net, and a basket with a rattlesnake design.⁸⁹

One might argue that Du Bois stole rather than preserved the Indians' past since she removed so much of it from California. From her perspective, however, Indian culture was being destroyed by a combination of misguided government policy that separated Indian children from their parents and inexorable encroachment of whites on tribal lands. That her efforts to collect sacred implements used in the ceremonials would mean those objects would

⁸⁷ Richard W. Hill Sr., "Epilogue," p. 234.

⁸⁸ Mary Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, May 22, 1908, PCGD, Reel 2.

⁸⁹ Milanovich, pp. 62, 65, 66, 68, 69. Du Bois had collected examples of all of these objects (and more) during her visits.

be lost in time and space to younger Indians did not seem to cross her mind.⁹⁰ She was conscious, however, that these were sacred objects she gathered, and she justified her possession of them on the basis that they were given to her out of trust rather than sold to her out of necessity or greed; Cinon was adamant that "These things [sacred stories] were not to be sold for money," but he gave them to Du Bois "on condition that she would write them down and put them in a book so that they should never be lost and forgotten."⁹¹ On his death bed, Cinon scorned his nephew who "sells the sacred things to the white people, and dances the eagle dance for pay."⁹² Given Du Bois's tremendous respect for and love of Cinon's people, one can imagine that if she were able to participate in today's debates about the repatriation of sacred objects from museum collections, she would be in favor of the total return of all such materials.

CONCLUSION

The radical implication of Du Bois's promotion of Indian arts and her defense of Indian cultures was that Indian culture was better in some fundamental ways than white culture. Primitive had advantages over civilized. Women, especially, had gained little from civilization. Du Bois was calling for a kind of return to the primitive, at least in aesthetics. Thus her parlor talks should be seen as early modernist primitivism texts, and also as significant critiques of gender roles in modern America. Most important is the fact that her arguments were carefully tied to the objects of Indian culture,

⁹⁰ The ceremonial literature itself was of course sacred too.

⁹¹ Du Bois, "Cinon Duro," p. 13, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

⁹² Du Bois, "The Chungichnish Worship," PCGD, Reel 2, #18.

particularly the baskets. In this way she constructed a new image of Indians (especially women) that focused on their artistic creativity and suggested that their entire culture -- the myths, history, beliefs -- were available through art objects that were nevertheless highly individualistic. With this paradigm she set up a perfect rationale for the consumption of Indian arts, for such arts not only displayed individual artistic creativity, but also encoded a tribal tradition that held a powerful critique of modern civilization, particularly of modern gender roles. As commodities on display in a home, Indian baskets became expressions of their owner's self.⁹³ The Indian basket in the parlor said, "I identify with Indian women who are spiritual, powerful, and creative." This message would draw many white women to the Southwest, a center of Indian arts, in the next few decades. It was a message that could be bought rather than lived.

If physical and mental illness had not cut her career short in 1909, Du Bois would likely have become a prominent member of the intellectual elite that "discovered" the American Indian in the 1910s and 20s. Unfortunately, she began to complain of "nerve strain" by 1905, though she kept up her summer visits to California until 1907, and continued to send money to Watkins until 1909.⁹⁴ Between those years, however, Watkins' letters to her

⁹³ Jean-Christophe Agnew and Karen Halttunen have written about this collapse of the boundary between the self and the commodity world; see, respectively, "A House of Fiction: Domestic Interiors and the Commodity Aesthetic" and "From Parlor to Living Room: Domestic Space, Interior Decoration, and the Culture of Personality," in Consuming Visions, ed. Simon Bronner.

⁹⁴ Mary Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, Jan. 21, 1905, PCGD, Reel 1. Mary Watkins to Constance Goddard Du Bois, April 3, 1909, PCGD, Reel 2.

friend contained frequent advice about various "cures," and by 1909 Du Bois admitted to Lummis that she had "been quite out of health" for several years and had been "suffering from nervous prostration" since August, leading her to "give up many of [her] occupations and interests."⁹⁵ Later that year she broke down entirely, and five years later her longtime companion, Dr. Caroline R. Conkey, revealed that Du Bois had recognized neither friends nor family since that time.⁹⁶

When we remember Du Bois and the efforts of all her friends in the Indian Industries League and other reform organizations formed to aid American Indians through the promotion of their arts, we should, I think, take the time to look at some of the baskets typical of those sent east from Mesa Grande. Go to any museum with such baskets -- invariably displayed by the score in large glass cases, devoid of interpretation except for the ubiquitous tags with tribe name and approximate date -- and first observe the visitors who file by. They pause perhaps to study an unusually shaped basket or to exclaim aloud at the time such weaving must have consumed; some pass quickly, eyes glazed. Stay a little longer, and you will hear someone speak with authority about a basket: it was used in this or that ceremony, the repeated triangle pattern symbolizes a mountain range, that is the such-and-such stitch. Wait a bit longer and someone will volunteer that baskets don't

⁹⁵ Constance Goddard Du Bois to Charles F. Lummis, Jan. 6, 1909, Charles F. Lummis Papers, Southwest Museum.

⁹⁶ Caroline R. Conkey to Charles F. Lummis, April 28, 1914. Charles F. Lummis Papers, Southwest Museum.

do much for him. Wait all afternoon and return for a week, and you will never hear these stories:

Angela Lachapa, mother of our good Petria made this basket for La Constancia whom she loves very much. She told me her story as she sat warming her frail old hands. She was a girl when the chimes at Santa Ysabel rang, silver chimes calling a thousand Indians to prayer (Fig. 24). We laughed at her account of her girlish pranks, and tears came when she showed the brown welts made by the lash to punish her for not praying correctly. She laughed until the tears came when she told of marrying a man of ninety years and blind in order to have the freedom accorded to married women.

Jacoba Pena is over a hundred years old and is the great-grandmother of several children. Her poor trembling hands wove these rounds feeling and holding the basket against the sun in order to see the next stitch.

Poor old Victoria Rodriquez is dead many years. She was a dainty little woman, fond of pretty clothes and of white people's ways. Her daughter brought the basket with tears in her eyes. She said, "the dear little mamma's basket. But babies were hungry and sentiment has no place where hunger dwells."

While the cannon were booming at the famous battle of San Pasqual, old Angela sat weaving the circles in this worn basket. She sat on the mountains overlooking the valley watching the hated white men and the yet more hated Mexicans murder each other. She said,

"They will all be dead and we shall be free." She was about a hundred years old when she died, and saw her land swallowed up by the gringo.⁹⁷

These are the stories we must learn if we are to, as Du Bois so often said, get past "our surface view" of Indian life. The "meaning" of these baskets is not in the shape and stitches and colors, but in the weavers' stories, in the histories of how and why these baskets were made (Fig. 25).

⁹⁷ Mary Watkins, "Notes," PCGD, Reel 4, #57.

CONCLUSION

In 1921 the Indian Industries League disbanded quietly, dispiritedly, with little fanfare or self-congratulation. Sparhawk wrote a brief summary of the League's history which named some of the individual Indians helped over the years by small loans, described some of the native industries fostered, and spoke of the general aid dispersed to many government workers and missionaries.¹ She made no sweeping claims about the League's impact on Indian policy, but from our perspective we can note several later developments for which the League deserves some credit. It played a role both in changing attitudes toward Indian cultures and in suggesting government policies which would come to pass in the 1930s. Moreover, by bringing Indian arts before the public, the League participated in an early twentieth-century movement in which Indians began to exert more control over their own image.

The League's activity waned a few years after it sold off its stock of Indian goods (1910). Meeting activity declined as did reports from field workers. Moorehead investigated conditions among the Indians in Minnesota and Oklahoma, and the executive committee discussed the possibility of establishing a government employment agency for Indian school graduates as well as the need for Indians to receive educations beyond the grammar school level. In 1917 the League spearheaded a drive to provide

¹ IIL, Record Book IV, March 30, 1921, p. 50, MHS. The League's corporation was officially dissolved by the state in 1922.

relief for three old Indian women living in Lakeville, Massachusetts who were said to be descendents of Chief Massasoit. Navajo rug sales continued on a small scale through 1918, but for the whole of 1919 the executive committee met only once.²

The League's activity slowed as a whole generation of men and women connected with the organization aged and died: Daniel Dorchester (1907); Sibyl Carter (1908); Mary Dewey (1910); Walter C. Roe (1913); William Mowry (1917); vice-president Hollis Frissel, the principal of the Hampton Institute (1917); John Lockwood (1920); Chester Dorchester (1921); Sara Kinney (1922). Other key members survived only a decade or so after the League's dissolution: Frances Sparhawk died in 1929, Alberta Houghton in 1931, and Warren Moorehead in 1939. The aging of the League membership also affected the Cambridge Indian Association, which disbanded in 1923.³

In March 1921, the executive committee voted to dissolve the League and disperse its funds between the National Indian Association, the Indian Rights Association, and Henry Roe Cloud's American Indian Institute (Wichita, Kansas). The funds were to be used by those organizations "to open individual opportunities of work or of education to be used for self support to individual Indians, and to build up self supporting industries in Indian communities."⁴ Cloud's Institute, modeled after the Hampton Institute, would keep alive the League's desire to provide educational opportunities for Indians, though now that education would be overseen by Indians

² IIL, Record Book IV, MHS.

³ Ames, p. 91.

⁴ IIL, Record Book IV, March 10, 1921, p. 46, MHS.

themselves.⁵ The NIA promised to use its share of the League's funds in its new Rocky Boy mission station (Montana) where efforts were underway to create a small woodworking industry and to develop the market for the women's bead work. Several recent substantial donations from people who had died made these contributions quite large: \$2,000 to Cloud's Institute, \$1,000 to the IRA, and \$500 to the NIA. It was a sadly fitting closure to the League's history -- just when it had the capital with which to work, it had run out of energy to do any work.⁶ The League had not labored totally in vain, however.

One of the most significant results of the League's promotion of native arts was to broaden reformers' faith in Indians' humanity to include faith in their cultural values. When the Cambridge Indian Association marked its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1911, it spoke to this broadening, noting that "We have seen of late a movement among ourselves that draws us nearer in sympathy to the sons of the forest . . . which gives us more respect for savage life than our forefathers had." Part of this respect came as "educated Indians like Dr. Eastman, the Sioux, and Angel DeCora, the Winnebago, interpret for us the customs and higher ideals of their people." The other part of this respect stemmed from the influence of contact with Indian arts: "There is a

⁵ Henry Roe Cloud, "From Wigwam to Pulpit: A Red Man's Own Story of His Progress from Darkness to Light," Missionary Review of the World 38 (May 1915): 328-339; Lee McCrae, "Work of the Roe Indian Institute," Missionary Review of the World 43 (Nov. 1920): 995-996. Henry Roe Cloud (1884-1950) was the adopted Indian (Winnebago) son of Walter C. Roe and a graduate of Yale University (1910).

⁶ *Ibid.*, June 30, 1921, p. 61; *ibid.*, John W. Clark to Annie Fuller, Jan. 10, 1922, p. 81 [insert]; *ibid.*, John W. Clark to Annie Fuller, Jan. 17, 1922, p. 83 [insert], MHS.

finer appreciations, too, of the Indians' beautiful and vanishing arts, their symbolic baskets and woven histories, and desire to preserve, while yet there is time, the records of their aboriginal life."⁷ As respect for "woven histories" grew, the urge to erase that history waned; the appreciation of Indian arts went hand in hand with the revision of some seriously flawed assimilationist ideas such as forced off-reservation education and the allotment of tribal lands. Efforts to develop and preserve Indian arts gave Indians an image disassociated from warfare, arrested the divisions between old and young Indians which educational efforts had previously fostered, encouraged a sense of Indian pride in their culture, and underscored the economic importance of Indian arts.

The League's various plans to involve the government in the promotion of Indian arts, though unsuccessful, anticipated the possibility that government policy might protect rather than destroy Indians' cultural resources. When Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier crafted the Indian New Deal under Franklin Roosevelt's administration, he instituted an Indian Arts and Crafts Board which recognized the cultural significance and economic potential of Indian arts. Significantly, this policy emerged only when the Indian Office stopped the allotment of reservations and encouraged tribal self-determination.

Finally, the League's history points to a significant continuity in the Indian reform movement: the role of the artist as a shaper of public images of Indians. Lydia Maria Child, Catharine Sedgwick, John Greenleaf Whittier,

⁷ Historical Sketch of the Cambridge Indian Association (Cambridge: Cambridge Indian Association, 1911), p. 12, CIAP, CHS.

Helen Hunt Jackson, Frances Sparhawk, Constance Goddard Du Bois, Mary Austin, and after 1910, a host of literary and visual artists were active defenders of the American Indian and shapers of Indian policy. Such artists had always represented Indians (or at least "good" Indians) as sensitive, intelligent, spiritual -- the opposite of the bloodthirsty savage image -- but not until the twentieth century did such defenses incorporate accurate depictions of specific Indian cultures. Du Bois presented her readers with Indians' actual ideas, cast as artistic and spiritual. After 1900 the number of books about Indian mythology boomed and, along with the demand for Indian arts, created an awareness of the richness of Indian cultures.

The move to bring native art and myths to the public's attention gave Indians themselves a measure of control over shaping their own image. Du Bois and Doubleday were among the first white Americans to speak of an Indian contribution to American culture not just in the sense that white Americans could incorporate the story of Indians into the national literature and art (as had been tried in the early nineteenth century⁸) but that Indians themselves could tell their own stories in words and images.⁹ Charles Eastman, Zitkala-Sa, Pauline Johnson, and other Indian authors began telling stories about the losses entailed by assimilation; Angel De Cora and countless unnamed Indian visual artists put their artwork before the public as evidence

⁸ Roy Harvey Pearce, Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

⁹ In 1914 the League bought and distributed 300 copies of John Seger's pamphlet Tradition of the Cheyenne Indians which described the tribe's "sacred traditions"; IIL Record Book IV, March 5, 1914, p. 271; *ibid*, April 2, 1914, p. 273; *ibid*, Jan. 20, 1915, p. 3, MHS. This booklet is reprinted in Seger.

of their aesthetic sophistication. Frederick Hoxie has written that these Indians "transformed the native past from a source of shame . . . to a badge of distinction."¹⁰ The League, by labelling some of the goods it sold with the names of the individual Indian artists, and by naming artists in its annual reports, encouraged a more complex perception of Indian culture.

Du Bois wrote that "Memory and reverence are two of the gifts of Nature which we have recklessly dissipated in civilized living."¹¹ She could have added that nineteenth-century reformers had themselves participated in the reckless dissipation of the Indians' heritage. The League, by moving to slow some of that dissipation, played a role in the twentieth-century recovery and revival Indian cultural knowledge.

¹⁰ Frederick E. Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland: Native American Journeys of Discovery in the Early Twentieth Century," Journal of American History 79 (Dec. 1992): 969-995.

¹¹ Du Bois, "Indian Summer in Southern California," p. 13, PCGD, Reel 2, #23.

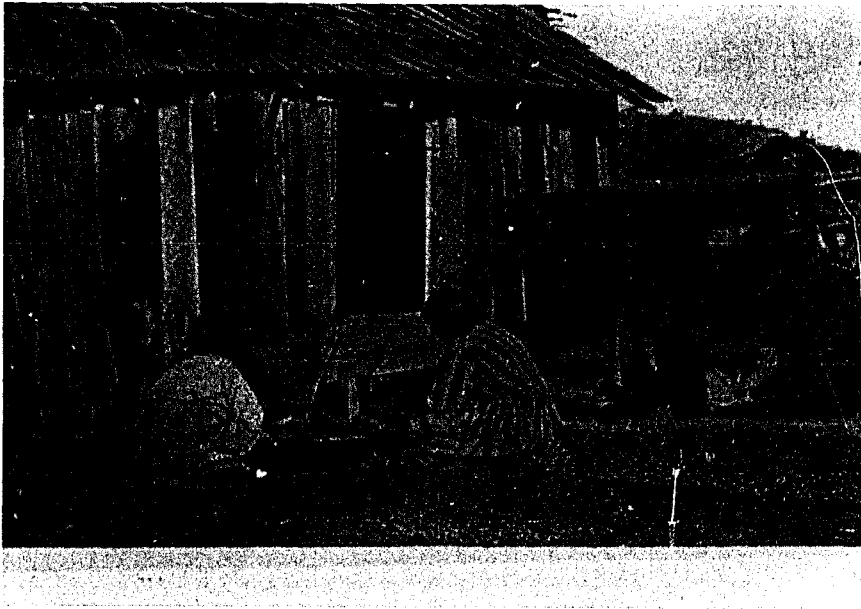


Fig. 1. "Division of Labour Under New Conditions - A California Scene." [Otis T. Mason, *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture* (1894), facing p. 7.]



Fig. 2. Indian lace-makers. [Jane W Guthrie, "Lace-Making Among the Indians," *Outlook* 66 (Sept. 1, 1900), p. 59.]



Fig. 3. Center panel of Mary MacMonnies' mural Primitive Woman. [Maud Elliott, ed., Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building (New York and Paris: Goupil & Co., 1893), p. 24.]



Fig. 4. Center panel of Mary Cassatt's mural Modern Woman. [Maud Elliott, ed., Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building (New York and Paris: Goupil & Co., 1893), p. 24.]

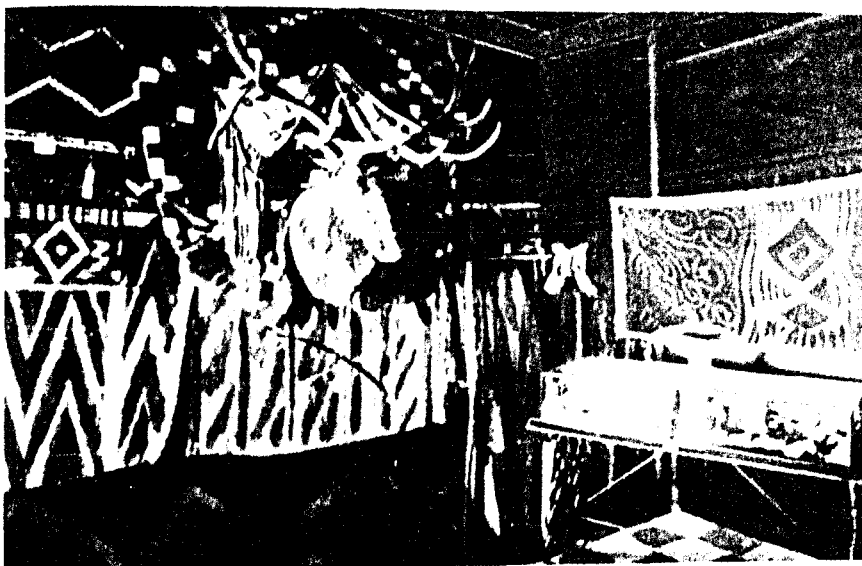


Fig. 5. Navajo crafts on display in the Woman's Building. [Jane Weimann, The Fair Women (Chicago, Academy Chicago, 1981), p. 403.]

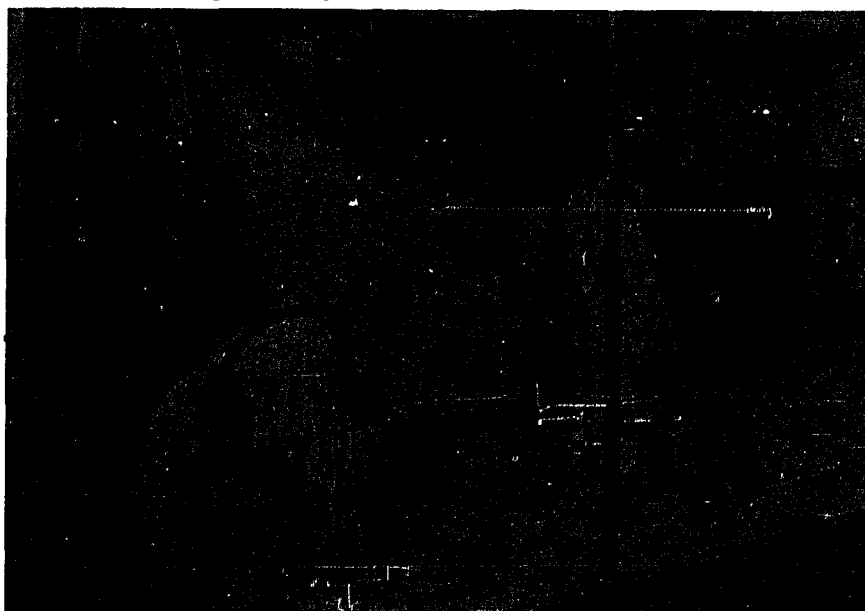


Fig. 6. Smithsonian exhibit in the Woman's Building. [Jane Weimann, The Fair Women (Chicago, Academy Chicago, 1981), p. 395.]



Fig. 7. Photo and caption accompanying 1910 article about field matrons. [Francis E. Leupp, "Woman in the Indian Service," *Delineator* 75 (June 1910): 484.]

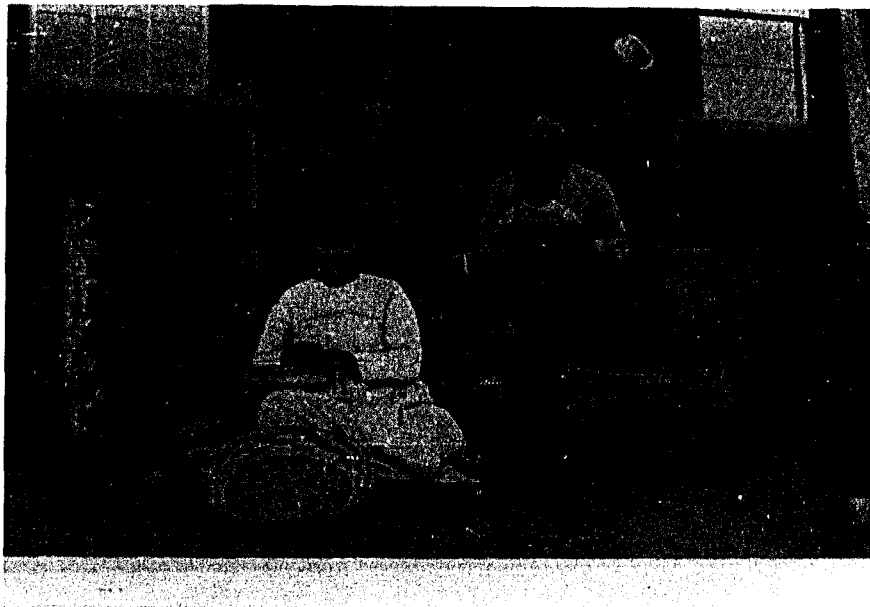


Fig. 8. "Recipricocity -- A California Family at Home." [Mason, facing p. 11.]



Fig. 9. Californian brush ramada of the kind Watkins lived in for a while. [George W. James, Through Ramona's Country (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1913), facing p. 192.]

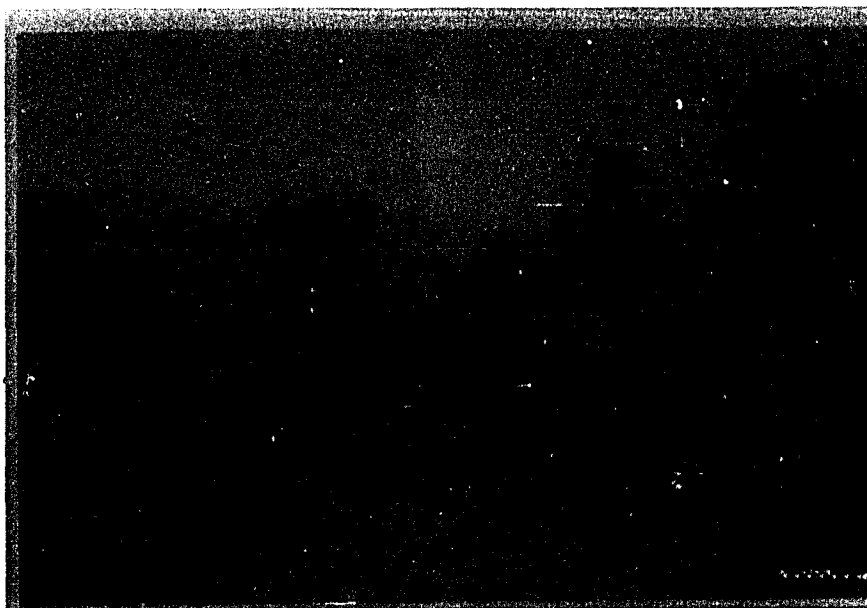


Fig. 10. Mary Reed "on the trail." [Mary Arnold and Mabel Reed, In the Land of the Grasshopper Song (1957. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).]

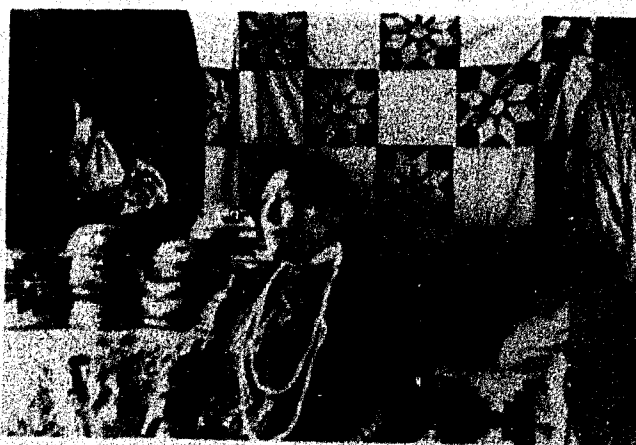


Fig. 11. Annie with her baskets. [Arnold and Reed, In the Land of the Grasshopper Song.]



Fig. 12. Bear Woman (Cheyenne) beading moccasins in the "Mohonk Lodge" work room, 1900. [John Seger, Early Days Among the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), facing p. 50.

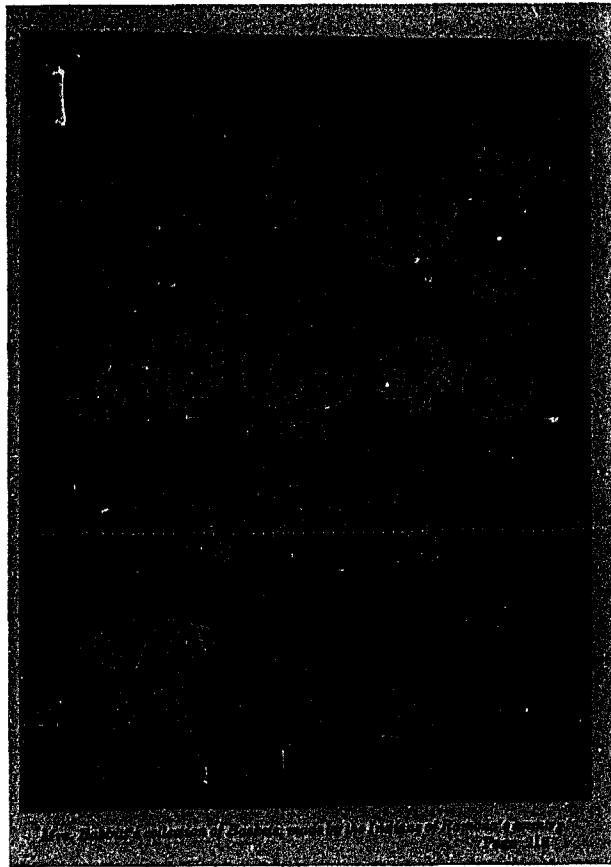


Fig. 13. Photos of Mission Indian baskets from Mrs. Josephine Babbitt's collection (she was an Indian school teacher at Warner's Ranch, near Mesa Grande). [James, Ramona's Country, facing p. 218.]

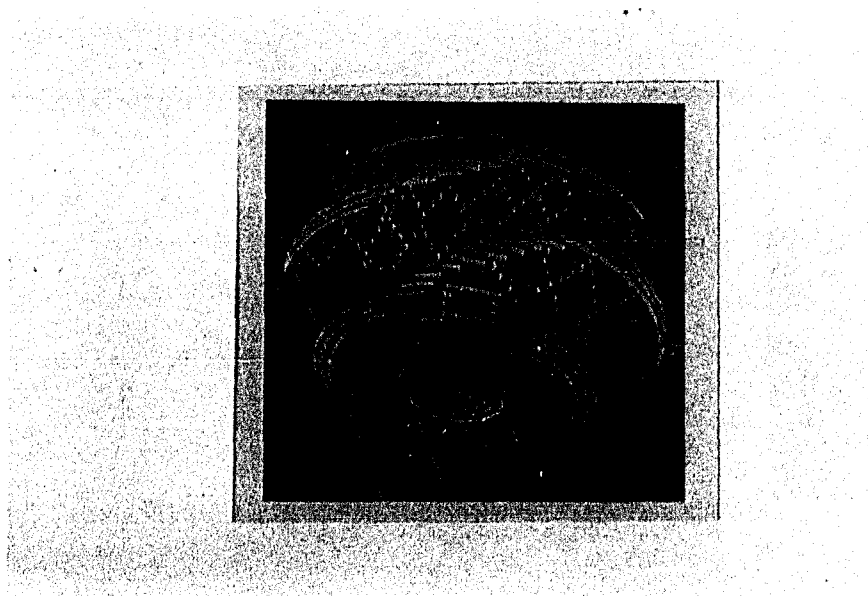


Fig. 14. Basket with a Rattlesnake design, one favored by Du Bois (From Josephine Babbitt's collection). [James, Ramona's Country, facing p. 222.]

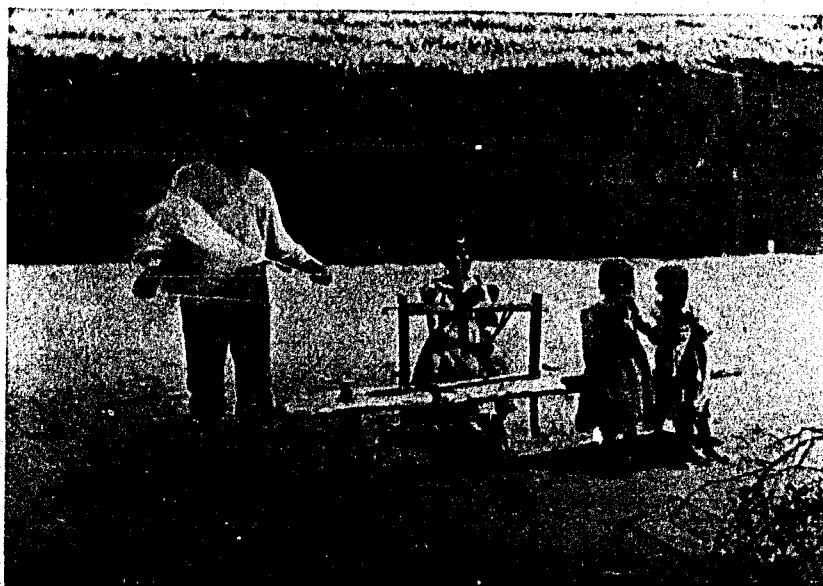


Fig. 15. "Indians at Agua Caliente spinning yucca fibre to make door-mats, etc." Du Bois and Watkins tried to foster this industry at Mesa Grande. [James, Ramona's Country, facing p. 230.]

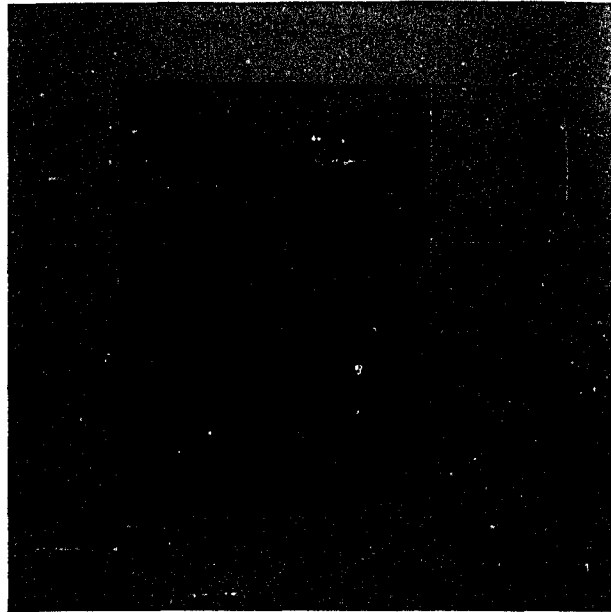


Fig. 16. Laguna Pueblo pottery fostered by Josephine Foard. [Leupp, p. 484.]



Fig. 17. Photo from C. N. Cotton's catalog, depicting how to use Navajo rugs in a summer home. [Lester Williams, *C. N. Cotton and His Navajo Blankets* (Albuquerque: Avanyu, 1989), p. 91.]

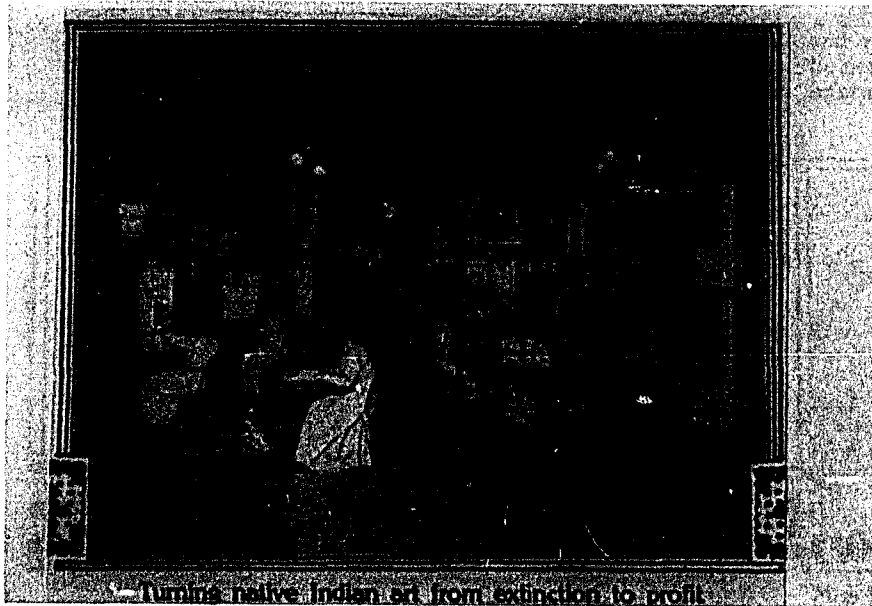


Fig. 18. The kind of industrial room the ILL hoped Eldridge would manage. [Leupp, p. 485.]



Fig. 19. Navajo woman carding wool. [J. B. Moore, *The Navajo* (1911), p. 5.]

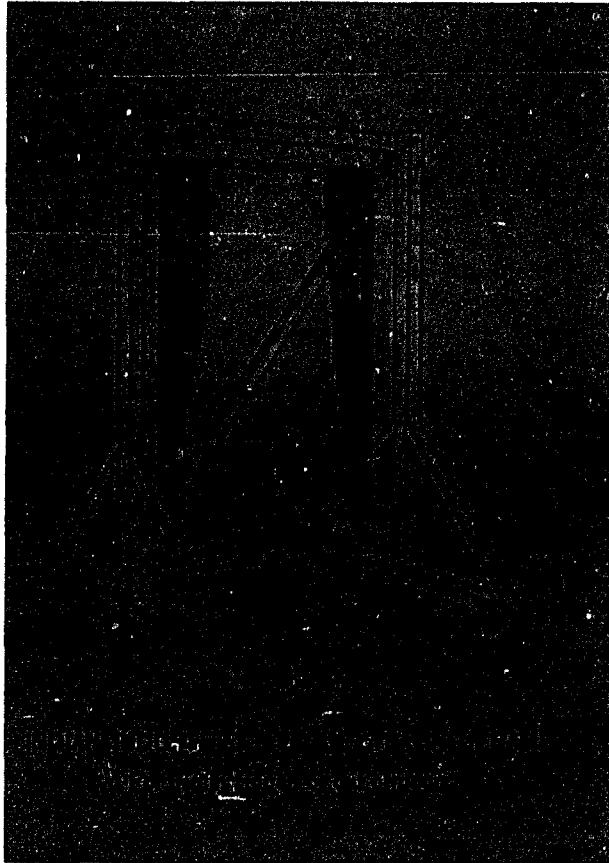


Fig. 20. The IIL sent these weaving frames to Mrs. Moore. Illustration from a League fund-raising pamphlet, 1906.

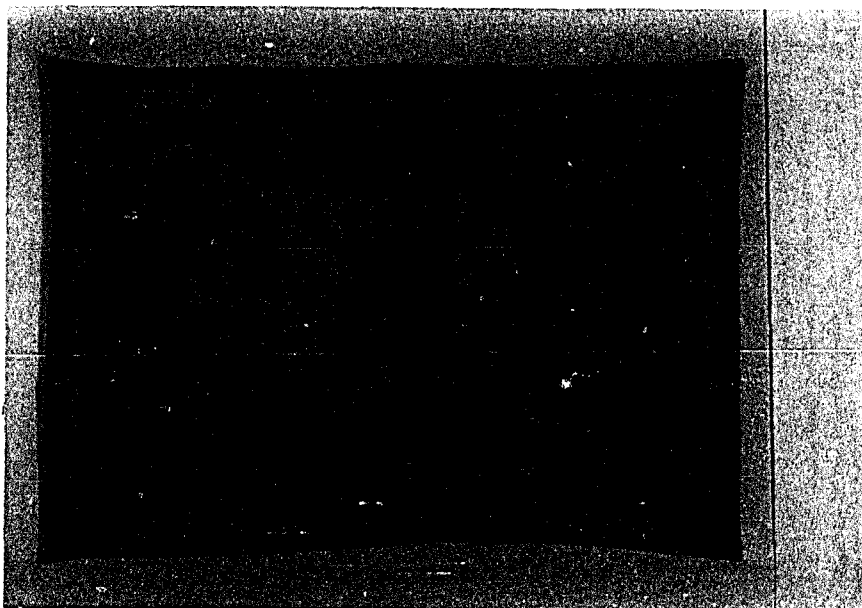


Fig. 21. Blanket (64x92) woven by Dug-gau-eth-lun bi Dazhie, one of the Crystal Springs weavers who joined the League (1908). [J. B. Moore, The Navajo (1911), p. 21.]



Fig. 22. J.B. Moore with Navajo weaver Bi-leen Al-pai Bi-zha-ahd and one of her rugs, from his 1911 catalog. She may be the Beleen Alpi listed as a League member for 1907. [Moore, The Navajo (1911), p. 8.]

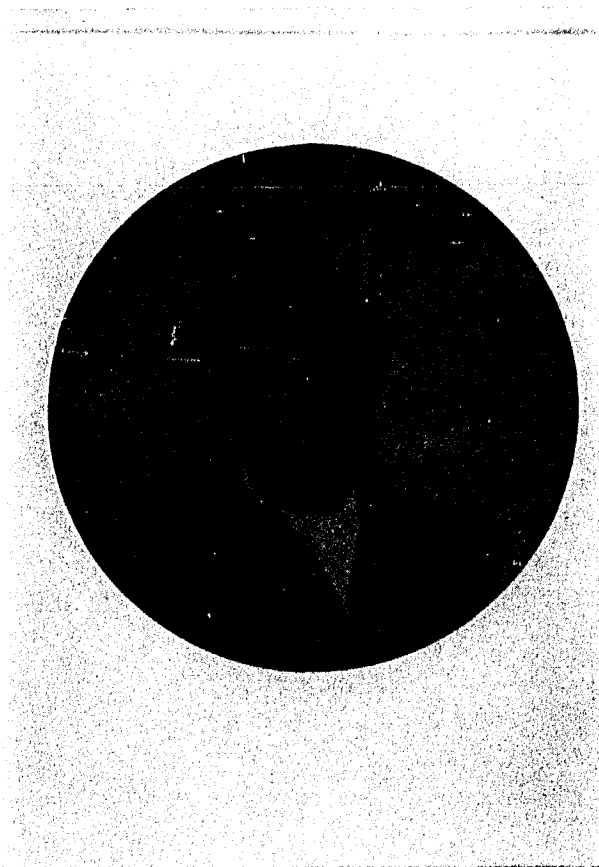


Fig. 23. Cinon Duro, Du Bois's favorite Mission Indian informant. [From the Huntington Free Library, Papers of Constance Goddard Du Bois Guide.]



Fig. 24. The brush mission at Santa Ysabel, 11 miles from Mesa Grande. The bells are those Angela describes ringing. [James, Old Missions, p. 28.]

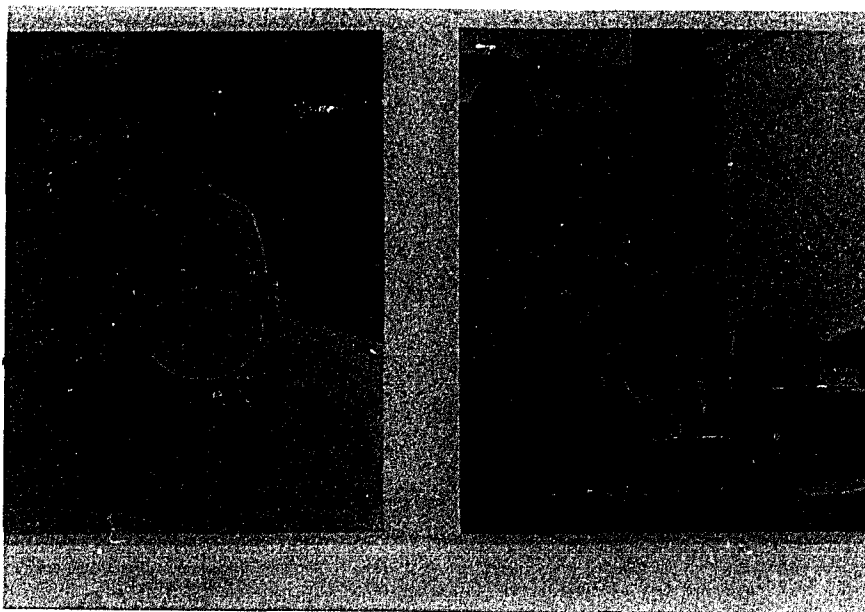


Fig. 25. Cahuilla weaver Ramona with star basket, telling her story into gramophone, pre-1899. The story is of white violence against Indians. [James, Ramona's Country, facing p. 168.]

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