



Making Native Science: Indigenous Epistemologies and Settler Sciences in the United States Empire

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*Making Native Science: Indigenous Epistemologies and Settler Sciences in the United States
Empire*

A dissertation presented

by

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to

Department of History of Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Making Native Science: Indigenous Epistemologies and Settlers Sciences in the United States
Empire

Abstract

This dissertation traces the history of Native science in the United States empire from the mid-19th through the end of the 20th century. Native science, an episteme that I propose is not synonymous with Indigenous epistemologies, but rather includes them, is particular to a settler colonial context in which settler sciences systemically and cyclically work to appropriate and terminate Indigenous bodies, lands, and knowledges in the service of capital (intellectual and economic) production and legitimacy for the settler state. Native science emerges as the knowledge production of the cast objects and tools of settler normative sciences. It is an unsettling epistemic foil to settler science and is marked by queer failures to achieve the authority of settler sciences, a vision of epistemic sovereignty reflective of political nested sovereignty, and the inclusion of diverse Indigenous bodies of knowledge, methodologies, and histories. I explore different modes and moments of Native science and the roles it has played in Indigenous survivance on Turtle Island, while also developing the history of what I propose are settler and frontier sciences.

Native science has moved from an unsettling embedded practice within settler scientific hegemony, to an unnamed mechanism of navigating relations to colonized lands and bodies, to an actor's category today. This dissertation is composed of two parts. Part I, "Red Progressives and Not-Quite Settler Sciences," follows the figure of the native informant through the Red

Progressive generation (1870-1932) in medicine and ethnology, focusing on Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte, Dr. Carlos Montezuma, and Francis La Flesche. Part II, “Repossessing the Wilderness: New Deal and Postwar Frontier Sciences and Native Science and Technology,” looks at how Indigenous leaders, activists, and laborers have negotiated top-down settler scientific initiatives in relation to their lands and communities, focusing on frontier sciences in the New Deal Civilian Conservation Corps—Indian Division in the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation and Haudenosaunee constructions of epistemic sovereignty in the postwar period. In an epilogue, I consider the futures of Native science as expressed in the history of canoes as temporal technologies that cultivate a horizon-oriented epistemology.

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Making Native Science:
Indigenous Epistemologies and Settler Sciences in the United States Empire



At the End of the Trail by Bunky Echo-Hawk (2013)

Eli Nelson

*For my father:
it was enough that you
stirred me to keep searching
and forgive*

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It is a humbling experience to come to the end of your dissertation and realize you are at a complete loss for words. I simply do not know what I could say in these few short pages that would even start to speak to one debt I owe in particular. But there are deadlines to consider and future opportunities for repayment, so I will do my best for now: first and foremost, I want to thank my advisor, Ahmed Ragab. When I first met Ahmed, I was a master's student suffering from a severe case of culture shock in my first year at Harvard, but I had my wits about me enough to realize he was probably the smartest and coolest person I had ever met. I decided then and there that he was going to be my advisor, though I don't think I clued him in until a few months later. Fortunately, he hasn't yet objected. I am not the same person I was when I met Ahmed, and my work is nothing like what I thought it might be back then. I am a better, happier, and a more complete person, and my research is more sophisticated and important to me than I ever could have imagined. I owe all of that to Ahmed. His lessons, scholarship, and example are infused in every page of this dissertation. Ahmed was the first person to believe in me with no qualifiers, and his love and friendship have meant the world to me. Whatever merit there is in this dissertation and whatever I accomplish going forward is all credited to him. And after six years, he's still probably the smartest and coolest person I've ever met.

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Introduction

I was surprised to learn that there is a children's book about the turn of the 20th century Omaha physician I had been studying. Written in 1991, *Native American Doctor: The Story of Susan La Flesche Picotte* is part of a "trailblazer biographies" series intended for kids nine and older. I encountered the book just before a flight to Lincoln, Nebraska in January 2016, where I planned to Picotte's records in the La Flesche Family Papers at the Nebraska State Historical Society. I was meeting with a friend in Washington D.C., where I was finishing up my work on Picotte's brother's papers (ethnologist Francis La Flesche) at the Smithsonian Anthropology Archives. My friend, a fiercely proud auntie to an especially precocious toddler, recognized Susan La Flesche Picotte's name immediately when I mentioned her. She fished *Native American Doctor* from a bin of children's books, and informed that she had been reading it to her nephew. As I flipped through the pages, she explained that *of course* she had heard of Picotte—she had been the first Native American doctor after all! I had forgotten how appealing firsts are in the history of science.

Despite my initial surprise at its existence, I recognized the narrative in *Native American Doctor* immediately. Susan La Flesche Picotte was described as selfless young woman who in being the first Native American doctor broke barriers and lead her people to their rightful and equitable place in U.S. society. The author, Jerri Ferris, a white elementary school teacher originally from Nebraska, has written numerous biographies of this kind for children about "people from 1776 to 1936 who overcame difficulties or discrimination or worse to do great and

important deeds for America.”¹ Her rendering of Picotte represents a typical neoliberal settler tale of overcoming adversity and appealing to the universal language of science. In Ferris’s framing, Picotte’s indigeneity was traded for minority status, and her complex medical and political work and activism was limited to a fight for progress and inclusion. The style in which this narrative is transmitted is grotesque in the way only propaganda targeting children can be, featuring saccharine accounts of Picotte’s pioneering spirit alongside a flattening depiction of her community as stuck in its ways, and painstaking attention to the complexity of white settler morality reminiscent of a “not all men” accounting of heteropatriarchy.

I scanned the pages, identifying characterizations and causative relationships foreign to me as an Indigenous historian, in addition to facts that were simply incorrect.² As my friend spoke about the importance of women and people of color being represented in the sciences, and how this story about the first woman to “break through” could contribute to that cause, I was struck by the commonsense nature of the value of firsts in science. The fact that Picotte had been a doctor was what foreclosed a critical reading of this text. As I departed for Lincoln, I could not shake the book’s foreword, written by Dennis Hastings, the Omaha historian Ferris consulted

¹ From Ferris’s Amazon biography page: https://www.amazon.com/Jeri-Ferris/e/B001K8OK1Q/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1.

² I read that “the Indians did not understand the promises [made by the Great White Father],” followed by a trite refrain detailing how impossible it was for Indigenous people to understand the concepts of property or treaty negotiation (10). There was a chillingly callous depiction of the 1876 Battle of Greasy Grass (called the Battle of Little Big Horn or Custer’s Last Stand by settlers) as “actually the *Indians*’ last stand” (emphasis in the original, 56). Shortly thereafter I came across an even more callous depiction of the Wounded Knee Massacre as a motivation for the Omaha to progress in white ways (27). I even discovered another “first” attributed to Picotte! Evidently, she was the first Indigenous missionary, as well (70). This is also patently false. In fact, some of the most influential Indigenous writing in the colonial period was penned by William Apress (1798-1839), a Pequot minister and missionary. His *Eulogy on King Phillip* is a staple of Indigenous Studies 101 courses.

while researching for the book: “[Picotte’s] story is a litany of frontier vignettes of which classic legends are made, and it needs not embellishment. Dr. Susan could very well emerge as one of the more notable heroines in American history.”³

I continued to find references to Indigenous firsts in my research. In fact, I found that Picotte’s popularity as a first in children’s literature was long-standing. In 1928, thirteen years after Picotte’s death, Vina Smith, a student at the Chemawa Indian Boarding School in Salem, Oregon wrote an article honoring Picotte. Published in the *Chemawa American* journal, Smith’s piece was part of the “Famous American Indians” series. Titled “Dr. Susan La Flesche: The First Indian Woman Physician,” the article recounted what to me had become a familiar narrative in literature on Picotte. Susan La Flesche Picotte was the courageous and bright daughter of the last chief of the Omaha. She went to a mission school near her home as a child, then graduated to a government boarding school, then a preparatory school in New Jersey, followed by Hampton College, and finally the Philadelphia Woman’s Medical School, where she earned her medical degree at 22 years old.

Picotte was appointed as an Indian Agency doctor on the Omaha reservation in Nebraska a year later, where she toiled for decades, risking her own health and wellbeing for the sake of her people, who struggled with alcohol addiction and other medical-social ills. Picotte practiced “spiritual leadership” and in “performing her social duties... she never lost her close relationship with her tribesmen.”⁴ The article concludes, “Just before her death in 1915, [Picotte] said in answer to words of commendation: ‘I cannot see how any credit is due me. I am thankful I’ve

³ Ferris, *Native American Doctor*, 7.

⁴ “Dr. Susan La Flesche: The First Indian Woman Physician,” by Vina Smith, Chemewa Student, Wednesday May 23, 1928,” Clippings, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

been called and permitted to serve. I feel blessed for that privilege above all measure.”⁵

Ultimately, Picotte was characterized as a humble and generous servant to her people. Picotte’s greatest ambition for much of her life was to build a hospital on the Omaha reservation, the article reports, which she achieved in 1912, leaving another first as part of her legacy—the first privately funded hospital on a reservation. Though this student’s article was more factually accurate and better constructed than my first encounter with Piccote’s commemoration as a first, it shared a settler ideological bent with *Native American Doctor*, and unsurprisingly so, given the nature of boarding school education and its violent attempts to eliminate everything Indigenous about Indigenous children.

Picotte’s generation of Indigenous leaders and intellectuals, known as the Red Progressives, featured many of these kinds of Indigenous firsts.⁶ A few months after Picotte earned her medical degree in 1889, Carlos Montezuma achieved the same at University of Chicago, and he had also been the first Indigenous person to get a degree in chemistry in 1882. Earlier, Ely S. Parker (Seneca) was appointed the first Indigenous Commissioner of Indian Affairs and served from 1869-1871. William Jones (Fox) was the first Indigenous person to get a

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ I define the Red Progressives as those Indigenous leaders and intellectuals who worked between 1870 and 1942. This is much broader than the term usually denotes. It most often refers only to those individuals who were associated with Progressive era pan-Indigenous organizations, like the Society of American Indians between 1911 and 1923. The Progressive Era in Indian Country came earlier than in the settler context. In part that is due to the United States’ delayed reaction to economic and environmental crisis at the turn of the twentieth century, which was more immediate in Indian Country. Other factors include the impact of boarding schools and shifting assimilation policies. My reason for grouping these figures is that there is a clear political milieu among people working in this period that is distinct from those who came before and after (a unique language of citizenship, politics concerning reservation retention, and assimilation) and because it is during this era that the “firsts” narrative is most prominent. For more on the Red Progressives as they are more traditionally understood, see Dosch, “Paradoxically Progressive.”

degree in anthropology in 1904, and Picotte's brother, Francis La Flesche (Omaha), became the first professional ethnologist when he was appointed to the Bureau of Ethnology in 1910. Picotte's sister, Sussette La Flesche Tibbles (Omaha), is credited with writing the first Indigenous short story "not based on a pre-existing tale," and the first novel written by an Indigenous woman, *Cogewea, the Half-Blood: A Depiction of the Great Montana Cattle Range* by Mourning Dove (Okanogan and Arrow Lakes) was published in 1927.⁷ There were even firsts that I came across in focusing on Native science that had not garnered the same recognition as others. For example, Ely S. Parker was not only the first Indigenous Commissioner of Indian Affairs, but also the first Indigenous civil engineer, and John Joseph Mathews (Osage), more often remembered for his literary work, was the first Indigenous person to get a degree in geology in 1920 and his subsequent literary work could as easily be read as natural history. Neither has been historicized as a scientist.

At the same time that I was encountering firsts in my archives, my own project came into sharper focus. I saw the engagements between Indigenous peoples and western scientific hegemony that I had originally set out to trace as part of the making of Native and settler sciences. I was convinced that settler sciences were distinct from colonial sciences more broadly, in that they were oriented around nation building via extraction, appropriation, and termination of the Indigenous, and I recognized the paradoxical epistemic position of Indigenous people

⁷ This assertion has been made retroactively. In a collection of Indigenous fiction, published by Swiss ethnologist Bernd C. Peyer, Tibbles is credited with this first, but with qualifications. What counts as an original short story versus a story based on a pre-existing tale is up for debate, and it is not a metric I have seen applied to settler fiction. Peyer's collection contributes to the construction of the Red Progressive era as one of firsts. It argues that the Indigenous literary renaissance that is generally considered a post-war development was not the origin of Indigenous fiction, which Peyer instead attributes to work written between 1881 and 1936. Interestingly, Peyer's work was published around the same time as *Native American Doctor: The Story of Susan La Flesche Picotte* (1989 and 1991 respectively). See Peyer, *The Singing Spirit*.

surrounded by and continually forced to reckon with an empire built by settler science. In being objects and tools of settler science, Indigenous people occupied a place of extreme violence, but we also occupied a place of disruption and survivance as *subjects* of sovereign nations. This epistemic position and production is what I call Native science—the epistemologies, bodies of knowledge, and technologies produced by Indigenous people in a settler colonial context that craves the objecthood and utility of Indigenous bodies (human, nonhuman, knowledge, etc...). The logical gymnastics that settler colonialism requires in order to maintain its legitimacy has been discussed in settler colonial and Indigenous studies most often in relation to the law and political theory.⁸ However, these studies have largely failed to take note of settler science, which was and continues to be a critical component of how the settler state constructs not only the legal parameters of its hegemonic and illegitimate sovereignty, but also extends into settler possessiveness of Indigenous sexuality, art, spirituality, identity, and “culture” generally.⁹ Moreover, in looking up at settler science, an episteme that is so invested in the homogeneity of indigeneity, we can see how laterally the diversity of Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and relations under that regime form an incommensurable epistemic partner and foil to that system: Native science.

There is a warranted and productive critique of studies of “indigeneity” or pan-Indigenous scholarship in Indigenous studies. The field is marked by national and tribal expertise (both in terms of content and analytics), and Indigenous solidarity. One major exception to this

⁸ For a review of tribal legal studies and the convoluted logical mechanisms behind the making of settler governance, see Richland, *Introduction to Tribal Legal Studies*; For more on the ways in which political theory functions *as* settler colonialism see Robert Nichols, “Contract and Usurpation: Enfranchisement and Racial Governance in Settler-Colonial Contexts” and “Indigeneity and the Settler Contract Today.”

⁹ A notable exception is Richland, “Hopi Sovereignty as Epistemological Limit.”

rule has often been literary and media studies, though even there, scholars such as Robert Warrior and Craig Womack have argued against postcolonial and poststructural approaches, and have instead advocated for tribal-specific modes of analysis.¹⁰ This approach is rooted in numerous contentious debates and political stakes involving the relationship between Indigenous and postcolonial studies, the role of Indigenous studies in the settler academy, and the relationship between Indigenous studies and settler colonial studies (more specifically, the all too frequent conflation of the two).¹¹ Native science emerges from the application of settler science, which continually makes, destroys, and recreates the category of the “Native,” to the hundreds of Indigenous nations and the unique and diverse epistemes and histories subsumed under the larger category. Native science concerns the subject position of Indigenous nations and knowledge production in relation to a settler colonial epistemic regime. However, Native science as a category by definition contains multitudes, because the Indigenous made by settler science is ultimately a conceit. As method then, my historical work focusses on specific national histories and epistemologies, while at the same time exploring how “pan-Indigenous” as an actor’s category interacts with Native science movements.

Due to the fact the unit of history I am focusing on is Native science itself, in addition to proposing it as a frame and analytic moving forward, I have chosen to look across national contexts and apply a multitude of analytics, some of which are derived from specific national traditions, and others Indigenous, postcolonial, queer, and critical race theories more broadly. These do not form the basis for comparison, but represent different modes and historical trends.

¹⁰ Womack, *Red on Red*; Weaver, *American Indian Literary Nationalism*.

¹¹ For more on these conversations see, Byrd, “Still Waiting for the ‘Post’ to Arrive”; Cook-Lynn, *A Separate Country*; Simpson, *Theorizing Native Studies*.

Native science has also been profoundly influenced by international pan-Indigenous activism, and its history accordingly addresses how it developed over time. Native science is troubling to settler hegemony in part because it not only can but must move between national and international scales. My national expertise concerns my own community and obligations (Haudenosaunee, Kanien'kehá:ka), which is where I am best able to speak to the specific epistemologies, theories, languages, and politics of Native science (see Chapter 6). In doing this kind of work, trying to think of how we can address the interactions between settler colonial, Indigenous, and postcolonial studies, I am also contributing to our field's increasing (and increasingly fruitful) engagement with global south studies and global Indigenous studies.¹² It is for that reason that I have made engaging queer and critical race theories a central piece of this work.

The features of Native science include the attempt and often failure to achieve the normative standards of settler sciences, various Indigenous philosophies of relation and methodology, Indigenous bodies of knowledge, histories and political positions, nested sovereignties and more. It is disruptive. It is diverse. It exists across nations and pan-Indigenous contexts, and yet it is unique in all these contexts and it is a critical component in the making of Indigenous futures, just as settler science has been in the creation of the United States empire. Indigenous epistemic production has not gone unchanged over the past several centuries and it is not simply something that has been couched in scientific rhetoric in order to gain legitimacy. Native science, like settler science, is a distinct epistemology with no recorded history as such.

¹² See Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*; Byrd and Rothberg, "Between Subalternity and Indigeneity"; Lightfoot, *Global Indigenous Politics*; Povinelli, "The Governance of the Prior"; Hamid Dabashi, "Israel as Absolute State"; Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It*; Okihiro, *Third World Studies*; Leroy, "Black History in Occupied Territory."

As these theories and categories developed in my work, I became increasingly aware of and unsettled by this project's position as itself a first.

The notion of a “first” in the history of science is deeply colonial. It is dependent on a view of knowledge production that is individualistic, linear, progressive, and universal, and it reinforces white supremacy and heteropatriarchy by reorienting complex histories and geographies to teleologically center the production of white, cisgender, and straight male subjects who are given license to invent and produce knowledge on these terms.¹³ Moreover, the first is an epistemic structure in western science. It is not only a narrative that excludes the vast majority of people and histories, but it is a tenet of an epistemic structure that in turn rewards competition, hierarchical thinking, objectivity, crisis, extraction, and relentless production as the ideal ways of making knowledge.¹⁴ This model of science objectifies human beings, renders

¹³ In this mode of thinking about the history of science, Europe becomes a geographic center of the world that radiates outward as its expansion is made possible by its scientific superiority (see for example, Steele and Dorland, *The Heirs of Archimedes*, or for a more complicated narrative that includes environmental factors, Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*). At the same time, all non-European or historically earlier work is refashioned as a precursor to European Science at best or simply not science at all (Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science*; Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*). Perhaps the worst contemporary offenders, who collapses both geography and history in an effort to reify the progress of science and the centering of the global north, Steven Pinker and Niall Ferguson (see Pinker, *Enlightenment Now* and Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest*).

¹⁴ There have been numerous expressions in the philosophy and methodology of European and settler sciences (which often stand in for Science at large) that construct science as an endeavor that requires the constant expansion of spheres of inquiry and mastery, including Francis Bacon's seminal *Novum Organum* in 1620. The history of science as a field is rooted in a view of science that positions it as occupying a sphere of public and intellectual life that is uniquely authoritative and within the purview of white men, perhaps most famously and stereotypically in the work of George Sarton (see Sarton, *The Study of the History of Science*). Even later 20th century philosophers and historians of science like Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn take as a point of departure the inherently competitive and progressive nature of science. Popper's focus on empirical falsification and critical rationalism, the belief that scientific theories can never be proven only falsified, could undercut the assertion that any one scientific theory was absolutely true, but does little to question how science ought to be made and only reinforces what gets to

environmental and nonhuman relations as inherently inanimate and inviolable, and forecloses decolonized and queer futures.¹⁵ As a discipline the history of science finds its origins in the impulse to protect and replicate the “first” as a narrative structure, which was at the heart of the making of European imperialism. Even subsequent scholarship in our field which has endeavored to situate science and reveal its contingencies and politics, has often failed to interrogate the “first” as an epistemic structure too.¹⁶ The result of such a move is often akin to

count as science—what is falsifiable is heavily dependent on normative colonial ideology. Similarly, Kuhn complicated this narrative by focusing on crisis and shifts in paradigms as opposed to necessarily greater or more powerful epistemic moments, but even he insists that “early” sciences were not properly sciences at all (see Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*; Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*).

¹⁵ Work in either discursively or historically non-modern history of science, postcolonial science studies, and recently global science studies has challenged this narrative. See Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories*; Anderson, “Racial Conceptions in the Global South”; Sivaramakrishnan, *As the World Ages*; Harding, *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader*; Hecht, *Entangled Geographies*; Digby, Ernst, and Mukharji, *Crossing Colonial Historiographies*; Ragab, *The Medieval Islamic Hospital*. At the same time, works in Indigenous and queer futurism and ways of knowing have lobbied for a re-centering of these futures—see Deloria et al., “Unfolding Futures”; Nelson, “‘Walking to the Future in the Steps of Our Ancestors’: Haudenosaunee Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Queer Time in the Climate Change Era”; Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*; Lempert, “Decolonizing Encounters of the Third Kind”; Nelson, “Introduction: Future Texts.”

¹⁶ Work in the past several decades in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK) and other attempts to situate science its historical context in science and technology studies (STS) has often failed to interrogate a number of factors related to the epistemic-political structure of science, particularly as it relates to (settler) colonialism. Examples of this include missing how moving beyond the supposed privileged view of science, modernity, and humanity is itself a luxury rooted in having been afforded that fictional status in the first place (e.g. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*; Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*); highlighting the political and historical situatedness of scientific concepts like experimentalism and objectivity and resisting assigning them a “self-evident” value, but in turn downplaying how the erasure of the contingency of these concepts is a critical component of colonial science and governance, in addition to the making of excluded and inviolable objects (e.g. Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*; Daston, *Objectivity*); or failing to consider how civic epistemology, itself the product of a particular history of conquest and domination, had to contend with and be shaped by the colonized epistemes it encountered (e.g. Jasanoff, *Designs on Nature*).

the “first” in the service of inclusion and diversity narrative that I identified in *Native American Doctor*, which I would argue differs in degree from more sophisticatedly theorized histories of science but not necessarily in kind. It is ultimately the epistemic complex surrounding the figure of the first that drives settler entitlement and science, including and connecting the Doctrine of Discovery, frontier sciences and massacres, species extinctions and epidemics, and pipelines and environmental racism, and these have cast Native lands and peoples in the roles of abused objects and technologies for centuries.

Postcolonial, Indigenous, and queer STS scholars have been challenging the centrality of the first and questioning the ways in which historical narratives and contemporary discourses about science mirror the internal logics of colonial scientific hegemony in a multitude of ways. For example, in thinking about how to frame how different epistemologies interact, Projit Mukharji has proposed the beautiful and productive term “braiding” as it relates to modern Ayurveda.¹⁷ Focusing on the temporal centering of European sciences, on the other hand, Ahmed Ragab complicates the traditional “signposts” of early modern Islamic sciences that (translation, Golden Age, and decline) that “tether” them to European archives.¹⁸ In another vein, Kim Tallbear has explored settler scientific possessiveness of both bodies and origins.¹⁹ It was through being in conversation with these works and others that I identified the stakes of properly conceiving both my own archival and scholarly firsts.²⁰ Native science is my contribution to this

¹⁷ Mukharji, *Doctoring Traditions*.

¹⁸ Ragab, “Making History.”

¹⁹ TallBear, *Native American DNA*.

²⁰ These examples are by no means exhaustive. Other work that is critical to both contemporary conversations in these fields and to my own thinking include Anderson, “From Subjugated

field, which challenges Indigenous epistemology's discursive temporality and presents a new framework within which we can think about not only inventors or even technicians, but also those assigned as objects.

Another field that challenges the firsts and was absolutely critical in conceiving this dissertation is contemporary Native science. Native science is an actor's category in the present, and it was in engaging with that field that I first started to explore the history of the idea. Native scientists today base their work in both a legacy of critique of western scientific hegemony and in community obligations and Indigenous epistemologies. It was due to the work of Greg Cajete, Vine Deloria Jr., Grace Dillon, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Rosalyn LaPier, Mellissa Nelson, Kyle Powys Whyte, Daniel Wildcat, and others in establishing Native science as a field that I was able to construct that field's history. My contribution to this field is that history and a new way to think about Native science—one that is not comparative but constructed and contingent. I believe a fuller historical understanding will help to refine the political uses of Native science in the present and beyond.²¹

I propose that Native science helps us to embrace firsts, at least conditionally. The Indigenous firsts that I consider in Part I emerged during the long Red Progressive period (approximately 1870 through the early 1930s) because settler governance and Indigenous politics, epistemic and otherwise, were shifting. Settler science was institutionalized differently

Knowledge to Conjugated Subjects"; Mitra, "Translation as Techné"; Roosth, *Synthetic*; and Mavhunga, *Transient Workspaces*.

²¹See Cajete, *Native Science*; Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*; Dillon, *Walking the Clouds*; Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; LaPier, *Invisible Reality*; Nelson, "Indigenous Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Persistence in Place"; Whyte, "Our Ancestors' Dystopia: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene"; Wildcat, *Red Alert!*

in the previous era.²² Expansion and unchecked frontier sciences (see Chapter 5) flourished in a settler epistemic context that was by design decentralized and informal, but as the geographic contours of the settler state solidified, Indian policy shifted to a focus on termination via assimilation, which included the development of boarding schools as sites of traumatic violence and the making of the kinds of Indigenous elites who would go on to form the Red Progressives.²³ At the same time, academic and institutional frameworks emerged in the settler context (degree granting programs, scientific associations, civil governmental agencies, etc...) that could verify Indigenous firsts who would be then recognizable in a colonial archive.²⁴ The firsts here were the result of a new era of settler scientific termination that was, as it has always been in one form or another, thwarted by Native science. These firsts then engaged settler science in new ways, marking a shift in the production of Native science itself, as well. The introduction of a new dynamic is a good place to start a story.

²² For more on U.S. formulations of science and governance in the early colonial and antebellum periods see, Chaplin, *Subject Matter*; Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*; Carson, "Differentiating a Republican Citizenry"; Delbourgo, *A Most Amazing Scene of Wonders*; Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863*; Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880*.

²³ For more work on late 19th and early 20th century Indian policy, see Carter, *The Dawes Commission and the Allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes, 1893-1914*; Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race*; Eick, "U.S. Indian Policy, 1865-1890"; Otis and Prucha, *Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands*. For more on boarding school education, see Adams, *Education for Extinction*; Child, *Boarding School Seasons*.

²⁴ For more on changes in the U.S. academy during this period, see Jewett, *Science, Democracy, and the American University* and Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University*. For more on the professionalization of sciences and shifts in the philosophy of science and governance during this period, see Kingsland, *The Evolution of American Ecology, 1890-2000*; Purcell, *The Crisis of Democratic Theory: Scientific Naturalism & the Problem of Value*; Kohler, *Landscapes and Labs*; Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists*.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is composed of two parts. Part I, “Red Progressives and Not-Quite Settler Sciences,” follows the figure of the native informant through the Red Progressive generation in medicine and ethnology. The first chapter, “Indigenous Physicians: Native Informants, Disability, and Reservation Diseases,” focusses on physicians Susan La Flesche Picotte and Carlos Montezuma. I argue that Indigenous physicians at the turn of the twentieth century emerged and were constructed as a new kind of native informant. Picotte and Montezuma were expected not only to practice biomedicine and encourage assimilation through the cultivation of more compliant patients in their communities, but they were expected to provide access and information to their settler patrons and institutional directors on the topic of indigeneity specifically under colonial assimilation pressures. I then situate Carlos Montezuma’s medical-political work in a longer history of medicine and pan-Indigenous negotiation and the construction of (dis)ability. Likewise, Susan La Flesche Picotte’s work as an Agency doctor in the allotment era, properly historicized as the first physician but by no means the first Omaha healer, highlights the relationship between the colonization and assimilation of Indigenous lands and bodies.

The next three chapters follow Francis La Flesche, Picotte’s brother, through his career as native informant and ethnologist. In Chapter 2, “‘Playing the White Man’s Game’: the Native Informant as an Epistemic Tool,” I look at sources from the La Flesche family archives and La Flesche’s personal papers to determine how a native informant like La Flesche was manufactured and taken up as an ethnologic tool. In this chapter, I mirror and explore La Flesche’s treatment as an object and tool lacking a legible voice by borrowing from methods and frameworks used in scientific object biographies. In chapter 3, “‘From one who knows’:

Collaborator versus Informant,” I explore an episode in Francis La Flesche’s career as an ethnologist, his collaboration on the Indian opera *Da-O-Ma*, to uncover what exactly changed when a he transitioned from informant to collaborator, and how that transition entangled La Flesche in settler sciences in new ways. La Flesche’s role in the (eventual non-)production of *Da-O-Ma*—it was never actually staged—revealed how his interactions in an academy premised on his termination and appropriation influenced how settler scientific disciplines took shape.

In Chapter 4, “Not-Quite Ethnology,” I look at La Flesche’s published works during his career working for the Bureau of Ethnology starting in 1910. La Flesche’s work has been called “incomprehensible” by subsequent generations of scholars. I argue that we look at La Felsche’s work through the lens of mimicry, terming it “not-quite ethnology.” Not quite ethnology encompassed two dynamics: first, an epistemic orientation and practice that failed to achieve the normative standards of the field due to the ambivalent nature of epistemic settler authority, which is evidenced in the previous two chapters, and second, a unique interrelation of settler and Native sciences, which is the subject of this chapter. To establish not-quite ethnology as a genre in which La Flesche worked, I first explore La Flesche’s position on religion, science and indigeneity, and how that position shaped his understanding of the object of ethnology and its technologies. I then explore how his particular understanding of the methods and topics of ethnology has been translated as salvage by the historiography of anthropology. Finally, I read Francis La Flesche’s career through the lens of queer failure to look at how Native science provides an alternative way of thinking about agency, complicity, resistance and assimilation.

Part II, “Repossessing the Wilderness: New Deal and Postwar Frontier Sciences and Native Science and Technology,” moves away from the role of Indigenous sciences in the settler academy and looks at how Indigenous leaders, activists, and laborers have negotiated top-down

settler scientific initiatives in relation to their lands and communities. In Chapter 5, “Progressive Crisis and Eastern Band Technology: The Civilian Conservation Corps—Indian Division at Qualla Boundary,” I explore the early history of the construction of a layered Qualla Boundary, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation’s trust lands, in the initiatives of the Civilian Conservation Corps—Indian Division (CCC—ID or Indian Division) between 1933 and 1942. Part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal program, the hallmark of the Progressive era, the Indian Division employed Eastern Band citizens in projects that included mapping the Boundary, constructing roads, facilitating timber sales and tourism, and warding against soil erosion and forest fires. I argue that the Indian Division was part of a New Deal repossession project that mobilized frontier sciences in a moment of political, environmental, and epistemological crisis and imperialist nostalgia in the U.S. empire.

Chapter 6, “Walking to the Future in the Steps of Our Ancestors: Postwar Haudenosaunee Science, Epistemic Sovereignty, and Queer Time,” follows Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment and its publications, community programs, and political organizing, as they relate to interpretations of the Great Law, Two-Row Wampum, and epistemic sovereignty, in the wake of the Superfund Clean-Up site and contamination of the St. Lawrence River. I then link these notions of epistemic sovereignty and Haudenosaunee science to international negotiations and discourses put forward by the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force at the Rio Earth Summit and International Indigenous Kari-Oca Conference in 1991 in Brazil. Here I explore how traditional ecological knowledge exists in a queer time and challenges Anthropocene notions such as posthumanism and ruination.

The epilogue, “Hōkūle‘a is in the past”: Canoes, Indigenous Futurism, and Horizon Epistemologies,” concerns the horizons of Native science and technology. In contrast to the

settler frontier sciences and technological development discussed in Chapter 5, I explore the history of canoes as temporal technologies that cultivate a horizon-oriented epistemology. I analyze the role canoes play in Indigenous futurism and Native science. Finally, I have included an appendix with archival images. This appendix also includes notes and meditations on how to read for Native science in colonial and Indigenous archives.

Part I: Red Progressives and Not-Quite Settler Sciences

1. Indigenous Physicians: Native Informants, Disability, and Reservation Diseases

In 1900, Jessie W. Cook, an educator at Carlisle and Sherman Indian Schools, published a landmark article on “the Indian Problem,” in *Outlook*, a New York-based magazine. She wrote,

The future of the Indian is always on our tongues, and we speak of the distant “sometime” when he shall become Americanized and be of use to the world. How many of us realize that the vanguard of this army of workers is not only in America but already of America? The Indian question is one of the worries we allow ourselves now that the country has reached that point where fighting for existence is no longer necessary, and there is leisure to indulge in the luxury of worry... Most of us look for examples of Indian civilization on the reservation... Is this the place to look for Indian progress?... Who hears of the Indian that leaves his wild home, and mingles with the American people, lives among them, practices medicine or law, or serves in the humbler walks of life? No one. He is a drop of water in the great ocean of the Republic... It is time the world knew of some of the quiet men and women of Indian blood who are a power among us. There are the late Colonel Ely Parker, a Seneca Indian, on General Grant’s staff and afterwards Commissioner of Indian Affairs; Dr. Eastman a Santee Sioux, physician and law student; and Dr. Carlos Montezuma, of the dreaded Apaches, a practicing physician in Chicago. There are men who have fought Dr. Montezuma’s tribe, and have suffered from its depredations not so many years since, who would laugh to scorn the suggestion that any good could come out of the Apache tribe. Dr. Montezuma is a living example of the possibilities of any one of his people under like conditions. Picked up on a battlefield, a little fellow of six year, educated among white people, and left, like so many, a self made man, to fight his own way into a living, he has fairly won his spurs among his compeers.²⁵

It is true that Carlos Montezuma was often most praised as a doctor, and to a lesser extent as a journalist, because that position was viewed as an astonishing departure from the popular Apache imaginary, which characterized them as the most violent and resistant to civilizing influence

²⁵ Cook, “The Representative Indian,” 80–81. Her next example after Dr. Carlos Montezuma was Francis La Flesche for his work in ethnology and representing Indian boyhood. It is worth noting that the first four “representative Indians” Cook named were two doctors, an engineer and native informant (though Parker was not recognized as such by Cook), and an ethnologist. The sciences were well represented in the category of the representative Indian.

among all Indigenous nations.²⁶ However, that was the only true point Cook made about Montezuma. He was not Apache, at least not originally and not only. He was not found on a battlefield, and he actually had a series of patrons and well-connected supporters. Furthermore, far from being a “drop of water in a great Republic,” Montezuma was well known in many circles—first regionally as a child performer with the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, then as an adult for his notoriety as an Indigenous academic and physician in Chicago. Later in 1916, his name (Wassaja, meaning “Signaling” in Yavapai) would be known across Indian Country and to U.S. officials due to his involvement (and disagreements) with the Society of American Indians and groundbreaking pan-Indian journal, *Wassaja*.

Physicians were especially important in the construction of the “representative Indian” at the turn of the twentieth century, as evidenced by Cook’s inclusion of three, Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte (Omaha), Dr. Carlos Montezuma (Yavapai-Apache), and Dr. Charles Eastman (Santee Dakota). This was more than any other profession Cook mentioned. Physicians were ideal examples of what the representative Indian was meant to actually represent: not only the success of assimilation, but the possibility of discovering more about that process, both on and off the reservation. As Cook’s highlighting and inaccuracies suggest, Native physicians could be a tool and target in the study of the Indian problem. In this chapter, focusing on Drs. Susan La Flesche Picotte and Carlos Montezuma, I argue that Indigenous physicians at the turn of the twentieth century emerged and were constructed as a new kind of native informant. Picotte and

²⁶ That derogatory popular imaginary was reclaimed from the start among the Apache as a point of pride. During a heated public debate with Sherman Coolidge in 1916, for example, Montezuma shouted, “I am an Apache and you are an Arapahoe. I can lick you. My tribe has licked your tribe before” (*American Indian Magazine*, Vol. 4, Fall 1916, p. 218). That was not the first nor would it be the last time an Apache has appealed to a legacy of raids and military prowess in order to win an argument.

Montezuma were expected not only to practice biomedicine and encourage assimilation through the cultivation of more compliant patients in their communities, but they were expected to provide access and information to their settler patrons and institutional directors on the topic of indigeneity specifically under colonial assimilation pressure. As Indigenous physicians, they would do this primarily in two primary ways. First, they would serve as observable objects in and of themselves for those interested in the process of assimilation through playing their parts as “representative Indians.” Second, they would act as tools for the Indian Agency in gaining access to the health, social dynamics, and cultures of reservation communities. As Native informants, Picotte and Montezuma were forced into positions of objecthood and utility to fit the shifting needs of a settler state whose Indian policies and scientific regulatory apparatuses were both in flux.

As the first Indigenous physicians, however, Picotte and Montezuma were still healers with numerous other Indigenous medical traditions to draw on and work within. They were firsts only in a settler-normative history. This chapter first explores how Indigenous physicians were construed as Native informants during the Red Progressive era. In that context, I then situate Carlos Montezuma’s medical-political work in a longer history of medicine and pan-Indigenous negotiation and the construction of (dis)ability. Likewise, Susan La Flesche Picotte’s work as a doctor in the allotment era, properly historicized as the first physician but by no means the first Omaha healer, highlights the relationship between the colonization and assimilation of Indigenous lands and bodies. Her interwoven work on allotment, health infrastructures, and addiction reflected a complex understanding of the mutually constituted nature of Omaha lands and bodies. For both Montezuma and Picotte, their projects were couched in the terms and parameters of their Victorian and Christian educations in medicine, but as representative Indians

they were poor native informants on the process of assimilation, as their roles required their ongoing engagement, identification, and investment with their own communities and identities. They were similarly unsuccessful as tools in observing and regulating reservation communities, as their medical and political work helped facilitate therapeutics and political ideologies that were ideologically inaccessible to Indian Agency officials.

The Physician as a Native Informant

In part one, I discuss native informants in two fields: medicine and ethnology. As mentioned in Jessie Cook's article, "representative Indians," who I call the Red Progressives, were represented in numerous other fields, and even limiting our analysis to the scientists in the group, not all were native informants. Native informant is a heavy term. On the one hand, it is an actor's category in ethnology and has its own internal history in that field. On the other, native informant is a broad category that has been discussed in postcolonial studies, predominantly either as unknowable subalterns or as colonized agents.²⁷ Considering Native science intervenes this conversation by moving away from questions of collusion and agency. Rather, I look at how native informants were taken up as tools in a settler science, and how that uptake created unexpected sites for Native science.

Native informants are taken up as tools in settler science in order to facilitate appropriation of lands and people and in turn terminate and erase them.²⁸ The Red Progressive

²⁷ See Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.

²⁸ The Native informant in the Red Progressive era was most prominent in social and medical sciences, but that was due, as I have argued, to the settler political conditions and Indigenous political ideology peculiar to that era. In previous and later iterations and moments of Native science, native informants were, for example, more often people who acted as geographic guides, or environmental and technological experts. These figures, often women, were identifiable as

era was made distinct by the impact of boarding schools, removals to increasingly small and circumscribed reservations, the ubiquity of the vanishing race hypothesis, and the end of U.S. treaty making in 1871 following a proclamation in the House of Representatives that tribes were no longer independent nations.²⁹ Native informants had two primary roles as epistemic tools in this context. As seen in the case of ethnology starting in Chapter 2, native informants needed to function as non-subjective (and non-hybrid) tools of sight and literal bodies of evidence for ethnologists seeking to document Indigenous culture in the process of making that very category disappear. As seen in the case of medicine here, native informants needed to be understood instead as inherently hybrid figures who could act as tools that would expand the physical and ideological reach of settler authorities into reservation communities, and who could act as bodies of evidence in the assessment of the United States “Indian problem.” In a sense, these two different configurations mirror the dominant views of the native informant in postcolonial studies: in ethnology, native informants resemble Spivak’s subaltern subject and in medicine they resemble Said’s colonized agent. However, the practice of Native science complicates both—native informants here are both these figures and neither, as their work ultimately contributed to a wholly other epistemological project.

people who could help settler scientists appropriate and survive on land, and they were figures settler scientists could use (and abuse) as tools of termination (See Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered*; “NATIVE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHIES AND THE JOURNALS OF LEWIS AND CLARK”). The latter happened either through subsequent betrayal and genocide or through further appropriation of indigeneity in holding up a legacy of the rape and murder of Indigenous women as evidence that everyone was a little bit Native and therefore no one truly was, e.g. the “Pocahontas exception” to the “one drop law” in Virginia. See Ellinghaus, “The Pocahontas Exception.”

²⁹ See Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty*.

Not all Indigenous scientists working in settler disciplines are native informants. In fact, medicine at the turn of the twentieth century was an unusual example of a field in which the native informant status was dependent on settler credentials. Carlos Montezuma and Susan La Flesche Picotte came from very different backgrounds, but their path to medical school converged in patron support and associated expectations. Over the course of his life Dr. Carlos Montezuma was known by three names: Wassaja, meaning “signaling” or “beckoning,” given to him by his Yavapai parents when he was born in 1866, Hejelweikam, meaning “Left Alone,” assigned by his Pima captors after a raid on the Yavapai in 1871, and, finally, Carlos Montezuma, a name chosen by his Italian-American father, Carlo Gentile, after he bought him from the Pima not long after. Montezuma’s story is one of rupture and disconnection, but also of identification and repair, in which medical care and his authority as a physician would play an important role. In fact, far afield from his characterization in “The Representative Indian” as a self-made man, Montezuma’s life, the events that led to his being able to pursue a medical degree and then the work he took on in his career, involved a series of important patrons and patient relations. His patrons, on one hand, set the expectations of what an Apache doctor should be like and how they should operate as a native informant, while his patients, on the other, inspired Montezuma to think creatively about both therapeutic options for Indigenous peoples on reservations and the Indigenous condition at the turn of the 20th century as it related to disability. In this first section, I will focus on the expectations established by patrons, and in the following two I will look at how patient interactions transformed those expectations.

As a small child, Wassaja was separated from his family during a Pima raid. The Pima then sold him to his settler father in 1871 in Adamsville, Arizona for thirty silver dollars.³⁰ His

³⁰ Marino, *The Remarkable Carlo Gentile*, 43

father, Carlo Gentile, a photographer who emigrated to the United States from Italy in 1863 and who made a name for himself in capturing images of the frontier, named his purchased son Carlos to establish a likeness between the two, and Montezuma in reference to the nearby Montezuma ruins, now referred to as “Montezuma Castle” by the National Park Service.³¹

Gentile presumed Montezuma was Apache, as they were most likely to be taken in a Pima raid for sale. Montezuma, of course, knew his own nationality as a child, but he adopted the Apache designation and later worked on the Apache reservation as an Indian Agency physician.³²

Montezuma would also visit his Yavapai family and maintain periodic relationships, particularly with his cousin, Charles Dickens, at the Fort McDowell Yavapai reservation in Arizona for much of his life, but he never saw his parents again after his capture.³³ Just after Montezuma’s adoption, he and his father toured with the Buffalo Bill Wild West show, wherein young Carlos was featured as “Azteka, the Apache-child of Cochise,” allowing Gentile to charge for photos with his son and for Montezuma to provide tales of his life with the infamous nation with whom he had never lived.³⁴ His father’s work required regular travel even after they retired from the

³¹ Preserved cliff dwellings of the pre-Columbian Siagua society, the Montezuma ruins, which Theodore Roosevelt had identified as “of the greatest ethnological value and scientific interest,” were first identified as possibly being connected to the Aztec emperor Montezuma II. This identification proved false, but the name stuck (Marino, *The Remarkable Carlo Gentile*, 43).

³² “To the Students of Carlisle Indian School” *The Indian Helper* (vol. 3, no. 10), October 14, 1887. CIS-0028, Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections, Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (<http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/publications/indian-helper-vol-3-no-10>).

³³ Not long after Montezuma’s adoption, his mother heard that her son was alive and not far from his home village. She attempted to recover him, but she was shot by U.S. Army scouts outside Adamsville. After this loss (which constituted the loss of most of his family by then), Montezuma’s father moved to the San Carlos reservation where he died before Montezuma was able to find him (Webb, *A Pima Remembers*, 31).

³⁴ Marino, *The Remarkable Carlo Gentile*, 43.

wild west show. Between 1872 and 1878, Montezuma attended public schools in Chicago, Galesburg, and Brooklyn, and he excelled in each location.

Montezuma's narrative, including the lack of stability and familial connections created by disconnection and return or settler fantasies and possessiveness, was (and continues to be) extremely common for Indigenous people in a settler colonial state that systemically attempts to sever ties between generations of families as a mechanism of termination.³⁵ It is partly due to this history of disconnection that Montezuma's role as a native informant has yet to be analyzed. The illusion of authenticity and representativeness of an Indigenous whole is necessary in the construction of native informants as tools and objects of a settler scientific paradigm. Montezuma's history of disconnection combined with the near-constant reminders of his indigeneity through performance, name, and skin color, however, made him an ideal candidate for a "representative Indian," and, more so, it made him an ideal candidate for a native informant-physician, who would report on and provide evidence for how Indigenous people navigate settler-controlled contexts—a condition his settler patrons assumed was synonymous with assimilation.

In 1878, Gentile ran out of money and found himself stuck in Chicago for the foreseeable future with unreliable financial prospects. It was then that he reached out to Reverend George W. Ingalls, the director of the Indian Department of the American Baptist Home Mission in Urbana,

³⁵The history of family disruptions can be traced from decimation of Indigenous populations due to small pox, influenza, and other epidemics and forced slavery to boarding school officials who ripped children from their families and who would not allow them to speak their languages starting in the mid-19th century, through and to forced sterilization and the extreme overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system today (what is called the Sixties and Millennial Scoops in Canada). For more, see Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics*; Ned and Frost, *Contemporary Issues in Child Welfare*; O'Sullivan, "'More Destruction to These Family Ties'"; Child, *Boarding School Seasons*.

Illinois, to inquire whether he would be able to take Montezuma in and educate him in Urbana.³⁶ Ingalls took him in, and he saw great potential in Montezuma as a student and future informant and civilizer of his people—with the right training and discipline. On Montezuma’s scholarly progress, he wrote in 1817, “[While] he is bright in some studies, he seems slow when put to work and must be trained and have patience excised towards him, for his race are disinclined naturally to hard work.”³⁷ With that caveat, Ingalls shared his aspirations for Montezuma in a letter to the local Y.M.C.A. president that same year:

I want Montezuma to become, first a real Christian, and then to be a Physician and with a good education and love of Christ in his heart, to go back to his people and labor for their good as a Christian missionary physician—I want him to have a knowledge of some trade—perhaps a carpenter, or other useful trade, a knowledge of farming so he can direct such branches of industry among his people.³⁸

At that time, Ingalls was picturing Montezuma as the first Indigenous physician, whose responsibilities would be expansive. Not only would an Indigenous physician need to “go back to his people and labor for their good,” but they would need to be a religious leader and someone capable of converting Indian Country. This labor included both medical and infrastructural skill (carpentry and farming)—to “direct such branches of industry” that would force assimilation.

In Ingalls’s estimation, Montezuma would need to be a Christian first and a doctor second. In fact, it was the Christian status that would establish him as a native informant, while the medical degree could give him the tools to be one effectively. Susan La Flesche Picotte, the

³⁶ Gentile was not a careless father necessarily. Shortly after he and Montezuma moved to New York earlier in 1878, his business was destroyed by a fire, leaving him unable to provide for his son (Iverson, *Carlos Montezuma and the Changing World of American Indians*, 7).

³⁷ Quoted in Iverson, *Carlos Montezuma and the Changing World of American Indians*, 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

actual first Indigenous physician, whose background was extraordinarily different from Montezuma's, experienced a similar expectation. Picotte came from an elite Omaha family where she was well connected both to Omaha and settler authorities. Picotte attended the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and graduated valedictorian with the class of 1889.³⁹ However, she would have never been able to afford the cost of that education, if it had not been for the Connecticut Indian Association, a woman's association dedicated to Indian advocacy with whom Picotte struck a deal brokered by the woman who employed Picotte's brother as a native informant, Alice Fletcher, as I will discuss in greater depth in Chapters 2-4. The Connecticut Indian Association, then directed by Amelia Quinten, agreed to pay Picotte's tuition in addition to room and board. In exchange, Picotte agreed to remain single during her years in school and some after, and to act as a missionary physician.⁴⁰

Many Indigenous advocacy groups and individual patrons at the time had their roots in longer missionary histories, and these played a role in funding "representative Indians" across numerous disciplines. The doctors, however, were unique, in that their profession in combination with faith would, their patrons reasoned, inspire them to provide specific kinds of care back on reservations. Physicians were not only representative, but uniquely capable of proselytizing. In 1893, Amelia Quinton, speaking on behalf of the Women's National Indian Association, spoke at the Congress of Women in Chicago:

Did time permit, many interesting illustrations might be given of the success of well-endowed Indian young men and women who have in a few years obtained a

³⁹ "Report of the Committee on Necrology [inclusive Susan La Flesche Picotte Obituary], 1916." Item r747_w82_1916_001, "Reports and transactions of the annual meetings of the Alumnae Association of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania." Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania Records, Drexel University.

⁴⁰ "Letter from the Connecticut Woman's Association to Alice Fletcher, September 16, 1897." Incoming Correspondence, 1896-1898, Box 1, Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

good elementary English education; of others who have graduated from colleges and institutions for special professional education; of some who have trained by our own association as physicians and nurses, or been aided in the study of law, and even of art. The first Indian woman physician was thus educated, and is now an honored government physician and Christian worker among her own people. The achievements of some of these Indian patriots among their own people would read like epics could they be written. We can here cite but one case: One who followed the wild, free life of an Indian boy—happily remote from vicious rough white borderers—till fourteen years of age, when, hearing from beloved lips the story of the Christ, and being won, he followed his Divine star to an Indian school one hundred and fifty miles distant; finished his course there, entered and graduated from college, achieved a three years' medical education, again graduated with honor, and to the persuasions of white fellow-students to stay east and get rich he made answer: "Do you suppose that I have studied here seven years to stay and make money? No. I go to help my people." And back to barbarians, to isolation, to hardships, but to noble service, he returned, exposing life again and again in the emergencies of his consecrated labor.⁴¹

Presumably the example Quinton cites but does not name was Dr. Charles Eastman, who along with Picotte and Montezuma constituted the most active and visible Indigenous physicians of the Red Progressive era. Indigenous physicians like these figures had to be prefigured as Christian first, because their patrons believed that only faith would drive representative Indians back to the reservation.⁴²

The problem with representative Indians as they were imagined is that they were few and far between. The violent systems of boarding school education, which would more accurately be

⁴¹ Congress of Women. Chicago et al., "Woman's National Indian Association," 71.

⁴² There was no evidence to support that belief. While many Indigenous people were and continue to be forced off their lands, either by poverty or legal restrictions, the records we have pertaining to Indigenous intellectual elites show an invariable trend of ongoing connection and occupation to homelands and communities. Theoretically, one could suppose that the archive is incomplete—that it would miss those Indigenous people who assimilated and cut off all contact. The records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, however, are expansive, and regular studies were conducted to keep track of Indigenous people, both on and off the reservation. It is extremely unlikely that there was a significant population of Indigenous people who succeeded in settler society and then achieved invisibility in said society as a result.

described as prisoner of war re-education camps, racism, and the denial of basic rights to safety and autonomy meant that few Indigenous students, including those from elite backgrounds, were able or displayed any impulse to emerge and succeed by settler standards. The “Indian Problem” was framed entirely as a question of education during this period, and part of the problem as settler authorities and commentators saw it was that Indigenous peoples needed not only to be trained, but to be refashioned, and that refashioning was dependent on “representative Indians” instituting more lateral influence.⁴³ Montezuma and Picotte, the first two physicians and some of the best known, were only able to access medical education through patronage which circumscribed their practice. They were physicians who would be compelled by their faith in Christ to use their medical expertise specifically on Indigenous bodies to refashion them. That is why Ingalls also wanted Montezuma to be a carpenter and a farmer. Building settler style homes and economies went hand-in-hand with the physician-as-informant model on which Montezuma’s education was premised.

Native informants in medicine were specialized instruments designed to create Christian patients in hostile conditions. These were unique from native informants in other fields, like ethnology, who were not as a rule pressured to adopt Christianity, though many of them did anyway. This was because the ethnologist’s objects of study were necessarily in Indian country. Unlike physicians, who were constructed as native informants through their education and degrees which tethered them to these patronage expectations, native informants in ethnology and natural sciences were construed as such because they were considered inextricable from their geographic and cultural contexts in the first place (even when they were taken out of them).

⁴³ See Axtell, “The Indian Problem.”; Friend’s Intelligencer, “The Indian Problem.”; Cook, “The Representative Indian.”

Additionally, the conferral of degrees did not establish their epistemic position. The opposite was true. Institutional recognition of expertise profoundly troubled their pre-existing status as native informants.

The difference between how religion was projected onto native informants in medicine and ethnology profoundly influenced both fields and the ways in which they took Indigenous peoples to be objects and instruments of study. It also established a theoretical temporal and causative link between medicine and ethnology, which placed ethnology as a prerequisite for Christian medical care. Ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, for example, came to believe that the Christian mission could only save Indigenous people if it came hand in hand with ethnology, and even then, ethnology would need to come prior. Noting the historically unique difficulty missionaries and missionary medicine had converting Indigenous peoples in North America, he concluded that missionary work could only be successfully conducted after ethnologists could determine the cultural and mental deficits that caused Native people to be so resistant.⁴⁴ In turn, the failures of Christian missionaries mapped onto ethnological thought, as the seeming inability to fully convert Indigenous populations directly contributed to renewed arguments that Indigenous peoples were not part of the human family and that polygenism was the only for explanation of their existence.⁴⁵ The result for native informants was that doctors were employed to proselytize and provide data on that process, whereas native informants in ethnology were employed to capture the true picture of the Indian soul. The religious attitudes of the former were

⁴⁴ Schoolcraft, *Personal Memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontiers*.

⁴⁵ See Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880*.

considered extremely important, but for the latter religiosity was not only unnecessary, but also little ahead of itself.

First and foremost, Picotte and Montezuma were compelled to maintain access to the most private spaces of reservations and militarized facilities housing Indigenous people (forts and boarding schools) at the end of the 19th century. However, Picotte and Montezuma differed on this point, owing to their different histories of disconnection and belonging. Picotte's entire career revolved around the Omaha reservation as a space she needed to map and navigate in order to provide care. In a testimonial pertaining to the death of Henry Warner, one of Picotte's Omaha patients, Picotte was asked "How intimate has your acquaintance and opportunity for acquaintance been among them during the time you lived with the Omaha?" Picotte, who had lived on the Omaha reservation her, excepting her time in school, replied, "I have lived right with them and have talked with them and I have worked among them for over twenty years practicing medicine, attending the sick, helping them with all their financial and domestic business, and anything that concerned their personal and family life."⁴⁶ Picotte was a pillar of the community at a time when the leadership structure was in transition, after her father abolished the hereditary chief position toward the end of his life in 1888. Her role as a doctor was to establish intimacy on all these different levels, and her expertise as recognized by the Indian Agency depended on her being able to maintain that level of connection and access.

On the other hand, outside his private practice in Chicago, where he would spend the majority of his working hours, Montezuma early on in his career worked as an Indian Agency physician at several locations, including Fort Stevenson in Dakota Territory, the Western

⁴⁶ "Examination by Henry L. Keefe (Picotte copy) May 1914," Papers of Susan La Flesche Picotte (1907, 1914, 1915, 1917), Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

Shoshone Reservation in Nevada, the Colville Reservation in Washington (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reserve, composed of Arrow Lakes, Chelan, Colville, Entiat, Nespelem, Okanagan, Methow, Moses-Columbia, Nez Perce, Palus, San Poil, and Wenatchee peoples), and the Carlisle Boarding School in Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ Montezuma never developed the same kind of intimacy with his patients that Picotte did. While he thought extensively about the dynamics of care on reservations, he tended to think in pan-Indigenous terms. The only exception was the Apache Reservation in Arizona, to which he would go back to at least one month out of every year to provide medical serviced. Instead, while Picotte cultivated intimate relationships, Montezuma worked on therapeutic options that could address the question of access and intimacy.

In 1893, Montezuma gave a talk at the Carlisle Indian School on a salve he had developed while serving “several years as a government physician and surgeon on the frontier, among soldiers, miners, cowboys, and Indians of various tribes.”⁴⁸ Montezuma developed a salve of menthol and Vaseline to treat lung problems, which, he noted, were endemic on reservations. He presented the salve as an alternative to the preferred hot poultice therapy, usually made with mustard, linseed oil, or even raw meat. These poultices did not work on rural reservations where doctors needed to travel long distances to reach their patients and resources were in short supply. Furthermore, the application of cool poultices did more harm than good. Menthol and Vaseline could travel, and, more importantly, the salve could be saved and applied without the supervision of a doctor. Montezuma’s work as a doctor, which has been very understudied due to his work as

⁴⁷ “Medical Lecture Given by Montezuma on the Virtues of His Menthol Salve, Precursor to Vapo-Rub, page 1.” MSS 60 Box 6 Folder 1E. Carlos Montezuma Papers, Arizona State University.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

an activist has overshadowing his profession, evidences the danger to settler hegemony posed by recruiting Indigenous physicians to the Indian Agency. As expected, Montezuma was pushed toward thinking critically and creatively about the questions of medical practice, isolation, and access on reservations. Unexpectedly, however, this undermined the reach of Indian Agency officials.

Wassaja (Signaling) Disability

Ultimately, in moving between the expectations of his mentors and the needs of his patients, between being a native physician-informant and an Indigenous healer and activist, Montezuma performed neither the part of the representative Indian nor the part of an Apache healer. Montezuma's work at boarding schools was more in line with his patrons' expectations. After Ingalls, Montezuma turned to a much higher profile mentor: Captain Richard Henry Pratt. Medical school was challenging for Montezuma. A mentor at University of Illinois wrote Montezuma a recommendation for his application to Chicago Medical School, but only after trying to dissuade him from the endeavor, suggesting instead that he might be better suited for work in a pharmacy.⁴⁹ While that letter was enough to guarantee him admission and covered tuition costs, Montezuma took longer to get through medical school than most, as his time was divided between his studies and, ironically, working in a pharmacy. Furthermore, while Montezuma enjoyed a certain degree of popularity as an undergraduate, in medical school he often complained of discrimination. His graduation was delayed one year for reasons that were not altogether clear to him, but the impression he had was that the administration's insistence

⁴⁹ Iverson, *Carlos Montezuma and the Changing World of American Indians*, 8.

that he was not ready to graduate reflected their belief that he could never be ready to be a doctor.⁵⁰

It was during that trying time, in 1887, when Montezuma consistently reported being undervalued and derailed by the faculty at the medical school, that he first wrote to Captain Richard Henry Pratt. Pratt had been a prominent figure in Indian affairs for some time, due to his military history and experience training scouts, but increasingly his name was known in relation to his work in Indigenous education as the director of the Carlisle Industrial Indian School. In his dealings with Indigenous people, both as enemies and allies, Pratt had become convinced that with the proper application of force all Native people could be assimilated.⁵¹ Now Pratt is best known for updating the adage “the only good Indian is a dead one,” in 1892 by adding “that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.”⁵² Pratt was thrilled to hear from someone like Montezuma. In his eyes, the young Apache medical student was an example of everything he thought education could do for Indigenous people.

In 1887, facing a repeat of his final year of medical school, Montezuma seriously considered giving up and moving to Pennsylvania to work at the Carlisle Indian School instead,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ See Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*; Ludlow, Eastman, and Indian Rights Association, *Captain Pratt and His Work for Indian Education*.

⁵² National Conference on Social Welfare, *The Indian Policy*, 46. The less known part of his address concerns the extension of this logic to African Americans. He continued, “Inscrutable are the ways of Providence. Horrible as were the experiences of its introduction, and of slavery itself, there was concealed in them the greatest blessing that ever came to the Negro race—seven millions of blacks from cannibalism in darkest Africa to citizenship in free and enlightened America; not full, not complete citizenship, but possible—probable—citizenship, and on the highway and near to it.” Anti-black racism and the legacy of racial capitalism and slavery in the United States has always been part and parcel of the larger structure of settler colonialism. Not to mention the fact that Afro-Indigenous people across the Americas have experienced the intersections of these different but interconnected mechanisms of colonial thought.

but Pratt encouraged him to continue, noting the symbolic importance of his degree. More importantly, Pratt referenced the performative importance of his degree. Comparing his career in medicine explicitly to Indigenous performances in wild west shows, Pratt pleaded with Montezuma to perform indigenous education and ability in medicine. He insisted it was that performance that “reservation Indians” and whites alike needed to see.⁵³ Pratt’s belief in the performative and public significance of Montezuma’s actions shaped the latter’s career. Montezuma took up positions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs when Pratt suggested that would further Pratt’s cause—the termination of indigeneity through educational assimilation. Montezuma also gave speeches at Pratt’s events, and would be one of the most vocal and publicly visible Indigenous intellectuals of period.

Montezuma inaugurated his own journal, *Wassaja*, in 1916. *Wassaja*, or signaling, named after Montezuma’s own birth/Yavapai name, was the first journal of its kind, intended to be read by an international native audience and settler public alike. It would allow Montezuma to perform indigenous expertise to the most diverse and largest audience yet. That wide readership ambition is the point on which he and Captain Pratt differed most during their long and otherwise intellectually kindred relationship. Pratt cautioned Montezuma against reaching out to such a broad public, arguing that there would be no political interests in common between nations. Furthermore, Pratt feared that the resulting failure of the journal would undermine the entire class of Indian intellectuals by putting such a prominent misstep up for white scrutiny.⁵⁴ Pratt was wrong. Not only did *Wassaja* circulate between nations and among settlers, but under

⁵³ Richard H. Pratt to Carlos Montezuma, January 21st, 1887. Richard H. Pratt Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

⁵⁴ “Pratt to Montezuma, January 18, 1911, Confidential,” Carlos Montezuma Papers, Box 3, Folder 154, Newberry Library.

Montezuma's leadership and authorship, the journal was one of the only publications, among many that took up Indigenous topics at the time, that spoke to and through Indigenous people, not just about them.

A facet of Montezuma's career as a writer and propagator of pan-Indigenous discourse that is entirely overlooked in the historiography is how his position as a doctor, not just an intellectual, impacted his writing, politics, and the kind of authority he exerted in Indian Country. There is, therefore, a little analyzed tension between alterity, authority, and power in the figure of the native informant as doctor in Indigenous contexts. I have found the example of Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī instructive in thinking about what such an analysis would look like. In her exploration of Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī's writings and empowerment through medicine, Fedwa Malti-Douglas notes that unlike many other physician-authors in Egypt, or those in the West, who infuse medical themes in their writing explicitly, there is a distinct "Sa'dāwīan de-emphasis [that] denudes medicine and science of part of their magical, technological power" in Sa'dāwī's work.⁵⁵ Instead, Malti-Douglas shows, Sa'dāwī centers power, and she uses her experiences as a physician and woman, including witnessing the cruelty of male doctors as a practice, the inequality of women in the field despite a constant encounter with common biology, and sexual politics and transgressions in both her life and in the lives of her patients, to give shape and insight to a literary assessment of power. Nawāl al-Sa'dāwī's role as a public feminist and literary author is shaped by her insight into human interaction as a doctor and her experience navigating authority as someone whose professional claim to it was always contested.

Though Montezuma's writing was non-fiction, we see a similar dynamic in his focus on power as it relates to maturity, (dis)ability, and embodiment. *Wassaja* featured correspondence

⁵⁵ Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word*, 131.

from readers, segments on poetry from Indigenous, African American, and settler authors, and above all else called for American Indian full embodied maturity, by which he meant a lack of dependence on the (absent) care of the Indian Bureau. The notion of “racial maturity” for Native people was common enough during the Progressive Era, but Montezuma’s impassioned rally for independence, seen in the pages of *Wassaja*, was unique. Unlike the contemporaneous Dr. Charles Eastman, the Sanatee Dakota co-founder of the Boy Scouts of America and 32 YMCA chapters for Indigenous men, whose focus on Indigenous bodies concerned their fitness and masculinity as markers of racial maturity, Montezuma often reckoned with notions of disability as it related to race, and his pleas for emancipation construed racial immaturity not as a fixed category but as a socially constructed problem. “The Indian problem,” *Wassaja*, as he referred to himself in the pages of the journal, stated in the April 1916 inaugural edition, “is a problem because the country has taken it and nursed it as a problem; otherwise it is not a problem at all.”⁵⁶ Indigenous peoples and bodies were pathologized and regulated, Montezuma argued, because the U.S. profited from such a state. It was, to borrow from Mike Oliver’s social model of disability, a social model of racial immaturity.⁵⁷

Montezuma published many accounts of abuses of disabled Indigenous people on reservations at the hands of Indian Bureau agents, as well. Ultimately, he espoused a view of independence as a condition in which his common refrain, “we can do it for ourselves,” called for systemic change, not a change in the bodies and constitutions of Indigenous people. Like his approach to offering relief from lung conditions for reservation Indians, Montezuma’s focus was on the invisible ways in which the U.S. government created dependence, not on curing

⁵⁶ *Wassaja*. Vol 1, No. 1, December 1916. Carlos Montezuma Papers. Arizona State Library.

⁵⁷ Oliver, *Understanding Disability*.

immaturity.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Montezuma's insistence on including reservation Indians in his printed discussions fundamentally altered the ways in which the futures of these people were being discussed. In *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, Allison Kafer, reflecting on the positive visions of the future she imagines with other disabled people versus the horrors projected onto her body and prospects by those in authority (doctors, professors, therapists, etc...). She writes, "How one understands disability in the present determines how one imagines disability in the future; one's assumptions about experience of disability create one's conception of a better future."⁵⁹ Montezuma's elevation of those whose assumptions about the present experience of Indigenous people were informed by the actual experience of indigeneity (and of course by discourse, from which no one was immune) provided an opening to think through other indigenous futures—ones which were too radical for many other political activists at the time.

Finally, Montezuma's authority as a physician constructing a pan-Indian audience was important in and of itself. In *The World We Used to Live In*, theologian Vine Deloria Jr. states that religious wars among native nations simply do not happen because this is a theological impossibility in our traditions which posit religious difference and plurality as fundamental to the nature of belief in the first place—each nation is created differently, becoming *the* people, and these people follow the stories and spirit instructions in their own lane, as it were. However, Deloria notes that the one religious area in which there was (Deloria's tense) crossover, in which theft and violence and exchange did take place, was medical-religious practice.⁶⁰ There is a case to be made for the pre-existing epistemic and political framework which positions medicine as an

⁵⁸ *Wassaja*. Vol 2, No. 9, December 1919. Carlos Montezuma Papers. Arizona State Library.

⁵⁹ Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, 2.

⁶⁰ Deloria, *The World We Used to Live In*.

international category that enables exchange between nations otherwise contained in their own epistemic and religious lanes. Montezuma's position as a man of medicine, if not a medicine man, provided him a unique platform for lobbying for pan-indigeneity.

Twin Reservation Diseases: Allotment and Addiction

The 1887 Dawes Severalty Act, which authorized the federal government to divide sovereign Indigenous territories into non-communal allotments for tribal citizens in exchange for U.S. citizenship and the ability to rent or sell land, was one of many excessively violent mechanisms of assimilation in the late 19th century, and it was particularly effective at reducing Indigenous land base and severing communities. Allotment gave Indigenous people living in extreme poverty and isolation what seemed to be an unavoidable choice: sovereignty or survival. Accordingly, allotment was not a matter of land ownership for the sake of communal security. Rather, it concerned the ability to sell land as individual plots which were then valued most in rent or sale, and this measure transformed environments, expanding the reach of ranchers and farmers across the continent. It drew lines across already circumscribed reservations, enabled quick dispossession, and short-lived monetary gain. Allotment transformed lands as it transformed peoples and it spread across Indian Country like a disease, resulting in a withering of communities and land bases. The scars are still visible today in territories greatly reduced in comparison to treaty stipulations, generations of disconnected (and reconnecting) Indigenous people, and an overall reduced Indigenous population.⁶¹

⁶¹ For more on the Dawes Act and its impacts across Indian Country, see Carter, *The Dawes Commission and the Allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes, 1893-1914*; Otis and Prucha, *Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands*; Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara, and André Le Dressay, "A Failed Experiment."

Susan La Flesche Picotte got her medical degree in 1889, two years after the Allotment Act. As the Indian Agency physician to the Omaha, she was tasked with seemingly contradictory objectives: to both prescribe allotment to her patients and treat its ill effects, among which Picotte targeted alcoholism. There has been much written on Susan La Flesche Picotte's medical work and rally for prohibition—more than has been written on the content of the medical practice of either Dr. Charles Eastman or Carlos Montezuma, her two contemporaneous peers.⁶² These works have focused on the Victorian political stance expressed in her rally for prohibition, the toll her medical practice took on Picotte physically, and her role as a mediator between the Omaha and settler officials. In large part, that focus is justified by her archive—these are by far the most consistent and salient themes as expressed in her papers. Connecting these three facets of her work to the larger allotment backdrop, however, reveals how Picotte mapped allotment and addiction geographically and socially in similar ways. Picotte's work in allotment and medical care required that she traverse the reservation time and again, developing different ways of preparing palliatives and constructing patients at the same time she was navigating a new way of relating to land. This work and her orientation toward land and addicts culminated in the erection of the first settler style hospital on a reservation—a project she understood to be her life's work.

Though we know from her letters that allotment entailed visiting neighbors and having conversations, viewing and mapping properties, and maintaining relationships, what is most evident is the relentless paperwork. The La Flesche family, including Susan and her siblings who were all educators, social scientists, lawyers, and other educated officials, saw and navigated this side of allotment more than most. Though Picotte kept few records pertaining to others'

⁶² See Tong, *Susan La Flesche Picotte, M.D.*; Starita, *A Warrior of the People*.

allotment cases, her letters reveal that she was assisting many of her patients on these sorts of financial matters, and the records concerning the allotment of her father's estate provides a glimpse of what that looked like. Allotment was difficult, requiring many levels of approvals and verification, negotiation with Indian Agents, and literal mapping and dividing of tracts of land. After he died, Picotte's father's estate was to be divided among his children, but it was not simple. They first needed to reimagine his property as something dividable, drawing up representations of it on a grid with color coded indications of which parcel would go to which child.⁶³ Picotte's father, Joseph "Iron Eyes" La Flesche, was the first to build a permanent settler-style house on Omaha land, so this view of static grid-like land was not even a generation old.⁶⁴

Perhaps even more abrupt was the shift (and rift) the constant paperwork caused in the relationships between the La Flesche siblings. In 1913, Picotte's sister, Marguerite, wrote to their brother, Francis, who was then living in Washington D.C. and traveling regularly for research:

I wrote you before you went back to Pawhuska but have not heard from you since. We sent some papers down to Lucy [another sibling] to sign to get the patent to father's land and she sent back toe papers saying the notary public had told her we were disowning her. I will send you the papers so you can see them and if they are what Lucy thinks they are, Susie [Picotte] and I have been mistaken in them. We thought we were doing it in the best way for everybody because you didn't want someone's name to appear and the other to avoid court proceedings [likely a reference to Frank's previous short-lived marriage]. Please write me fully after reading the papers. Every one of you seems to mistrust the others. If as brothers and sisters and nephews we can't trust each other, who are we going to trust and who will trust us. ... In our old ages who is going to care for us if we don't care for our brothers and sisters. Susie is so anxious to have the estate settled on account of her health. Carry doesn't trust anybody so if we get the thing settled it will be a miracle. What I've been through on account of these estates would fill a large book. I don't blame anybody excepting for lack of trust in one another. In the agreement which I send you with this, Susie asks for the patent to father's land, with yours, Carey's, and Lucy's, and the rest of the heirs' permission. After

⁶³ See figure 3 in the Appendix.

⁶⁴ See figure 5 in the Appendix.

the patent is issued she asks for deeds from us and pay for each share. She is to buy father's estate from the rest of us and have the patent issued to her.⁶⁵

The La Flesche family had their disagreements in earlier generations. Francis's father stopped living with his mother following his conversion to Christianity, and Susan's mother had a tumultuous and pained relationship with her own white father, who was a white settler. The mistrust and fear for security in old age was new, however. Even with a complex family structure, with numerous half siblings, cousins, and remarriages, the word "disown" was a new one in the La Flesche family.

Furthermore, Joseph La Flesche, the man whose estate they were dividing up only to be sold back to one individual (Susan), had relied on his family for support as he got older. That the La Flesche children did not expect the same signals a shift in Omaha familial dynamics resulting in large part from allotment. Picotte was especially vulnerable to these changes in family dynamics. In part, this was due to the fact that her health was poor. Just before she died in 1915, Picotte's nephew wrote to her brother Francis:

Aunt Sue is very low. They had to operate on her several times, and Dr. Gifford said that he did not see how she could live more than a month. They say that her suffering is something terrible. She is nothing but skin and bones. Jack said that if he was in the shape that she is he would thank some body to put him out of misery. Poor woman, she certainly has had her share of pain.⁶⁶

As her nephew implied, Susan had been ill for decades. She retired briefly as the Agency doctor as early as 1893 to tend to her own and her ailing mother's health, though she never stopped

⁶⁵ "Letter from Marguerite La Flesche to Francis La Flesche, January 29, 1913." The Estate of Joseph La Flesche, 1909-1916, Box 14. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

⁶⁶ "Letter from Carry E. Farley to Mr. Frank La Flesche, June 25, 1915." The Estate of Joseph La Flesche, 1909-1916, Box 14. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

treating non-La Flesche family patients.⁶⁷ She had ocular condition that caused extreme headaches and neck stiffness, which she had dealt with since her time in medical school.⁶⁸ That condition was not helped by the extremely tough work demanded of her by her community. Picotte was responsible for 1,300 patients over a 450-square mile area.⁶⁹ While she had an office at the Indian Agency, it was small and dank with no windows. The Agency was also far away from where many Omaha actually lived. Instead, Picotte would transport all her instruments and medicines to the day school or to people's homes.⁷⁰ This constant travel over bumpy dirt roads or no roads at all was tough on Picotte.⁷¹

Mapping for allotment and for providing medical care was a difficult job for Picotte—one that left her physically scarred and changed the way she related to her family. This mapping also influenced the way Picotte conceived of and constructed her patients. In a letter to her brother Francis concerning her appointment as a representative for the Omaha in matters pertaining to allotment and the Indian Agency expectation that they would all transition to farming in 1909, she wrote:

The Omahas were unanimous in making a first choice of me to go as delegate. It is pitiful to see them. You and Mr. Abbott are mistaken in thinking I am agitating them. I knew exactly what would happen when I found about the plan—I haven't seen a single white person or Indian who is in favor of it and everything is exactly as I prophesied it would be to Mr. Abbot. You do not know what the conditions are out here or you would not approve of it either—understand me—I am in favor of the industrial demolishment of the Indian but Mr. Abbot's plan is going to fall

⁶⁷ Tong, *Susan La Flesche Picotte, M.D.*, 100.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 122.

⁶⁹ National Library of Medicine, Biography of Susan La Flesche Picotte.
https://cfmedicine.nlm.nih.gov/physicians/biography_253.html

⁷⁰ Diffendal, "The La Flesche Sisters: Susette, Rosalie, Marguerite, Lucy, Susan," 43.

⁷¹ Tong, *Susan La Flesche Picotte, M.D.*, 122.

flat factually—you cannot make famers of all the Indians just because they all have land... (emphasis in the original).⁷²

Francis La Flesche moved away from the Omaha Reservation at a young age, and though he visited regularly, sent money to his family, wrote to them, and provided legal and professional assistance when possible, he was not present in the way that Picotte was. Her work in allotment and in traversing the reservation while maintaining physical networks for care and political dispossession had made her bitter. She came to see her patients often as pitiful and deserving of “industrial demolishment.” And yet, she regularly had to testify and reconfirm her relationship to and identity as one of the “pitiful Indians.”

Nowhere was Picotte’s simultaneous identification and disidentification, her care and revulsion, more prominent than in her campaign for prohibition on the Omaha reservation. This was a family affair. Her father had instituted a community-sourced Omaha police force dedicated to making the reservation dry before her (see Chapter 2), but Picotte was dealing with a radically different terrain of addiction. After her father abolished the Omaha hereditary chief structure and other sub-governance structures organized around clan and ceremony in 1888, only a year after the Dawes Act was instituted, addiction and related violence hit an all-time high in the community. In 1914, in response to the question “What hygienic, physical, and industrial effects did you observe from this eighteen years of the use of liquor?” during a public hearing, Picotte stated:

The Omaha Indians had always been a very moral people. Every individual member of the Tribe was required to conform very closely to the codes of ethics drawn up by the tribal organization; *the prime objective of the organization to preserve the integrity and unity of the people as a whole*. Therefore we find the Omaha Indian before the advent of the whiteman a fine specimen of manhood, physically and morally, of good health; and work and rest were properly balanced.

⁷² “Letter to Frank La Flesche from Susan La Flesche Picotte, 1909, n.d.” Omaha Tribal Affairs, 1907-1918, Box 15. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

He lived at peace with his neighbors with plenty for his household; content with his share of the gifts of God and more nearly attaining that goal which is the universal pursuit of mankind—happiness. After the advent of the whiteman with liquor, we find these conditions radically changed and reversed. We find physical degeneration of the Indian; the use of liquor lowering resistance to any kind of a disease (emphasis mine).⁷³

As other scholars have emphasized, Picotte's debt to Victorian woman's associations is evident in her framing of the morality of sobriety. However, I am more struck by her association of morality and community cohesion as a whole. The sale of liquor in Omaha territory was a tactic used by white settlers attempting to dispossess Omaha citizens of their land, and this became especially prevalent after the Dawes Act contributed to increased fracturing and systemic individualism. The division and colonization of land was part and parcel of the diseases Picotte was treating.

One of Picotte's final "firsts," just before her death in 1915 was the opening of her hospital—the first of its kind on a reservation.⁷⁴ In a letter to her brother in 1914 which included a postcard with an image of the hospital, she proudly described its features:

There is a main ward of 6 beds, a secondary ward of 6 beds—a bath for each, a modern equipped operation room—private + an obstretical [sic] room—an office + diet kitchen. Rooms in basement, dining room, kitchen, furnace, laundry—rooms for janitor and house keeper. 3 rooms in second story for surgeon and nurses. We have had good success and a good many operations. We keep 3 or 4 nurses on all the time.⁷⁵

⁷³ "Henry Warner Testimony given by Susan La Flesche Picotte, May 1914 (Dr. Picotte Copy)," Papers of Susan La Flesche Picotte (1907, 1914, 1915, 1917), Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

⁷⁴ See Figure 4 in the Appendix.

⁷⁵ "Letter from Picotte to La Flesche, 1914." Omaha Tribal Affairs 1907-1918, n.d. Box 15. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

This structure was unique. That level of medical support and infrastructure was unheard of in Indian Country. Every other physical base for her practice had doubled as something else—a schoolroom, a community meeting place, an agency office. This hospital was only for medical care and it was staffed by numerous employees, some Omaha, others from the Indian Agency. It centralized medical care on the Omaha Reservation, allowing Picotte’s successor to avoid the constant mapping, traversing, and parceling out that marked her career thus far. More so, the hospital was more than just another first for Picotte. It was the culmination of her various medical and social projects. In Picotte’s mind, the hospital was part of the making of a modern Omaha. At the same time, it worked against the allotment impulse to fragment, as it provided services for those suffering from alcohol addiction and did so in a way that was community centered, no longer organized around one woman travelling long miles between disparate Omaha families.

Conclusion

Literature on Red Progressive figures tends to fall into two major camps—one critiquing their politics and complicity in settler colonial violence and the other trying to recuperate some Indigenous political framework in their work, such as focusing on mediation or hybridity. As Pripas-Kapit argues in “We Have Lived on Broken Promises,” over the course of her career, Picotte saw how settler colonial structures were responsible for the ills she was treating, and as a result grew increasingly ambivalent about assimilation, including, as I explained, how settler colonialism was responsible for alcoholism.⁷⁶ Similarly, Montezuma and other native informants observed similar conditions and believed in the vanishing race not because they believed

⁷⁶ Pripas-Kapit, “We Have Lived on Broken Promises.”

Indigenous people ought to die, but because they saw colonial violence and were swayed by the powerful evidence before them. The Red Progressives fell victim to a colonial logic that is as exceptionally difficult to resist now as it was then—the truism that regardless of the moral or just standing of settler colonial supremacy, it was impossible to reverse its advances. If nothing else, the Red Progressives were practical, and having fully internalized this logic, they acted accordingly.

Part of Indigenous survival has been due to the rejection of these logics and the ongoing production of various Indigenous epistemologies and governance outside of them.⁷⁷ At the same time, we need to recognize the generations of work and support it has taken to build vocabularies that speak back to that level of intellectual decolonization on audible frequencies.⁷⁸ I argue that Native science was part of that work in that it revealed the fallacies of settler logics, even when (or perhaps especially when) it was contorted under assimilation. Picotte and Montezuma were absolutely assimilationists and native informants, and still their work was part of the making of forms of Indigenous knowledge and medical care that were unsettling within a settler colonial context and constituted part of the historical development of diverse Indigenous epistemologies and medical traditions.

Settler and Indigenous are entwined concepts. We only became Indigenous when there was a non-Indigenous other who marked (and then subsequently attempted to erase that marker)

⁷⁷ See Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 2014; Simpson, *As We Have Always Done Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*; Wilson and Yellow Bird, *For Indigenous Eyes Only*; Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor.”

⁷⁸ In reference to audible frequencies, I am speaking to Spivak’s classic formulation of subaltern incommensurability. The answer to “can the subaltern speak” is “yes, but the colonizer cannot listen.” Spivak and Morris, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

as such.⁷⁹ Previously we were (and still are, in addition to the Indigenous qualifier) hundreds of nations, each with their own and often intersecting epistemological histories and bodies of knowledge built through tens of thousands of years of living with environments that profoundly shaped that knowledge and how we produced it.⁸⁰ Those continued, just as our nations did, but in large part due to the Indigenous being a settler scientific concept and to the history of the co-construction of European sciences and colonialism, a new sphere of diverse pan-indigeneity emerged—Native science. Indigenous epistemologies became “Indigenous” at the same time that Indigenous people became the objects and tools of the hegemonic settler science that was colonizing Turtle Island (what settlers called North America). Our knowledges and ways of knowing, including medical and technological regimes, became the knowledges and ways of knowing of a category of people and their relations that provided the content settler extractive science. Native science is extraordinarily diverse but it is unified by that subject position and its relation to settler scientific orientations.

Carlos Montezuma and Susan La Flesche Picotte engaged this terrain differently. Montezuma imagined his work as pan-Indigenous. Picotte was most concerned with the Omaha and Omaha lands. Today there are also Native scientists who do both—those who think and work expansively with “Indigenous knowledge” and epistemology generally, and those who continue to situate their work within their own epistemic traditions. As seen in the case of Montezuma and Picotte, these positions do different political work and resulted in different kinds of medical care. However, because both were constructed as Native informants, as tools and

⁷⁹ See Povinelli, “The Governance of the Prior.”

⁸⁰ See Nelson, “Indigenous Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Persistence in Place.”

objects of a settler science, in their interactions with settler discourses and authorities, these different approaches converged. While it is our responsibility to interrogate internalized colonialism, some failures to do so do not necessarily always result in supporting the settler colonial project. Picotte and Montezuma could be assimilationists and Native scientists at the same time, and that uneasy condition in and of itself contributed to our developing decolonial vocabularies and the failure of settler colonialism anyway.

2. “Playing the White Man’s Game”: the Native Informant as an Epistemic Tool

The September 9, 1932 New York Times obituary for Omaha ethnologist Francis La Flesche described him as “the Indian leader who played by the white man’s game and won.”⁸¹ It characterized his forty-nine-year career in ethnology as dedicated to the documentation of his “vanishing race,” and insisted that his most important intellectual contributions to his field were those works that “led him to conclude that his own race was doomed” to disappear as a result of intermarriage with settlers. La Flesche’s obituary constantly harkened back to his indigeneity, pausing on sensational accounts of his birth in a tipi, involvement in buffalo hunts as a child, and the “weird death feast” held in his honor the night before.⁸² Like many Indigenous professionals at the time, Francis La Flesche’s career and scholarly works were interpreted as evidence of the success and natural inevitability of Indigenous assimilation and termination. At the same time, as an individual, La Flesche was constantly compelled to perform some version of authentic indigeneity—to provide time and again an object against which his colleagues and an eager public could project settler anxieties and fantasies.

What exactly was the white man’s game La Flesche supposedly played, and if he was simultaneously performing the ongoing presence of indigeneity and documenting its disappearance, how could he possibly have won? La Flesche’s obituary declared his victory due to his ability to carve any life at all in a settler dominated context, but his life and his work has since been judged according to the specific rules of ethnology, which was certainly the white

⁸¹ “INDIAN FEAST MARKS LA FLESCHE BURIAL: Masonic Services Also Are Held for Son of the Last Chief of the Omaha Tribe,” *New York Times*, September 10, 1932.

⁸² *Ibid.*

man's game, as well. Ethnology was in transition at the turn of the twentieth century.⁸³ It was professionalizing in the academy and emerging as a prominent social science in institutions and associations like the Bureau of Ethnology, the Smithsonian Institute, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). But its roots in military science, particularly geological surveys and phrenology (and the associated theft of human remains) ran deep, especially as ethnologists continued to conduct their work as agents of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, and government-funded boarding schools.⁸⁴ John

⁸³ In the 19th century, ethnology, the comparative study of cultures, was dominated by theories of cultural evolution. It was the most prominent area of social thought concerning civilizational difference at the time. Around the turn of the century, ethnology was subsumed by the broader academic field of anthropology under the Boas model at Columbia University, where the first PhD program in anthropology was offered in 1899. Boas's anthropology included ethnology, linguistic anthropology, archeology, and physical anthropology as the four major subfields of the discipline. Francis La Flesche and the ethnologists he worked with, however, were all of a previous generation who referred to their work and profession exclusively as ethnology. Though the time period covered by this chapter saw that transition, I am using "ethnology" in this chapter and following chapters, understanding it as part of a longer history of anthropology and the U.S. settler scientific study of its perennial Indigenous other, including military surveys, phrenology, archeology and natural history. For an account of the ascendance of anthropology, its professionalization, and how it was conceived at the time, see Boas, Franz. "The History of Anthropology." *Science* 20, no. 512 (1904): 513–24.

⁸⁴ For histories of ethnology and anthropology at this time and their professionalization see: Terry A. Barnhart, *Ephraim George Squier and the Development of American Anthropology* (U of Nebraska Press, 2005); Joan T. Mark, *4 Anthropologists: An American Science in Its Early Years* (New York: Science History Publication/USA, 1980); Curtis M. Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology, 1846-1910* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981); Thomas C. Patterson, *Toward a Social History of Archaeology in the United States*, Case Studies in Archaeology Series (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1995); Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology*, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986). For the history of U.S. grave robbing, scientific racism, and military phrenology, see Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); Anthony M. Platt, *Grave Matters: Excavating California's Buried Past* (Berkeley, Calif.: Heyday, 2011); Ian Tattersall and Rob Desalle, *Race?: Debunking a Scientific Myth* (Texas A&M University Press, 2011); Simon Harrison, *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Samuel J. Redman, *Bone Rooms: From Scientific Racism to Human Prehistory in*

Wesley Powell, the first director of the Bureau of Ethnology, who served at the same time as the second director of the U.S. Geological Survey (1881-1994) and who had previously made his name as a military engineer in the Union Army, embodied and expressed this long history and moment of transition best. In his introduction to the *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* in 1880, he wrote:

By act of Congress of March 3, 1879, the various geological and geographical surveys existing at that time [under military and federal authority] were discontinued and the United States Geological Survey was established. In all the earlier surveys anthropologic researches among the North American Indians were carried on. In that branch of the work finally designated as the Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region, such research constituted an important part of the work. In the act creating the Geological Survey, provision was made to continue work in this field on the direction of the Smithsonian Institution, on the basis of the methods developed and materials collected by the Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region.⁸⁵

During this period, when the discipline still existed in a gray area between hobby, policy work, and social science, a few of the partners of ethnologists, their “native informants,” who were critical to but silent in earlier geographic surveys conducted by the military and federal government, first carved entry points into the professional level of settler social scientific knowledge production.

This posed a challenge to ethnology, and later anthropology, as a social science.

Indigenous peoples were the object par excellence of these fields. The scientific validity of

Museums (Cambridge, Massachusetts ; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2016). For more on U.S. geological surveys and their relation to Indigenous dispossession and displacement, see William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959); Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁸⁵ Smithsonian Institution. *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.*, 1st 1879-1880: xii.

ethnology, which was then in dispute, depended on an Indigenous other who was relationally on par with objects of inquiry in other scientific fields, and the relevance and urgency of the discipline relied on the vanishing race hypothesis. Indigenous ethnologists complicated that object position and troubled the logic of the vanishing race hypothesis. Someone like Francis La Flesche then was forever objectified and fetishized for his indigeneity as an informant, while simultaneously penalized and excluded for it as a scholar. La Flesche, who began his career as a translator and informant, first for James Owen Dorsey in 1871, and then for Alice Cunningham Fletcher ten years later, struggled to assert his position as an ethnologist in his own right. Even when he attained authorship status with a second author acknowledgement from Fletcher on their 1910 *The Omaha Tribe*, his labor was never quite viewed as scientific. Reviewers questioned his objectivity. Colleagues found his work difficult to engage and his collections near impossible to display, and collaborators were never able to get him to play the role they felt was proper. The day-to-day of Francis La Flesche's career featured regular assaults on his intellectual capacity and humanity, most often expressed through criticisms of his objectivity and or obsessions with his positionality. His work was interpreted at best as raw data to be admired and appropriated by the real settler ethnologists. At worst, his work was "incomprehensible."⁸⁶ La Flesche was the first Indigenous ethnologist to achieve institutional backing and recognition, and yet both he and his work was never quite at home in the field.

I propose that this "never-quite" dynamic be taken seriously as a Native scientific position and methodology in ethnology that have been present in the field since its onset. That position and methodology emerged from the negotiation of Indigenous subjectivity and objectification. In the following three chapters, I approach La Flesche in the ways he was characterized during his

⁸⁶ La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 4.

life—as an ageless object and tool, and later an insider researcher and not quite ethnologist, and I use different methods in accordance with those radically different subject positions. First, I look at sources from the La Flesche family archives and La Flesche’s personal papers to determine how a native informant like La Flesche was manufactured and taken up as an ethnologic tool. In this chapter, I mirror and explore La Flesche’s treatment as an object and tool lacking a legible voice by borrowing from methods and frameworks used in scientific object biographies.⁸⁷ In the following chapter, I analyze an episode of his career as an ethnologist and collaborator in the production of the “Indian opera” *Da-o-ma*, using the records La Flesche kept during his time at the Bureau of Ethnology starting in 1910, and, in Chapter 4, I analyze his published works and collection practices as products of a not-quite ethnology. La Flesche’s consequential position as a tool and object of science is a constitutive feature of Native science, and it is a key difference between Native sciences and other Indigenous epistemes.

Not-quite ethnology was the result of object and subject negotiation on the part of Indigenous practitioners, like Francis La Flesche, and— unique to the position of Native science in a settler state— the result of occupying the impossible position of a *Native* native informant in an epistemic, physical, and discursive context that systemically pursued and presumed

⁸⁷ Object biographies have been increasingly popular in postcolonial and global histories of science. David Arnold, for example, in *Everyday Technology*, traces small technologies, like the bicycle or sewing machine, in their conception, travel, and uptake/transformation in Indian contexts. The perspective of the machine allows Arnold to analyze not only how these tools were used, but also provides a view of the intersections and contingent nature of sex, gender, class, caste, and race at play in the lives of Indians and in Indian nationalism and modernism at the time. Equally important for my purposes, object biographies bring forward the extent to which objects, once produced or conceived, reproduce, transform and interact with the meanings mapped onto them. In framing my account of La Flesche’s time as an informant as an “object biography,” I am highlighting the ways in which race, indigeneity, class, and sex are mapped onto him, and in so doing, I argue for the considerable extent to which this objectification enabled a different kind of agency. See Arnold, *Everyday Technology*.

Indigenous termination and settler appropriation.⁸⁸ The scientific racism that permeated Francis La Flesche's career and field, and forced him to perform extra emotional, physical, and intellectual labor, and to withstand objectification, infantilization, and fetishization was not evidence of an immature or improperly scientific discipline—it was a feature of ethnology as a field within the emergent and later formalized structure of settler epistemic governance.⁸⁹ La Flesche was one of the first to engage settler knowledge production about Indigenous peoples in through ethnography in this mode. The product was a queer kind of failure to achieve the normative requirements of his field, resulting in work and disciplinary dynamics that were both foreign to and part and parcel of settler ethnology.⁹⁰

In this chapter, I read Francis La Flesche's uptake and career as a native informant as an object biography—a common genre in the history of technology, a field dedicated to the study of tools. I first explore how tools are made by asking what actually constitutes an elite Indigenous person in the settler gaze in the late 19th century. I find that the making of native informants as tools of settler science pushes against common conceptions of native informants as elite and hybrid subjects. I then explore the various ways in which native informants were wielded as tools by tracing La Flesche's career as a native informant first with James Owen Dorsey and then with Alice Fletcher. Through these episodes, La Flesche moved from being an object of ethnology, to

⁸⁸ See Ahmed Ragab, "History of Science," in *Women and Islamic Cultures: Disciplinary Paradigms and Approaches, 2003-2013*, by Suad Joseph and Marilyn Booth (Leiden: Boston : Brill, 2013) for a discussion of object/subject negotiation for Muslim women scientists.

⁸⁹ See Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 387–409, for a discussion of the structure of settler colonialism and the logics of Indigenous termination.

⁹⁰ See J. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011) and David Mitchell, Sharon Snyder, and Linda Ware, "[Every] Child Left Behind," *Journal of Literary & Cultural Disability Studies* 8, no. 3 (January 1, 2014): 295–314 for queer and crip readings of failure.

a tool of sight, to an object and tool of legitimacy and authenticity. The question of his subjectivity was raised on a few occasions, most often at La Flesche's own behest, but his labor and positionality were necessarily invisible. When viewed as complex tools of settler social scientific knowledge production, native informants shed light on how settler sciences function, and how we might understand Native science from the vantage of object and subject negotiation.

Native informants are rarely discussed as having epistemic capacity.⁹¹ They are instead analyzed in terms of moralilty (Said), subaltern status (Spivak), and colonial collusion (Massad).⁹² These discussions have failed to engage two key aspects that are central to this study of La Flesche. First, the "native informant" is a technology of colonial and settler colonial knowledge production. The Native informant continues to be an operative term in social sciences. As human technologies, informants offer an opportunity to interrogate not only how social categories and power relations are mapped onto bodies and enacted in the production of imperial knowledge of the other, but also the concrete ways in which the other, in that production, maps different epistemic and social constellations back. To be an object and a tool of imperial science is paradoxically a disempowering and colonizing position, on one hand, and a unique position of power and liberation on the other. Second, discourses in postcolonial studies that address native informants remain uncritical of the term "native." La Flesche was native twice over in being a native informant and an Indigenous person, which entailed a slightly different form of colonial termination and appropriation, a consequence of the specifically settler context within which he worked.

⁹¹ See "Epistemology and Ethnography" in Bryman, *Ethnography* for a rare discussion of the epistemic structure of ethnography.

⁹² Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*; Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Massad, *Desiring Arabs*.

The Conception and Manufacture of a Native Informant

In his youth, Francis La Flesche was in demand as a translator and informant, in large part due to his name. The La Flesche family was exceptionally prominent and active in politics and education on the Omaha reservation and internationally.⁹³ Francis's father, Joseph "Iron Eyes" La Flesche, was popularly known as the last hereditary chief of the Omaha.⁹⁴ Iron Eyes was

⁹³ By the mid-19th century, the Marshall trilogy, a series of three exceptionally influential rulings by chief justice John Marshall between 1823 and 1832 (*Johnson v M'Intosh* in 1823; *Cherokee Nation v State of Georgia* in 1831; and *Worcester v Georgia* in 1832), had established Indigenous polities within the borders of the United States as "domestic dependent" nations, whose "nation to nation" relationship with the United States government was rooted in the legacy of treaty making between Indigenous polities and confederacies and the young U.S. American republic. "Nation-to-nation" as a term, however, belied the hegemonic relationship inherent in a settler state with domestic dependent nations, wherein plenary power and a legally mandated presumption of the U.S. congress's best intent when it came to federal Indian policy, could and would override treaty agreements whenever they contradicted U.S. economic and territorial interests. See Justin Richland, *Introduction to Tribal Legal Studies* (AltaMira Press, 2010) for more on federal Indian law and the significance of the Marshall trilogy. In this context, the international character of the La Flesche family's influence was indicated in their organizing between other Indigenous nations, regionally and through transnational organizations, and their involvement in negotiations and legal cases with the United States government. Joseph La Flesche's children would also prove to be active internationally off Turtle Island. Joseph's daughter Susette La Flesche lectured on Indigenous rights in Europe, too. Susette traveled to the United Kingdom in 1887 for a lecture tour with her husband. Her visit was documented in local papers as part of the golden jubilee for Queen Victoria. This write-up, "The Other Side of Indian Life," described Susette as "Mrs. Tibbles, a famous Indian chief's daughter, and her own name of 'Bright Eyes,' which is now familiar all over the United States" ("The Other Side of Indian Life: 'Bright Eyes,' Her Husband, and Their Work," La Flesche Family Papers, Clippings, RG 2026AM, SG2; S.15; F.1). Susette visited Glasgow, Newcastle, and Edinburg, as well, where their honor at receiving "royalty" (North American Indigenous chiefs and their families were understood according to European monarch standards, making Susette an "Indian princess") prompted publications sensationalizing the coming "Indian squaw," who would mark one of the first royal visits to these locales in ages and whose uniqueness provided evidence that America could rival Africa, or "the dark continent," in the production of truly one of a kind objects ("North of England News," *The Newcastle Chronical*, February 24, 1888; "Brights Eyes in Aberdeen," *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, January 9, 1888; "*Glasgow Herald* 19th September 1887," La Flesche Family Papers, Clippings, RG 2026AM, SG2; S.15; F.1).

⁹⁴ Joseph La Flesche was often featured in newspaper pieces in Nebraska, occasionally more broadly, and the ethnologists who came to study the Omaha usually centered him and his family

appointed a principle chief after his father's death in 1853. Between that time and his own death in 1888, Iron Eyes took part in negotiations of Omaha land secession to the U.S. in 1854, and relocation to the Omaha reservation in the Blackbird Hills of northeast Nebraska and western Iowa in 1856. Later the Omaha witnessed with horror the effects of the nearby Ponca removal to Indian Territory (what is now Oklahoma) in 1877. There was a real fear that the U.S. congress would disregard their 1854 treaty, which exchanged U.S. cash payment in installments over the next few decades for the vast majority of Omaha lands and confinement to the reservation, and elect to remove them even farther afield to Indian Territory too, but that never came to pass. Short distance dislocation and confinement, which were still violent and challenging for the Omaha was evidence of Iron Eyes' and the other chiefs' resolve, keen understanding of the political situation in which they found themselves, and a certain degree of luck.⁹⁵

Like his son's ethnologic work, Joseph La Flesche's harsh pragmatism and resolve were often read as evidence of the success of a civilizing mission. In an undated draft of a letter addressed to white settlers found in Iron Eyes' records, Wa- ja-pa, a family friend who by all accounts shared La Flesche's political goals, implored settlers to grant Indian citizenship free of

in their narratives. Local journalists were fascinated by the fact that he may have been the first chief of the Omaha to have a white parent, and they were doubly interested in the chief with white ancestry directing "civilizing" projects on a reservation (The Bancroft (Nebraska) Journal, "Joseph La Flesche, Head Chief of the Omahas," *Friends' Review; a Religious, Literary and Miscellaneous Journal* (1847-1894); *Philadelphia*, May 9, 1889).

⁹⁵ There were ten Omaha chiefs, each a hereditary appointment from one of the Omaha clans, two of which would be principles, one each from the Earth and Water moieties. La Flesche was the chief of the Elk clan and principle chief of the We'zhinshte of the Earth moiety (Alice Cunningham Fletcher, *The Omaha Tribe*. 1911, 134). For more on Omaha chiefs at this time, see John M. O'Shea and John Ludwickson, "Omaha Chieftainship in the Nineteenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 3 (1992): 316–52.

the strings of land secession.⁹⁶ But he specified that his foremost priority was the Omaha. Many (if not most) Omaha had relations among the Ponca. In fact, Iron Eyes was born to a Ponca mother, a relative of Big Elk, and a French-Canadian father, and he was formally adopted by Big Elk in a public ceremony only a few years before Big Elk's death. Yet, the statement reads,

We have tried working and know very well that it is good. so [sic] we desire it. As we write this letter to you, God is sitting with us as it were, therefore we hope that the white people will stop talking about our land (or against us). We wish to keep what is ours so we petition you and you people [sic] too, who are helping [us]. we pray to you, and you who are on the other side, we pray to you also: Have pity on us Omaha Indians. *We do not mean all the other tribes. Ourselves alone, do we mean* (italics mine).⁹⁷

The anxiety about land speculation and attention to singling out the Omaha indicates this address was written after Ponca relocation, and it reflects the hard political line La Flesche and others were walking. Iron Eyes was practical and strategic to a fault, and he valued land retention (if through allotment and privatization) and the lives of Omaha above all else. Like many

⁹⁶ Wa-ja-pa was one of Alice Fletcher's original informants when she first travelled west to Omaha, Ponca, and Sioux country in 1881. On Wa-ja-pa's political position, Fletcher wrote in her diary in September, 1881, "Wa-ja-pa is very courteous—He is quite a typical Indian... He belongs to the citizens party and affects white man's clothes. It is the pressure of civilization that brings this about, hardly conviction or free choice." Later, she added, "Wajapa belonged to the Indian Police, but perhaps because he was too intelligent he was removed by the agent. He was a carpenter, built homes for the government, paid 10.00 per month" ("Diary entries from September 1881, pages 8 and 14," Diaries—Typescript, n.d., Box 12, Series 9 & 10, National Anthropology Archive (NAA), Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C). Wa-ja-pa's background was rather similar to La Flesche's. While Wa-ja-pa was a carpenter for the Anglo-U.S. Indian Agency, La Flesche had been a fur trader with his French-Canadian father at the decidedly non-Anglo American Fur Company, though their employment background involved a similar degree of negotiation with settler agents. They both belonged to the citizen party, and Wa-ja-pa had been on the Indian Police, which La Flesche had first instituted, and Wa-ja-pa remained close to the La Flesche family until his death in 1907 ("Telegram to Francis La Flesche from Carryl Frarley, August 26, 1907," La Flesche Family, 1900-1930, Box 14, Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers).

⁹⁷ "Letter from Wa-ja-pa," Box 3, Miscellany—Joseph La Flesche, SG2, S.16, F3, La Flesche Family Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE.

Indigenous leaders during allotment and relocation periods, Iron Eyes focused on preparing his children for a world radically different than what he had known, and he modelled what he believed were survival strategies for the whole nation in his own family.

Joseph La Flesche was praised in articles about both him and his children not only for being an assimilationist chief, but for being a leader who valued guiding the Omaha into a new age of settler civilization above all else, including his own popularity.⁹⁸ During his tenure as chief, he openly mocked Omaha religion, established a prohibition on alcohol, and enforced major changes in the day-to-day realities of Omaha life. He supported severalty policies, and perhaps most dramatically, in 1888, he dissolved traditional Omaha leadership structure—hence his being the famed “last chief of the Omaha.” An 1889 article about Joseph La Felsche in *The Friend* read:

His observations of men and events taught him that if the Indian was to survive in the midst of the incoming civilization he must possess his land individually and become a citizen. The old organization of the tribe was incompatible with these demands, and the old customs must yield to the methods of the white race... This remarkable move to abolish the chieftainship on the part of the man holding by virtue of Indian requirement and the authority of the United States, the office of head chief in order to secure the future good of his people, is characteristic of Joseph La Flesche. His ambition transcended the desire of mere personal honors. He believed in the truth, that greatness is found only in unselfish labor to upbuild and advance his fellowmen. It is to his persistent effort that the abolishing of the chiefs among the Omahas is due. This radical act made it possible for the tribe to abandon many ancient customs, which if persisted in under their changed conditions incident to the loss of game, would have retarded their acceptance of civilization and Christianity. While he yet held the position of head chief he used it to inflect severe penalties upon those addicted to drunkenness and gambling. The results of his vigorous action are felt to-day after the lapse of more than twenty years.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ See “Visit from personage of royal rank”, Glasgow Herald, 19th September, 1887,” Box 3 Clippings, RG 2026AM, SG2; S.15; F.1, La Flesche Family Papers; “Untitled on Francis La Flesche,” Extracted from Bright Herald, Oct. 20, 1900, Clippings, 1900-1926, Box 17, Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers, NAA.; The Bancroft (Nebraska).

⁹⁹ “Joseph La Flesche.”

That Iron Eyes pushed the growing Omaha reservation population toward settler-style lives—citizenship, council governance, wood frame homes, severalty, and Christianity—is a fact, and La Flesche was not often thanked for these measures by other political factions who prized more overt resistance.¹⁰⁰ What *The Friend* article and others misrepresented was the sense that “ancient” lifeways were taken by Iron Eyes as impediments to the adoption of the necessary settler attributes for survival. Joseph La Flesche’s policies were more complicated than a paving over the old to make space for the new movement. The non-equivalence between settler perception and political reality on the Omaha reservation contributed to the variety of eliteness that made the La Flesche family so well suited to be taken up as native informants.

We can see the mismatch in the mechanisms by which La Flesche attempted to enact new policies. The prohibition of alcohol was an action that was later praised by his daughter, Susan La Flesche Picotte, who served for most of her adult life as the Omaha Agency physician. Unlike allotment, which ended in the loss of land, by design and through leasing, Picotte credited her father’s prohibition with an overall increase in the health and public well-being of the Omaha. In 1914, when she was called to testify in the case of the death of Henry Warner, an Omaha man who had died in an incident related to public drunkenness, Picotte, in response to a question about the “history of liquor traffic and use of liquor among the Omaha,” stated,

They [the Omaha] were a very moral people and they never made liquor, and did not know the taste of it until it was brought to them by the French voyageurs [sic] trading. They first used liquor sometime before 1856. It brought them disastrous

¹⁰⁰ The introduction of tribal councils that were distinct from traditional governance was a feature of the 1887 Dawes Act and was seen across Indian Country during this period, and these councils, backed by Indian Agents, often directly contradicted other sources of national authority. The loss of tribal government had profound effects on the political, cultural, and religious life of the nation. However, Iron Eyes’ children still held positions with the Omaha Agency, the Omaha tribal council remained intact, and they elected their inaugural Tribal President, Hiram Chase, in 1908 (“An Address, by Hiram Chase, February 28, 1908” Box 15, Omaha Tribal Affairs, 1907-1918, Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers).

results. There were murders, lawlessness and vice. Joseph La Flesche or Iron Eyes, my father, was chief at the time. Realizing the ultimate disastrous effects liquor would have on them, he took drastic measures to put a stop to drinking. He organized a police force of the Omaha Indians in 1856 and the police administered corporal punishment to any member of the tribe who was found drunk. They stopped drinking immediately and the people began to work on their farms and were very industrious and sober. There was no drinking for they had a wholesome respect for Joseph La Flesche and a wholesome fear of his disapproval”¹⁰¹

Though Picotte argued that her father’s actions ultimately contributed to a turn toward agriculture and away from “vice,” a perfect example of a supposedly civilizing mission, his methods and motivations were not clearly in line with that description. Iron Eyes, as she described, was responding to the needs of his community, and his way of meeting those needs was to rely on Omaha obligations and labor. His actions reinforced Omaha self-governance and national cohesion, at least during his lifetime.

Similarly, the non-equivalence between settler perception and Omaha political reality could be seen in where Omaha community members located responsibility for the ill-effects of allotment era politics. As a vocal proponent of boarding school education, La Flesche could have been subject to criticism for the deaths of many Omaha children. However, the despair and ire of parents in his community were not directed at him. Rather, much of it was directed at Alice Fletcher in her capacity as an agent for the Carlisle and Hampton schools. In a heartbreaking 1863 letter to Captain Richard Pratt of the Carlisle Indian school, two Omaha parents, James and Lens Springer, admonished Pratt for the carelessness of those in charge at his school, and expressed regret and anger at the fact that they had not heard sooner of the death of their daughter while she was in their care. They wrote:

I had no idea of sending my children there, but Miss Fletcher got round Elise and persuaded her to go and then Alice [the daughter who had just died] wanted to go

¹⁰¹ Exemination [sic] by Harry L. Keefe of Susan La Flesche Picotte, May 22, 1914, Box 3, “Papers of Susan La Flesche Picotte,” La Flesche Family Papers

with her. It was Miss Fletcher's doing that they went, and now my husband is grieving all the time. I do not see why the government put so much power and confidence in Miss Fletcher, as we think she does no good to the Omaha but much harm. She cannot be trusted.¹⁰²

They demanded the return of their daughter's body and withdrew their other two children from the school. Iron Eyes supported both settler-style and Omaha education for children, and his own daughters were sent to boarding school, like many Omaha children. However, while he hosted recruitment officers like Fletcher, parents like the Springers located manipulation and culpability with her, not with Iron Eyes.

Iron Eyes was only one among many voices, both in Omaha leadership and in the broader community, and he was certainly on the spectrum of political thought that leaned more toward the strategic adoption of some settler political arrangements. He was an assimilationist, but assimilation for Iron Eyes did not always or necessarily involve the destruction of other modes of being and relating. La Flesche's mechanisms of policy change drew from longstanding Omaha relational dynamics, and his community identified settler agents as the appropriate targets of their rage and despair in the face of traumatic loss. This is critical in understanding how Francis La Flesche was cast as a native informant, and later in how he understood the goals of ethnology. The ways in which Iron Eyes interacted with ethnologists and how they viewed him allowed for an ideal ethnological object—one which was compliant with settler political goals, while still embodying an authentic and supposedly legible Indigenous subject.

One would be hard pressed to name a more influential Indigenous family at this time, and needless to say the La Flesche family looms over the 19th and 20th century historiography on the Omaha. The La Flesche family was elite among the Omaha and known locally owing to Iron

¹⁰² "Letter from Lens and James Springer to Captain Richard Pratt, November 20, 1863," Box 1, Incoming Correspondence (1883), Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

Eyes and his wives' political clout, but they had far higher aspirations for their children. Two women married and had children with Iron Eyes after he was appointed chief, Mary Gale and Ta-in-ne, and between them they had seven children, at least three of whom gained prominence as the first Indigenous people to earn degrees in the U.S. academy or had a hand in shaping international Indigenous politics.¹⁰³ The eldest La Flesche children, born to Mary Gale, were sent east for more prestigious schools once they were old enough, while Frank, born in 1857, and his younger siblings were educated at the Presbyterian mission school nearer the reservation. Frank and his older sisters were active in the ceremonial life of the Omaha, and, as Frank's obituary was sure to highlight, they took part in Omaha buffalo hunts and traditional Omaha agricultural exchanges, organized by women, before settler economic practices built around patriarchal families and stationary land plots became compulsory.¹⁰⁴

That the La Flesche's were elite surely contributed to Frank's popularity with ethnologists as a native informant. As an element of their elite status, there has been a considerable amount of conjecture concerning the various mixed-race statuses and lineages of La Flesche family members. The presumptive conjecture about the role mixed race identity played in the different political positions and careers of the La Flesche's has obscured what their actual positions were. This obsession with mixed-ness has also framed how scholars have analyzed La Flesche as a native informant, centering hybridity as the most significant element of informant

¹⁰³ Iron Eyes was married briefly a third time but ended that relationship when he converted to Christianity. After the birth of their third child, Carey, Ta-in-ne and La Flesche parted ways as spouses, as well, though they remained connected through their children and shared finances. See Green, Norma Kidd. *Iron Eye's Family: The Children of Joseph La Flesche*. Lincoln, Neb.: Johnsen PubCo, 1969, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ "History copied from Dr. Picotte's Journal, August 23, 1928," Box 3, Genealogy and Miscellaneous Printed Matter, MS2026/ SG2, La Flesche Family Papers.

experience.¹⁰⁵ Settler understandings of (and obsession with) Indigenous blood quantum do not translate to the La Flesche family context, and hybridity fails to adequately speak to the condition of being a native informant.

The confusion surrounding the racial make-up of the La Flesche family begins with Iron Eyes' lineage. Iron Eyes was the son of a Ponca mother and French-Canadian father, but that was not always what reported in the publications that mentioned him. James Owen Dorsey originally identified Iron Eyes' mother as Ponca.¹⁰⁶ Francis La Flesche and Alice Fletcher later claimed she was Omaha.¹⁰⁷ The descendants of Iron Eyes, however, have insisted that she was, in fact, Ponca, and that Francis La Flesche had asserted she was Omaha to protect his father's status as chief.¹⁰⁸ There is no evidence in the papers of his children that Iron Eyes's family origins were ever questioned. It seems most likely that his mother was originally Ponca, a relative of Big Elk, and

¹⁰⁵ For an explicit emphasis on Francis La Flesche's hybridity in the historiography, see Joan Mark, "Francis La Flesche: The American Indian as Anthropologist," *Isis* 73, no. 4 (1982): 497–510. For what valuation of hybridity contemporaneously, at which time it was more about tradition versus modernity and assimilation, there are numerous articles and letters which touch upon it. See, for example, reviews of La Flesche's fictional account of his childhood, *The Middle Five*, which was reviewed as a piece with other Indigenous literature at the time, such as Zitkala-Sa's (Sioux) "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" in *Atlantic Monthly Magazine* (1900) and Charles Eastman's *Indian Boyhood* (1902) in *The Book Buyer* in 1902. The article relates that after three years of settler education Zitkala-Sa returned home, "neither a wee girl, nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one," and discusses the "turmoil and strife between old and new influences. La Flesche's work is regarded as less melancholy, but no less divided ("Recent Writing by American Indians, *The Book Buyer*, February 1902," Box 17, Clippings, Life and Work, 1920-1926 (scrapbook), Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.

¹⁰⁶ James Owen Dorsey, *Omaha Sociology* (U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology, 1885), 211.

¹⁰⁷ Fletcher, *The Omaha Tribe*, 73.

¹⁰⁸ Benson Tong, *Susan La Flesche Picotte, M.D.: Omaha Indian Leader and Reformer*, North American Indian Thought and Culture (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 8–10; Norma Kidd Green, *Iron Eye's Family: The Children of Joseph La Flesche* (Johnsen Publishing Company, 1969).

that his adoption by Big Elk was not a contentious one, which very well could be why Francis La Flesche did not bother to explain the intricacies of his lineage.¹⁰⁹

Iron Eyes's first wife, Mary Gale, was by many accounts a Native Iowa woman, whose father was the settler surgeon at Fort Atkinson near present-day Fort Calhoun in Nebraska. The records, particularly Rosalie La Flesche's remembrances of her mother after her death in 1909, indicate that Mary Gale was, like Iron Eyes, very much culturally and politically Omaha and not inclined to identify as mixed. As Susan notes, Mary Gale often refused to speak English, and would only identify herself as Omaha.¹¹⁰ Gale was generally of a mind with Iron Eyes on matters pertaining to their children's education, and, unlike Frank and his younger siblings, Mary Gale's daughters were sent away for their education, but there is no reason to suppose that corresponded with a hybrid identity, or feeling of being less Omaha.

Joseph La Flesche's second wife and Frank's mother, Ta-in-ne, was from an indisputably Omaha family. Joan Mark, among others, have argued that Ta-in-ne was marginalized in the La Flesche family following Iron Eyes's conversion to Christianity, as she was his second wife and more observant of Omaha traditions than her husband. Joan Mark notes that Frank's mother's religiosity and full-blood status caused his lifelong interest in ceremony.¹¹¹ However, this psychological reading of Frank's motivations to work in ethnology is unsupported. In writing about his youth and work in ethnology, Frank instead always framed his interest in ceremony in terms of a belief that his people were vanishing. It is important to remember that Frank was a

¹⁰⁹ The fact that Iron Eyes dissolved his position in 1888 also speaks against any theory that La Flesche would have tried to obscure his father's lineage in order to protect his position.

¹¹⁰ "Mary Gale La Flesche, 1826-1909," Box 3, "Genealogy and Miscellaneous Printed Matter," MS2026/ SG2; S. 10; Fi, La Flesche Family Papers.

¹¹¹ Mark, "Francis La Flesche," 498.

Presbyterian too, like his father.¹¹² His entire approach to ethnology was rooted in his sincere belief that Indigenous and Christian religions were of a similar kind. More so, it was not just his mother's religiosity that inspired La Flesche to focus on ceremony. He focused on ceremony because he recognized that ceremony was a language and location of Indigenous cultural, religion, and natural knowledge.¹¹³ It was his simultaneous education in Christian and traditional Omaha contexts that guided La Flesche's focus. There is no evidence that he felt compelled to choose between his mother and father, or sublimated tension surrounding his mother's influence in his work.

It is true that Frank and his siblings born to Ta-in-ne likely had a higher blood quantum than the older La Flesche siblings born to Mary Gale, and that impacted the ways in which settler officials encountered and read them. Blood quantum is a prominent metric in colonial archives, and there is ample evidence showing the privilege of "half breeds" in education and employment from this perspective. In 1914, for example, the Indian Agency Superintendent, Chas E. Dagenet, surveyed all reservation schools for information on the relative success of their graduates. The vast majority of Indian Agents reported that there were no graduates—only students who had aged out. The Pine Ridge Holy Rosary Mission did send data, however, and a telling interpretation. The reverend directing the school wrote back to Dagenet:

Enclosed please find the names and present addresses of most of the graduates of the holy Rosary Mission School. By graduates I mean men and women who got their education, or most of it, at this school, although they did not receive a diploma. Somehow many of our children are afraid of graduating exercises or else they did not stay long enough at the end to be entitled to an official document... Considering that half of our pupils were mixed-bloods one learns from the

¹¹² At least during the periods that La Flesche was keeping a regular diary and when he was not travelling, he tended to go to church every Sunday ("Diary entries, 1883-1924", Box 16a, Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers).

¹¹³ See La Flesche, "Who Was the Medicine Man?" or Chapter 3 for more.

enclosed list that the latter were steadier and appreciated an education more than the full-bloods¹¹⁴

That “mixed-bloods” graduated at higher rates was exactly due to the perception that they were “steadier” and more “appreciative.” This bias surely contributed to how educators interacted with the La Flesche children, none of whom were “full blood.”

However, there is no evidence that this was a significant factor in internal La Flesche family dynamics, their sense of belonging with the Omaha, nor their political ideology. There are no mentions of “half siblings” among the La Flesche children, nor a difference in adherence or interest in Omaha tradition. That characterization of the La Flesche’s at the time and in the historiography since arise not from confusion in the archive, but from a confusion of settler and native relation-making. Rather than focusing on Indigenous citizenship categories and systems of establishing cultural belonging and identity, many accounts have instead poured over genealogical records and applied notions of blood and mixed-race status congruent with settler understandings of self and family. Not only has this resulted in a great deal of confusion, but it has also replicated settler supremacy by undermining Indigenous self-determination.¹¹⁵

Both contemporaneous accounts of the La Flesche children and the La Flesche family historiography underestimate the roles that Ta-in-ne and Mary Gale played in the lives of their children. Despite anthropological accounts of the extent to which Omaha mothers oversaw the education of their children, including accounts that directly reference the La Flesche family children, any differences between their parenting styles has been attributed to the ways in which

¹¹⁴ “Letter to Mr. Chas E. Dagenet, Supervisor of Indian Employment from Reverend Eugene Duschell October 19, 1914” Entry 761, “Reports concerning graduates of Indian Schools 1914-16,” RG 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives, Washington D.C.

¹¹⁵ Kimberly TallBear, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

it was imagined that Iron Eyes regarded them. More specifically, it has been supposed that Mary Gale was more highly respected than Ta-in-ne, due to her mixed-race and first wife status, and her settler education out East that mirrored Iron Eyes's own experience. Meanwhile, Ta-in-ne, as the second wife who was by all accounts more of a traditionalist than Iron Eyes, has been cast as the marginalized and less powerful of the two.

The biggest practical difference we see in their choices as mothers was in the education their children received. Mary Gale's children were sent east for their education. On the other hand, Ta-in-ne had her children educated at the local mission school, where they too received a settler style education—just closer to home which enabled them to return to her at least once a week.¹¹⁶ Their respective educations were not otherwise significantly different, nor was the east coast education highly regarded enough to provide evidence that Iron Eyes favored his children born to Mary Gale. Ta-in-ne's and Mary Gale's decisions were reflections of their own histories and priorities. Mary Gale privileged political savvy and ability to obtain potential patron connections, while Ta-in-ne privileged an understanding and privileging of ceremony. Furthermore, they reflect their respective orientations toward moving and place. Mary's mother, Nicomi, was an Omaha-Iowa woman who refused to go with her husband, "to live the life of a white woman," when he was called away from his post at the local fort, and she fought fiercely to keep her daughter from that life, as well. When Mary grew older, she went to school in St. Louis. However, this education did not result in the assimilation that her mother feared. Instead, Mary appeared to have maintained a commitment to her identity, language, and community obligations.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, Ta-in-ne, who had remained on Omaha land her whole life,

¹¹⁶ La Flesche, Francis. *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School*, 11.

¹¹⁷ "Mary Gale La Fleche, 1826-1909," Genealogy and Miscellaneous Printed Matter, MS2026/SG2; S.10, La Flesche Family Papers.

knew from experience the importance of place and community connection in rearing children. Ta-in-ne's parenting style privileged the ability to locate oneself on a land and in a network of people in the development of moral and responsible children.¹¹⁸

Contemporaneous accounts of the La Flesche family portrayed them in various ways to suit differing political ends— Indian royalty, the last authentic Omahas, civilizing agents, and mixed bloods caught between two worlds. There was renewed interest in the La Flesche family starting in the late 1960s, and the resulting body of scholarship has interpreted them according to settler racial and gender hierarchies. By those metrics, the latter interpretation, mixed bloods caught between two worlds, emerged as the most prominent. Scholars have presumed that the way mixed race status was interpreted by Indian Agency officials and contemporaneous publications translated to identity and interpersonal dynamics among the Omaha, and they have minimized the role Mary Gale and Ta-in-ne played in raising their children. This historiographic confusion and inability to conceive of elite status in a different racial and gender order has had a tremendous impact on how Francis La Flesche's career and status as a native informant has been

¹¹⁸ There is far less recorded on Ta-in-ne's history and political position. Francis La Flesche would reference her occasionally in printed work and private correspondence. In his fictional account of his time at the mission school, La Flesche notes his longing for his mother when he was sent away and allowed only to visit her once a week, or "bathing day" (Saturday), for a portion of the year (2). One indication as to her parenting philosophy and decision to keep her children with local Omaha students is found later in that chapter, where La Flesche remarks on the lack of familial markers at the school. At home, he wrote, "Omaha children would be warned to know your playmates' family—are they good people? Where are they from? What is their reputation? Their clan?" (11) This relation making, or knowing someone through an interrogation of their family is as recognizable as an Indigenous social custom today as it would have been then. La Flesche's assertion of the importance his mother placed in this custom could provide a clue to her thinking on sending him to a local boarding school as opposed to ones that may have been slightly more prestigious but further away. Surrounded by other Omaha, perhaps also Poncas and Iowas, would ensure a degree of social legibility and maintenance of his own social positionality (La Flesche, Francis. *The Middle Five: Indian Boys at School*, 1900).

interpreted. Joan Mark and others have read La Flesche's hybridity, being caught between two worlds, as the cause for his easy uptake as a native informant.

If we turn away from his blood quantum and his parent's religion, and focus instead on his education, access to patronage, and the history of his nation, a rather different picture of what constitutes an Indigenous elite emerges. Unlike his older sisters, who were sent to boarding schools further afield after they graduated from grade school, Frank was educated only at the mission school in relative proximity to the reservation. He learned English and Omaha jointly, and received a western-style primary education while having access to his community and culture. Even considering that he was still taken from his family for long periods at the mission school, this was an enormous privilege in the context of violent Indigenous education at the time, and it was what made him an ideal native informant. It was the Omaha's relative land security, his mother's parenting style, and the missionary presence with the Omaha that made this possible. On top of that, his father's political position enabled La Flesche to access patronage networks and career opportunities.

Francis La Flesche was made the kind of elite who could be simultaneously used and erased by ethnologists not by his racial composition nor his father's political prestige, though the latter contributed to his exposure, but through Ta-in-ne's choices as a mother and the Omaha's experience negotiating with the settler state. Indigenous elites at the turn of the century were made through a complex interplay of settler class, racial, and gender hierarchies, the varied ways in which trauma was inflicted across Indian Country, and the diverse co-existing Indigenous social structures these were mapped onto. In the midst of this interplay, which was largely invisible to outside observers, native informants were conceived and manufactured to act as flexible tools who could morph into hypervisible and invisible extensions of settler ethnologists who wished to access Indigenous communities. At the same time, because so much of their

conception and manufacture was based on categories and histories grossly misunderstood by ethnologists at the time (and by many historians since), the tools often failed to conform to their intended purpose.

The most detailed and focused study of Frank La Flesche as an ethnologist (more has been published on his work in fiction) was published in *Isis* in 1982 by historian of anthropology and Alice Cunningham Fletcher biographer Joan Mark. Mark situates La Flesche in a discourse on hybridity, though she doesn't quite name it as such. La Flesche, she argues, was "doubly marginalized" as a Native academic and torn between tradition and civilization.¹¹⁹ La Flesche therefore was alienated from his own people by his Western education and career, while he was alienated from his settler colleagues by his race. Mark attributes La Flesche's delay in moving from native informant to ethnologist to disinterest in synthetic and interpretive work, qualms about the theft of sacred objects and knowledges, and choice of an inadequately prominent mentor, Alice Fletcher.

It is true that Indigenous anthropologists who worked with more esteemed (or more accurately for Fletcher, less marginalized due to their gender) scholars, like Franz Boas, made it through the ranks of the field much faster than La Flesche. A prime example was one of Boas's earliest students, William Jones (Fox), the first Indigenous person to get a PhD in anthropology in the United States. After working with Boas, Jones was appointed an assistant curator at the Field Museum in Chicago in 1908. Not long after, he was commissioned by the U.S. Department of the Interior to do ethnographic fieldwork in the Philippines—a colonial exploratory measure to inform strategic presence and land acquisition in the area. He was murdered in the Philippines

¹¹⁹ Mark, "Francis La Flesche," 498.

in 1909 by the Ilongot people he was studying.¹²⁰ While his connection to Boas contributed to his early success, Jones was already a Harvard graduate prior to going to Columbia. Unfortunately, his records, mostly kept at the Field and in the Boas collection in New York, are not nearly as well preserved or extensive as La Flesche's, so it is difficult to decipher what his experiences were in the academy or how he experienced being an Indigenous anthropologist. It is worth noting that Jones was never quite a native informant in the way La Flesche had been. As a native speaker, Jones published on Fox linguistics, but he always did so as first and only author, and he spent much of his youth away from Fox lands and his family, which limited the kinds of interactions with researchers La Flesche had.

Hybridity may be the right lens to study William Jones, or Francis La Flesche later in his career, but it is inadequate in looking at native informants, or at the early career of Francis La Flesche. It is likely that Jones was required to perform his role as an insider in much the same way La Flesche did when he was employed by the Bureau of Ethnology later in his life. However, La Flesche's experiences of being a native informant and being an insider researcher were vastly different. La Flesche was an ideal candidate for being a native informant precisely because his hybridity was contestable and could be made invisible. Despite his education and despite his life lived in settler academic circles, La Flesche was used as a tool and object of the knowledge he produced. He was only allowed to acknowledge one facet of his experience, precisely because all the factors that contributed to his ability to be a native informant were easy to qualify. He was educated in a mission academy, but he was educated at home. He came from a prominent, supposedly assimilationist family that was receptive to engaging ethnologists, but he was raised with a strong Omaha education and community ties. As an insider researcher, La

¹²⁰ For more on William Jones, see Vigil, "William Jones in the Philippines."

Flesche would have the hybridity that has so dominated the discourse surrounding him thrust upon him. As a native informant, he was denied even that.

On Being a Technology

Their education background and community connections (shaped in different ways by their mothers) and relationship to a well-known chief who was friendly to U.S. agents and ethnologists made the La Flesche children ideal candidates to become native informants. However, it was Frank in particular who was most cited in the literature, and who became increasingly associated with the role. The first ethnologist to make mention of the La Flesche family as informants was James Owen Dorsey.¹²¹ Dorsey, an Episcopalian missionary from Baltimore, lived with the Omaha and Ponca between 1871 and 1873, when ill health prompted him to return home and take up a reverend position in Maryland. However, in 1879, John Wesley Powell, in his new capacity as the first director of the Bureau of Ethnology, commissioned Dorsey to return to the Omaha reservation to conduct a more expansive and scientific study of the Omaha, their language, governance, religion, sexual practices, gender expressions, and relations to other nations in the region in particular.

Dorsey published his findings, titled “Omaha Sociology,” in the third annual report of the Bureau of Ethnology in 1885. There is very little mention of Dorsey in the La Flesche family

¹²¹ Lewis Henry Morgan conducted some of his first non-Haudenosaunee focused fieldwork on the Omaha between 1859 and 1862. In his seminal *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871), Morgan used the Omaha as one of the six Indigenous kinship systems he identified internationally—the others were “Eskimo,” Hawaiian, Iroquois, Crow, and Sudanese. Morgan would have been wholly unfamiliar with the Omaha language group when he went to Nebraska in 1859, and so it is likely he relied on a translator and informant then. However, unlike Dorsey, Morgan makes no mention of these informants in his published work.

records, but his report is rife with their name. The La Flesche family name (or La Fleche, as Dorsey wrote it) was mentioned 95 times in Dorsey's 160-page study. Iron Eyes and his friend Two Crow were cited most frequently, but Frank alone, who was 19 when Dorsey came back to the Omaha reservation as an ethnologist, was cited 38 times. The fact that Frank was 19 is not easily identifiable in the text, however. He reads as much younger due to the voyeuristic focus on his body as an object and as a tool to look through. For the most part, Frank's voice is used as a witness to Omaha ceremony, though he is rarely cited as a participant in those ceremonies. Rather, he acts as a corroborator, someone with unlimited access and far more time than Dorsey would have had. For example, in Dorsey's description of the Black Bear medicine society's secret dance ceremony that precedes the public application of red medicine, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent Dorsey had been privy to the non-public steps of the process. He writes,

A man thinks, 'I will boil,' and he invites to a feast those who have the medicine of the Witchita society. On their arrival he says, 'on such a day we will dance.' Two or three men boil for the feast to be held in connection with the dance. It takes three days to prepare the candidate, and this is done secretly. On the fourth day there is a public ceremony in an earth lodge, during which the candidate is shot with red medicine. Frank La Fleche has witnessed this, and says that it closely resembles the public ceremonies of the Witchita society.¹²²

Frank was not a member of this society. While it is possible that he witnessed the private portions of these ceremonies, it is not likely, and Dorsey's language is vague. Whether Dorsey witnessed the public or the private portions of the ceremony, and where Frank's witnessing ends and Dorsey's begins are unclear. Entrenched in his authorship status, Dorsey paints Frank in his narrative as an extension of his sight and experience.

¹²² Dorsey, *Omaha Sociology*, 350.

One of the few references to Frank, not as an informant, but as an embodied piece of evidence, concerns his youth and sex. In a section on “child life,” after describing the subjugation of Omaha girls to their mothers, Dorsey writes,

With a boy there was not so much strictness observed. He had more liberty allowed him... If a boy played with girls (probably with those who were not his sisters), the Ponkas referred to him as a ‘miquga’ or hermaphrodite. Both sexes were fond of making houses in the mud, hence the verb, *vgaxe*, to make lodges, to play games. // Joseph La Flesche used to punish his son, Frank, by tying him to a chair with a cord and saying to him, ‘If you break the cord I will strike you.’¹²³

The statement about Frank is its own, one-sentence paragraph and there are no transitions or indications of how these topics might be connected, if they are. The following paragraph concerns the various rites of passage and fasting rituals boys would undergo as they transitioned between gendered roles.

Mark Rifkin and others have written about the “bribe of straightness” that “functions as a way of calling for native intellectuals and communities to signify indigenous tradition in ways that make it appear less *queer*—that divorce it from what are taken to be forms of gender and sexual perversity.”¹²⁴ This process of making Indigenous queerness invisible to settler scrutiny can be seen in the history of the anthropology of sexuality, which begins with early colonial accounts of the weird sexual practices of naked Indians, through this early period of ethnology in which the very basis of settler understandings of the history of kinship were predicated on the “straightening” of Indigenous families and sexualities in the works of Lewis Henry Morgan and others, and, after a relative lull and preponderance of invisibility in the 20th century, an explosion

¹²³ *Ibid*, 266.

¹²⁴ Rifkin, Mark. *When Did Indians Become Straight?: Kinship, the History of Sexuality, and Native Sovereignty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011; 276.

of Indigenous queer studies by white settler anthropologists looking for evidence of non-homophobic cultures outside the west.

This process of making invisible what was then newly queer according to the normative structures of settler sexuality and gender binaries was part and parcel of a compulsory heterosexuality being enforced on Indigenous peoples as part of the structure of settler colonial hegemony. That process intensified during this era with the Dawes Act, as the final push for settler economic structures went hand-in-hand with settler family units.¹²⁵ In this context, the construction of Indigenous straightness, which was only possible through the parallel construction of Indigenous men and women, and its buy-in through the “bribe of straightness” was constructed also through a settler scientific notion of what kind of subjects were capable of knowing and acting. That Francis La Flesche’s gender and sexuality were always in hard to determine, were never quite right, was partly why his ethnology could never be wholly itself. This originated in his use and construction as a native informant.

There has been almost as much interest in La Flesche’s sexuality as there has in his racial make-up, both during his life and in more recent accounts of his family. La Flesche had a platonic relationship with a woman many years his senior (Alice Fletcher) for the majority of his life. He was married twice, though both times briefly. La Flesche’s romantic history is surprisingly difficult to surmise given how extensive and revealing his and Alice Fletcher’s papers and the La Flesche’s family’s papers are in most other facets of his life. References to La Flesche’s first marriage are hard to come by. It seems to have been an exceptionally short affair

¹²⁵ For more on the Dawes Act, see Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara, and André Le Dressay, “A Failed Experiment”; Otis and Prucha, *Dawes Act and the Allotment of Indian Lands*; Carter, *The Dawes Commission and the Allotment of the Five Civilized Tribes, 1893-1914*; McDonnell, *The Dispossession of the American Indian, 1887-1934*; Greenwald, *Reconfiguring the Reservation*.

with an Omaha woman that was likely annulled. There is more on his second marriage from a Washington Post article detailing the rather acrimonious separation he had from his second wife in 1907.¹²⁶ His wife, Rosa B. La Flesche, alleged at that time that Francis married her in Washington D.C. in 1906, brought her back west to visit her father in Chippewa territory, and promptly abandoned her—first to visit with his own father and then to return to Washington D.C. without her. When she came back to D.C. herself to confront him, he showed no interest in rekindling their relationship but agreed to pay her alimony in the amount \$50 a month. Evidently, according to this article, Rosa was suing her husband for the full amount of alimony owed to her—a sum greater than the \$50 he had offered.¹²⁷

This is an odd account. It claims that Francis La Flesche went to visit his father in 1906 though he had been dead since 1888. It fails to mention that Rosa B (for Bourassa, her maiden name) La Flesche worked for the American Indian Federation and the Indian Agency all over the country for many years. She was not nearly as stationary or as subject to her husband's travel plans as the article made her out to be. Indeed, Rosa B. La Flesche's record from the archives of Carlisle Indian School paint a picture of a woman who was moving between jobs at least as frequently as Francis La Flesche was during that time. Her records do corroborate that she was living in Michigan (likely where her father was) in 1906-7, and during that time she reported her marriage to La Flesche and changed her name.¹²⁸ There is evidence that she was in a great deal

¹²⁶ "INDIAN WIFE ASKS SUPPORT: Says Husband, Government Clerk Does Not Help Her. Took Her West, Left Her on Reservation, and Used Endearing Letters to Keep Her There." *The Washington Post* (1877-1922); *Washington, D.C.* June 18, 1907).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Letter from Rosa Bourassa La Flesche to Department of the Interior, United States Indian Service, January 21, 1907. RG 75, Series 1327, box 133, folder 5242, National Archives and Records Administration.

of debt due to the Indian Agency's failure to pay for her secretary work years earlier. By 1910, she was working on a different project in California. Her relative absence from Francis's records and in public write-ups on him could have been at Rosa's behest, as she seemed to value privacy. In a letter to a Mr. Miller of the Carlisle Indian School in 1910, Rosa B. La Flesche made her wishes regarding the privacy of personal correspondence clear with dark underlining for added measure: "Now, this is a personal letter and you must not publish personal letters in any of your publications. Remember!"¹²⁹ There is no further mention of her and Francis's short-lived marriage.

Since the mid-1980s, many anthropologists have characterized their field as a historically queer one. In 1993, anthropologist Walter L. Williams wrote in the *Journal of Sex Research*:

As I attempt to understand why I have been attracted to doing research in non-Western cultures, I think I am reacting in the same way that past generations of gay people have done. Since at least the 17th century, there has been a tradition for homosexually-inclined individuals to try to escape the oppressiveness of heterosexism in Europe and America by migrating beyond the frontier... Although the documentation is slight, scattered evidence indicates that a high proportion of 19th century explorers and colonial officials who went to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific were homosexual. In the 20th century, many of these same types of people went into the profession of anthropology. Pioneers of the field, like Edward Westermarck and Ruth Benedict, are just two examples of the prominence of homosexuals as ethnographers. And there are numerous others, like Margaret Mead and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, whose bisexuality provided them with an empathetic perspective that without a doubt aided their connectedness to people who like them were very different from the Western norm. It is noteworthy that, of the numerous female presidents of the American Anthropological Association, beginning with Ruth Benedict, many may have been lesbians.¹³⁰

The idea that queerness had been both a motivation for anthropologists and a condition that sharpened their skills—improving empathy and the ability to earn trust—spread in the 1990s, as

¹²⁹ Letter from Rosa Bourassa La Flesche to Mr. Miller, September 21, 1910. RG 75, Series 1327, box 133, folder 5242, National Archives and Records Administration.

¹³⁰ Williams, "Being Gay and Doing Research on Homosexuality in Non-Western Cultures."

the anthropology of sexuality became more popular and benefited from the growing presence of queer studies and theory in the academy.¹³¹ Alice Fletcher is often included in similar “may have been a lesbian” lists, though more often she is singled out for being resistant to any sexual or romantic relationships at all.¹³² In fact, the most frequent references to Fletcher in references on

¹³¹ This argument is riddled with historical inaccuracies and rebrandings of a colonial enterprise. Though there have been numerous instances of productive solidarity between white queer (usually cisgender) anthropologists and the people with whom they worked—Will Roscoe and his work with two-spirit organizers in the 1990s is an excellent example—queerness does not negate whiteness, settler status, nor the legacy of anthropology as a tool of empire. Walter Williams is an illustrative counter example. Williams built his career studying two-spirit Indigenous peoples in North America and later developed a specialty in sex and gender in the South Pacific. Two decades after his publication on how his gay status allowed him to gain the trust of his research subjects in the *Journal of Sex Research* in 1983, Williams was placed on the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list for sexual exploitation of children, travel with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct, and engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places. In 2014, he pleaded guilty to sexual contact with boys aged 14 to 16 in the Philippines, where he had been researching. He was sentenced to five years (See Mather, “Ex-USC Professor and FBI Fugitive Gets 5 Years in Prison for Child Sex.”). That Williams was singled out and placed on the FBI’s most wanted list when sexual tourism, including child prostitution, in the Philippines is widespread and owed in large part to the legacy of U.S. empire (making Williams hardly the first agent of U.S. colonial interests to commit such crimes), suggests a serious anti-gay sentiment in the law (See Aquino, *Tourism and Child Prostitution in Pagsanjan, Philippines*). However, the fact that Williams was engaged in these crimes in the first place is also evidence that queerness in anthropology does not cure the profession of its colonial and violent bent.

¹³² Joan Mark provides greater detail in her biography on Fletcher. As a young girl, Fletcher was abused by her stepfather, and despite numerous requests for help, no one in her family would intervene. Mark attributes this to Victorian values and qualms about interfering with someone else’s family. Finally, in the 1850s when Fletcher was a teenager, a local wealthy hardware merchant hired her as his family’s governance and would provide her living wages regardless of employment for decades thereafter. It was only then that Fletcher was able to escape her stepfather. On how this shaped Fletcher’s attitudes toward relationships as an adult, Mark writes, “Although Alice Fletcher had been rescued, the ‘tough fight’ left its scars. Included among these must be her ‘flirtatious ways...’ The coquettish ways she learned so well may have been a desperate child’s attempt to win sympathy and some measure of fair treatment. Underneath the flirtatiousness was an avoidance of any form of physical sexuality. Alice Fletcher never married. But she yearned for male companionship, a home, and a warm, loving family such as she had caught a glimpse of as a small child when she listened to her mother’s and grandmother’s recollections of her father. She worked out a way to have a version of these things for herself, but she was never able to put aside her abiding and despondent sense that she was, and would always be, alone in the world” (Mark, *A Stranger in Her Native Land*, 14-15). Mark goes on to claim

encyclopedias of gay figures in history fall under E. Jane Gay's entry, saying, "E. Jane Gay (1830-1919) took up photography to document the work of anthropologist Alice Fletcher (1838-1923) for whom she had an unrequited love."¹³³

That Francis La Flesche was straight has never been questioned. This is curious, given that his narrative displays elements remarkably similar to Fletcher's—a general aversion toward romantic relationships and otherwise archival silence on the matter. Including also the way he was described by Dorsey and the fact that La Flesche came from a context where straightness was a relatively new concept that had to be cultivated and enforced, there is ample evidence by the metrics usually employed by those searching for queerness in history.¹³⁴ I do not believe there is enough evidence to say definitively whether or not Francis La Flesche was another example of queerness in anthropology, nor do I think it would be particularly enlightening if there were.¹³⁵ Judging by the juxtaposition in Dorsey's work concerning Frank as a young person and by the lack of evidence supporting the presumption of straightness, however, I think we should resist mapping straightness onto him. I call attention to Frank's sexuality as coded in Dorsey's work exactly because it is so indeterminable and yet has remained wholly

that her experiences as a child also contributed to her inability to approach any intimate relationship as anything other than maternal.

¹³³ Zimmerman, *Encyclopedia of Lesbian Histories and Cultures*, 589. See also Summers, *The Queer Encyclopedia of the Visual Arts*, "The Loving Eye."

¹³⁴ See Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*

¹³⁵ Finding queerness in history is a long-standing project in queer studies, one that often intersects with anthropologies of queerness in non-western contexts. There are clear political stakes to claiming that queerness has always existed in one form or another depending on the normative at any given time. It is not an especially compelling line of inquiry for La Flesche, because his position as an Indigenous man in a settler context that set (and violently enforced) the standards of normative gender and sexuality was already queer. See Anderson and Innes, *Indigenous Men and Masculinities*.

unremarkable. Like La Flesche's age, his masculinity and sexuality morphed as he was used in different capacities. To identify La Flesche with any subset of Omaha society beside the elite, which already included a presumed mixed racial position, would have undermined his usefulness as a native informant. La Flesche was always potentially queer, potentially straight, potentially child-like and potentially old enough to access adult ceremonies. He could access any space and serve as any kind of evidence as needed. This was especially true in the way Dorsey used him.

Dorsey's prose was often choppy and lacking in transition, so it is likely the comments on Frank's childhood punishments and Omaha hermaphrodites were unconnected thoughts. However, Dorsey knew Frank personally. He had only ever heard of those people he called hermaphrodites second hand. The only other reference Dorsey makes to hermaphrodites is in his section on sexual indiscretions, including fornication, rape, and incest. Here, under the subheading on pederasty, Dorsey claims that Joseph La Fleche and Two Crows refer to those men guilty of the crime as hermaphrodites. However unlikely and contrary to two-spirit memory and history this may be, not to mention how conveniently reminiscent of Western thinking on the link between "pederasty" and gender non-conformity, the important orientation to note is that in both passages on the topic, Dorsey describes these people through hearsay.¹³⁶ It is very unlikely he ever recognized an Omaha as not fitting his expected gender binary. And yet, Dorsey describes Frank's childhood punishment and the perceived consequences of sexual transgressions in the same mechanistic manner as punishments for theoretical sexual deviance on the part of individuals he would never recognize—if you break or this, you are punished or labeled that. In his earliest interactions as a native informant, Frank was used primarily as tool of sight for Dorsey, and as such a tool, Frank needed to be constructed in such a way that he only

¹³⁶ Dorsey, *Omaha Sociology*, 365.

expanded Dorsey's field of vision. He was evidence of what had been or could be witnessed by any Omaha person. He was also, on occasion, a physical piece of evidence, his body and its interactions with others acting as a piece of data. Ultimately, it did not matter particularly if he had been the one doing the seeing or if his body had any other meanings assigned to it.

In 1879, while Dorsey was still conducting fieldwork with the Omaha, La Flesche left with his sister Susette, Ponca chief Standing Bear, and journalist Thomas H. Tibbles (Susette's husband) for a speaking tour around the country to raise awareness about the unlawful imprisonment of the Ponca people. It was the first time La Flesche had spent a considerable time away from Omaha and Ponca lands, and it proved to be a consequential trip for him. La Flesche met and left an impression on Senator Kirkwood of Iowa. Two years later, in 1881 when Kirkwood was appointed Secretary of the Interior, he got La Flesche a job as a clerk in the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington.¹³⁷ Frank would work as a translator and clerk at the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the next thirty years, until he was hired as an ethnologist by the Bureau of Ethnology in 1910. It was also during that tour that he first met Alice Fletcher. However, that time it was not Frank who left a strong impression. Rather, it was his sister, Susette and her husband who Alice Fletcher remembered and would contact a year later when she was preparing for her first foray into the field out west.¹³⁸

Alice Cunningham Fletcher was a latecomer to ethnology, but she took to the field quickly. It was not uncommon to come to ethnology as a second or third career. There were no career ethnologists in the early 1880s, after all. Dorsey was a missionary first and foremost, at

¹³⁷ Mark, "Francis La Flesche," 500.

¹³⁸ Alice C. (Alice Cunningham) Fletcher, *Life among the Indians: First Fieldwork among the Sioux and Omahas*, Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 24.

least initially, and he came to ethnology after accepting a position as a reverend in Maryland only after a direct request from Powell, in his capacity as the director of the Bureau of Ethnology. Powell in turn was a veteran who directed geological surveys, before turning to ethnology. He was 47 when he founded the Bureau of Ethnology, but, in fact, his experience as a surveyor had been most aligned to ethnological work, and it therefore could be said that his fieldwork had been underway for many decades. Even Lewis Henry Morgan decades earlier, who was arguably the most influential and high profile ethnologist of that era, was a lawyer and politician first, whose interest in ethnology was born of his involvement in a fraternity that mimicked the Iroquois.¹³⁹ Before coming to ethnology, Fletcher had worked as a teacher and public lecturer, and was active in local women's organizations, especially those that advocated for the advancement of women in the sciences.¹⁴⁰ She was in her early 40s when she first met F.W. Putnam, curator of the Harvard Peabody Museum. Fletcher visited the Peabody in 1878 in preparation for a talk she would soon deliver on the ancient peoples of the Americas. Putnam encouraged her interest in ethnology and took her under his wing, offering to let her assist in research at the museum. When she met Susette La Flesche, Fletcher was in the process of planning her first trip to the field to see and live with western Indian tribes.

Fletcher's age and gender caused some to scoff at her intent to go into the field in 1881. In his memoir of this period, Frank's brother in law, Thomas Henry Tibbles, recalls his first meeting with Alice Fletcher in Boston. He wrote,

While we were in Boston in 1879, a lady [he does not mention Fletcher by name] told me that after studying ethnology for years in books and museums she now wished to visit Indian tribes in their own lodges, living as they lived and

¹³⁹ Daniel Noah Moses, *The Promise of Progress: The Life and Work of Lewis Henry Morgan* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁰ Joan T. Mark, *A Stranger in Her Native Land: Alice Fletcher and the American Indians*, (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska University Press, 1988).

observing their daily customs herself—especially the women’s and children’s ways. . . I found it hard to take her plan seriously. She, a thorough product of city life, was evidently nearing her forties. I could not imagine her leaving all her home comforts to go out to the far frontier and live among the Indians in an Indian lodge. Still, she was so earnest that I reluctantly agreed to take her someday with our group for the trip she wished. Circumstances kept her from coming to us in 1880, but on September 1, 1881, she arrived in Omaha with letters of high praise from the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Interior, the Postmaster General, and many scientific men.¹⁴¹

Fletcher was clearly prepared for Tibbles’s brand of skepticism. Before her departure in September of 1881, she wrote to Putnam repeatedly, his assistant at the Peabody Lucien Carr, John Wesley Powell twice, and Tibbles and Susette La Flesche. She was most candid with Putnam and Carr, expressing anxiety about the lack of communication from Powell and her belief that he may not approve her, and her worry that the radical politics of Tibbles and Susette La Flesche may undermine her requests with the Department of the Interior.¹⁴²

When exactly Alice Fletcher began to rely on Frank La Flesche is not clear. During her first visit to the Omaha, Frank was in Washington D.C., working as a clerk at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. When Fletcher left the Omaha, her first stop on the East Coast was Washington D.C.—her intent to lobby as best she could for allotment, which she did at first by befriending Mrs. Henry Dawes, wife to the senator who would author the official allotment act (the Dawes Act) years later in 1887.¹⁴³ While in D.C., Fletcher met with La Flesche to discuss Omaha political happenings and their shared interest in ethnology, which La Flesche had continued to entertain from his time working with Dorsey. During this visit, Fletcher and Frank

¹⁴¹ Thomas Henry Tibbles, *Buckskin and Blanket Days; Memoirs of a Friend of the Indians Written in 1905.*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1957), 236–37.

¹⁴² Fletcher to Carr, August 3, 1881 and Fletcher to Putnam August 10, 1881, Peabody Museum Records, box 4, folder “1881 C-F;” Fletcher to Powell, August 10, 1881, NAA, Records of the BAE, Correspondence, Letters Received, 1879-1888, box 60.

¹⁴³ Fletcher, *Life among the Indians*, 38.

Hamilton Cushing, curator of the ethnological department at the National Museum in Washington D.C., organized a meeting between La Flesche and one of Cushing's informants from Zuni. Designed as means to find cultural similarities, the record of this meeting suggests that Fletcher and La Flesche had already begun to perform the relationship of ethnologist and informant.¹⁴⁴ She brought La Flesche as a representative of the Omaha, took a level of ownership over him, and used him as a means to establish expertise on par with Cushing's.

Fletcher used her native informants in ways vastly different than Dorsey, and in ways that were more complex. While Dorsey was pleased with second hand accounts of "hermaphrodites" and of the ways in which women conducted their affairs, Fletcher was most interested in the "woman question," a much understudied aspect of Indigenous cultures, owing to the presumed political uselessness of understanding women.¹⁴⁵ Also unlike Dorsey, whose actual experiences among the Omaha were obscured by his use of his native informants as tools of sight, Fletcher would come to be known for a more personal narrative style of ethnography. While many of her books and articles do employ the traditional "ethnographic present tense," just as many are told from a more literary, narrative perspective.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ "Other Tribes Quapaw-Zuni," Box 30, Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers, NAA.

¹⁴⁵ A play on the "Indian Question" that animated discourses on Indigenous people at the time, Fletcher once wrote of her interest in the "Woman Question" when she was preparing to go to the field. (Fletcher to Carr, August 3, 1881, Peabody Museum Papers). For more the ways in which Indigenous women were erased by ethnologists and BIA agents at this time, see Marsha L. Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009).

¹⁴⁶ There does seem to be a strong correlation between political project, venue, and style in Fletcher's work. Compare, for example, Fletcher's "The Aboriginal Indian Life" (*Outlook*, March 14, 1896; 53, 11) and "The Indian and Nature" (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States*, September 15, 1915; Vol 1. No. 9). Arguably, both have a similar political project in Fletcher's eyes—for Fletcher it was critical that settlers understand the realities of transition between an Indigenous worldview and lifeway and a settler position. What she tried to get across in many of her writings was that Indigenous philosophies about land were

A desire on the part of settler ethnologists to become truly integrated into Indian life as a component of research was not at all uncommon. While Fletcher was conducting her fieldwork, Cushing, whom she had spoken with just a year earlier in D.C. with La Flesche and one of his own informants from Zuni, published his experiences with the Zuni during his employment as the team ethnologist with the James Stevenson U.S. geological survey. It was the first account of its kind written by ethnologist. In a three-part series, “My Adventures in Zuni” in *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* between 1882 and ’83, Cushing established in writing many of the classic tropes of the field—earning an Indian name, being inducted into religious orders, unique gifts, and, above all else, a portrait of the ethnologist and not an Indigenous nation.

In the conclusion of his second installment of “My Adventures in Zuni,” Cushing describes being named:

I could not understand the whole prayer; but it contained beautiful passages, recommending me to the gods as a “Child of the Sun,” and a “Son of the Coru people of earth” (the sacred name for the priests of Zuni). At its close, the old man said—“And thus become thou my son, Te-na-tsa-li...” When all was over, my father took me to the window, and, looking down with a smile on his face, explained that I was “named after a magical plant which grew on a single

expressed in social relations and institutions—gendered labor, especially. In relation to allotment, she insisted that it not work unless these social relations were addressed head-on. The alternative was the disenfranchisement of Native women into a patriarchal system of land tenure and, more often than not, the leasing of Indigenous land to white settlers when Indigenous men were asked to take on new forms of labor that were incongruous with their roles. Both these articles get at this by looking at how the Indian (really, the Omaha) conceives of the world and how that structures her life. In “The Aboriginal Life” she does this through personal narrative, explaining how she came to understand how Indigenous people live. In “The Indian and Nature” she writes in the third person and lays out the various ways in which Indigenous practice, dress, and society are structured by how Indians (again, really, the Omaha) relate to nature. The dates when these were published and the journals are critical here. In the former, Fletcher is aiming for a broad audience, not simply her scientist peers, and she is explicitly advocating for political action. In the latter, she is addressing an audience of fellow scientists, and she makes no prescriptive statements. The popular versus science audience aspect matters, but this had to do with her own age, as well. By 1915, Fletcher was a much older woman whose political aspirations had been muted by the realities of allotment and Indian policy that she witnessed throughout her life.

mountain in the west, the flowers of which were most beautiful in the world, and of which were a panacea for all injuries to the flesh of man. That by this name,— which only one man in a generation could bear,— would I be known as long as the sun rose and set, and smiled on the Coru people of east, as a *Shi wi* (Zuni).¹⁴⁷

While the ritual of naming was imbedded in an affirmation of Zuni survivance and futurity, Cushing's account effaced this aspect and focused instead on the intricacy of his own experience as a white ethnologist. Cushing's style and this series served as an origin for the popularization of ethnology. However, Cushing's work and the genre it came to represent was also a microcosm of ethnology more broadly. Just as the scientific narration of Indigenous peoples was always speaking to the condition of white settlers, so too were personal narratives describing the lives of Indigenous peoples ultimately about white ethnologists.¹⁴⁸

Alice Fletcher was exceedingly aware of the moral and political obligations her access to and identification with the Omaha demanded of her. In *My Life with the Indians*, a semi-fictional, narrative account of her time with the Omaha in 1881 and '82 that she wrote approximately four years later, Fletcher recalls one of many difficult conversations with Joseph La Flesche, who she referred to as "the father:"

'I have thought much over this thing,' continued the father. "Every right of manhood is denied us; our ancient forms are broken; we are forced into the conditions of the white man, then we are deprived of everything good he possesses. No law protects us; we can make no appeal for justice, and we are prohibited from defending ourselves when our live or property are taken from us; our land, the graves of our fathers of our children we are not permitted to own..." I dreaded these talks; they made me sore and ill at ease. What right had I to be enjoying working out the sociology of the people, getting at their inner life and thought, when their sore troubles from the greed of my own race were so plainly discernable. Withhold my hand and do nothing for them? But what could I, a

¹⁴⁷ Frank Cushing, "MY ADVENTURES IN ZUNI. II," *Century Illustrated Magazine* (1881-1906) xxv, no. 4 (1883): 511.

¹⁴⁸ See Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology*, 1st ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986) for an account of how ethnology in the U.S. was used as a mechanism of establishing U.S. settler identity and validity by using Indigenous peoples as a an Other against which they could measure themselves.

woman, do against this trend of wrong? To get rid of these wearying thoughts, I strove the harder at my ethnological work, but the thread was broken for the evening and we sat silent beside the waning fire.¹⁴⁹

Over the course of her career, Fletcher received her requisite Omaha name in 1881, Ma-sha-ha, meaning the high soaring of the eagle that sees the new day, and a holy gift made especially for her in 1884, sacred pipes, that Frank La Flesche assured her no other white person had ever owned.¹⁵⁰ Inserting herself into the story of the Omaha, in the role of the savior and adopted member, was, in fact, part of the making of ethnology as distinct from previous iterations of state-directed, organized knowledge production on Indigenous people. As civilians, ethnologists could claim a familiarity with Indigenous peoples inaccessible to military personnel, and, whether conducting salvage, as La Flesche would do, or working as government agents attempting to provide aid in the process of acculturation, like Fletcher, ethnologists could position themselves as allies and sympathizers. What was interesting about Fletcher and what made her use of native informants so distinct was that while the white savior trope was already ubiquitous in ethnology by 1881, that savior had been almost invariably a man. Fletcher's white heroine complex combined the white maternalist politics of the era with a scientific anthropological methodology that engendered a rather different orientation toward tools and objects.

Margaret Jacobs provides an excellent account of the role white women played in settler states (the United States and Australia). She describes maternalism as a type of early feminism, marked by 4 distinct characteristics: "(1) elevating motherhood as a woman's most sacred

¹⁴⁹ Alice C. Fletcher, *Life among the Indians: First Fieldwork among the Sioux and Omahas*, Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 278.

¹⁵⁰ Fletcher to Putnam, November 7, 1881, Peabody Museum records, box 4, folder "1881 C-F."

occupation; (2) justifying women's presence in public reform as a natural extension of their experience or socialization as mother; (3) acting in a motherly manner toward other women they deemed in need of rescue and uplift; and (4) upholding a maternal and domestic role as most fitting for other women, not for themselves."¹⁵¹ Particularly relevant to Fletcher, Jacobs looks at how maternalism, which has until recently been more popularly associated with Progressive labor politics, was an element of Indian policy in the 19th century which regarded Indigenous peoples as children, inculcating white women in settler colonialism in very tangible ways. In the case of Alice Fletcher, this maternalist perspective shaped the intimacy she had with her informants and contributed to an alternative kind of objectification.

In 1883, Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, appointed Fletcher as the allotment agent to the Omaha. This presented an ideal opportunity for Fletcher: it would allow her to develop her work in ethnology and further her social agenda. In a letter to F.W. Putnam that year, she wrote, "Good will of it to the people [and] if you approve, next year, if I live, you can have a complete exposition of one tribe's life & customs." In a postscript, she added, "Frank is detailed to go with me & we may be together for 6 mos. on the reserve."¹⁵² She and La Flesche arrived at the Omaha Agency on May 12, 1883. They worked through June, but in July Fletcher fell ill with an extreme "inflammation of the covering of the thigh bone, the inflammation had extended to & involved the large muscles and injudicious treatment had resulted in adhesion."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 89.

¹⁵² Fletcher to Putnam, May 1, 1883, Putnam Papers, Harvard University, box 5, quoted from Fletcher, *Life among the Indians*, 39.

¹⁵³ Fletcher to Caroline H. Dall, September 7, 1883, Dall Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, box 8, folder 22, item 22.

It was during the months when La Flesche cared for her that he later attested that he and Fletcher grew exceptionally close. In 1925, when Fletcher's will, in which she bequeathed all her assets to La Flesche was contested, he gave a deposition describing the history and nature of their relationship. He said:

In 1883... [when] Alice C. Fletcher became seriously ill and was attended and brought back to health partly by aid [of the] affiant [La Flesche]. Thereafter, affiant and Alice C. Fletcher both living in Washington became exceedingly close friends, Alice C. Fletcher taking towards the affiant the attitude of a mother. She had been all her life deeply interested in Indian work and Indian affairs.¹⁵⁴

The relationship between Alice Fletcher and Frank La Flesche was, by their account, of a mother to a child. As was the case with Dorsey, Frank's age seemed to recede into the background when he was put to use as informant.

Even as the "bribe of straightness" took root and Indigenous leaders and intellectuals reinforced an imaginary cisgender and heterosexual past at work through tradition, Indigenous masculinities and femininities were undermined and made undependable through a queering of Indigenous age, particularly in this period and through the New Deal era—moments when settler maternalism and paternalism were in full effect in Indian policy. As seen also in the previous chapter and Carlos Montezuma's construction and subversion of Indigenous immaturity through models of disability, Francis La Flesche's masculinity, and as such his supposed access to settler academic and scientific authority, was made queer in his regular discursive and relational age shifting. As a native informant Francis La Flesche's role in the production of knowledge was veiled—his presence was regularly alluded to, but his potential as an actor at any given point was indeterminable. His age was not easily ascertained—his lack of agency could suggest that he was a child, while his centrality and the degree to which he was relied on as a source of information

¹⁵⁴ "Biography and Memorabilia," box 13, Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

could only suggest an older subject. More so with Alice Fletcher, Francis La Flesche could only be a son or a victim of her impropriety, and neither fit. He was too young to be her lover, too old to be her son, and too foreign to white masculinity to be anything else. This dynamic was a microcosm of Indigenous age more broadly—by settler discursive logic Native peoples were young on the chain of civilization and needing of maternal and/or paternal guidance. On the other hand, they were vanishing, an old order soon to be washed away by a much younger and virile settler nation.

The closeness between Fletcher and La Flesche did not go unnoticed and they were plagued by rumors of indiscretion. At one point in 1886, rumors on the Omaha reservation swirled that Fletcher had a financial interest in allotment and that her relationship with La Flesche, who was many years her junior, was unsavory. Herbert Welsh, secretary of the Indian Rights Association, investigated the accusations against her. In a letter to a journalist in Worcester, Massachusetts, Welsh wrote,

The land business is complicated. I do *not* believe that A [Alice] had made money out of this. I do *not* believe that her relations with her Indian friend are improper. She is enthusiastic, unconventional & very emotional. She has fallen into a wretched sentimental way of calling the Omaha her children—her babies & such pet names— this is well enough in private talk with a friend—no, not well enough but still not bad, but it is mischievous as a habit & in public—petting acts follow petting words, and A is frankly foolish about her heavy, burly, twice married boy [La Flesche], but I think there is no wrong.¹⁵⁵

Fletcher took such a maternal stance toward Indigenous people, and toward La Flesche, “her heavy, burly, twice married boy,” as her owned representation of them, that she was accused of misconduct.

¹⁵⁵ Goddard to Welsh, August 2, 1886, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Indian rights Association Papers, Incoming Correspondence, box 2, series 1A, quoted from Fletcher, *Life among the Indians*, 51.

Fletcher was dependent on Frank La Flesche in ways other ethnologists may not have been. She was dependent on him emotionally, and in her work she still used him as a tool and as an object of which she felt possessive of, but not as an interchangeable tool. In 1884, while La Flesche and Fletcher were preparing her initial historical sketch of the Omaha, she wrote to F.W. Putnam, expressing her possessive feelings about La Flesche. She wrote,

They are after Frank in Washington. Mr. D [Dorsey] tried to get a promise that F. would work for the Bureau, but I can hold him and he is valuable... You can't fancy how many plans are on foot to get him away from me and turn his work off from the Museum. He is to be a member of the Anthropological Society and he also offered other things. He holds so far. This is all between us.¹⁵⁶

Fletcher's fear was not that Frank would work with other people as an informant and translator. In fact, La Flesche regularly provided information to other researchers, often at the recommendation of Fletcher. Rather, she was afraid of losing him as an informant—that he would join the Bureau or the Anthropological Society and put his work to his own use.

Throughout the 1890s, La Flesche would ask that Fletcher recognize his intellectual contributions to her work—not just as her son, and not as a translator and informant, in the way that Dorsey had. At first, his demands were modest. He requested that his “aid” be officially noted in publication. In 1893, while Fletcher was preparing *A Study of Omaha Music*, she wrote to F.W. Putnam, “I find that Francis has a great deal of feeling concerning the recognition of his share in the work involved in this monograph. He wants his name to appear on the title page.” When the book was published, on the title page La Flesche's name was listed as “aided by.” As Joan Mark noted in her article on La Flesche, it was not unusual for ethnologists to make note of their native informants in their published work. Morgan and Boas were both exceptionally vocal about their indebtedness to their informants, Ely S. Parker and George Hunt, and Boas went so

¹⁵⁶ Fletcher to Putnam, September 11, 1885, Peabody Museum Papers

far as to invite Hunt to be second author on two monographs.¹⁵⁷ Fletcher's concession was fairly standard and she was happy to go that far. Indeed, as she admitted to Putnam:

“He has spent several hundred dollars and given much time and labor, moreover he first had the idea of writing out this music. He had several songs taken down by Zimmelgave (or some such name), a professional musician, but the work was a failure. After that I took it up with him, having made a few attempts alone and failed. I shall be glad to have his name added... and hope you will be willing.”¹⁵⁸

Having a proper informant, however, was not much of a concession in reality. It was evidence of properly conducting ethnographic work, of getting that authentic experience of being accepted into the community studied.

Fletcher resisted La Flesche's ambitions in ethnology. In fact, she often could only dimly perceive that his ambitions were serious. Fletcher wrote to Putnam at the Peabody Museum in 1895, “Francis said jokingly that he thought he was doing enough for the Museum to win him a place among its workers. He certainly does labor assiduously and loyally.”¹⁵⁹ Instead, she encouraged him in other fields. La Flesche wrote many half-finished stories during his life, few of which were ever published. Many are either retellings or variations on Omaha stories, but most are short stories about hybridity—vignettes in which a protagonist who could very well be La Flesche works through attraction to home and tradition, while navigating the settler world in which he lives. Indigenous literature, written in English, during this period was dominated by stories like these, and many variations were extremely popular. Stories about Indian boyhood were especially popular, as they spoke to the interest in Indigenous masculinities that was rising in the time, which would ultimately lead to the founding of the Boy Scouts of America in

¹⁵⁷ Franz Boas and George Hunt, *Kwaikutl Texts and Kwaikul Texts: Second Series* (Leiden: Brill; New York: G.E. Stechert, 1902, 1906).

¹⁵⁸ Fletcher to Putnam, April 13, 1893, Peabody Museum Papers.

¹⁵⁹ Letter from Fletcher to Putnam, January 22, 1896, Putnam Papers

1910.¹⁶⁰ Within two years of each other, both Francis La Flesche and Charles Eastman, a Santee Dakota physician and very prominent Indigenous rights activist, published books on Indian boyhood—Eastman’s aptly titled *Indian Boyhood* (1902).¹⁶¹ La Flesche’s *The Middle Five*, published in 1900 after a great deal of effort on both La Flesche’s and Fletcher’s parts and many rejections, was a semi-fictional tale of La Flesche’s days at the mission school on the Omaha reservation.

The Middle Five was praised for its “fidelity to nature,” “the absolutely true portrayal of Indian thought and action,” “contribution to the literature of [his] people,” and for its oratory quality: “the story is told as if we were listening [sic] to it!” One correspondent went so far as to insist that this work would do more to increase knowledge of, and corresponding sympathy for, the Indian than any ethnographic project ever could.¹⁶² The response could not have been more in line with the way that Fletcher understood their work. La Flesche was aiding her in her work for his people, and the most politically expedient writing for him would be the kind in which people could imagine he was not writing at all. La Flesche’s book mirrored Fletcher’s belief that narrative ethnography was a politically powerful vehicle for change. The problem for La Flesche

¹⁶⁰ Physician Charles Eastman (Santee Dakota) was the consultant first for Ernest Thompson Seton’s Woodcraft Indians group for young boys. He then helped design the YMCA’s Indian Scouts program for urban youth, and in 1910 he aided Daniel Carter Beard and others in founding the Boy Scouts of America. Eastman was also involved in founding of the Camp Fire Girls. All these youth organizations modeled their programming on an imaginary of healthful youth in outdoor spaces that they believed Indigenous children had due to their position outside civilization. This was based in part on a misreading of books like Eastman’s, and La Flesche’s, and others. See Eastman, *The Essential Charles Eastman (Ohiyesa)*.

¹⁶¹ The other most famous examples from around this period were Zitkala-Sa’s *The School Days of Indian Girl* in 1921 (one of few examples of writings on Indian girlhood) and *My Indian Boyhood* by Luther Standing Bear (1931).

¹⁶² “The Middle Five, Personal, 1900-1912,” Box 14, NAA.

was that when Fletcher made use of that vehicle, it inserted her into the work, making her a savior and drawing attention to all she had done, but when La Flesche used that method, it made him disappear. As Sherry L Smith has argued, there is a great deal of overlap between the anecdotes that La Flesche conveys in his fiction and pieces of evidence Fletcher provides in her ethnology, such as an account of a prank young boys at the Omaha school play to get out of class.¹⁶³ Whether acting as an informant for Fletcher or writing his own non-ethnological work, the result was the same—his erasure.

As Joan Mark detailed in her biography of Alice Fletcher, her career as a white woman in anthropology was difficult. While Fletcher never identified herself as particularly aligned to any women's rights movement, she was acutely aware of the ways in which her gender had curtailed her career. Fletcher, though she was congenial with her predominantly white male colleagues, rarely worked as closely with them as she did with Francis, and, in fact, unlike Francis, who later in his career would work on joint projects. La Flesche's position as informant, as son, as child, as something to be possessed, set him apart from other men for Fletcher. The culmination of Fletcher's and La Flesche's work together was *The Omaha Tribe*, published in 1911. A year earlier when only final edits were left to complete, La Flesche got the break he had wanted for so many years: a position as an ethnologist at the Bureau of Ethnology with an assignment to study the Osage in Oklahoma.

Fletcher was on a trip to England at the time, and when she came back just before Christmas in 1910, La Flesche had left the house they shared in Washington D.C. and traveled to Oklahoma to begin his work. Fletcher, by then in her seventies and much attached to La Flesche,

¹⁶³ Sherry L. Smith, "Francis La Flesche and the World of Letters," *The American Indian Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (August 1, 2001): 582.

wrote to him to inquire what had happened. La Flesche, after years of subtle hints and reasonable demands, accused Fletcher outright of having only valued him as an informant and of having expressed romantic interest in another man, though exactly why that was a problem (jealousy or fear of abandonment) was not clear. He claimed that now *The Omaha Tribe* was complete, she no longer needed his services.¹⁶⁴ Astounded, Fletcher wrote him daily to assure him that he was, after all, the only thing in the world that mattered to her. “You are beset by a phantom. I am deeply interested in your work... You are the one dear thing in life to me,” she wrote back in January.¹⁶⁵ She wrote again shortly thereafter, “I have a bad headache and I am very sad. I was so happy before. Do not you be sad. There is nothing to trouble you. Our work and our close friendship is all there is in life and all there has been for these many years.”¹⁶⁶ And two days later: “I should do everything I can to help you just as long as God spares my life. If you will be kind and loving it will help me to live... Be my own dear Francis always.”¹⁶⁷

La Flesche would stay away from the home they shared in Washington for six months after that, as Fletcher repeatedly wrote seeking assurances from him that they would be alright. He did eventually begin to write her again, and they remained invariably close for the next twelve years, when Fletcher died in 1923. In fact, during this period, letters from La Flesche increased. While La Flesche was away from their home in D.C. conducting research with the Osage, he wrote her

¹⁶⁴ His letter on this matter has not been preserved. Alice Fletcher described what he wrote in her diary on December 31st. It is possible that his words were not so harsh and that she interpreted them that way, but given her ability to minimize his complaints until that point and his relative silence for months after, it is likely that he did not mince his words. (Fletcher Diary entry, December 31, 1911, Box 12, Fletcher and La Flesche Papers).

¹⁶⁵ Fletcher to La Flesche, January 4, 1911. Box 5A, Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

¹⁶⁶ Fletcher to La Flesche, January 9, 1911. *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Fletcher to La Flesche, January 11, 1911. *Ibid.*

daily, keeping her up to date on all facets of his research and many of the particularities of his life—his health, the weather, relationship with family, and hopes for what he would accomplish with his career. Fletcher, for her part, mostly gave up her own work during that time, and aided La Flesche as she was able. She also named La Flesche a co-author on their *Omaha Tribe*. He had broken through. He was a proper ethnologist, on the payroll of the Bureau of Ethnology, and, for once, Alice Fletcher was his assistant. He had gained an acknowledgement, professionally and personally, of his subjectivity.

3. “From one who knows”: Collaborator Versus Informant

The movement from object and tool to subject of ethnology was not smooth and did not guarantee epistemic authority for Francis La Flesche. Rather, his ascendance to an institutionally recognized subject only highlighted the fact that La Flesche could never quite be what the position implied. After all, La Flesche would never be white, and his presence in a system that never intended his survival, much less presence as a producer, revealed the ambivalence of the authority La Flesche had coveted for so long. The reviews of *The Omaha Tribe*, Francis La Flesche’s first foray into scientific authorship, were excessively and revealingly negative. One review in particular, penned by Robert H. Lowie of the American Museum of Natural History in *Science* in 1913 characterized the book as nothing short of an affront to the field. In his review, Lowie complained that Fletcher and La Flesche did not adequately engage existing scholarship on the Omaha, especially the previous ethnographic study conducted by James Owen Dorsey, with whom La Flesche had worked for years as a translator and native informant. They failed to truly interpret their data, he argued, proposing instead that one ought to approach the book as a field journal, not a work of ethnology. Even then, the field journal would be a failure. Lowie wrote,

In the first place, the tremendous wealth of concrete material is classified according to canon of aboriginal rather than of scientific logic. Thus, the Medicine Pipe ceremony is described under the heading of Music, apparently because its native name means ‘to sing for someone...’ Secondly, there are large fields of ethnological interest that the authors either do not touch at all or treat in a very unsatisfactory manner.¹⁶⁸

This was not an ideal first foray into scientific authorship for Francis La Flesche.

¹⁶⁸ Robert H. Lowie, review of *Review of The Omaha Tribe*, by Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *Science* 37, no. 963 (1913): 912.

Alice Fletcher's work under her own name or even with La Flesche's listed alongside as aid had not received reviews like this. Her work was characterized instead as "sympathetic and thorough."¹⁶⁹ It is true that *The Omaha Tribe* was unique among Fletcher's work. It bears a greater resemblance to La Flesche's later publications than it does Fletcher's scholarship, and so it is unsurprising that its reception was markedly different. Allegations of working "according to the canon of aboriginal rather than scientific logic" were serious. This was contrary to the central tenant of ethnology, which was to apply scientific logic to the Indigenous. Lowie's critique suggested that Fletcher and La Flesche were more unskilled hobbyists than scientists—if they could not speak to the animating questions of the field using the common vocabulary and logics employed by their colleagues, then in what way were they producing an ethnologic text?

La Flesche did not take the attack lightly, however, and he defended himself and Fletcher exactly two weeks later in a response in *Science*. First and foremost, La Flesche made clear that Dorsey was not to be taken as expert on the Omaha. He wrote:

The final adoption of this plan [for the book] was due in a large degree to the regard which the authors felt for the late Rev. J. O. Dorsey. They honored his personal character and his conscientious efforts, and preferred silence to the unwelcome task of pointing out the numerous errors throughout his work when he was no longer living to rectify them. Had Mr. Dorsey continued the study of the Omaha language and so perfected his knowledge of it he would have been better able to understand the meaning of the institutions and ideal of the tribe as they were explained to him in the native tongue. Regrettably, his imperfect knowledge of the language, as can readily be seen in his Omaha texts, accounts for misconceptions that now appear in his writing.¹⁷⁰

La Flesche went on to assert his own expertise and pointed out how ludicrously incorrect Dorsey had been on several factual claims pertaining to the Omaha. La Flesche referenced Dorsey's

¹⁶⁹ Russell, "The Import of the Totem" (1889).

¹⁷⁰ Francis La Flesche, "The Omaha Tribe," *Science* 37, no. 965 (1913): 982.

assertion that the Omaha believed that “the ancestors of the people were animals and that at death men returned to the animals from which they sprang” as an especially egregious example.¹⁷¹ That Dorsey was so mistaken on this matter had been a La Flesche family joke that even Alice Fletcher was in on for decades. In a letter from Frank’s sister, Rosalie, to Fletcher in 1896, she mentioned Mr. Dorsey’s belief in “coming hither from animals,” and reported that her father, Iron Eyes, laughed when Dorsey asked him about it, telling him to “be careful from where he got his information.”¹⁷² La Flesche was finally in a position to criticize in print the ways in which ethnologists had failed in their construction and use of native informants. However, La Flesche was restrained in his response and qualified most of his criticism of Dorsey. Dorsey had very recently died, and La Flesche was unwilling to speak ill of the dead in the absence of serious provocation.

That La Flesche did not, as a rule, pick fights with his colleagues did not prevent him from being hyper visible in the field. In 1916, W.J. Holland, director of the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, sent word to La Flesche that he would photograph in the correct order the Osage bundles in his collection for safe keeping, a point of grave concern for La Flesche previously. He continued:

“I recall with great pleasure my meeting you at Washington, and you will pardon the liberty I took on the occasion of the banquet at the Cosmos Club of asking you to rise. Your graceful compliance with my request not only pleased me, but I am sure pleased everybody in the hall. You were the only ‘real American’ present on that occasion, and yet I venture to say that you came to us originally by way of the Pacific, as the rest of us had come by way of the Atlantic.”¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 983.

¹⁷² “Letter from Rosalie La Flesche to Alice Fletcher, April 18, 1896,” Box 1, Incoming Correspondence (1896-1898). Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

¹⁷³ Letter from W.J. Holland to Francis La Flesche, 1916, Box 15, “Sacred Bundles, 1911, 1915

La Flesche was never fully free of ethnology's gaze, even when he was also doing the gazing. As an ethnologist, he may have no longer been the direct object of study, but in trading his position as an informant he had become an oddity. More importantly, the desire to claim La Flesche as the only 'real American' present not only in various elite spaces, but also often in the sciences more broadly, placed him at the center of a scientific project intent on the termination, scientific possession, and appropriation of the Indigenous in the settler nation building project.

The La Flesche archive is rife with examples of the casual and overt racism La Flesche faced in the academy. He was constantly fielding requests for information, his blessing, or an Indian name for both his colleagues and their possessions, and he was on guard for the potential theft of his work or responsibilities he needed to address back at home on the Omaha reservation.¹⁷⁴ In this section, I will explore an episode in Francis La Flesche's career as an ethnologist, his collaboration on the Indian opera *Da-O-Ma*, to uncover what exactly changed when a he transitioned from informant to collaborator, and how that transition entangled La Flesche in settler sciences in new ways. La Flesche's role in the eventual (non)production of *Da-O-Ma*—it was never actually staged—revealed how his interactions in an academy premised on his termination and appropriation influenced how settler scientific disciplines took shape. In addition to new varieties of racist encounters associated with the institutional recognition of La

¹⁷⁴ In a letter from 1917, La Flesche responded to an inquiry from R.G. Davenport for a unique "Indian name" for his seaside cottage: "The only name I can think of that would be suitable for your seaside cottage is Neekoñoka, (Ne-ekoñ-aka), accent on the second syllable. The name means, Between, or In the midst of the Waters. It is an Osage Indian word and although used by these Indians as a name for a certain place in the country that was once theirs, it has never been employed by the white people who now occupy those lands. The name nearly describes the situation of your cottage, and besides being euphonious it is easy of pronunciation. Nemaha is also a beautiful name but it has long been used for a place in the state of Nebraska. It is an Omaha word and means, Misty Water. The Omaha tribe is related, linguistically, to the Osage" (La Flesche to Davenport, April 12, 1917. Inquiries, 1912-1930, Box 15).

Flesche's subjectivity, his transition from informant to collaborator entailed different modes of claiming legitimacy and expertise, both for La Flesche and his colleagues.

Francis La Flesche possessed an abiding interest in Omaha and Osage music. That interest was expressed in his unique collection practices, and it was expressed in his collaborative endeavors. In 1908, prior to his taking a position at the Bureau of Ethnology, La Flesche began work with poet Nelle Richmond Eberhart and composer Charles Wakefield Cadman on *Da O Ma*, their so-called "first Indian opera."¹⁷⁵ Cadman and Eberhart would be partners on other related projects, such as *The Four American Indian Songs. Op 45* (1908) and *Shanewis* (1918), with Cadman composing music and Eberhart providing words.¹⁷⁶ Cadman, who was in his late twenties when he started to work with La Flesche, had spent most his musical career training and composing in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and he was decidedly U.S.-centric in the themes he explored. Over the course of his career, Cadman composed a number of American folk songs, most drawing from either Indigenous music traditions or "ragtime" and African American music genres.¹⁷⁷ For the former especially, he was reliant on the scholarship of ethnologists to interpret his source material.¹⁷⁸ Cadman, Eberhart, and La Flesche were part of a larger "Indianist" ethnomusic movement that sought to produce (settler designed and often

¹⁷⁵ Letter from Nelle Richmond Eberhart to Francis La Flesche, May 20, 1909, Correspondence, 1900-27: Box 1, Folder SG1, S1, F1. La Flesche Family Papers.

¹⁷⁶ Drafts of Four American Indian Songs, Op 45: *From the Land of Sky-Blue Water, The White Dawn is Stealing, Far Off I Hear a Lover's Flute and The Moon Drops Low*: 1910-1923. Box 3, Folder 6, Nelle Richmond Eberhart Papers. New York Public Library, New York, New York.

¹⁷⁷ Cadman, "THE 'IDEALIZATION' OF INDIAN MUSIC," 387.

¹⁷⁸ Cadman was also reliant very often on Indigenous performers, most notably Tsianina Redfeather Blackston (Creek and Cherokee), his so called "Indian princess soprano." See Lush, "The All American Other: Native American Music and Musicians on the Circuit Chautauqua," *American: The Journal of American Popular Culture* (1900-present), Fall 2008, 7(2).

performed) Indigenous composition in the early 20th century that paired ethnologists, poets, and composers in the supposed (re)construction of a truly “American” music style and tradition.¹⁷⁹

That ethnology was an essential tool in the creation of an “American music” during this period is an instructive example of how it functioned as a settler science. Cadmon was invested in establishing a musical tradition that was wholly separate from European roots and training. This was the source of his fascination with Indigenous music and its emergent position as a point of national pride. In 1915, Cadman wrote an article defending his use of Indigenous music in erecting an American art form:

What is gained if you young misguided Americans overload your creative efforts with ‘idealized’ ragtime, or employ Indian folk-tunes as a partial basis for your compositions? Why that fear of turning out your orchestral works, your chamber music or your songs with a stamp ‘Made in Germany’ – ‘Made in France?’ Thus Europe interrogates us, or at least, thus I was interrogated recently by a European musician... It is indeed quite true that the brief span of years so far allotted our nation, with the physical and commercial struggle for survival and development, has not permitted any sudden outburst of folk-lore or folk-song that would embody the defeats, the victories, the achievements of our national life... However, the folk-song that we *have* attempted to idealize has sprung into existence on the American continent. It is as much the heritage of America and Americans and the musicians who live in America as the music of the barbaric hordes of Russia is the heritage of cultures Russians and Russian musicians.¹⁸⁰

The Indianist ethnomusic movement was premised on the notion that the nation’s young age had not afforded it a distinct “folk” culture apart from Europe, and Cadman and others looked to Indigenous music as a source from which they could usurp the cultural trappings of a non-settler

¹⁷⁹ For more on the early 20th century Indianist music movement and its various dimensions related to Indian policy and music history, see: Perison, “The ‘Indian’ Operas of Charles Wakefield Cadman”; Meyer, “Edgar Hewett, Tsianina Redfeather, and Early-Twentieth-Century Indian Reform”; Ziegel, “Enacting the Nation on Stage.”

¹⁸⁰ Cadman, “THE ‘IDEALIZATION’ OF INDIAN MUSIC,” 387.

nation.¹⁸¹ However, unlike Cadman's example of the Russian empire above, the settler colonial context in the United States made the scientific investigation of Indigenous music a necessary step in being able to convert it as settler cultural capital.

Ethnology as a settler science had a dual role then: on one hand, it was used as a means of ensuring Indigenous termination via objectification and policy direction, and on the other, it was used in the appropriation of Indigenous material by settlers looking to establish their own claim to nationhood, belonging, and ownership. This two-part cycle of scientific study for termination and appropriation is an essential feature of a settler science. Scientific investigation and disciplining of the Indigenous was a mechanism of possessing, displacing, and performing it. In this case, in order to establish a uniquely American style that was not indebted to Europe, Cadmon needed to rely on the scientific assessment and collection of Indigenous music and culture. Ethnology as a settler science was concerned with the control of Indigenous bodies and lands, as seen in Alice Fletcher's allotment crusade earlier, and it was also concerned with the creation of an American identity, exceptionalism, and sense of belonging on occupied land, as we will see in Cadmon's ethnomusic project.¹⁸²

Francis La Flesche's role as a native informant revealed that those impulses to eliminate and replicate were not and could not have been mutually exclusive. Fletcher certainly displayed

¹⁸¹ A direct line to this thought can be found in how Indigenous music is archived and categorized today. The Omaha music recorded by Francis La Flesche and Alice Fletcher is still categorized as "American Folk Music" by the Library of Congress. See the Omaha Indian Music Collection on their website at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/omaha-indian-music/about-this-collection/>.

¹⁸² This was by no means unique to settler science in the United States. A similar investment and appropriation of Palestinian (reimagined as Israeli) pasts through archeology emerged in the 1940s in Israel, as well. See Abu El-Haj, Nadia. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

the romantic appropriation characteristic of Cadmon, for example. Her desire to mother Indigenous people, like La Flesche, as part of her scientific process mirrors the ethnomusicological desire to curate Native music elements to create a “real” U.S. American art form, and she expressed this in her work on music most explicitly. In the preface to her *Indian Games and Dances with Native Songs* (1915), Fletcher wrote:

This little book took its rise in the following experience that came to me many years ago when living with the Indians in their homes and pursuing my ethnological studies: One day I suddenly realized with a rude shock that, unlike my Indian friends, I was an alien, a stranger in my native land; its fauna and flora had no fond, familiar place amid my mental imagery, nor did any thoughts of human aspiration of love give to its hills and valleys the charm of personal companionship. I was alone, even in my loneliness. Time went on. The outward aspect of nature remained the same, but imperceptibly a change had been wrought in me until I had no longer felt alone in a strange, silent country. I had learned to hear the echoes of a time when every living thing upon this land and even the varied overshadowing skies had its voice, a voice that was attentively heard and devoutly heeded by the ancient people of America... When I realized how much closer because of this change I had been drawn to our land, how much greater had become my enjoyment of nature, the desire arose to find some way by which I could help make audible to others the voice I had heard and thereby restore to our hills and valleys their lost human element. Impelled by this purpose I have arranged these dances and games with native songs in order that our young people may recognize, enjoy and share in the spirit of the olden life upon this continent.¹⁸³

Confrontation with the Indigenous inspired a sense of disgust for Alice Fletcher in her earliest days in Indian territory but also an undeniable longing. Fletcher believed it was her duty as an ethnologist to make available the “lost human element” of this strange continent. The impulses to destroy and restore were part of the same process that was increasingly professionalized and codified as scientific at the turn of the 20th century. Ethnology was based on an impulse to steal in order to preserve that which was being destroyed by such theft in the first place. The dynamic

¹⁸³ Fletcher, Alice Cunningham. *Indian Games and Dances with Native Songs, Arranged from American Indian Ceremonials and Sports*. C. C. Birchard, 1915, 5.

of settler destruction and appropriation is embedded in the act of scientific investigations of the other in the United States.

Francis La Flesche was part of the ultimate failure of both these impulses-cum-projects, even as he participated in them. He could neither terminate nor appropriate himself nor his relations. The tension inherent in La Flesche's role with Alice Fletcher as she sought termination and restoration was rarely acknowledged, but with Cadman, who worked with Francis both before and after his appointment at the Bureau of Ethnology, the tension defined their relationship.¹⁸⁴ As a collaborator, La Flesche was neither the invisible tool of sight used by Dorsey nor the hypervisible source of validity and connection used by Fletcher. He was something else necessitated regular confrontation and negotiation.

Cadman's connection to La Flesche was initiated, perhaps unsurprisingly, through an original communication sent to Alice Fletcher in 1907, in which Cadman asked permission to use her and her "associate's" work on "American Indian Melodies" published by the Peabody Institute. It is worth noting that in this original letter, the associate to which Cadman referred was a "Prof Fillmore," one of Fletcher's colleagues and a composer, not Francis La Flesche. Cadman wrote to Fletcher:

Out of all the lore on the subject at the Carnegie Institute [Cadmon's home institution at the time], and I may add with pride, we have quite a bit, I find your work the most desirable. You will understand that in no way shall I appropriate your harmonizations nor infringe upon the originality of your and Prof Fillmore's labor, but shall use the melodies you have gathered in 'their nature state' and also with my own adaptations, guided by your ethnological knowledge...¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ For examples see Swann, Brian. *Song of the Sky: Versions of Native American Song-Poems*. Univ of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Cadman to Fletcher, October 17, 1907. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

Cadman deferred to Fletcher's authority as an ethnologist, and he categorized Fletcher's and Fillmore's output as intellectual "labor," while the Indigenous music itself, in a "nature state," was up for trade and interpretation. This attitude reflected Fletcher's own framing of her work. In a comment in 1900 on the value of "Indian music" she wrote:

Aside from its scientific value, this music possesses a charm of spontaneity that cannot fail to please those who would come near to nature and enjoy the expression of emotion untrammelled by the intellectual control of schools. These songs are like the wild flowers that have not yet come under the transforming hand of the gardener.¹⁸⁶

Fletcher in this scenario would be the botanist informing the practice of gardeners, like Cadman and her associate, Professor Fillmore, who wrote music to the songs she described in her books.

Cadman's mention of his preference for Fletcher's work (and La Flesche's, though he failed to mention him then) also evidenced its uniqueness. Fletcher's work on music was initiated earlier in her and La Flesche's relationship when they recorded Omaha music on wax cylinders in 1895. Her subsequent writing on the topic was well regarded, particularly by those outside ethnology who had cause to take it up in their own creative endeavors, like ethnomusic enthusiasts. On written entries accompanying the wax cylinder recordings of Omaha music solicited and collected by Fletcher and La Flesche, Francis was acknowledged as the "recordist and second collector."¹⁸⁷ The majority of the descriptions of these entries were penned by La Flesche, and this was a practice he applied in his scholarship later with the Osage. Fletcher never recorded music without him. La Flesche and Fletcher were fairly early adopters of the

¹⁸⁶ Fletcher, *Indian Story and Song, from North America*, ix.

¹⁸⁷ See the Omaha Indian Music Collection at the Library of Congress website: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/omaha-indian-music/about-this-collection/>

graphophones as a tool in ethnology, and her easy access to La Flesche's descriptions and recordings when she wrote years later was evident in her work. In fact, some of her last publications, such as the previously mentioned *Indian Games and Dances* (1915), were on music and likely would not have been possible, given her ill health and agreement with La Flesche that she would step back from research, had she not had access to these earlier recordings.

Fletcher did ultimately call on La Flesche to advise Cadmon on the matter of his Indian opera. Sometime between October 1907 when Cadman sent that initial request and August of the following year, Fletcher had referred Cadman to La Flesche, with whom Cadman was quite taken. He wrote to Fletcher:

I have written to Mr. Le Flesche [sic] in appreciation of his aid in the interpretation of this melodie [sic]. It is such a privilege to listen and hear the themes first hand from one who knows. I like him personally so much and am proud of his friendship. I can well see how his patience, sympathy, and undisturbed knowledge has made a great deal of the work possible (emphasis in original).¹⁸⁸

Cadman's marvel at La Flesche as someone "who knows" and was possessed of racially stereotyped "patience, sympathy, and undisturbed knowledge" was by no means a new phenomenon in La Flesche's life as a native informant. After all, sympathy, patience, and natural wisdom were all features of the classical imaginary of the stoic North American native informant or guide, whose noble, self-sacrificing role it was to aid white settlers.¹⁸⁹ However, as La Flesche

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Cadman to Fletcher, August 17, 1908. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

¹⁸⁹ That vision of a perpetually receptive and self-sacrificing guide, part of a grander narrative of the noble Indian, was most often exceptionally gendered. Cadmon's pride at calling La Flesche his friend is part of the same legacy that held figures like "Pocahontas" (more accurately, Matoaka—her name, life story, and genetic relation to settlers have all been falsely mythologized in settler memory) and Sacagawea as paragons of Indigenous femininity. Sacagawea in particular is probably the best known native informant in North American history exactly because those traits have been so strongly mapped onto her. For more on this, see Green, Rayna. "The

transitioned in his position at the Bureau of Ethnology and asserted himself as collaborator with Cadman (as opposed to a source for him), this intense pride that Cadman felt at having a personal friend who was Indigenous and could inform his music would ultimately cause some friction between the two and would contribute to their opera's slow production and eventual failure.

Cadman repeated his refrain, "one who knows," to La Flesche himself in correspondence not long after his enthusiastic endorsement to Fletcher. In a letter written in August 1908, Cadman relayed a request from a colleague, Miss Katherine Eaton at University of Pittsburg, that La Flesche deliver an "address on paper on any subject apropos of Indian lore" when he came to visit that August. He went on: "She said that a great good can be done if he who knows can speak to us—that this way is better than books—sometimes. In some ways I agree with her—though books are mighty, too (emphasis in the original)."¹⁹⁰ Cadman certainly believed books were "mighty," as evidenced by the fact that he sought to publish his and La Flesche's findings in the years to come, and though he may have prized La Flesche for his experience as "one who knows," Cadman was at the same time positioning himself as a different kind of expert—one who commands, is recognized for having acquired knowledge through skill, and who could put that knowledge to use.

Cadman in the coming years would receive increasing recognition for his intellectual and artistic merit. During the previously mentioned visit in October 1908, La Flesche used an Omaha rattle in his presentation at the University of Pittsburg, the invitation to which he evidently did

Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture." *The Massachusetts Review* 16, no. 4 (1975): 698–714 and Simpson, Audra. "The State Is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty." *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (October 12, 2016).

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, August 24, 1908. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

accept. Cadman was so taken with the object that he wrote twice asking if La Flesche could furnish him one of his own, as it would impress his audiences in Pennsylvania, he explained. La Flesche acquiesced and sent him a rattle, and in receipt Cadman wrote:

I received the rattle today and hasten to acknowledge receipt of it. Your kindness and generosity touches me deeply and if you will not accept remuneration for your trouble in making this, the only way to show my appreciation to you is to stick to my ideals and work toward a goal that may in the end satisfy you. My heart is in this work and you may rest assured that I shall not quit till I shall have produced something which will reflect credit on us all.¹⁹¹

Cadman's insistence that his heart was in the work was a common refrain, much like "one who knows." Like Fletcher, Cadman had a stake in proving his personal investment in the study of Indigenous people. They both imagined an important political, cultural, and moral center to their work, and they both saw the study of indigeneity as a means of attaining credit they perceived as having previously been denied to them—Fletcher due to her gender and Cadman due to his nationality and disconnect from European musical prestige. For both La Flesche for both proved an excellent tool toward that end, providing at various points legitimacy, expertise, a source of personal investment, and authenticity.

Even in writing that he aimed to produce work which would reflect credit "on us all," Cadman knew that he had managed to produce work that had certainly reflected credit on himself, if not La Flesche and Fletcher. In the same letter, he continued:

I have some excellent good news for you and Miss Fletcher... When I announced the premiere of my Indian Music Talk for January 20th, I heard in about two days afterward from the president and officers of the Tuesday Musical Club, to the effect that they felt their organization should have the honor of giving such an 'original entertainment' to the city for the first time, and if I would reconsider my plans and accept an engagement which carried with it a handsome monetary remuneration, they would be grateful... So that this premiere will be given under the most favorable auspices and will carry with it such a musical recognition and

¹⁹¹ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, January 14, 1909. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

prestige that it is likely to be solicited in New York and Boston... By this engagement I shall be enabled to travel west in June or July and secure from your Indian friends more 'experience' and 'color' for my music. I feel now that things will proceed. I have been working very hard at the affair (emphasis in the original).¹⁹²

The recognition that Cadman received in 1909 flamed his passion to increase his reach in inserting "experience" and "color" into his music, as the Tuesday Musical Club's response made clear that the value of his work lay in its novelty. Though he cared deeply about La Flesche's opinion of him, or at least repeatedly attested to that fact, this passion sometimes inspired Cadman to exaggerate both his access and knowledge.

Two years later, on May 18, 1911, just a year after Frank took his position at the Bureau of Ethnology, La Flesche wrote a letter to Cadman that was uncharacteristically confrontational, especially in light of the decades it took him to request acknowledgement from Fletcher. He wrote:

My dear Mr. Cadman,

Enclosed herein I am sending you a clipping from a paper bearing the title, The Christian Science Monitor, Boston.Mass" and dated May 13, 1911. In the article appears this statement:

"Mr. Cadman is interesting all music lovers and ethnologists as well by his present work of composing music for a grand opera which shall truly convey the animus of Indian life, its hundreds of songs expressive of every phase of daily experience and of exceptional occasions as well. He has collected the music for these and studied the nature of the people whom he would represent.by [sic] laying patient siege to the Indian at his home, winning his confidence and friendship and learning something of his inner life.

One of the most important researches of this sort had to do with the ceremonies of the Osage Indians in Oklahoma. Here Mr. Cadman recently secured the music of the 'Wo-Xo-be' ceremony. It was had from one of the few old men of the tribe who knew it- his name, by the way, is 'Saucy Calf.'

Now Mr. Cadman, may I ask if this is your own statement or if you authorized it to be made? Is it true that you made researches among the Osage Indians and secured the wa-xo-be songs from Saucy Calf? If the statement is not true and was not in any way authorized by you, should you not in justice to yourself and the one who really did secure the songs, correct the statement?

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

yours truly,
Francis LaFlesche¹⁹³

La Flesche worked with the Osage for his whole career with the BAE. His first and closest informant was Saucy Calf, and he was often extremely protective of the objects and information he collected from Saucy Calf. While he was an informant with Fletcher, La Flesche's requests for acknowledgement of his work were rarely legible. Fletcher at least on one occasion interpreted such a request as a joke, and other times she deflected or presumed there was a plot afoot to turn him away from her.¹⁹⁴ La Flesche could repeat time and again that he did not feel his work was recognized when he was a native informant and elicit virtually no response. Though La Flesche's letter calling out Cadman for misrepresentation of expertise is far bolder and palpably more passive aggressive compared to requests for recognition he had previously made to Fletcher, Cadman's response was that much more dramatic and offended.

La Flesche had provided Cadman with the music and its interpretation in the first place. No one else had worked with Saucy Calf. La Flesche's first informant among the Osage, Black Dog, died only a month after Francis arrived.¹⁹⁵ Saucy Calf was his second informant, and La Flesche was extremely protective of him. A priest of the Buffalo Clan, who had something of a penchant for scandal but who was nevertheless extremely knowledgeable, Saucy Calf developed a close relationship with La Flesche, who regarded him as a father figure.¹⁹⁶ Cadman's

¹⁹³ Letter from La Flesche to Cadman, May 18, 1911. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

¹⁹⁴ Fletcher to Putnam, April 13, 1893; Fletcher to Putnam, September 11, 1885. Peabody Museum Papers

¹⁹⁵ La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 19.

¹⁹⁶ United States. Congress. House, "Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, 1927-1928," 529.

transgression was serious, and that was reflected in the tone of La Flesche's letter. Francis La Flesche was an astoundingly courteous colleague. His letters were almost invariably typed (often in duplicate) and exceptionally polite. But it was invariably evident to those with whom he corresponded when he was displeased.

Cadman's response was swift and wordy. In fact, in his response, scrawled across four pages including marginalia and excessive emphasis, he called La Flesche's original communication "scathing." On May 22, he wrote:

Dear Francis!-

When I got your scathing letter this a.m., I was shocked, hurt, literally stunned by the form of it, and then gradually I grew indignant that you should so mistrust and doubt my nature and my friendship in such a manner and before you had really had time to investigate the affair, in other words to consider me guilty before I could prove myself innocent. I want you to know now and for all time that I would never for a minute take credit for work which did not rightfully belong to me. I have never yet done so and if others have attributed such false motion to me it is entirely not my fault. This is exactly the 3rd time I have been misrepresented and my words misconstrued and it is pointedly the last time. I shall never have anything to do with a request for information about the Indian I have anything to do with.... Having our opera (your opera as mine please notice) in mind I thought that such an article in Boston would do us a good... I told them of the wonderful work you had done in securing the Wo-Xo-Be ceremony from the Osage Indian "Saucy Calf..." (emphasis in the original).¹⁹⁷

It is difficult to say whether or not Cadman misrepresented himself in that interview and others that preceded it, or indeed in the publications and performances that were to follow (despite Cadman's claim that he was done with the whole business). It was common for articles reporting on research conducted in Native communities to embellish the extent of the labor done and expertise gained with an eye toward making the story about the heroic efforts of a scholar who

¹⁹⁷ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, May 22, 1911, page 1. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

had “laid patient siege to the Indian at his home.”¹⁹⁸ At the same time, it was equally common for scholars to make that claim for themselves. Cadman’s insistence that he would give up the whole business of speaking about his work on Indian music is telling, however. Whether or not Cadman explicitly claimed expertise on the matter, it would be presumed as long as he performed and wrote on the topic—this was evidenced by his accelerated access to financial support and the mounting admiration of his work—and it was reflected ultimately in the reputation he would garner going forward in the twentieth century as one of the great “American” composers who worked with Indigenous music. That Cadman would so readily wash his hands of the whole business showed his desire to remain on good terms with La Flesche and maintain at least the illusion of personal stakes, all while revealing that his personal reputation was more important to him than the moral stake of studying Indigenous people that he had previously opined on at length. Though he did promise to write to the *Christian Science Monitor* to correct their error, Cadman was clearly most concerned with maintaining his relationship with and access to La Flesche.

Cadman’s sense that he was the true victim in this situation was communicated most strongly toward the end of his letter where he shifted the conversation in an effort to police the tone of La Flesche’s inquiry and to criticize further his gall at suspecting wrong doing in the first place. He continued:

I think it is unreasonable and childish Francis for you to have addressed me as you did: ‘Dear Mr. Cadman’ and “yours very truly.” You aimed a slur and an insult at me that it will take years to blot out. Your letter found me when I was ill-prepared for such a thing... Your cold and cynical letter did not have a very Christian effect upon my nervous system. If I were like an ordinary hot-tempered man I would demand an apology at once, but knowing how quick tempered you

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

are as I found at Omaha with you the last time, I forgive you willingly for I know there is nothing to gain by a spiteful feeling.¹⁹⁹

There is no other reference to what may have happened at Omaha the last time. Whatever it may have been, this description of La Flesche is a wholly opposite rendering than Cadman's first impression, which saw La Flesche as generous, yielding—a true guide. As an informant La Flesche may have been perceived as childish due to a supposed innocence and lack of white masculine authority. As an ethnologist, he was perceived as childish due to a quick temper and threatening manner. As a native informant, La Flesche could not speak loudly enough for anyone to hear him. As an ethnologist, he was perceived as yelling even in restrained and fully justified prose.

For all his performance and claims to be so deeply hurt that he may never recover from the wound, Cadman did celebrate that he had a Native friend again following this encounter. In 1913, Cadman constructed a lodge in the Smokey Mountains of Colorado near Estes Park. In his new western home that he found quite agreeable, his thoughts would often turn to La Flesche. He named his mountain home Daoma Lodge, after the opera. He wrote to La Flesche, in July 1915:

Well, things are comfortable up here in the mountains. We came here first part of July and had a lot of hard work to do to get fixed up. I brought a good many of my Indian rugs and curios up and the place looks quite attractive. I wish you could see my sign near the road. I have two rustic supports upon which rests a pine board enameled white and we have formed letter with dissecting a pine cone and using the little 'shingles' with lapping them over one another and tacking, so that the whole effect is quite original and taking. The words you may be interested to know are DAOMA LODGE. You see the extent of my passion for Indian things has carried me.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, May 22, 1911, page 4. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

²⁰⁰ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, July 15, 1915. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

It was not the name of the lodge that brought La Flesche and their Indian opera to mind. In fact, it was the landscape that inspired the name. In an earlier letter written just after he constructed the cabin in April 1913, Cadman wrote:

What are you doing these days? How I would like to see you and have a talk with you. Have you been thinking about me lately? Maybe it is telepathy. You have been a great deal in my thoughts. Maybe it is because I am up here in the mountains and the “vibrations” of the aborigines are reaching out to me (?) Then again I brought the Indian flageolet you have me and every time I play with it or try to play on it your face comes before me or I call up scenes of that summer at Walthill (emphasis in the original).²⁰¹

Cadman loved Colorado for the same reason he loved La Flesche. Both he believed were physical manifestations of his connection and moral appropriation of Indigenous lands and people.

Cadman was a peculiar colleague for La Flesche. On the one hand, they continued to work toward the production of their Indian opera. La Flesche would review Cadman’s and Eberhart’s work, provide consultation and recommendations for new directions, and write sections when necessary. On the other hand, Cadman remained steadfast in keeping La Flesche abreast of their progress as if it was La Flesche’s career and the validity of Indigenous music that was at stake, not Cadman’s and “American” music. He would go on at great length about the work he was performing in guaranteeing that the production would happen, positioning himself as the marginalized researcher due to the marginalization of his subject matter.²⁰² In January of

²⁰¹ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, April 1913. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

²⁰² For another example of this phenomenon, researchers’ expression feelings of marginalization due to the marginalization of their research subjects, see Kowal, Emma. “Orphan DNA: Indigenous Samples, Ethical Biovalue and Postcolonial Science.” *Social Studies of Science* 43, no. 4 (August 1, 2013): 577–97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312712471739>.

1916, Cadman wrote to La Flesche again from Colorado with news he felt to be of utmost importance. Though the letter was typed, it displayed the telltale signs of Cadman's enthusiasm—marginalia, underlining for emphasis, and several pages that were typed upside down or sideways. He wrote: "Am writing you primarily on a matter of great importance which tho [sic] on the surface may not appear to be important, yet really has a bearing on the future of the opera..." He explained that he had met a "young genius" who presented him with an Indian play, "The Thunderbird," based on a "legend (but with a very human element) of the Blackfeet."²⁰³ This play had already been run by the Santee Dakota physician Charles Eastman, Cadman was sure to mention, and he was extremely excited to share what he believed to be a critical development and opportunity for the production of their opera.

The play, Cadman explained, "it is NOT an opera," was published by this young genius with illustrations in watercolor and charcoal and he built small stage models "the size of a shoe box." Evidently, the boy, whose Blackfeet drawings were "absolutely perfect according to *those who know*," hoped to get help from Fletcher and La Flesche in ensuring the same sort of perfection for his Omaha work (emphasis mine).²⁰⁴ Cadman, after confirming that he would request a copy of their book for the boy from the U.S. Printing office, underscored the importance of having such a model and book for their opera. He wrote:

I went into raptures over the beautifully prepared book of his play and he will make our opera just as beautiful. Cant [sic] you see Frank, what this is going to mean to us? If I am 'armed' with stage pictures and matter which will place before an operatic manager or producer A PICTURE OF WHAT THE INDIAN

²⁰³ Letter from Cadman to La Flesche, January 24, [1916?]. Correspondence, 1900-27, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

OPERA WILL APPEAR LIKE ON THE STAGE that manager, or producer will more than ever become interested in the work! (emphasis in the original)²⁰⁵

In Cadman's framing of their relationship and the mission of the first Indian opera, he was doing his work on behalf of La Flesche, not with him, neither in the sense of using him as a tool in performing that work nor as a collaborator. In collaborating, La Flesche was asked most often to simply corroborate—to lend a new kind of legitimacy. La Flesche's friendship and stamp of approval, Cadman and others imagined, was a font of insider understanding and passion. The feature that remained steadfast between his days as a native informant and his work as an ethnologist was the presumption that his knowledge was a functional stand-in for Indigenous knowledge more broadly. What changed was the ensuing erasure. La Flesche was no longer besieged by boundary-less mother figures nor an exclusively objectifying gaze. Instead, he was besieged by allies looking to capitalize, personally and professionally, on his expertise *as someone who knows*. In the end, the extent of his passion for Indian things carried Cadman a long way, but it never produced his beloved Indian opera, and La Flesche was ultimately far more concerned with his ethnological accounts of the Osage than with the fate of "American" music.²⁰⁶

As an academic, it was normal that Francis La Flesche would be consulted on matters relevant to his area of expertise. The ways in which he was asked to consult, however, rendered La Flesche a representative of Indigenous knowledge and experience. He was used as a resource when he acted as a collaborator. La Flesche was discouraged from synthesizing and formulating theory, and often when he did that work was harshly criticized (if it was recognized at all).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Smith, "Francis LaFlesche and the World of Letters," 597.

Moreover, the termination-appropriation paradigm in ethnology, and the white savior complex it fostered among those in the field left La Flesche to inhabit the position of an outside marker of authenticity that was necessarily irrelevant to the Indianist music movement he engaged. The Indianist music movement and ethnology more broadly was premised on the vanishing race hypothesis, including Francis La Flesche himself. If La Flesche and the people and knowledges he represented did not vanish, they could not be taken up as settler folklore.

4. Not Quite-Ethnology

Francis La Flesche dedicated most of his career to capturing Osage religion via any means he could—recording, collecting, transcribing, and publishing. He was known for working long hours and his employment scores with the Bureau of Ethnology were exceptionally high. His efficiency rating in particular was always in the 90th percentile.²⁰⁷ It had to have been to account for his productivity. La Flesche was 54 when he started his work on the Osage, and between then and his death 24 years later, he published over 2,000 pages, not to mention the countless pages he never published, his various side projects theorizing indigeneity more generally, and all the recordings and material culture he collected, sorted, and cataloged.²⁰⁸ Even during his final year of employment in 1928 as his health diminished, La Flesche rarely took a sick day.²⁰⁹

La Flesche received the following letter in March of 1922:

“I feel that [*The Osage Tribe* by Francis La Flesche], with the volumes that are to follow, is going to mark a new epoch in the study of the Native American race. Every anthropologist who will be honest with himself and with the world must be forced to admit that the soul of the Indian, which we are trying to find out something about through its manifold expressions, is a baffling thing, especially to us of the Caucasian race, which has for its dominant ideal in life something about as far from the dominant ideal of the Indian race as the north is from the south Pole... My great hope is that more men and women of your race may be led to do what you have done. You know the soul of your people; you include it and it includes you, and when you get your own knowledge of it into literature we have

²⁰⁷ Letter from the Bureau of Ethnology to Francis La Flesche, October 1926, Box 14, Employment 1912-1928, Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

²⁰⁸ La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 3.

²⁰⁹ Bureau of American Ethnology Dr. La Flesche Leave Record, May 1, 1928. Box 14, Employment 1912-1928. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

something priceless to add to the rich cultural expressions of the race with which to illuminate and interpret them.”²¹⁰

La Flesche was clearly valued as an insider. The phrase “you include it and it includes you,” referring to the soul of his people, is significant. That was the same logic at play in the creation of native informants, that the individual contained the whole, and it was ultimately the logic applied when assigning value to Francis La Flesche’s work as an ethnologist too. He was someone who would prove capable of adding a great deal to the literature presently available on Indigenous peoples, but it would be “something to add to the rich cultural expressions of the race” that could in turn be used “to illuminate and interpret them,” which coincidentally was imagined to be the job of an ethnologist.

If La Flesche was adding to ethnological literature, but in a way often illegible or unrecognized by his peers, then what science exactly was he practicing? While Fletcher had been consumed by the relationship between her scholarship and political advocacy, La Flesche, like most of his contemporaries, has been characterized by anthropologists and historians of anthropology as driven by an ethic of salvage. It is true that La Flesche endeavored to capture materials he believed to be urgently at risk of disappearing. Francis La Flesche’s brand of ethnology exhibited two primary goals: first, to evidence the long history and complexity of Indigenous religious knowledge, ceremony, and philosophy, and second, to capture that knowledge in long, technical treatises that bordered on the pedantic. That project and the fact that he labored tirelessly in its pursuit was motivated by his belief that Indigenous people were “rapidly approaching extinction, not by death but by absorption into the white race.”²¹¹ The

²¹⁰ Letter from the San Diego Museum (unsigned) to Francis La Flesche, March 10, 1922, Box 14, General Correspondence, 1922-1929. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

²¹¹ La Flesche, *The Osage Tribe*, 46.

experiences he had as a specific kind of Indigenous elite who assumed the position of a native informant, followed then by his interactions in academia, had fully convinced La Flesche of the vanishing race hypothesis.

Those experiences also shaped his unique approach to scientific investigation and a methodology framed in his understanding of the relationship between science, religion, and tribal organization. La Flesche believed the key to indigeneity and culture was to be found in ceremony and religious belief, and at the same time, he had invested his life's work in a science that he knew failed to accurately capture indigeneity in the right light. The result was that La Flesche's attempt to salvage Osage ceremony was never quite what it could or should have been according to the rules of the game he was playing. In his 1995 heavily edited collection of Francis La Flesche's work, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, anthropologist Garrick A. Baily described the issue his colleagues might encounter when engaging La Flesche's work:

There are two reasons why La Flesche's monumental studies of Osage religion have faded into obscurity. First, the Osage religions practices and concepts he recorded contrast sharply both with Euro-American stereotypes of American Indian religion and with religious beliefs and practices recorded for more western and northern tribes... Second, La Flesche's style of representation rendered data almost incomprehensible. Alfred Kroeber [1932] hit the crux of the problem when he wrote, "The Osage are... difficult to place. Thanks to La Flesche, we know several of their rituals in detail, but these give relatively few indications of the type of the culture as a whole."²¹²

Baily's description is informative but misleading. I would argue that the first difficulty he describes, the uniqueness and non-stereotyped nature of the Osage, was not a result of any inherent quality of the Osage. All nations have distinct religious practices, and the appearance of ones that are easy to sort into the ethnological classificatory apparatus has always been the result of how ethnologists represented them, not some innate stereotype or system. Rather, La

²¹² La Flesche, *The Osage and the Invisible World*, 4.

Flesche's scholarship was so unique that it was supposed in subsequent literature that the Osage were inherently resistant to Indigenous stereotypes in ways other nations were not. A review of La Flesche's writing on science and religion, however, reveal that it was not the Osage that were divergent, but the areas of Osage intellectual life identified by La Flesche that were outside the ethnological norm. In reality, what Baily motions to is that it was both La Flesche's object of inquiry, these divergent locations of Indigenous thought, and his "style of representation" that rendered his ethnology "incomprehensible." Not quite ethnology was exactly this incomprehensible object and style.

The Osage ceremony that La Flesche sought to preserve could not be taken up within the institutional nor intellectual frameworks of his field, particularly not "salvage anthropology," but his failure to adhere to these rules opened up other possibilities and definitions of salvage. Not-quite ethnology encompassed two dynamics: first, an epistemic orientation and practice that failed to achieve the normative standards of the field due to the ambivalent nature of epistemic settler authority, explored in the previous two chapters, and second, a unique interrelation of settler and Native sciences, which is the subject of this chapter. To establish not quite ethnology as a genre in which La Flesche worked, I will first explore La Flesche's position on religion, science and indigeneity, and how that position shaped his understanding of the object of ethnology and its technologies. I will then explore how his particular understanding of the methods and topics of ethnology has translated as salvage.

Technology, Religion, and the Location of Indigenous Knowledge

On December 10, 1903, Francis La Flesche delivered an address before the Fairmont Park Association of Philadelphia. He was still an informant and translator at this time, though he

had garnered name recognition since the publication of his fictional account of his childhood in *The Middle Five* in 1900. The occasion for his address was the Fairmont Park Association (now known as the Association for Public Art) presentation of Cyrus E. Dallin's statue of the Medicine Man to the city.²¹³ His address was published two years later in the *Journal of American Folklore*. In his address, La Flesche attempted to explain the epistemic and structural role of medicine men, and in so doing he hoped to convey two critical and related components of Indigenous thought and history as he saw it. First, he asserted the contentious fact that Indigenous people had religion, and second, he argued that not only does Indigenous religion encompass both supernatural and natural truth, but also that Indigenous religion recorded, transmitted, and produced this knowledge not through the written word, but through ceremony and tribal organization.

Indigenous religious knowledge and practice, much like scientific knowledge, has a contested history. What has come to be known as Indigenous religion, ceremonies (often private) consisting of songs and dances among many other rituals, organizations, and knowledges, was not recognized as properly religious by settler authorities and was generally forbidden by Indian Agency agents and various state and federal laws until Congress passed the Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. Even still, there has been a much stronger association in the settler imagination between Indigenous practice and spirituality than with religion, though the difference between the two is by no means concrete. The 1978 legislation and the move to label certain Indigenous practices as religious was part of a longer history wherein Indigenous activists, practitioners, and politicians in the 19th and 20th centuries sought tribal sovereignty through claiming legitimate religion and therefore legitimate protection of religious freedom

²¹³ See Appendix, figure 7.

under U.S. law. Indigenous epistemes, encompassing orientations, knowledges, technologies, institutions, and practices, contain some elements more easily sorted into western traditions of science and religion than others, but these terms never map evenly or entirely. Rather, to call an Indigenous practice either science or religion involves an unsettling and opening up of these categories, and it reflects different mechanisms of expertise and registers of authority—not any inherent relationship or internal dynamic. Much like science, religion is a term that has historically been taken up for a number of epistemic, political, and strategic reasons in Indian Country.²¹⁴

Misunderstanding of the nature of Indigenous knowledge production and the misrecognition of charlatan medicine men who did not rightly embrace the production of truth in their practice was the root of anti-Indigenous sentiment in the United States, La Flesche argued. His opening remarks faulted both religious and scientific authorities for failing to comprehend the Indigenous:

The real character of peoples is never fully known until there has been obtained some knowledge of their religious ideas and their conception of the Unseen Power that animates all life. It is not generally credited by the white race that the tribes of this continent did not differ from other people of the earth, in the effort to understand the meaning of life in all its infinite variety of forms, and the relations of these forms to the great, mysterious power that animates all life. It is true, however, that the natives of this land had given these themes much thought, and had formulated their ideas concerning them long before the European set foot upon this soil... We find that most of the missionaries who have labored among the Indians did not stop to inquire if the people had any idea of a Power that made and controlled all things. These well meaning and zealous men seem to have taken for granted that savages were not capable by their own effort of conceiving the thought of such a Power... Nor has the Indian fared much better at the hands of those who have undertaken to study him as an object of ethnological interest. The myths, the rituals, and the legends of the race have been frequently recorded

²¹⁴ For more on this and the evolving understanding of what constitutes Indigenous religion and religious freedom see, Wenger, Tisa. *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom*.

in such a manner as to obscure their true meaning, and to make them appear as childish or as foolish.²¹⁵

Ethnologists had failed to accurately record Indigenous religion in way that did not merely reaffirm their own prejudices, and religious authorities had failed to see it altogether. La Flesche went on to explain that language barriers had a great deal to do with that—something he was uniquely positioned to address in his own work. La Flesche was known for his refusal to translate large portions of recorded ritual and key terms, and often presented only extremely literal translations with the caveat that the language was ritualistic and not a reflection of the ways in which Osage people communicated in other contexts.

Faulty informants and gullible ethnologists were far more at fault than language barriers, however. La Flesche argued that reliance on informants who were not fully fluent in English resulted in translations of stories and rites that none of the most knowledgeable of the nation in question would recognize. More so, La Flesche identified ethnology's treatment of its technologies as the ultimate barrier. The ways in which native informants were used and chosen did not allow for discernment, and ethnologists were easily taken in by flashy approximations of medicine men who held no claim to truth value in their respective contexts. He chose to communicate this to his engaged Philadelphia audience by gesturing to how absurd it would be if contemporaneous settler faith healers were chosen as *the* representatives of all settler religious thought and epistemic values:

There was another kind of Medicine Man very different in character. *He* held no office of public trust, for he lacked one of the essential qualifications for such a responsibility, and that was truthfulness; he continually wandered in thought, word, and deed from the straight path of truth. He was shrewd, crafty, and devoid of scruples... He was a "Healer," something similar to the healer known to the civilized folk nowadays as "divine," only considerably more so. (Laughter). He was a keen observer of nature and human nature and he used his acumen solely to his own advantage. Had he had book learning added to what he gleaned from

²¹⁵ La Flesche, "Who Was the Medicine Man?," 270.

experience, and lived in New York City, or Chicago, he would not fail of many followers. (Laughter). Or, he might have been useful in the Weather Bureau at Washington (laughter), for when *he* said it would rain, it *did* rain. These up-to-date tricksters were much in evidence in the tribes, and they never failed to impress the stranger who travelled and wrote books (emphasis in the original).²¹⁶

La Flesche did not claim that these figures had no power. “When he said it would rain, it did rain” is not ambiguous in that regard. However, they did not follow the truth, as La Flesche put it. They were hardly representative of Indigenous institutions of knowledge production. The ethnological assumption that any native informant, so long as they were “authentically” a member of the group to which they were trying to gain access, could act as a tool of sight and legitimacy had led to the uncritical acceptance of patently false and epistemically incongruous information. In other words, La Flesche argued the process by which Indigenous elite, or perhaps more accurately Indigenous authority, was made in the eyes of scientists as they chose their native informants not only failed to include any vetting process, but actually actively discouraged ethnologists from seeing or seeking authoritative sources.

In his approach to Indigenous science and religion, La Flesche revealed a fundamental flaw in settler ethnology. There was a mismatch, as Flesche described it, between the creation of Indigenous elites and intelligentsia and settler identification of elites for the purposes of selecting a native informant. The tools of ethnology, native informants, were ill-suited and their application, as tools of sight and as sources of legitimacy, obscured their object of study. La Flesche’s choice to study the Osage is often attributed to the fact that the Omaha and Osage share a language family. While this is true and was an important component of his work, the Osage were unique in another respect. In 1893, Indian Agent Eugene White described the Osage as the “richest people in the world” due to the oil reserves recently tapped on their lands in what

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 274.

was then also known as Oklahoma Indian Territory.²¹⁷ That wealth was not altogether a positive development, however, as settlers scrambled to find new increasingly violent and duplicitous ways of dispossessing them.²¹⁸ On the other hand, their wealth did ensure that ethnologists, who were accustomed to relying on Indigenous poverty and their ability to provide both cash and access to networks of patronage, could not easily recruit native informants. La Flesche had to work hard to develop his relationships with informants among the Osage, which was likely one reason he has remained the authority on them in anthropological literature, as this was work few others were willing to exert.

In affirming the existence of Indigenous religions and religious authorities, La Flesche was trying to make Indigenous institutions of knowledge production legible. He established a clear causal link between the existence of Indigenous belief in and seeking of Wakonda (the Great Spirit or God) and knowledge of the natural world.²¹⁹ He did this first by insisting that

²¹⁷ White, *Service on the Indian Reservations*, 202.

²¹⁸ For more on these methods, ultimately known as the “reign of terror” and the Osage Oil Boom, see Chapter 2: The Osage Murders and Oil in Fixico, Donald. *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century: American Capitalism and Tribal Natural Resources*, Second Edition. University Press of Colorado, 2012.

²¹⁹ Wakanda/Wakonda is the specifically Omaha/Osage term for the spirit that La Flesche is describing. La Flesche’s description of Wakonda here and elsewhere has been described by some, particularly anthropologist Garrick Bailey, the editor of *The Osage and the Invisible World: From the Works of Francis La Flesche*, as misleading. Bailey argues that Wakonda is a spirit that animates all things and could never be spoken of as singular or even strictly a god, which makes La Flesche’s comparison of Wakonda to Jehovah or Allah inappropriate. In *The Osage and the Invisible World* Bailey edits out this usage for clarity. Though La Flesche’s description of Wakonda could easily have been influenced by his Christian education and desire to communicate to a broadly Christian audience, I see no reason to interpret his reading as misleading. Varying interpretations of religious doctrines do not constitute misrepresentation, and religions that change over time do not necessarily become different religions. I have chosen to reflect La Flesche’s interpretation of Wakonda here, though I make no claims to this being a wholly accurate representation of contemporaneous Osage religious thought. It is also important to note that while La Flesche was speaking broadly about Indigenous people in this talk, all

Indigenous people of North America had historically the same sense of something divine seen in other traditions across the globe, and that it was only natural upon sensing something to seek it.

According to La Flesche there were two ways to seek the “Mysterious One:”

One was by seeking to come into direct communication with the supernatural. This he found to be impossible amid the disturbing influences of the manifold activities of daily life; so, in order to achieve this desired end, he secluded himself... In the intensity of his feelings he heard voices in the sky, he saw visions and had strange dreams, all of which he believed to be manifestations which his soul craved. Yet these but partly satisfied his longings. The other way by which he sought to approach the Mysterious Power—a way which gave play to his imagination and also to his reasoning faculties—was by seeking to fathom the secrets of nature that surrounded him on all sides. With longing patience he watched the sun, the moon, the stars. Their magnitude and the precision of their movements stirred his soul with sublime thoughts. The air that he breathed ; the rain that moistened the land ; the earth, with its mountains and valleys, its seas and rivers ; the seasons, with that unvarying succession of changes—all whispered to him of the presence of the Mysterious One. The mist that dimmed his mind’s vision drifted away, and lo! he beheld in all these the foreshadowing of Jehovah, Allah, Wa-kon-da.²²⁰

La Flesche asserted that it was because Indigenous people have religion that they have systematized investigations and bodies of knowledge relating of the natural world, and he goes on to claim that the presence of those two facets of knowledge, the natural and supernatural, also point to institutions, predictable sources of authority, and symbolic representations of knowledge that discipline Indigenous bodies and structure social interaction.

specifics and examples he provides are clearly drawn from the Osage, though he does not make that explicit at any point. This is another example of how La Flesche’s approach was not quite of its genre. Like most ethnologists, La Flesche was happy to extend particularities about one nation to generalizations about all Indigenous people. On the other hand, his generalizations about the whole allowed for the diversity of Indigenous thought and organization to have meaning. That nations were organized differently is more than an aesthetic variation. These cultural differences were not markers of the different types of Indigenous culture, but representations of wholly different sets of knowledge.

²²⁰ La Flesche, “Who Was the Medicine Man?,” 272.

La Flesche revealed what he believed to be the proper object of ethnological study to the crowd assembled on that cold December afternoon in 1903 in Fairfield Park:

The Indians that lived within the borders of this country knew no written literature. The record of their religions conceptions was kept by means of rites, ceremonies, and symbols. Among many of the tribes (as it was the case of my own tribe) these symbols were embodied in the organization of the tribe itself, and in the ceremonies connected with the avocations of the people.²²¹

The information ethnologists had collected on Indigenous peoples—their various practices, kinship structures, stories, art, and so on—were the symbols and institutions through which Indigenous knowledge was recorded and transmitted. And so, La Flesche identified Indigenous knowledges coded in the schematic information pertaining to the Indigenous then being generated and mapped (often poorly) by ethnologists, and it was that knowledge, the ceremonial knowledge of the natural and supernatural or Indigenous science and religion, that he so wished to preserve. He wished to preserve it because he believed it was that knowledge which was most at risk of extinction as settler encroachment forced changes in Indigenous institutional organization, as he had seen firsthand during his career aiding Fletcher in allotment. A preservation-oriented not-quite ethnology would be something other than the remembrance of Indigenous peoples for posterity. It would be the key and map of Indigenous knowledge. Ethnology then as a mode of studying Indigenous people was useful for him and something La Flesche dearly believed in, because it was in the structure of Indigenous societies, the purview of ethnology, wherein he believed the knowledge generated by Indigenous peoples—not knowledge of but knowledge by— was to be found.

Tribal organization not only acted as a record and symbolic representation of Indigenous religious knowledge, but it was part of the creation of the institutions through which knowledge

²²¹ La Flesche, 272.

could be vetted, reconsidered, and transmitted across generations—clan networks, medicine societies, and other groups with complex interpersonal and institutional relations and symbolic meanings. In this context, we can read La Flesche’s evocation of “the truth” in his description of “Healers” and their divergence from medicine men as a set of epistemic values developed in the context of the second means of seeking Wakonda, the systematic investigation of nature. He named four principles or values sought for and cultivated in medicine men, the representatives of different factions of tribal organization who were responsible for interpreting and transmitting through these systems:

First, and most important was the recognition of the sanctity of human life. The man who was to mediate between the people and Wa-kon-da must stand before his tribesmen and the Great Spirit with hands unstained with the blood of his fellow man. Second, he must be a man whose words never deviate from the path of truth, for the Great Spirit manifests the valued place upon truth in the regular and orderly movements of the heavenly bodies, and in the ever-recurring day and night, summer and winter. Third, he must be slow to anger for the patience of the Great Spirit is shown in his forbearance with man’s waywardness. Fourth, he must be deliberate and prudent of speech, lest by haste he should profane his trust through thoughtless utterance.²²²

The proper subjects of Indigenous knowledge production, medicine men as La Flesche called them, were invariably nonviolent, in tune with the orderly movements of the heavens and seasons, patient, and slow to speak or claim knowledge and authority. These characteristics and values were far more important, La Flesche contended, than heredity, relations, or placement in a clan—some of the mechanisms by which native informants were selected in ethnology.

In accordance with his understanding of Indigenous epistemic values, rather than looking to figureheads of tribal government, La Flesche’s sought sources he would recognize as priests and medicine men, and his relationship with these men required him to reassess ethnological

²²² La Flesche, 272–73.

standards of collection. La Flesche was an avid collector of Omaha and Osage artifacts, and sent pieces to museums all over the country, particularly the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, owing to Fletcher's connections there. He was exceptionally precise in his descriptions of items and insisted on storing and displaying them in exactly the same way he found them. He was also sure to name his sources at length and to provide the history of the objects he traded. In 1916, La Flesche sent an Osage shield to the Smithsonian. Attached was a bill and a letter detailing the shield's history, value, connection to people—it belonged to one of his most important Osage informants, Saucy Calf—and proper storage and use.²²³ A little over a week later, La Flesche followed up with the museum with more information on the shield's ceremonial uses and histories. After a long description, he wrote, "No information was obtained as to the number of times owner of the shield carried it in battle and on the war-path, but in the year 1873, its last owner, Saucy-calf, told me that he carried it..."²²⁴ The information La Flesche provided failed to provide the necessary information for display.

The logics of display required categorical information and a past tense: Was this shield ceremonial or for war practices? Was it standard Plains design or unique? Which societies was it associated with? Where can we locate this shield in the museum? La Flesche instead regarded the object as one that was unique in its connection to living people and use. He located it in Osage Country—it was out of place in Cambridge, not the other way around. And the shield was exceedingly difficult to categorize due to La Flesche's specifications and focus on history and use. The item was claimed and present, but history, uses, and current owners were antithetical to

²²³ Letter from Francis La Flesche to F.W. Hodge, June 17th, 1916, Box 15, Sacred Bundles, 1911, 1915- 1917. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

²²⁴ "Letter from Francis La Flesche to F.W. Hodge, June 29, 1916, Box 15, Sacred Bundles, 1911, 1915- 1917. Fletcher and La Flesche Papers.

the project to which he was ostensibly committing—his collection was directed at an object he understood as temporally present, and as a result his collections have proven more useful to Indigenous people than to museum curators.²²⁵

Not-Quite Ethnology and the Science of Salvage

La Flesche's belief in religion as a locus of Indigenous knowledge, and cultural formation as the page on which that knowledge was written, would not necessarily have contributed to a not quite ethnology if it had not also been for his explicitly salvage oriented vision of what ethnology ought to do. In his 1915 *The Osage Tribe: Rites of Chiefs; Sayings of the Old Men*, La Flesche wrote:

“The Osage tribe is rapidly approaching extinction, not by death but by absorption into the white race... Along with the process of absorption is also carried the gradual obsolescence of the language. Most of the people can speak English, but in their conversation they prefer to use the native language. This, however, offers only a feeble resistance and will in time pass away... The Osage tribal rites, which for generations running back beyond the historic period were to the Osage people their law and their religion, which kept them in constant touch with Wakon-da, are now rapidly dying, as are the few old men to whom these rites were transmitted with reverent care. Under the new conditions and the new ideas introduced among the people by the white race these rites will soon fade from the memory of the coming generations and be lost beyond recovery. It was because these rapid changes that the ceremonial life of the people was given immediate attention when taking up the study of the Osage tribal life.”²²⁶

Rites of the Chiefs is a famously challenging text. La Flesche's reaction to the extinction he predicts above was to record these rites in three sections: first, a “free English translation of the

²²⁵ La Flesche's wax cylinder recordings, for example, were taken up in the 1970s in Osage pow-wow culture, and they have been taken up again in 21st century Osage cultural revitalization programs. See the Library of Congress Omaha Music Collection (<https://www.loc.gov/collections/omaha-indian-music/about-this-collection/>) and Hall, “Indigenous American Cylinder Recordings and the American Folklife Center | Folklife Today.”

²²⁶ La Flesche, *The Osage Tribe*, 46–47.

intoned or recited parts of the rituals,” with the repetition of one particularly common refrain redacted; second, “the Osage language as transcribed from the Dictaphone records, made by “wa-t,se’-moⁿ-iⁿ and other members of the tribe versed in tribal rites” with the refrain included, as “it is necessary to show that every line intoned is authoritative and originated in the house where the ancient Noⁿ-hoⁿ-zhiⁿ-ga (the Little-Old-Men) gathered to formulate the rites;” and third, an English translation given as literally as it could be made under certain difficulties.” La Flesche evidenced a layered understanding of his potential audience in these three sections: settlers with a general interest, Osage readers looking for a reference text, and ethnologists interested in exact translations to use in their own work. La Flesche here also brings front and center his position on religion and the true object of his study. La Flesche collected rites, not to analyze or compare the nature of Osage culture, but to record their law and religion which were coded in them.

Though La Flesche identified divergent objects to be saved in the face of disappearance and was unique in that he formatted these objects in accordance with a diverse imagined audience, his belief in the eventual extinction of Indigenous people in North America in general was not unique. That had been a feature of settler thought since the earliest days of European encroachment, and at the end of the 19th century as some of the last official military wars with Indigenous nations were waged in the 1870s and the western settler frontier reached the coast, the belief solidified into a settler common sense that permeated U.S. cultural production.²²⁷ What would become one of the more significant instantiations of that cultural production came in 1907 when Edward S. Curtis published the first of twenty volumes of photos he would take for posterity while conducting fieldwork with Indigenous peoples in the southwest. One photo in

²²⁷ See Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense*.

particular, “The Vanishing Race—Navaho,” taken in 1904, would become emblematic of the vanishing race hypothesis. The photo featured out of focus “Navaho” (or more accurately Diné or Navajo) people, slumped and downtrodden, with their backs to the camera, riding horses into the distance with a cliff blocking anything but forward movement toward that vanishing point.²²⁸ Curtis portrayed a melancholy and unavoidable genocide. The only thing that could be salvaged of the Indigenous inhabitants of North America was the stuff of indigeneity, and that, it was supposed, could exist unpeopled or could be performed by settlers with the aid of research, institutions, and places reserved for education and display.²²⁹

In its many forms, the attempt to appropriate the Indigenous in the wake of termination was a necessary component of the creation of the United States as a technoscientific settler empire. Salvage anthropology, the discipline that has since been associated with turn of the twentieth century ethnology and anthropology more generally (which included physical anthropology and archeology), and its attendant faith in the eventual disappearance of Indigenous people, was the logical consequence of a United States manifest destiny. The imagined course of history proposed by settler logic, that settlers were destined to progress, territorially and technologically, implied and often directly stated that Indigenous people were at the same time destined to die and assimilate, their knowledge and cultures too weak and primitive to withstand the pressure of white civilization. However, as seen already in the cases of ethnologists acting as government agents and ethnomusicologists as national identity fabricators, Indigenous termination enabled and necessitated settler scientific intervention. More importantly, that scientific intervention was never static. It changed dramatically as the U.S. empire did. At

²²⁸ See Appendix, figure 10.

²²⁹ See Deloria, *Playing Indian*.

the turn of the 20th century, salvage was not a recognized category of scientific intervention. The vanishing race hypothesis added a sense of urgency to ethnology, and there was a related attempt to appropriate the Indigenous as it was terminated, but salvage itself is not an ahistorical analytic.

Despite the historical contingency of salvage, historians of the social sciences, like Joan Mark, have opted to describe La Flesche's project as one of salvage anthropology.²³⁰ In fact, Fletcher's work has also been described as "salvage ethnography," as has Curtis and virtually all of La Flesche's colleagues.²³¹ One would be hard pressed to find an ethnologist in the United States who has not been described as conducting salvage. And yet, while the logic of Indigenous vanishing was woven into the fabric of U.S. intellectual and cultural production, salvage itself did not enter U.S. discourses on science until the 1930s, just after Francis La Flesche died. Between then and the 1960s when salvage solidified as a scientific method, U.S. occupation involved increasingly complex land transformations, as seen in the initiatives of the New Deal, for example, or later in the post-World War II population and industry boom. These changes profoundly altered the discursive and legislative orientation of the U.S. empire. The federal government during this period established various agencies and legislations, the 1945 Committee for the Recovery of Archeological Remains and 1964 Wilderness Act, for example, that linked, theoretically and institutionally, the preservation of U.S. "natural and cultural resources;" cultural resources more often than not meaning Indigenous archeological and ethnographic materials.²³²

²³⁰ Mark, "Francis La Flesche," 498.

²³¹ Browman, *Cultural Negotiations*, 38.

²³² See McManamon, *New Perspectives in Cultural Resource Management*.

The methodology of salvage anthropology was developed in the context of discourses on urgency, emergency, and crisis—the imagined loss of the frontier, the Great Depression, and anxieties about the strength of the U.S. empire abroad. These were in turn linked explicitly to changes in land use and environmental degradation—the Dust Bowl, deforestation, industrial encroachment on “heritage” lands, and industrial pollution. That context was quite distinct from the discursive font of ethnologists at the turn of the twentieth century, who proposed some urgency in the rapid extinction of what they identified as full blood or culturally authentic Indigenous people, but who saw no threat posed to their cultural materials nor to archeological heritage sites. In other words, the stuff of indigeneity was understood to be secure, land and artefacts, at the turn of the twentieth century. This was not the case from the 1930s onward. As seen in Curtis’s photo, ethnology at the turn of the 20th century envisioned the vanishing Indian as melancholy, not in crisis. It was in this context that Francis La Flesche worked.

Salvage anthropology has been cast back in time for decades now by practitioners and historians alike. It has come to mean any anthropology predicated on the presumed loss of its ethnographic subject. La Flesche, whose work was even more predicated on this presumed loss than most and who exhibited a more anxious, perhaps even crisis-oriented understanding of the role of science in the face of that loss, could possibly be said to have been conducting salvage. Allowing for anachronism, was not quite ethnology and its unusual objects slated for recovery akin to salvage anthropology? Parsing when and how salvage came to be understood as Francis La Flesche’s project in the first place, and determining what salvage specifically meant at the time during which that historical narrative was developed, will reveal why La Flesche’s objects of recovery made his “salvage” project so “incomprehensible.”

The 1960s was when salvage was translated into explicit scientific technique, and it was then that anthropologist-historians projected the term backward as the structuring principle of the

field, if one that was improperly theorized and lacking in the sophisticated technologies of the day.²³³ Though the United States had been using “salvage” as a legislative and institutional category for decades, salvage as methodology in the United States was born primarily of Cold War anxieties and the relationship between postcolonial nations and the settler state. Envious of high profile postcolonial salvage projects, anthropologists and archeologists in the United States pushed to recognize their country as one in possession of equally valuable and ancient artefacts and as the originator of scientific salvage. Chief among the campaigns that attracted U.S. criticism was the 1960 “International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia” executed by the United Arab Republic and Sudan governments with financial aid from the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Nubian Campaign was mounted in advance of the planned Aswan High Dam project, which would flood the Upper Nile Valley between Aswan in southern Egypt and the Dal Cataract in Sudan, an area with an especially high concentration of artefacts and sites of archeological interest, including the temple complexes of Simbel and Philae.

Part of the post-1952 Egyptian revolution (more so the post-1956 Gamal Abdel Nasser presidency) campaign for agrarian reform and industrialization, the Aswan High Dam was part and parcel of postcolonial nation building in the region. Salvage of sites and artefacts was conceptually and financially linked to that project, which would reclaim and reimagine Egyptian history in the erection of postcolonial modernity. The cost of aid and collaboration with UNESCO members was steep, however, especially as the British and French were interested in securing renewed access to excavation sites. Sudan and the United Arab Republic were expected to issue asset repayments with interest. The United Arab Republic was expected to provide “no

²³³ See Baldwin, *Race against Time; the Story of Salvage Archaeology*,.

less than fifty per cent of the finds excavated in Nubia, authorization to carry out further excavations in other parts of Egypt, and the cession of precious objects and monuments, including certain Nubian temples, for transfer abroad,” while Sudan, “for its part, [offered] fifty per cent of the finds from excavations to be made in its territory.”²³⁴ That the United States was not a member of UNESCO at this time and accordingly did not gain access to Egyptian sites nor to the prestige of what was heralded as a uniquely successful example of international collaboration in a decolonizing world, surely contributed to this being a sore point for U.S. archeologists and anthropologists.²³⁵ Perhaps more so, institutions in the United States had attempted and failed at collaboration with Egyptian scholars and archeologists previously, as seen in the project undertaken by the Egyptian Department of Antiquities and University of Pennsylvania at Mit Rahina between 1953 and 1957.²³⁶

The Aswan Dam would act as a reference point and foil for nearly all publications on salvage in the U.S. in the 1960s. Discourses on salvage in anthropology during this time promoted the idea that salvage was a historically U.S. science rooted in normative fast-paced and urgent civilizational and historical progression that required very specific methods of collection and reading data. In 1965, archeologist Frederick Johnson published “Archeology in an Emergency” in *Science*. Far from announcing an emergency, Johnson’s article, which was seminal in imagining salvage as a U.S. science, commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Inter-

²³⁴ Vittorino, “Save the Treasures of Nubia; UNESCO Launches World Appeal.”

²³⁵ For more information on international salvage projects, see Adams, “Organizational Problems in International Salvage Archaeology.”

²³⁶ Carruthers, “Visualizing a Monumental Past.”

Agency Archeological Salvage Program. Archeology in emergency was not only normal—it was normative. He wrote:

Everyone is familiar with the spectacular archeology now in progress on the upper Nile in areas where a reservoir is to be created by the Aswan dam. Here whole temples are being moved to higher levels and even more importantly archeologists are recording the long prehistory of the Nile River Valley before it goes under water. It was not common knowledge, prior to this emergency, that the prehistory of the region extends back into Paleolithic times. Probably less well known, or at least less dramatically publicized, is the fact that, within the United States, the federal government has been conducting, since 1947, an Inter-Agency Archaeological Salvage Program. This was designed initially to salvage materials to be destroyed by the construction of multipurpose dams in all parts of the nation. The results may not be as spectacular as those coming from work in the Old World but they are fully as valuable, for they document a significant part of the long human occupation of the New World.²³⁷

The last sentence in particular echoes the insecurities about the age and prestige of the “New World” expressed by ethnomusicologists at the turn of the twentieth century, and again the antidote was to appropriate the “long human occupation” of the continent.²³⁸ Accordingly, the first principle aim of salvage archeology as it was developed in the 1960s in the U.S. was that

²³⁷ Johnson, “Archeology in an Emergency,” 1592.

²³⁸ Holding up the ancientness of Indigenous peoples has been a double-edged sword for the settler state. On one hand, identifying Indigenous people as part of the legacy of the settler state, lends a sense of cultural, political, and historical legitimacy to the empire. On the other hand, it delegitimizes the state by drawing attention to the fact that Indigenous peoples have prior claim to the land. Settler sciences, anthropology, DNA science, archeology, and geography chief among them, have addresses this paradox in a number of ways. DNA sciences dispossess Indigenous peoples of self-definition and serve to genetically indigenize non-Natives. Archeologists have found evidence of ancient people displaced by contemporary Indigenous people, and in conjunction with geographic surveys have reimagined the populating of the continent via different routes and start dates, such as the Bering Land Bridge migration theory, that serve to portray Indigenous people as non-Indigenous.

“the archeological materials were recognized as one of the country’s natural cultural resources and the government should be responsible for their preservation.”²³⁹

What had changed between the turn of the twentieth century and the 1960s was the normative view of crisis that was associated with settler science. The U.S., Johnson argued, had been developing scientific programs to address the rapid industrialization of the country for decades. “Archeology in an emergency” was not a call to action.²⁴⁰ It was a pronouncement instead that relished in the long tradition of frontier sciences in the United States. Emergency evoked the fast paced, high stakes form of knowledge production on the western frontier, which had been imagined as a space of technological innovation and knowledge production for as long as salvage had been an explicit term deployed in reference to the scientific maintenance and recovery of natural and cultural resources in the 1930s. In drawing attention to the longer history of scientific salvage in the U.S., Johnson was making a case for salvage being a historically settler colonial project, and his tact in drawing attention to the 1947 program was modest when compared to the verbose claims being made in print by his colleagues. Three years earlier, in 1962, John Otis Brew, then director of the Harvard Peabody museum, went so far as to make the claim that Thomas Jefferson’s excavation of the “Indian burial mounds” near Monticello was the original salvage project—one that he saw leading, of course, to the Aswan Dam project and other

²³⁹ Hester, “Pioneer Methods in Salvage Anthropology,” 133.

²⁴⁰ This expression of emergency and science contradicts Joe Masco’s characterization of 1960s discourses surrounding crisis and nuclear technologies in the United States. Masco posits that unlike current notions of crisis that are presentist and foreclose political change, crisis in the 1960s was generative and had the potential to instigate radical change. Crisis played different roles in constructing the social meanings and uses of nuclear technologies and anthropology, but the social science counter-example here, if nothing else, evidences that it was not the decade that was politically unique. Crisis has always been central to the epistemic ethos of U.S. sciences, and that ethos was part of a settler political project that necessarily foreclosed decolonized futures. See Masco, “The Crisis in Crisis.”

postcolonial salvage anthropology projects in the contemporary.²⁴¹ Postcolonial science initiatives were, in their estimation, indebted to settler colonial science.

Not only was the Aswan Dam archeology project indebted to Thomas Jefferson, but the scientists associated with the project were, according most notably to ethnologist James T. Hester, overly sentimental and failed to collect the optimal amount of data from their work. In order to justify that contention of indebtedness and maintain the conceit that salvage had been historically present since the birth of the U.S. republic, anthropologists in the United States needed to establish the parameters of the science of salvage. Salvage was not defined by the vanishing nature of its object—something that was increasingly present also in various industrializing and decolonizing contexts. Rather, it was marked by technologies that enhanced speed and a data-driven focus on quantity over quality of collections. These techniques, technologies, and modes of evaluation in U.S. salvage were then used as the marks of quality of salvage anthropology internationally.

In comparison, Hester found the Aswan Dam project wanting:

The concept of archeological salvage in the past twenty years in the United States has changed somewhat through time... Initially, salvage was thought to require few changes in technique, with the major effort being placed on wise selection of the endangered sites to be studied. The techniques to be employed at these selected sites were the traditional ones dictated by the training the researcher had acquired. Through time it became apparent that a better sample could be acquired by digging more sites rapidly than by digging a few sites with great care. The use of power equipment became commonplace and techniques of field recording and laboratory analysis became geared to need for greater speed and standardization... It is interesting to contrast the evolution in techniques described above with those utilized by some of the salvage teams from other countries working in the Aswan reservoir. A common theme emphasized by many of the latter, primarily those researchers with a background in classical archeology, was that the salvage situation made possible legalized looting. The concern was not for the obtaining of a broader informational sample, but instead for the collection of a larger sample of art objects. The result was that the larger sample had less data recovered to

²⁴¹ Wendorf, *A Guide for Salvage Archaeology*, 9.

document each object, and many items of little artistic merit were completely ignored.²⁴²

Salvage was a means of data collection that privileged breadth and speed and was to a certain extent blind to the cultural value of objects in and of themselves. Any one object was only of interest and worthy of salvage if it provided data about the whole. Salvage was divorced from the scientific study and collection of objects at risk of extinction or being destroyed. It was instead a methodology and toolkit which involved a quantitative, data driven method that disciplined very specific ways of seeing and assigning value to objects.

It should be clear that Francis La Flesche's single-minded volume on the Osage rites of chiefs, in which he presented the same data, in three different formats over the course of hundreds of pages with a mind to capture the depth of Osage religious and legal thought would have failed the standards of this vision of salvage science. However, by the mid-1970s the project of rewriting salvage's history in the United States was eerily complete, the specifications of salvage science had faded in favor of trends in structuralism and postcolonial critique. What was left of discourses on salvage in the 1960s was that nearly all accounts of late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology presume a salvage paradigm, many attributing it to Franz Boas's influence.²⁴³ Even recent critical work in the history of science that frames anthropology as a field dominated by settler fantasies describes salvage ethnography as "the defining disciplinary paradigm for early twentieth century anthropology that posited the pending extinction of native cultures in the wake of the collision of 'primitive' society with modern

²⁴² Hester, "Pioneer Methods in Salvage Anthropology," 138.

²⁴³ See for particularly prominent examples: Clifford, "The Others"; Gruber, "Ethnographic Salvage and the Shaping of Anthropology1"; Stocking, *The Ethnographer's Magic and Other Essays in the History of Anthropology*.

Western ‘civilization.’”²⁴⁴ It is in this sense that Francis La Flesche is often understood as a salvager.

Was La Flesche a salvager? Despite the collective amnesia surrounding salvage, or really because of it, thinking with the variant and more historically rooted definitions of salvage is generative for “not-quite ethnology.” After all, not quite ethnology was transformed into salvage anthropology in the context of reactionary anti-decolonial science discourses that sought to dispossess new subjects and objects of salvage. Salvage is far from value neutral, and it is deployed to describe and mobilize vastly different settler colonial, colonial, and postcolonial projects. There are three modes of salvage as I have traced it historically. The object-oriented presumption of vanishing, the specific settler science of salvage in the 1960s, and the postcolonial salvage projects that acted as the foil to the settler 1960s version.

The object-oriented definition is most prominent in the history of anthropology today. La Flesche’s not quite ethnology is presumed to fall into this category. It is the study of an object that is believed to be going extinct. However, while the object of not quite ethnology was vanishing, it was not truly salvage. The use of salvage in the history of anthropology is rooted in an understanding of salvage as a noun—rescued people or items, compensation, or anything put to good use that would otherwise have been wasted.²⁴⁵ La Flesche’s work ultimately fails the salvage test by this standard, because while he was attempting to recover something that was at risk, the noun was never right. The object of his ethnology was not compensation, or consolation, and it was not necessarily an object that La Flesche could fully rescue. The data to be extracted

²⁴⁴ Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 90.

²⁴⁵ The dictionary definitions for salvage that are most salient for this discussion are its use in maritime law, in which case salvage is a noun and item that is legally possessable by those who find it, and its use in environmental conservation, in which it is a verb to rescue or reuse. See Law, “Salvage”; Park and Allaby, “Salvage.”

from La Flesche's object of study, despite being generated through a practice that was ostensibly ethnological, was inaccessible via settler scientific methods. It was an item to be rescued, but it was unclear for whom that rescue was staged and to what ends.

The second definition of salvage is the very specific data driven frontier science that emerged in the U.S. in the 1960s, within which La Flesche would have been incomprehensible.²⁴⁶ This definition relies largely on the salvage as a verb—to rescue and to put to good use. “Good use” in the 1960s U.S. was so exclusive and specific by design that few anthropological or archeological works would satisfy the criteria. Despite the fact that it was in the context of this usage that La Flesche was brought under the banner of salvage, his meticulously arranged texts and categorization- and display-resistant collections could never be salvage by the standards deployed in the 1960s. Whether through highlighting its operation or object, settler colonial salvage sciences are predicated not only on vanishing and recuperation, but on a logic that presumes the finality of cultural breakages and upheavals. Items salvaged by salvage anthropology are repurposed in that they become frozen, their use confined to civilizational data.

Finally, there was the salvage science conducted in projects like the Aswan High Dam, supposedly indebted to these first two varieties. Salvage has a different valence in postcolonial contexts. Salvage can also indicate a different kind of verb from the one imagined in the settler discourses in the 1960s. Salvage can mean to restore, to create, and to repurpose, often subversively.²⁴⁷ Salvage allows for a change of course and for a layering of meanings, intent, and

²⁴⁶ Hester, “Pioneer Methods in Salvage Anthropology.”

²⁴⁷ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, 8.

history. It is a continual reclaiming and reconfiguring of the past that stands in sharp contrast to the appropriation and rewriting of that past that marks the salvage of settler anthropology.

In *Rites of the Chiefs*, Francis La Flesche writes,

In this volume of the study of the Osage tribe the first place is given to the rite called Ga-hi'-ge O-k' oⁿ, Rite of the Chiefs, for the reason that in this rite is perpetuated the story of the vital changes that took place in the ceremonial life of the Osage people during the protracted transitional period through which the tribe passed. Although the ancient Noⁿ-ho^a-zhiⁿ-ga (the Seers) handed down the story of the tribe's experiences in cryptic form, the story revealed clearly to the studious members of the tribe that these men of the ancient days were well aware of the historic fact that the tribal life of the people, as well as their tribal institutions, were developed gradually; that this gradual development was a process continually stimulated not only by the desire for the preservation of the tribal existence, but by actual hard experiences that taxed both the physical and mental powers of the people and their leaders. *This rite also points back to the time when the life of the people as a tribe was in a chaotic state; to their emergence therefrom; and to their achievement of a tribal government well suited to safeguard the people, as an organized body, from internal as well as external perils.* Under this peculiar form of government the people lived contentedly until within the last few decades. (emphasis mine)²⁴⁸

There is an unusually strong focus in La Flesche's writing on the historical development of Osage tribal organization and its relation to periods of upheaval. Though he professed time and again that Indigenous people as such would become extinct in a matter of decades, his intellectual interests and contributions almost invariably lend themselves to a reading of change that could not mean vanishing, and his collections, such as his wax cylinder recordings and non-translated religious rites, lend themselves to a creative interaction that troubles the temporal logics suggesting vanishing in the first place.

The rites of the chiefs were objects that always already resisted colonial categorization. They were well suited to see a people through change and peril, external as well as internal. They didn't ward off change. They were made through upheaval and facilitated it. In salvaging the

²⁴⁸ La Flesche, *The Osage Tribe*, 47.

rites, La Flesche recreated them in a way that echoed their original construction. Like the “sentimental” collection practices that privileged aesthetic and culturally significant objects at the Aswan High Dam decades later, La Flesche’s not quite ethnology targeted objects that were emblematic of historical change and prone to creative restoration and repurpose. At the same time, not quite ethnology was entangled with versions of salvage which were always already destructive by virtue of their institutional and conceptual locations in the settler state. Francis La Flesche failed to inhabit that space, because he was never meant to, and his subjects and objects of salvage while they mimicked and even passed as ethnology, their tense and location were always just a bit too queer for coherence.

Conclusion

Francis La Flesche failed at being an ethnologist. His published works relied too heavily on Indigenous categories of knowing. His understanding of salvage in ethnology was not quite right, leading him to return artifacts when others would not have, and to preserve patrimonial materials in such a way that they were more easily used than observed. Even La Flesche’s presence in the academy was evidence of the failure of the inner logics of the field. He should not have existed the way he did in settler academic spaces, neither due to his position as an Indigenous person in a world bent on his termination, nor due to his position as an established object and tool. In *The Queer Art of Failure*, J Halberstam offers the following definition of failure: “a way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline and as a form of critique. As a practice, failure recognizes that alternatives are embedded already in the dominant and that power is never total or consistent; indeed, failure can exploit the

unpredictability of ideology and its indeterminate qualities.”²⁴⁹ Was La Flesche offering a critique of ethnology? Was he exploiting the unpredictability of ideology and therefore showing embedded alternatives in the normative structure?

I argue that the answer is yes and no. On one hand, Katie Graber has argued for a reading of Francis La Flesche’s works, ethnography and fiction, as expressly subversive and disruptive in both the content and structure to systems of knowledge and domination, and she looks to La Flesche as part of a legacy of discussions of subjectivity and representation in anthropology.²⁵⁰ Graber falls more in line with New Indian History writers of the last three decades, though she is an ethnomusicologist by training, who center narratives of Indigenous agency and resistance.²⁵¹ La Flesche, however, was not decolonizing ethnology. He was invested in the field, made use of harmful stereotypes and hypotheses, lobbied hard for allotment, and at more than one point during his career he was accused of unethically collecting materials.²⁵² There is a reason he worked so hard to count himself as a contributing member of the scientific community.. La Flesche may have been subversive, but he was still a part of his field and context, and to analyze his work primarily through the lens of resistance fails to recognize the reality of the difficult choices our ancestors had to make. Similarly, to be queered, especially as a colonized subject, is not necessarily an act of subversion. It is a violent imposition of foreign normative frameworks.

²⁴⁹ Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*, 88.

²⁵⁰ Katie Graber, “Francis La Flesche and Ethnography: Writing, Power, Critique,” *Ethnomusicology* 61, no. 1 (2017): 115–39.

²⁵¹ Nicolas G. Rosenthal, “Beyond the New Indian History: Recent Trends in the Historiography on the Native Peoples of North America,” *History Compass* 4, no. 5 (September 1, 2006): 962–7.

²⁵² See Ridington, Robin. “A Sacred Object as Text: Reclaiming the Sacred Pole of the Omaha Tribe.”

That La Flesche was queered and that his masculinity (itself a potentially violent imposition) was necessarily different than white masculinity was not evidence of a revolutionary praxis. These were part of the structure of settler colonialism. La Flesche's ability to achieve status as an ethnologist and his inability to be anything but Indigenous are evidence of both the successes and failures of that system.

Mimicry and failure offer a solution here that helps escape the question of intent and subversion. As a colonized subject, as an object, even, Francis La Flesche adopted settler colonial markers of authority—masculinity and the scientific rhetoric of salvage and objectivity. For him, that meant making the shift from being an object and tool of settler knowledge production, a native informant, to being an agent of it, an ethnologist. That is the white man's game that he is said to have won, because, in a sense, he did—he earned the title. And yet, just as Homi Bhabha characterizes the irony of mimicry, La Flesche was still “not quite/not white.”²⁵³ His failure to achieve success, to properly win, showed the arbitrary nature of the authority he was attempting to appropriate, because no matter how much he conformed to the rules of the game, he could not win, because he was not white and as not white he was queered and non-normatively gendered. However, and more importantly, his failure was not just an instantiation of the absence of whiteness. It was a presence of indigeneity—an Omaha political history and project, an understanding of ceremony and Indigenous relations, and an awareness of Indigenous philosophy. His failure, as Halberstam draws out, showed the embeddedness of alternatives. By failing to produce settler science, La Flesche evidenced that there was something other: something more, even.

²⁵³ Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*.

It is in this way that the not-quite ethnology La Flesche practiced should be regarded as a Native scientific position. Like Native science today, which adopts science as a moniker but is decidedly something other than, La Flesche's not quite ethnology grasped at the epistemic authority of settler science while systemically providing proof that there were other options, and, perhaps, better ones. It also established a model of Indigenous epistemic sovereignty that was necessarily queered in its relational logics in this settler colonial context. La Flesche did this unintentionally, whereas Native science today is often rooted in an explicit critique and rejection of western scientific hegemony. However, regardless of intent, failure is in and of itself critique. La Flesche, though his position was undermined and ridiculed, was also still an influential ethnologist. He embedded the critique of failure in the history of settler ethnology as part of its historical practice. The Native scientific position has been present since some of the earliest days of the field.

Part II: Repossessing the Wilderness

Post-New Deal Frontier Sciences and Native Science and Technology

5. Progressive Crisis and Eastern Band Technology: The Civilian Conservation Corps—Indian Division at Qualla Boundary

Cherokee, North Carolina sits at the southern terminus of the Blue Ridge Parkway, which follows the 450 miles of the Smoky Mountains blue ridge from Shenandoah National Park in Virginia to Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. One of the most popular tourist destinations in the region, Cherokee is the capital of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation's trust lands, called the Qualla Boundary. When tourists exit the Blue Ridge Parkway on their way into town, they pass road signs designating their entrance into the Eastern Band's territory, and from there all roads and legal turns lead to the casino. It is impossible to miss the towering Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel, a structure that manages to hold its own in a skyline that includes the towering Smokies. Visitors are encouraged to "let [their] braids fly in downtown Cherokee" and "awaken [their] power animal."²⁵⁴ The path of least resistance as you enter downtown is Paint Town Road, the so-called "Cherokee Strip," where one can find Cherokee arts and craft shops, kistchy smoke shops, gift shops, and theme-hotels, such as the "Wigwam," many of which are distinctly Plains Indian in their aesthetic.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ Cherokee, "Attractions."

²⁵⁵ It is perhaps not surprising that Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel sits on the site of the previous Cherokee Frontier Land amusement park, which was shut down in the 1982. Frontier Land included wild west shows, train-themes rides, an "old stockade fort," western style "grub," and a general store stocked with "the hat Davy Crockett wore" (See the park's 1981 brochure at <http://www.themeparkbrochures.net/brochures/frontier-land/>). The visual cues most popular with settler tourists visiting sovereign Indigenous lands or Indian-themed areas in the United States are derived from mid-19th century western frontier iconography—this is the case even outside North America in countries like Germany and Sweden where there is popular "pow-wow" culture in the absence of actual North American Indigenous people. These cues are still present at Cherokee, though they have been muted as the Tribal Council fades out some of the more iconic tourist landmarks in favor of encouraging visitors to go the casino, museum, and cultural attractions instead. For a sense of the attractions and aesthetics of Frontier Land, see the Earl

This town offers more than just labyrinthine traffic patterns, kitsch, and slot machines, however. The Qualla Boundary is a historically, epistemologically, and spiritually layered place, and visitors are encouraged to seek “adventures that go deeper.”²⁵⁶ Those who are able to find their way out of the casino parking lot, which is no small feat, are welcome to venture back down Casino Road and turn west toward the stunning Museum of the Cherokee Indian or Oconaluftee Historic Village, where Cherokee history is “alive” and staged by “modern” residents.²⁵⁷

Cherokee promotional materials invite investigation:

Each place you visit in Cherokee pulses with the stories and significance of a people whose roots run deep and whose ancient wisdom is fascinating to *uncover*. Nestled in the lush landscapes of Western North Carolina, Cherokee invites you to smell the wood smoke and open your ears. If you listen closely maybe you can hear the chanting of the little Nunnihi people of the mountain peaks (emphasis mine).²⁵⁸

Palmer Appalachian Photograph Collection at the Virginia Tech digital archive:
<https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/handle/10919/10397/discover?query=frontier+land&submit=>

²⁵⁶ Cherokee, “Attractions.”

²⁵⁷ Cherokee, “Oconaluftee Indian Village.”

²⁵⁸ Cherokee, “Attractions.” A note on the chanting one may or may not hear in the mountains around Cherokee, NC: In Cherokee cosmology, the Nûñnē'hī, which translates in English to The People Who Live Anywhere or Traveler/One Who Goes About, are a race of nonhuman and nonspirit beings who live in the mountains of Cherokee Country, where they spend most of their time underground and rarely reveal themselves to people. However, there are numerous stories of their providing warning or aid for the Cherokee during times of conflict. Often said to be quite small (though not always), the Nûñnē'hī were of great interest to ethnologist James Mooney, who at the behest of J.W. Powell and the Bureau of Ethnology, visited and stayed with the Eastern Band for several years in the 1880s, after which he published *The Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee* (1891) and *Myths of the Cherokee* (1900). Mooney described the Nûñnē'hī as similar to races found in other eastern North American Indigenous cosmologies, such as Haudenosaunee Jogah or Wampanoag Puckwudgie, and concluded that these all were variants on the “fairy” or “little person” archetype (See Mooney, *James Mooney’s History, Myths, and Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*. Though some similarities may exist between the Nûñnē'hī, Jogah, and Puckwudgie, they are distinct and bear little resemblance to the European understanding of fairies. More importantly here, in Cherokee stories, the Nûñnē'hī almost invariably intervene on behalf of the Cherokee, and the likelihood of their presenting themselves to a settler visitor during this period of prolonged occupation I would argue is unlikely. However, while most may

But keeping your eyes and ears open along the steep cliffs, sharp switchbacks, and high elevation can be a challenge for tourists at the Qualla Boundary. Visitors find their way out of town by way of Rt. 19, heading south toward Bryson City or north to Asheville. Along Rt. 19, most of us (myself included) miss one of the most historically and ontologically significant areas in the whole Boundary—Kituwah on the Tuckasegee River, the site where Cherokee ancestors first received their laws and sacred fire; where they became truly Cherokee. And perhaps even fewer take note of the Eastern Band tribal council building on Plantation Road, one of many sites where Cherokee being and becoming is negotiated today.

At the Qualla Boundary, Eastern Band sacred geographies, sovereign institutions, settler tourist catering kitsch and capital generating gambling not only coexist, but they echo across one another in a generative space that invites excavation.²⁵⁹ How did this space come to encompass so many figurative and literal layers? In this chapter, I will explore the early history of the construction of a layered Qualla Boundary in the initiatives of the Civilian Conservation Corps—Indian Division (CCC—ID or Indian Division), formally known as the Indian Emergency

never hear the Nûñnē'hī in the forests around Cherokee, for a time when the Talking Trees exhibit was still operational, you could literally hear the trees speak (in both Cherokee and English) in the Oconaluftee Island Park (Vicki Rozema, *Footsteps of the Cherokees*, 2nd Ed. (John F. Blair, Publisher, 1995), 192). Furthermore, for visitors who are still dedicated to pursuing a nonhuman race around the Qualla Boundary, Cherokee promotional materials provide more explicit directions to find a bigger target, Judaculla (Giant) (Cherokee, “Chasing Giants.” <http://visitcherokeenc.com/itinerary-builder/sample-trip/chasing-giants/>).

²⁵⁹ In 1970, Vine Deloria Jr. argued for the important role geography plays in Indigenous intellectual and religious traditions: “Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a ‘sacred geography,’ that is to say, every location within their original homeland has a multitude of stories that recount the migrations, revelations, and particular historical incidents that cumulatively produced the tribe in its current condition.” In fact, as he continues, Cherokee homelands are an excellent example of a sacred geography: “Traditional Cherokees today can still tell us stories about the sacred places in Georgia and North Carolina that illuminate tribal history” (121). See Deloria, *God Is Red*.

Conservation Work program until 1937, at the Qualla Boundary between 1933 and 1942. Part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal program that was the hallmark of the Progressive era, the Indian Division employed Eastern Band citizens in projects that included mapping the Boundary, constructing roads, facilitating timber sales and tourism, and warding against soil erosion and forest fires. I argue that the Indian Division was part of a New Deal repossession project that mobilized frontier sciences in a moment of political, environmental, and epistemological crisis and imperialist nostalgia in the U.S. empire.²⁶⁰ The Qualla Boundary today is the material and epistemological result of the production of Indigenous bodies and lands as technologies in that project, which inscribed settler supremacy while also fracturing it in the physical reality of Eastern Band bodily relation, sovereign political vision, and place.

I will first situate the Progressive era within twin crises in the United States empire and Indian Country. In this context, the CCC—ID constituted a meeting of oppositional nation building projects (the Eastern Band's and the United States') that centered science policy in the imagining of national identities and futures as they related to environmental and economic wellness. Then, drawing on the records from the Indian Division at the Qualla Boundary, Eastern Band tribal council meeting records, and documents relating to the leadership of the Indian Division housed at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, I will reconstruct and analyze four major aspects of the program at Qualla Boundary—public health, forestry, tourism and leadership. In these, I will explore the interplay of frontier sciences (applied ecology and anthropology) and the Native sciences and technologies that developed in the context of Indian Division projects.

²⁶⁰ By imperialist nostalgia I mean the sense of mourning and regret experienced by colonizers upon perceiving that they have destroyed the versions of the colonized that existed prior to colonization. See Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," *Representations*, no. 26 (April 1, 1989): 107–22.

Finally, I will link the Indian Division at the Qualla Boundary to contemporary Native science movements in an epilogue on Standing Rock water protectors today.

Crisis and Imperialist Nostalgia

The western continental frontier was critical to the development of the United States as a settler technoscientific empire. Nineteenth century observers of settler culture, such as Alexis De Tocqueville and Francis Grund, had long noted the seemingly innate U.S. American drive for westward expansion. For example, in 1837, the German-born Grund observed:

It appears, then, that the universal disposition of Americans to emigrate to the western wilderness, in order to enlarge their dominion over inanimate nature, is the actual result of an expansive power, which is inherent in them, and which, by continually agitating all classes of society, is constantly throwing a large portion of the whole population on the extreme confines of the state, in order to gain space for its development. Hardly is a new state or territory formed, before the same principle manifests itself again, and gives rise to a further immigration; and so is it destined to on until a physical barrier must finally obstruct its progress.²⁶¹

Expanding dominion over inanimate nature involved not only territorial expansion, but an epistemological paradigm that privileged the frontier and its attendant progressive transgression of boundaries as a site and method of knowledge production. It also involved the transformation of Indigenous peoples into inanimate nature and required an understanding of inanimate nature as inherently inviolable. I call this mode of knowledge production that privileges, even fetishizes, the transgression of borders in the pursuit of continually expanding dominion over nature “frontier science.” Frontier sciences, which have at any time encompassed a number of settler disciplines in the U.S.—particularly “applied” sciences and engineering—were the domain in which the settler state developed its technologies of empire. As historian of the Plains Walter Prescott Webb observed in 1931, settler expansion on the frontier was responsible for many of

²⁶¹ Grund, *The Americans, in Their Moral, Social, and Political Relations*, 206.

the most significant developments in U.S. technologies; everything from guns, windmills, trains, fences, and irrigation had been constructed and tested on the frontier.²⁶²

This mode of knowledge production comes at a cost. Frontier science creates a paradox in its temporal and territorial progress orientation that continually destroys the object of their fetish—the frontier itself. Even Grund included a qualifier in his prophecy of U.S. destiny: “until a physical barrier must finally obstruct its progress.” That Turtle Island was territorially finite had often been imagined as the ultimate check on U.S. settler expansion. In a paper read at the meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago in July 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner heralded the closing of the western frontier at the Pacific coast, marking the end of U.S. expansion with the 1890 census. In his frontier thesis, Turner posited that it had been the frontier, the experience of contact and expansion into “free land,” that defined the United States.²⁶³ The frontier was responsible for not only the pioneering and individualistic American character, Turner argued, but for its form of governance, institutions, education, economy, and culture. He explained:

Behind institutions, behind constitutional forms and modifications, lie the vital forces that call these organs into life and shape them to meet the changing conditions. The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people—to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life...²⁶⁴

²⁶² Webb, *The Great Plains*.

²⁶³ Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, vi.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

In Turner's estimation, the closing of the frontier constituted the end of a great epoch of "pioneer democracy" for the United States.²⁶⁵

From Turner's vantage of 1893, the final total dominion over the wilderness that the close of the frontier symbolized was a triumph and point of transformation, not a crisis. Even later in 1921, when he published his longer monograph on the topic, he concluded:

The transformations through which the United States is passing in our own day are so profound, so far-reaching, that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that we are witnessing the birth of a new nation in America. The revolution in the social and economic structure of this country during the past two decades is comparable to what occurred when independence was declared, and the constitution was formed, or to the changes wrought by the era which began half a century ago, the era of the Civil War and Reconstructions. These changes... have been prophesied, and the course of the movement partly described by students of American development; but after all, it is with a shock that the people of the United States are coming to realize that the fundamental forces which have shaped their society up to the present are disappearing.²⁶⁶

A nation built on the potential of the frontier would eventually lose its foundation. In reality, the closing of the settler frontier itself was largely rhetorical, though this did not diminish its discursive significance. The twentieth century would see the recreation of numerous new frontiers for the United States, including its acquisition and use of new settler territories in the South Pacific and Caribbean midcentury, and expansion of the frontier imaginary to outer space during the Cold War, all of which contributed to ongoing frontier science and technological

²⁶⁵ While Turner downplayed the brutal and bloody reality of the acts required to produce his beloved American ruggedness, it is important to note that the 1890 census which first signaled the alleged close of the frontier coincided with the end of the Sioux Wars and the Wounded Knee Massacre at Pine Ridge Reservation. It was not only the disjuncture between supposed civilization and "savage wilderness" that contributed to United States exceptionalism, but ongoing genocide, legalized by the Doctrine of Discovery.

²⁶⁶ Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, 321.

development.²⁶⁷ At the turn of the twentieth century, the frontier may have disappeared by settler accounting, but it was not lost. Quite the opposite: it was imagined as having been won.

The victorious dominion over inanimate nature marked by the close of the frontier looked starkly different only a few years later. Thoughts about the close of the frontier and what it meant for the future of the settler state coincided in the late 1920s and early 30s with a series of sudden and dire environmental catastrophes, the Dustbowl and rampant deforestation particularly, and a severe economic crash in 1929 and ensuing Great Depression. Decades of expansion and overexploitation of North American prairie lands had resulted in long term soil erosion and dust

²⁶⁷ Not only has the United States continued to create and exploit new settler frontiers since the closing of the continental western frontier in the 19th century, but the settler empire includes territorial acquisition without settler appropriation and frontier expansion. When Turner was writing, the United States had already colonized the Philippines, and throughout the twentieth century, the U.S. would expand its imperial reach, especially in Latin America and recently in the Middle East, as seen in the 2003 occupation of Iraq. In many ways, the technologies developed on the continental frontier, including weapons, capital generating industrial processes, and nuclear power, has enabled the United States to develop its empire abroad, as well. These places were and are also sites of colonial knowledge production where the U.S. empire experiments and extracts material, information, and labor, but colonial knowledge production is not synonymous with frontier science. To illustrate the difference: Hawaii today is the most prominent U.S. American frontier. It is a site where settler scientists imagine boundaries that they are entitled to transgress, because this act is considered necessary for the production of knowledge. We can see this in the debate surrounding the Mauna Kea Thirty Meter Telescope today, where astronomers insist that they have the right to transgress upon the Mauna Kea mountain, which is sacred space for Native Hawaiians, because it would give them access to the darkest skies on the planet—free space into which they must expand to generate knowledge, which could in turn enable further expansion. Compare this to how the United States conducted nuclear tests and medical radiation experiments in Micronesia in the late 1940s. Micronesia was not used as a frontier, and physicians and physicists from the United States saw no need to experience movement through it for that reason. It was a site of colonial extraction and experimentation, a laboratory, where generalizable knowledge of nuclear power and radiation was produced through the observation of a space and people that were deemed disposable. The degradation of Micronesia was by experimental design. The degradation of Hawaii is a side effect of the progressive movement of settler frontier expansion. I refer to the United States as a settler empire exactly because it displays both settler colonial and imperial methods and interests. For more on Mauna Kea see Witze, “Controversial Thirty Meter Telescope Gets Go-Ahead to Build in Hawaii.” For more on U.S. nuclear testing in Micronesia see Dibblin, *Day of Two Suns*.

storms. In its hasty grab for resources and expansion, the U.S. empire had already exhausted fifty million acres of land in the Midwest, and in the East, deforestation and invasive species were wreaking havoc in once abundant forests.²⁶⁸ These disasters constituted a serious existential and epistemological crisis for the empire. Frontier sciences did not just create a paradox in their movement through the frontier which transformed it into metropole, but they were potentially inherently unsustainable. The western frontier had not been won, after all. It had been destroyed.

At the same time, conditions in Indian Country were far worse. In 1928, the Miriam Report, an independent assessment of the “Problem of Indian Administration,” was made public. Commissioned by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1926 and carried out by the Institute for Government Research, later known as the Brookings Institution, the Miriam Report general summary began, “An overwhelming majority of the Indians are poor, even extremely poor, and they are not adjusted to the economic and social system of the dominant white civilization.”²⁶⁹ As such in nearly every metric the report found suffering and inhumane living conditions on reservations. The Miriam Report signaled the failure of previous allotment and termination policies. The report revealed that assimilation policies and the social sciences they were based on failed to dismantle Indigenous nations, and had instead gutted Indigenous communities, leaving many destitute and dying, though no less Indigenous. Like the frontier, Indigenous peoples were neither assimilating into the metropole nor being defeated.

²⁶⁸ McEntee, *Now They Are Men; the Story of the CCC*, 3.

²⁶⁹ Brookings Institution. Institute for Government Research, *The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey Made at the Request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and Submitted to Him, February 21, 1928.*, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. Institute for Government Research: Studies in Administration ; No. 17 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928).

The settler response to these crises was an acute case of imperialist nostalgia, a longing for the good old days of uncomplicated U.S. expansion and domination, which was written into so many pieces of the New Deal. On April 5, 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed an executive order authorizing funds for the Civilian Conservation Corps. The program would provide young (predominantly, but not exclusively white) men employment in the creation and maintenance of projects like the establishment of national parks, scenic motorways, and soil conservation initiatives.²⁷⁰ The CCC was part of a whole host of New Deal initiatives, including the creation of the Social Security Administration and the National Industrial Recovery Act, but it in particular addressed the epistemic valence of the Progressive era crisis. CCC enrollees would apply conservation science, based on ecological principles like natural equilibrium, which necessitated regular intervention to prevent natural upsets like forest fires or erosion events, in the construction of sustainable internal frontiers in spaces like National Parks. In the process these young men, aged 18-25, would send nearly ninety percent of their \$25 monthly paychecks home, stimulating the economy.²⁷¹

More importantly for Roosevelt, a quarter of a million men would experience the necessary conditions to fuel and shape United States character and empire. On March 21, 1933

²⁷⁰ Calvin W. Gower, "The CCC Indian Division: Aid for Depressed Americans, 1933-1942," *Minnesota History Magazine*, Spring 1972, 3-13. 3; Generally, Civilian Conservation Corps camps were segregated, though not always. Black enrollees were regularly passed up for positions with the CCC (despite staggering levels of unemployment), were denied access to the same forestry and surveying classes offered to white enrollees and were all too often sent to address dangerous problems (forest fires and other emergencies) with little to no training or support. For more see: Cole, *The African-American Experience in the Civilian Conservation Corps*; Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks*; Arnesen, "African Americans and the CCC"; Gower, "The Struggle of Blacks for Leadership Positions in the Civilian Conservation Corps"; Parman, "The Indian and the Civilian Conservation Corps."

²⁷¹ Gower, "The CCC Indian Division: Aid for Depressed Americans, 1933-1942." 5.

Roosevelt wrote to Congress, “More important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work [the CCC]... We can take a vast army of these unemployed out into healthful surroundings.”²⁷² In other words, the program mirrored the frontier science drive for technological development and control through expansion into and disciplining of wilderness—what the CCC called “environmental management.” Conservation was a frontier science, both historically as it was developed through U.S. expansion, and in principle, as it functioned predominantly according to “the concept of planned and efficient progress.”²⁷³ The moral and spiritual value of the work was to be found in the act and production of (this time simulated) expansion. Roosevelt’s “healthful surroundings” were reminiscent of Turner’s “free land,” only healthful surroundings needed to be maintained and cultivated. An expression of mourning for the frontier, the CCC would apply the very frontier sciences responsible for the frontier’s demise in its resurrection and hoped for immortality.

In a parallel movement, the CCC—ID would apply anthropology, also developed through frontier expansion, contact, and domination, to the problem of “Indian Management.” The Miriam Report made three major recommendations for changes in federal Indian policy: first, the creation of a “professional and scientific Division of Planning and Development,” second, “a material strengthening of the school and reservation forces,” and third, the “maximum practical decentralization of authority.”²⁷⁴ In line with these recommendations, Roosevelt appointed

²⁷² McEntee, *Now They Are Men; the Story of the CCC*.

²⁷³ For a history of U.S. ecology, see Kingsland, *The Evolution of American Ecology, 1890-2000*; Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency; the Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920*, 5.

²⁷⁴ Brookings Institution. Institute for Government Research, *The Problem of Indian Administration*.

director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA or Indian Bureau), John Collier, a sociologist by training. Collier endeavored to solve these problems of Indian management through the application of an ambitious policy change. He authored the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, which scholars have come to call the Indian New Deal and trained a new Indian Bureau labor force in applied anthropology as the agents of this change. Collier understood the challenge for the BIA to be primarily a moral and administrative one that was to be solved with the application of the “culturally objective viewpoint and approach which the anthropological training of the field worker should have given.”²⁷⁵ With Roosevelt’s blessing, Collier implemented an Indian Division of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933, even before the passage of the Reorganization Act. Unlike the Civilian Conservation Corps proper, the Indian Division would employ Indigenous people on their own lands.

The May 20th, 1933 edition of *Happy Days*, the CCC national newspaper, reported that “seventy-two forest work camps will be set up on Indian reservations located in fifteen western and southwestern states.”²⁷⁶ Over the course of the program, the Indian Division employed between 80,000 and 85,000 Indigenous enrollees across 33 reservations. Indian Division camps were managed by Indian Agency employees, whereas CCC camps were managed by military officials and representatives of the Forest Service or Soil Erosion Conservation Service.²⁷⁷

Between 1933 and 1942 the federal government funneled nearly \$600,000, which today would

²⁷⁵ United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Applied anthropology unit, *Instructions to Field Workers, Applied Anthropology Unit; [by John Collier]*.

²⁷⁶ Civilian Conservation Corps, *Happy Days*. It is no coincidence that Indigenous peoples on the east coast were forgotten in this announcement. Erasure of Indigenous peoples on the east coast happened both by removal and ignorance.

²⁷⁷ Gower, “The CCC Indian Division: Aid for Depressed Americans, 1933-1942.”

be more like 11.5 million, into the Qualla Boundary through the Indian Division program. Their activities were varied, ranging from soil conservation efforts, road construction and management, timber sales, and plant nursery programs. Indian Division enrollees were also responsible for operating Qualla Boundary phone lines and construction vehicles, providing supplementary medical care, and overseeing tourism and recreation. By and large, these initiatives were in line with Eastern Band tribal council priorities. In fact, at the program's start in 1933, the council was already directing their own funds to bolster the projects undertaken by the Indian Division, and their initial statement on the proposed program a year earlier confirmed that their first priority was the health of their forests and facilitation of timber sales, though this was only one aspect of the program's overall purpose.²⁷⁸ The Indian Division was a tool that the Eastern Band used in imagining and enacting a sovereign future. The Eastern Band Council, which predated Collier's Reorganization Act and its associated introduction of many non-culturally relevant and harmful tribal governance structures, centered science policy in their negotiation of economic security, tribal belonging, and cultural expression and transmission.²⁷⁹

While many activities were common to CCC—ID programs across nations, the Qualla Boundary was unique in its goals and context.²⁸⁰ Its primary concern was with accessibility. The

²⁷⁸ "Cherokee Council Budget, August 1933," Swain County "Cherokee Indian Council Minutes, in Cherokee, 1931-1962," North Carolina State Archives; Civilian Conservation Corps.

²⁷⁹ The Eastern Band had already adopted a constitutional government and council political arrangement in 1868 due to their unique political status and incorporation (Bridgers, "An Historical Analysis of the Legal Status of the North Carolina Cherokees," 1908).

²⁸⁰ The diversity of the Indian Division and the role it played in various national Indigenous politics during the Progressive Era cannot be stressed enough. The Eastern Band experience that I describe here is unique, and an example of Eastern Band leaders taking up this science policy in the pursuit of their own goals. That political and scientific position was not the case for all nations. Indian Division and soil conservation programs with the Diné (Navajo) directly contradicted shepherding practices and exacerbated the political and cultural unrest that had

Qualla Boundary represents only a small fraction of Cherokee territory in the Southeast. The Eastern Band are descended from the more isolated Cherokee communities who evaded violent and genocidal relocation across the Mississippi under the Jackson Administration's 1830 Indian Removal Act and subsequent Trail of Tears in 1838. Their position in the mountains, however, was a challenge in timber trade, as they lacked the roads necessary for transport. Reservations across the country were isolated by design. For the Eastern Band that isolation was a function of infrastructure, but not distance. Even in the final year of the program, the Indian Division allocated \$30,000 to "truck road maintenance," almost ten times more than enrollee payment and recreation funds combined that year (\$3,500), and this was consonant with weekly progress reports from previous years.²⁸¹ The environmental context was also different at the Qualla Boundary. There was always a sense among Indian Agency officials that environmental catastrophe could strike at any time. However, while there was a chestnut blight spreading across

sprung from the reservation system's restriction of community migrations. Collier, champion of Indian self-determination, authorized a massive flock reduction program against the will of shepherds, women in the community whose economic and social position was reliant on their close relationship to those flocks. The result was historical trauma, increased poverty, and continued (if not increased) soil erosion (See Weisiger, *Dreaming of Sheep in Navajo Country*. The result was also a starkly different Diné Native science tradition later in the 20th century in the context of uranium mining and energy production. Nations in the Pacific Northwest, whose forests had not been impacted in the same ways as those on the east coast and who enjoyed a booming timber industry, often rejected the Indian Division altogether (United States., "Indians at Work," 1933, 8). On the other hand, the Six Nations generally fared well with the Indian Division, while their relations with New York State and encroaching industry were a source of unrest, protest, and concern (See Hauptman, *The Iroquois and the New Deal*. These are only a few examples, but they display the breadth and diversity of what Indian Country, a space Collier preferred to imagine as an idyllic and homogenous "Red Atlantis" (Kenneth R. Philp, *John Collier's Crusade for Indian Reform, 1920-1954* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), 2).

²⁸¹ "Status of CCC—ID Projects, 1941", p 2, "Letters to the Indian Office, 1941" Box 1, RG 75, Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps Division at Qualla Boundary, National Archives, Atlanta, GA.

the Southeast at the time, which hit the Eastern Band particularly hard as the chestnut tree had been a key component of Cherokee art and technology, it was hardly mentioned in the CCC—ID records. This indicates that those who were keeping the records did not perceive a local ecological crisis, unlike many of the contexts farther west which were concerned with soil erosion.²⁸²

In *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, Mark David Spence explores how turn of the 20th century preservationist ideas reimagined the wilderness as an uninhabited space, and how that imaginary necessitated the removal of Indigenous peoples who actually lived, hunted, and prayed there.²⁸³ He notes that this was a significant break from previous settler notions of wilderness, made wild in part by the presence of Indigenous peoples. Spence describes the movement from the earliest national park enthusiasts in the mid-19th century who rarely made a distinction between Indigenous people and land to turn of the 20th century preservationist efforts that “viewed wilderness as an uninhabited Eden that should be set aside for the benefit and pleasure

²⁸² In fact, by all accounts, the majority of the timber used by the Indian Division in the construction of new buildings and road guard rails came from fallen chestnut trees. For more on the Cherokee response to the chestnut blight see Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 77. For more on the chestnut blight see Freinkel, *American Chestnut*.

²⁸³ The concept of wilderness in American thought has never been fixed. Before the mid-nineteenth century wilderness held more negative connotations, as a foil to civilization. At the same time, the richness and beauty of that same environment, especially when properly cultivated, fueled settler exceptionalism. While European natural scientists often adhered to an environmentalist philosophy that blamed the supposedly unevolved state of American Indians on the inferiority of North American landscapes, American environmental scientists, like geologist Nathaniel Shaler, argued that it was this very same condition that would allow white Americans to thrive, much like invasive species (Shaler, *Nature and Man in America*). At the turn of the century wilderness was praised as a moral and societal good in and of itself. Wilderness was a bolster for American civilization, providing a sounding board and spiritual other that was absent in Europe. For more on U.S. settler conceptions of wilderness, see Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*.

of vacationing Americans.”²⁸⁴ It was during this period that the western frontier was imagined as having been won—these parks were intended to function as sacred monuments honoring that legacy.

Spence’s story ends in the early 1930s when John Collier’s Indian New Deal ushered in a new era of Indian policy that featured fewer removals and a more progressive attitude toward Indigenous self-determination. The 1930s was a critical decade. It was not marked by a gentler form of colonialism, but by a reconstitution of and reinvestment in the epistemological orientation of the empire. I propose that we read the Indian Division as an attempt to “repossess the wilderness,” now through frontier sciences. The Indian Division was designed to apply the sciences that had been fueled by centuries of frontier innovation to the creation of new frontiers. The CCC—ID would repossess the wilderness by establishing frontiers capable of a sustainable kind of transgression. National parks like Great Smoky Mountains and spaces like the Qualla Boundary were not monuments to the frontier, nor spaces where Indigenous people were quarantined in order to create them. Rather, they would be a resurrection of the frontier. The Indian New Deal imagined a wilderness repossessed through the science initiatives of the Indian Division in two senses. On one hand, it imagined a wilderness possessed of receptive and static Indigenous peoples, maintained through applied anthropology; and on the other, one capable of being sustainably possessed through the application of measured conservation technologies that would not result in the previous excesses of settler relations to land and indigeneity. This was a mobilization of frontier sciences to address the mourning for what had been destroyed by colonial enterprise— a scientized imperialist nostalgia that refused to accept the loss of the object of its mourning.

²⁸⁴ Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, 4.

Public Health

For Indian Division managers and doctors from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Qualla Boundary was a space full of problems. It was an unmanaged wilderness—the site of communicable diseases, noncompliant patients, and unpredictable terrain under the constant threat of erosion, mudslides, and forest fires. All of these were taken as opportunities to discipline Eastern Band people and lands and produce knowledge through simultaneously providing aid and establishing access. In 1933, the first item on the Bureau’s agenda was an official health study of the “Indians and the Indian’s environment, with a view to establish definitely the diameter and scope of the public health problem” at Qualla Boundary in order to inform upcoming Indian Division work and subsequent tourism.²⁸⁵ This study was conducted in conjunction with the North Carolina Tuberculosis Sanatorium, the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, the Cherokee Indian Agency, and the North Carolina State Board of Health. That there was, in fact, a public health problem at the Boundary was not questioned by any of them.

The “diameter and scope of the public health problem” at Qualla Boundary was of great concern to its settler neighbors, who anticipated increased access to the area with the coming labor program and associated tourist spaces. The report states:

“Considerable interest has recently developed in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park project by both the citizenry and the representatives in the North Carolina General Assembly from this locality. The population of the Park and Extra Park Zone [the Qualla Boundary] includes some 2,800 Indians whose health status and health practices have been such as to cause some anxiety on the part of the white residents in this section.... It has also been alleged that the prevalence of tuberculosis, trachoma, and venereal and other diseases existing among the

²⁸⁵ Introduction, p 1. Report of General Health Survey of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina, June 5-17, 1933, RG 75. Records of the Health Division.

Indians was detrimental to the fullest usage of the Park and extra-park zone by the residents of this section as well as by tourists and vacationists frequenting this area.²⁸⁶

Repossession entailed an assessment of dangers in the Qualla Boundary because they were “detrimental to the fullest usage” of the new and improved frontier space. “Usage” here included the use of both Indigenous bodies and lands. The great concern about venereal disease implies that local health authorities expected or at least entertained the possibility of sexual tourism. At the same time, though it is not referenced in this initial statement of objectives, the study focused on both communicable and non-communicable diseases—trench mouth being the most prominent example of that latter. The threat to full usage was not only the risk of disease transmission to settlers. It was the risk of losing the Eastern Band residents of the Extra Park Zone with whom they would interact, even from afar.²⁸⁷

This study was not easy. The report references the “rough, rugged, and mountainous” physical terrain doctors had to navigate, the extensive cooperation required between different agencies in managing the program, the trouble in finding a location that residents could or would access, and the difficulty in transporting and treating unwilling or as they called them “unreliable” patients.²⁸⁸ Ultimately, the conductors of the study chose to center the study at the

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁷ There was also the potential risk that Eastern Band citizens would not be well enough to provide the labor necessary for Indian Division Programs, but that proved to be the least of their concerns. In reference to Indian Division enrollees the report notes, “Included in the 1115 persons examined during the conduct of the clinics at Cherokee, the agency physician presented for examination 224 Indians, applicants for employment in the reforestation conservation camp. These applicants were given the same physical examination by the specialists on duty in the respective sections. Of this group, 19 were rejected on account of communicable diseases, or as being physical unfit on account of various physical defects” (Reforestation Conservation Camp Applicants, p 11).

²⁸⁸ General Description of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, p 4.

medical facilities at the central Yellow Bird Day School, where an Indian Agent could use a bus to transport patients back and forth from their homes.²⁸⁹ Even still, they were only able to screen less than half of the population— 1,115 residents, 174 of whom were white. Despite the significant hurdles and modest portion of population screened, the report describes the study as a great success, evidence of their ability to forge forward and overcome: “The representatives from these respective agencies work diligently, harmoniously, and with enthusiasm. The responses on the part of the Cherokee Indians exceeded my most optimistic hope.”²⁹⁰

Even when they could get them to the site of the study, patients were a problem. Many were unwilling to give blood, and a third of those who did agree to give a sample did not give enough to be fully screened. Furthermore, the report states: “Some of the Indians could not speak English. Others were timid and reluctant to give the information requested; while still others had very little knowledge of the previous health status of themselves or members of their families.”²⁹¹ The doctor’s sense that Indians did not have the capacity to know their own medical history was reflected in their recommendations. From endemic trench mouth to a lack of immunization, the report’s authors privileged treating and educating children in being proper medical subjects, assuming that Eastern Band adults were past the point of intervention.²⁹² That attitude was also reflected in who was seen and treated. When, the conductors of the study realized that they had scheduled it for just after the local school would close for the summer, they elected to conduct tuberculosis testing several days in advance of the official study at the school

²⁸⁹ Health Clinics, p 9.

²⁹⁰ Introduction, p 1.

²⁹¹ Registration Section, p 13.

²⁹² Recommendations, p. 17.

while it was in session. This resulted in their reaching numerous children who would have otherwise not shown up to the clinic, and it gave the clinicians intel on what families to target during the general health survey.²⁹³ Children's bodies were more easily accessible and functioned better as evidence.

The health survey focused predominantly on vaccination for small pox and yellow fever, addressing dental issues, and testing for tuberculosis and syphilis. By and large the prevalence and severity of these conditions at Qualla Boundary reported in the survey matched the priority they were given. The exception to this was syphilis.²⁹⁴ Incidence of syphilis in the Qualla Boundary proved lower than Bureau doctors had anticipated, in that it was "not unusually high."²⁹⁵ The report noted that 4.5% of the general population of North Carolina had syphilis at the time. At the Boundary, 5% of Indian test subjects and 3% of white test subjects tested positive for syphilis.²⁹⁶ Given the size of their sample, this hardly constituted a public health crisis. But with these numbers in mind, the report recommended an additional "junior medical officer position" be created at the Eastern Band Indian Agency to be filled at the "earliest possible moment by the appointment of a young physician having training along public health

²⁹³ Tuberculosis Research, p 47.

²⁹⁴ There was also a disproportionate amount of literature on maternal and infant hygiene that was not linked to any concrete results or observations. The survey recommended mothers take courses with Agency nurses, give birth in the hospital where they could be supervised and directed on care infant care, and emphasized the importance of having children properly registered upon birth. This was in response more to a general assumption that many Cherokee women were still giving birth at home. If there was an attempt to quantify the impact of that, it was not included in the report (PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICES AND SERVICES to be rendered by LOCAL FULL TIME HEALTH DEPARTMENTS. 2. Maternal and Infant Hygiene, p 7).

²⁹⁵ Collection of Blood Specimens, p 30.

²⁹⁶ Collection of Blood Specimens, p 26.

lines with particular attention to the control of venereal diseases” because “it will be necessary to use considerable pressure in requiring regular attendance at the venereal disease clinic.”²⁹⁷ It is also worth noting that the Qualla Boundary at this time already had Agency health services, including a public health program:

A twenty-two bed hospital is also maintained at the boarding school. A physician is employed and his services are free to all the Indians of the reservation. There are employed at the boarding school hospital, two nurses, a ward attendant, and a cook. There is also a field nurse who carries on a public health program among the Indians of the reservation. The climate is equable, the average temperature is not more than 72 degrees. There are no mosquitoes and the natural drainage of the section is ideal.²⁹⁸

The Indian Division records imply that these were all relatively underused resources. After all, the Qualla Boundary was not in and of itself a dangerous place, as the report notes above. It became dangerous in being imagined as a space for potentially destructive settler transgression. There was no public health emergency, but there was a need to discipline Eastern Band residents and create proper medical subjects who could be monitored more easily.

The Qualla Boundary was a space that was conceived of as internal to the empire. In fact the very justification for the study was that the Indians were technically on federal trust lands. However, their vision of the Boundary was a place that needed to be managed and protected against not only to ensure the safety of settler visitors who wanted to cross over, but to establish Eastern Band subjects who could sustainably inhabit what was being imagined as a frontier space. The public health research and associated measures constructed the bodies of Cherokees as technologies by attempting to create docile subjects of a settler medical paradigm that mandated their otherness as long as it was contained and monitored.

²⁹⁷ Collection of Blood Specimens, p 31.

²⁹⁸ Medical and Health Services, p 5.

Forestry

The problems perceived by Indian Division foremen and directors at Qualla Boundary were made even worse by Indian Division construction projects, including recreational areas, footbridges across the Oconaluftee River, sawmills, and fire watch towers. In his justification for funds to support roadside cleanup and fire hazard reduction, foreman John Libby wrote:

“There is a considerable accumulation of debris along this section of the Truck Trail, left from past logging and sawmilling operations as well as from the construction of the truck trail itself. This debris not only presents a very unsightly appearance, but constitutes a considerable fire hazard... this project should be approved as the area through which this truck trail is located is one of the most scenic, and potentially one of the most valuable sections in the Smokies.”²⁹⁹

Cherokee enrollees were trained in forest thinning, which included clearing brush and cutting down blight compromised chestnut trees. They had to be trained to see the forest as something that was menacing and ugly without intervention. They were trained to sit in fire watch towers for long hours and view unauthorized activity in the forest as a threat. Just as the Indian Division was intent on transforming (thinning) the forest to ensure its safety and scenic nature, so too was it intent on transforming enrollees to ensure the same, and they used the bodies and objects of one to condition the other.

Forest fires are a constant looming threat in the the Indian Division records, though rarely are any significant ones reported. Fear of forest fires inspired Indian Division management to order the construction of new paths and bridges so that chestnut trees fallen to the endemic chestnut blight could be cleared, or more so that “the Indians could salvage those trees which

²⁹⁹ JUSTIFICATION OF PROPOSED NEW PROJECTS AND INCREASES REQUESTED FOR EXISTING PROJECTS: Project 41-12, Roadside Cleanup and Fire Hazard Reduction, John W. Libby, Production Supervisor. Letters to the Indian Office, 1940. RG 75, Box 1.

should be done to reduce our fire hazard.”³⁰⁰ Even very minor forest fires compelled the Indian Division to increase their fire suppression detail. In 1940, Cherokee enrollee and foreman Ray Bradly reported one of the few documented forest fires to occur during the whole Indian Division tenure. He wrote, “We had a small forest fire Thursday Nov. 11. It burned over about 1 ½ acres, destroying a small section of the grass and leaves which we had placed on the road banks under our Road Band Stabilization program. A waiting room is in the making at the CCC—ID shop to house the fire detail.”³⁰¹ Again, the real victim of forest fires were the structures built and planted by the Indian Division itself. Periodic forest fires were a regular occurrence in Cherokee Country, and so it was the forest itself that was a threat. When enrollees were trained in forest fire prevention, they were trained to relate differently to the forest.³⁰²

While sources of infrastructural isolation, the forest and mountains surrounding the Qualla Boundary’s Soco Valley were also partners in Eastern Band survival. The Eastern Band are descended from the Cherokee citizens who evaded genocidal relocation efforts under the Jackson Administration a century earlier. Through ingenious legal maneuvering and inhabiting that space which was seen as dangerous to outsiders, they had managed to secure state and

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ K. Narrative Report on Field Activities, November 13, 1940. CCC—ID Camp reports, 1940-1941. RG 75, Box 1.

³⁰² There is the occasional reference to literal “forest education” in the CCC—ID budget reports. It never received more than \$500 in any given month. It is unclear what this education might have been. There are images from the nearby North Carolina State University Agriculture School archives that suggest that CCC—ID enrollees hosted agriculture and forestry training sessions. That sum may have referred in part to those activities. (RECAPITULATION OF COSTS, AS PER CLASSES OF WORK PRESENTED IN MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT CCC ID 7, n.d., Projects, Authorizations for the Fiscal Year 1938. RG 75. Box 3.; “Farmers attending a forestry meeting and demonstration at farm of Johnson Owl, Cherokee Indian Reservation Swain County.” Agricultural Extension and Research Services (UA2023.007), North Carolina State University).

federal recognition and trust lands. They were the stewards of the last sovereign piece of the Cherokee homeland in the Southeast. It was no surprise that the Cherokee Tribal Council's first priority was the health of their forests, which were then changing as the chestnut blight killed nearly all chestnut trees in the area. However, the definitions of "health" and the proper way to view the forest varied considerably between Eastern Band citizens and the Indian Division managers.

On October 19, 1940, Qualla Boundary Indian Division director C.M. Blair sent a letter to the superintendent of Indian Affairs concerning a series of timber permit and employment misunderstandings. In that letter, he addressed the sale of timber at the Henson Donation in Cherokee Country. On this particularly isolated tract of land, Blair reported, several Cherokees had timber sale permits, and a Mr. Ed Graves (non-Cherokee), owner of a small sawmill just north of the Henson Donation, who bought "a considerable percentage of such logs as the Indians have to sell," was granted a "trucking permit to truck logs and other forest products from the Donation and the Donation itself was posted with signs stating that no trucks could operate on the Donation without permits from this Office [CCC—ID]." ³⁰³ At the same time, a Mr. F.R. Graves, a "white man who had been living on the Donation for many years with the tacit consent of all concerned," was employed by the Indian Division to paint the boundary lines of the Donation because he was "the only one available there who had worked on the survey and knew the location of the new lines." ³⁰⁴

This situation, which to C.M. Blair deemed perfectly acceptable, was protested by numerous Cherokee residents, claiming that the Graves' were neither Cherokee, nor was their

³⁰³ "Letter from C.M. Blair to Indian Bureau Superintendent, October 19, 1940," "Letters to Indian Office." RG 75, Box 1.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

monopoly on the Donation in the Cherokees's best interest. Blair conceded the matter, stating that perhaps it would have been better to hire a Cherokee and make clear that a non-Cherokee trucking permit could not be exclusive. He concluded his letter with the following recommendation: "In order to improve the situation on the Hanson Donation in Cherokee County, we are now contemplating employing on of the Indians for part time—to act as a scaler and fire guard, and to look after the interests of the government."³⁰⁵ Blair's response to an episode in which Cherokee citizens objected to his appointment of a white man to survey the forest because he was supposedly the only one who knew it was to set aside more funds to employ Cherokees as fire guards looking after "the interests of the government."

Enrollees assigned to keep an eye out for potential forest fires, known as "lookout men," were considered so important for the Indian Division at Qualla Boundary that despite the program's near-constant struggle to secure enough funds to provide regular employment, lookouts had guaranteed funding for consistent "man hours" from the park service. Toward the end of the program in 1942, C.M. Blair wrote the Commission of Indian Affairs again:

It is our desire to enlarge the present Lookout House at the Barnett Knob Tower... Our justification for this request is not only for larger quarters but because Barnett Knob Lookout is located near the new Parkway where it will be visited by many tourists and outsiders. The present structure is not very presentable compared to other units in this area. The donations by the Park Service were requested by us because of the present cooperative fire production we have with them. They have for the past several years paid the salary of our Lookout Man and therefore feel that they can afford to donate some of the material required.³⁰⁶

Blair's assumption that it was the view from the tower that tourists would be most interested in taking was not wrong. Barnette Knob continues to be a point of interest for tourists at the Qualla

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Letter from C.M. Blair to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 10, 1942. "Letters to Indian Office." RG 75, Box 1.

Boundary to this day. The lookout tower was exactly the epistemic vantage the program had tried to instill in its enrollees.

The impact of forest fire prevention training in this context must have been profound. The Indian Division had enrollees hoisted above the tree-line to survey their territory. This view from the top is part of the settler observational paradigm. In my initial layered description of Cherokee, I attempted to describe the space as you may encounter it laterally. The layers of the Qualla Boundary are not visible when looking from the top down. Those long hours, often 12-hour shifts or more, were critical to enrollees who were lucky to get paid for 15 hours a month for any other position.³⁰⁷ Those hours were meant to obscure a Cherokee observational paradigm that privileged more lateral, relational visual references. All the lookout towers in Cherokee Country today date back to the New Deal era or later. The forest was only a threat when a repossession project necessitated that it be sanitized, and this could only be done with a view from above—a sense of complete control and surveillance. In training Cherokee enrollees in forest fire prevention, the Indian Division program was working toward conditioning Cherokee enrollees in such a way that would undermine the settler-perceived threat both Cherokee people and the forest posed.

³⁰⁷ During the 1939 peak of forest fire potential period, for example, weekly work on fire suppression and the Barnett Knob Lookout Tower composed the second highest number of “man hours” of all Indian Division projects (100 hours). Spread across the week, this would entail over 12 hours of surveillance a day, and rarely were there enough enrollees assigned to this position to allow for multiple people to take a shift per day. The lookout position was one of the higher-level positions in the program in terms of training time required. The highest, in both hours and training, which was the case invariably throughout the program, was road and truck trail construction (a combined 187 hours). (Weekly Group Progress Report, March 31, 1939. CCC—ID Camp Reports 140, 1928-1939. RG 75, Box 1.

Tourism

The strange dynamic of the Indian Division was that in attempting to condition and construct a manageable wilderness and docile Cherokee subjects, they were potentially undermining the internal frontiers project, which according to the Turner and Webb models, required that the frontier be a hard and challenging place. But the Indian Division imagined a new kind of frontier—one accessible to tourists, if not pioneers. The roads constructed by the Smoky Mountains Park CCC camp and the Qualla Boundary Indian Division ran both ways—they could transport timber out and tourists in. In 1939, Congressman Zebulon Weaver of North Carolina introduced a bill that would authorize the U.S. secretary of the interior to seize a 200-foot-wide right-of-way tract of land through the Qualla Boundary. This parkway, which was to follow the long blue ridge of the Smoky Mountains, would be part of the making of a newly founded and motor vehicle accessible Great Smoky Mountains National Park.³⁰⁸ Under certain projections of the parkway's path, such as the Congress-favored Soco Valley route, it would run directly through the capital of the Eastern Band's lands, the town of Cherokee, and the bill would provide authorization and subsequent payment to the Eastern Band regardless of whether or not their tribal council voted in favor of it.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁸ For more on the role of cars and tourism in the creation and imaginary of United States National Parks see: David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks*, Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

³⁰⁹ As evidenced by the make-up of the Qualla Boundary today, the Soco Valley route was eventually rejected. Instead, the Blue Ridge Parkway would end Cherokee, and the Eastern Band authorized a much narrower right-of-way for Route 19, which would connect Cherokee with both Asheville and Bryson City—a connection that was economically beneficial for the Eastern Band and did not establish Cherokee as literally being in national park land. See Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway*.

While principle chief, Jarrett Blythe, and others on the Eastern Band council were open to negotiating access, because it would ensure a steady stream of tourist dollars for the Eastern Band, some council members, most notably Blythe's cousin, Fred Bauer, would not look kindly on the measure under any circumstances. In July of that year, the House Committee on Public Lands convened hearings on the Weaver bill. Bauer, a member of the American Indian Federation who would eventually be one of the leaders of a campaign demanding that John Collier step down from his position at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was a seasoned orator and especially invested in this issue.³¹⁰ He travelled to D.C. to address Congress personally. In a long, impassioned speech, he declared that the bill was nothing more than part of the Indian Bureau's attempt to "landscape the Indians into the park entrance... for the entertainment of rubbernecked tourists."³¹¹

³¹⁰ For Bauer the connection was found in a common communist threat. The Blue Ridge Parkway would be the final nail in what Bauer viewed as the "communitarian" coffin crafted by the Indian Reorganization Act. The Parkway, he argued, would ensure that the Eastern Band would rely on tourist money for survival, encouraging them to remain disconnected from the capitalist modes of governance of their neighbors. For him, the ultimate irony of this turn was that, unlike what he termed the "Mooney myth," the cultural and historical narrative of the Eastern Band put forward by ethnologist James Mooney in his 1900 study of the nation, private property, not shared ownership, was native to the Eastern Band (Fred Bauer, *Land of the North Carolina Cherokees*, Brevard, North Carolina: 1970, 28. Museum of the Cherokee Indian Historical Archive). This turn toward encouraging communitarian economies and governments in Indian Country, Bauer argued, as opposed to the previous allotment era enforcement of private ownership, left a weak spot in the United States where communist ideology could spread. For more on Indigenous anti-communist rhetoric at the time, see A.L.Jamison, *Now Who's Un-American?*

³¹¹ United States., *Establishing the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina. Hearings before the Committee on the Public Lands, House of Representatives, Seventy-Sixth Congress, First Session, on H.R. 6668, a Bill to Grant the State of North Carolina a Right-of-Way for the Blue Ridge Parkway across the Cherokee Indian Reservation in North Carolina, to Provide for the Payment of Just Compensation for Said Right-of-Way, and for Other Purposes.*, 51, 66–79. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Lands, *Establishing the Blue Ridge Parkway*, 51, 66-79.

Bauer was not incorrect when he singled out the Bureau's tourism motivations. While the Indian Division was constantly lacking in funds and regularly provided less employment than would have been ideal for the community, there was one day every October for the program's entire tenure that the Division shut down entirely and with no protest: the day of the annual Cherokee Fair. The Cherokee Fair was first held long before New Deal programs came to the Qualla Boundary. Beginning in 1911, Eastern Band residents would stage stick ball competitions, crafts sales, and powwows every year, at first mostly for their own community and in following years for their white neighbors willing to make the trek through the mountains. The Indian Division, however, viewed this fair as very much within its own domain. The October 1938 CCC—ID narrative report read:

The twenty-seventh annual Cherokee Indian Fair held in October as planned was acclaimed as the most successful of the fair's history. Weather conditions were favorable; the spirit of community cooperation was excellent; gate receipts, local and visiting attendance, number of exhibitors, the quality and number of exhibits and amount paid for prizes were considerable above the fair's average even for the past few preceding year. Considerable interest is being manifested toward improving fair-ground facilities and the fair's program of interest and entertainment. It is evident that this annual occasion is a definite stimulant in the economic and social life of the Cherokees.³¹²

The Indian Division managers believed it was their job to make the long trip to Cherokee worth the while.

Everything from phone line expenditures, to road maintenance and recreation time for employees was justified by the fact that it was "believed that this project should be approved in as much as Cherokee is becoming more and more a tourist center and it is felt that the resources

³¹² "Narrative Report," "Letters to the Indian Office." RG 75, Box 1.

of the Cherokee Indians should be developed wherever possible.”³¹³ Because these expenditures would provide income to the Eastern Band and, perhaps more so, because they encouraged a form of economic life that was communal and rooted in a certain image of what it meant to be Cherokee (to play at being Cherokee), these programs hit at a fundamental issue across Indian Country. The question of enrollment has always been especially fraught for all Cherokee Bands, due to the legacy of removal rolls, slavery and freedmen, and an otherwise unusually low blood quantum requirement. When the Eastern Band became a center of ethnic tourism, facilitated by a New Deal repossession project, that fraught issue was expressed predominantly in the Tribal Council.

In the debate over the Blue Ridge Parkway, which was representative of many smaller debates on matters relating to tourism, the two major players were principle chief Blythe and his cousin, council member Fred Bauer. Prior to reorganization and the tourist injection of funds, both Bauer and Blythe could and did run for the principle chief position. However, as funds increased and descendants of settlers on early Cherokee rolls emerged, the council passed a rule dictating that the minimum requirement to be chief must be $\frac{1}{2}$ blood quantum, as opposed to the previous $\frac{1}{4}$. Bauer, Blythe’s adopted cousin, was $\frac{1}{4}$. Blythe was $\frac{3}{4}$.³¹⁴ Bauer opposed tourism because he felt it was infantilizing. Blythe was in favor of it because it provided a means of Cherokee survivance. Ultimately, Blythe’s voice was louder, both because of his blood quantum, and because it was a position that Congress and the Bureau of Indian Affairs also favored, though for different reasons.

³¹³ “Justification of Proposed New Projects and Increases Requests for Existing Projects,” “Letters to Indian Office, 1938” RG 75, Box 1.

³¹⁴ Fred Bauer, *Land of the North Carolina Cherokees*, Brevard, North Carolina: 1970, 34. Museum of the Cherokee Indian Historical Archive.

In *Ethnicity Inc.*, Jean and John Comaroff note the extent to which the commodification of ethnicity, especially in the Indigenous U.S., accompanies an essentialization of ethnic identity and a seeming discontinuity with anthropological models of authenticity and capitalism.³¹⁵ This was certainly the case at the Qualla Boundary and in the CCC—ID program. The introduction and pursuit of nature-culture tourism during this period, as distinct from the previous era of anthropological expositions and wild west shows, was shaped by Cherokee political formations and debates on belonging. Those debates and how they related to tourism and Cherokee identity were rarely visible to the Indian Bureau agents present at the Boundary, due to their preconceived anthropological notions of Cherokee-ness. In their attempt to repossess and brand the Eastern Band, the Bureau became increasingly less capable and less in control of seeing or correctly interpreting its residents.

Leadership

In the inaugural edition of *Indians at Work*, the internal publication of the Indian Division, John Collier celebrated the promise of the program:

The greatest opportunity and the greatest challenge confronting the Indian Service and the Indian tribes is the emergency conservation work. It is costing nearly \$6,000,000. If effectively done, the work will add many times six million dollars to the value of the Indian lands. The work is employing nearly 15,000 Indians, and as a relief measure is directly benefiting not fewer than 100,000 Indians. *No previous undertaking has so largely been the Indians' own undertaking*, as the emergency conservation work (emphasis mine).³¹⁶

As Collier saw it, the question of self-determination was not just a matter of injecting funds into Indian Country. It was a matter of conditioning and educating Indians to be Indians again, after

³¹⁵ Comaroff and Comaroff, *Ethnicity, Inc.*

³¹⁶ United States., “Indians at Work.” 1.

decades of assimilation policy had discouraged just that. This required both an applied anthropological approach on the part of Bureau Agents who could assess what it meant to be Indigenous, and a reinvigoration of Indigenous lands, so that they could be held communally.

Some of the only mentions of education in the Qualla Boundary records are in statements made by program director C.M. Blair. In one instance, he insisted that the Indian Division had no need of fire prevention training, and in a note requesting extra funds to send five Cherokee enrollees to spend time at the CCC Smoky Mountains National Park Camp plant nursery in 1942 he wrote:

We believe we can set up tree planning projects to care for all the seedlings, as well as ornamental trees and shrubs that we earn with the contributed labor. Tree nursery work would fit in well in educating our Indians in this class of work. There is a movement now on in [sic] planting Rhododendron plants to sell to the tourists. Our Indians could learn about this at the Nursey where they have had experience with it for the past several years.³¹⁷

C.M. Blair had spent his entire life in Indigenous education up until that point. Before relocating to work with the Eastern Band, Blair directed the Haskell Institute, and before that he was Superintendent of the Chilocco School in Oklahoma, where he was involved in farming education initiatives in the 1920s—his only recorded experience that would have qualified him to direct a conservation project.³¹⁸ His silence on the matter is therefore noteworthy. The areas where education was most lacking for enrollees seemed to be in settler tourist tastes. Much like public health and forest fire prevention, Indian Division conservation education was geared toward conditioning and training Eastern Band enrollees to be the right kind of Indian.

³¹⁷ “Letter from C.M. Blair to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 23, 1942” “Letters to Indian Office, 1940,” RG 75, Box 1.

³¹⁸ *Indians of the United States*, 454.

While C.M. Blair's is the loudest and most consistent voice in the Qualla Boundary Indian Division program records, his is not the most frequent nor involved in the day-to-day operation of the division. Rather, it was Roy Bradley, a Cherokee enrollee and foreman, who for the vast majority of the program was the manager who signed off on the Indian Division weekly updates. In fact, Bradley for much of his tenure was responsible for all safety education for the North Carolina CCC, Indian Division and otherwise.³¹⁹ While supervisory positions were held by settler Bureau agents and Cherokee enrollees alike, the latter was more likely to have prior conservation training. Tribal Council records from the Eastern Band at this time do reference at least one representative of the Forest Service, Mr. Roberson, and his proposed conservation plans for the Qualla Boundary, corroborating Indian Division policy to partner with the Forest and Soil Conservation Services. However, he is absent from the CCC—ID records at Qualla Boundary.³²⁰ What the records do show is that between 1933 and 1942, twenty Cherokee enrollees were placed in "supervisory, facilitating or skilled" positions. The definition of skilled was varied, including everything from cook, clerk-stenographer, machinery operator, foreman and sub-foreman, and an "Assistant Indian" position. This was out of a pool of a reported 520 enrollees over the same period.³²¹

The exact nature of some of these supervisory positions is unclear. The "Assistant Indian," for example, remains a mystery. The position was only referenced one time in 1942, and

³¹⁹ "Narrative Report on Camp Activities, Edward Libby, November 4, 1938," "Camp Records, 1938," RG 75, Box 1.

³²⁰ Cherokee Council Minutes, Cherokee, N.C. June 22, 1933," Cherokee Indians Council Minutes, in Cherokee, 1931-1962.

³²¹ "Letter from C.M. Blair to D.S. Murphy, April 28, 1942," "Letters to Indian Office, 1940," RG 75, Box 1.

as the report reflects on the full length of the program there is no way of knowing how long-lived it was, or what skills it may have called for. We do know it was filled by Ralph Owl, who was regarded as a “leader” in the Indian Division by 1939.³²² Owl had been educated in boarding schools prior to his employment with the CCC—ID. Years later in an interview about his boarding school experience, he said “the vocational training made students more hireable when the Fontana Dam... was being built, because the girls had some vocational training in school and the boys had training in the trades like carpentry and blacksmithing.”³²³ The Fontana Dam was not an Indian Division project, but it was a similar New Deal initiative directed by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Owl recognized that his boarding school education, which was extremely violent and profoundly impacted Owl’s life, qualified him for New Deal work relief and projects.³²⁴

Boarding school experience was not unique to Owl. Many of the Indian Division employees, especially those in skilled and supervisory positions, had been boarding school educated. Fred Bauer, also employed by the Indian Division, had gone to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, in addition to the day school at the Qualla Boundary, and Jarrett Blythe had gone to Haskell Institute (now Haskell Indian Nations University).³²⁵ Before working with the Indian Division, Blythe had already worked as a “laborer, a cowboy, a sheep herder, and a

³²² “Leaders, July 31, 1939,” RG 75, Box 2, “Enrollees pre--1939,” Civilian Conservation Corps Camp and Enrollee Records.

³²³ Patterson, “The Eastern Band of Cherokee and Their Boarding School Experiences,” 461.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

³²⁵ Jarrette Blythe,” 1987.093.001, Blythe Collection, Museum of the Cherokee Indian Archives.

farmer.”³²⁶ Furthermore, the Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute in Virginia had established a special program for Indigenous peoples that ran from 1878 through 1923, which educated numerous Cherokee residents.³²⁷

Indigenous education had already been predicated on agricultural and ecological training for decades, at least since the 1887 Dawes Act encouraged the privatization of Indigenous lands. The ultimate goal had previously been to transform Indigenous peoples into capitalist farmers. By the 1930s, there was already a generation of Indigenous laborers who had the skills to undertake the kind of projects dictated by the CCC—ID. These skills were repurposed in the Indian Division. Indian Division agents either assumed that this educational background was common knowledge, or they did not recognize it in the first place. There was no space for previous experience or training on enrollment forms, and the qualifications of Eastern Band foremen and other leaders was not noted.

Boarding school education was not all that was repurposed by enrollees and it was certainly not all that might have been forgotten or unseen by Bureau agents. The records of the Indian Division at the Qualla Boundary are peppered by odd accident reports and the frustrations of settler doctors. The records of the Indian Division at the Qualla Boundary are peppered by odd

³²⁶ *Ibid*; Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway*, 191.

³²⁷ Hampton, an historically black college, founded the program at the bequest of Richard Pratt, the infamous founder of the Carlisle boarding school. With the exception of a stream of Indigenous students from western nations who were enrolled in the program after they were released from Pratt’s Fort Marion prison, most students in the program were Cherokee. Unfortunately, the program was terminated when officials at the school believed they were unable to prevent “race amalgamation” between Indigenous and black students. Furthermore, there had been a number of incidents and altercations between Cherokee students, who had been unwilling to abolish slavery in their own communities, and freed black students. See “HAMPTON NORMAL AND AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE EDUCATION OF NATIVE AMERICANS, 1878-1923,” *Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society* 9, no. 2 (1988): 64.

accident reports and the frustrations of settler doctors. On July 21, 1939, Ralph Owl included in his weekly report that an Indian Division enrollee, “well-versed in first aid” saved another enrollee’s life when the latter fell a total of 200 feet from the top of a waterfall. The enrollee applied first aid at the scene. Later the injured man was brought against his will to the Cherokee hospital.³²⁸ Another case from that year, perhaps the most prominent in the whole of the Indian Division archive for Qualla Boundary (it features very prominently as a point of interest in the finding aid), concerned a man who accidentally caught fire while operating a truck. In his report, the Cherokee hospital physician remarked that it was unclear exactly what happened between the time of the incident and when he was finally able to examine the patient. More specifically, he could not reconcile the sensational image of the incident he had been given—a man on fire screaming in agony after a minor explosion—and the patient before him—a reluctant and already patched up patient who was at the hospital only because he needed the physician to make an official report.³²⁹

Around the same time there was a somewhat less sensational controversy surrounding enrollee Codaskie Arch’s disability claim. Arch was injured on the job. He reported the incident (under duress, evidenced by the fact the document remained unsigned) as follows:

I was operating the road machine. I lost my balance while at the controls and my left foot slipped between the spokes of the hand wheel which controls the lowering of the rising of the right side of the cutting blade. The hand wheel and the road machine were both in motion at the time of the incident. My foot was

³²⁸ “Form CCC—ID-9 Weekly Progress Report, by Ralph Owl,” “CCC—ID Camp Reports, 1938-1942,” RG 75, Box 1.

³²⁹ “Employee’s Report of Injury and Claim of Compensation and Medical Treatment, 1942” “CCC—ID Employee Compensation 1942.” RG 75, Box 2.

caught by a spoke of the turning hand wheel and became lodged between the spoke and the frames of the road machine.³³⁰

The doctor he eventually saw described the nature of his injury as “contusions of the left foot, fracture of the first phalanx of the left big toe, and fracture of the metatarsals.”³³¹ He was back at work within a week, refused for many weeks to make an official report of the incident, and was altogether an unwilling participant in the whole compensation process. The camp physician assumed this was owing to a sense of shame. He wrote:

The injured man, Mr. Codaskie Arch, refused at the last moment, to sign form CA1. Since giving us his original report of the accident, it seems that some of the Indian men have ‘twitted’ him and have jokingly accused him of injuring himself on purpose in order to collect compensation. All attempts to reason with him on the matter have been futile.³³²

Interestingly, none of the commentary on the case seems to note the two eye-witness reports that document his fellow enrollees providing care for his foot in the meantime. The non-Cherokee employees of the CCC—ID and Indian Bureau doctors who staffed the Cherokee hospital were unable to determine why Cherokee residents were so unwilling to make use of their services, and often fell back on theories of Indigenous masculinity or superstition to fill in the blanks.

The Indian Division archive for Qualla Boundary is a challenging one. Enrollees clearly had a distaste for paperwork and bureaucracy, and so most of the direct statements about the program come from letters between Bureau agents. This is a typical colonial archive, but there are ways to read against the grain. I have done this by reading into the silences and confusion of

³³⁰ “Employee’s Report of Injury and Claim of Compensation and Medical Treatment, August 12, 1941,” CCC—ID Employee Compensation.” RG 75, Box 2.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² “Addendum to Employee’s Report of Injury and Claim of Compensation and Medical Treatment, August 12, 1941,” CCC—ID Employee Compensation.” RG 75, Box 2.

Indian Agents, and I have done it by reading Cherokee Tribal Council records and archival materials from the Museum of the Cherokee Indian alongside them. Most accounts of the Indian Division program herald it as a perfect example of a Progressive era program—providing labor justice in the context of a new sympathetic and kinder age of American Indian policy.³³³ I find that this reading flattens the dynamics and importance of the program, both as it existed as a mechanism of a settler empire and how it was taken up in Eastern Band politics. It is also only supported if the documents are taken at face value.

The Indian Division was concerned with repossessing both the Eastern Band and Eastern Band lands as epistemic and technical tools and spaces of a nostalgic United States empire. At the same time, enrollees directed many aspects of the program toward their own ends. They welcomed infrastructure development for timber trade and negotiated the role of tourism in their political and economic futures. The chestnut trees that were threatening to Indian Bureau agents were critical components of Cherokee technology and they used much of that timber in their own construction projects. Cherokee enrollees repurposed first aid in a way that undermined the access and conditioning power for Bureau physicians. Much like the Kituwah Mound and the Tribal Council building is missed by most tourists to the Qualla Boundary today, the actual valences of these acts were often invisible to Bureau agents who read the Eastern Band through the anthropological frameworks that would enable their safe repossession.

³³³ See Calvin W. Gower, “The CCC Indian Division: Aid for Depressed Americans, 1933-1942,” *Minnesota History Magazine*, Spring 1972, 3–13; Mattea V. Sanders, “‘I Got to Do Something to Keep My Family up.’ (Cherokees Offered a New Deal),” *Prologue* 46, no. 4 (2014): 24–34; Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2006); Harley E. Jolley, *The Blue Ridge Parkway*, [1st ed.] (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1969); Charles J. Weeks, “The Eastern Cherokee and the New Deal,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 53, no. 3 (1976): 303–19.

Conclusion

In 2003, Ken Blankenship, then director of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, wrote in his introduction to the Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook:

We still recognize the old Cherokee homeland. Its physical features are still here—the rivers and ridges, the rich plant and animal life, and the beautiful Appalachian vistas. On the Cherokee Heritage Trails visitors and residents alike can explore places that were part of the original Cherokee territory: ancient sites identified by archaeologists, sites of historical events, and places of myth and legend. Some of these sites clearly interpret Cherokee history; others make more demands on the imagination. And we, the Cherokee people, are still here.³³⁴

As much as the Progressive Era experience of the Eastern Band was shaped through frontier science, Blankenship's characterization is a clear indication that it is also a site made through Native science. Native science is a class of knowledge production and technology that occurs through the action of subjects who are taken as tools and objects of settler sciences—resulting in an epistemologically diverse and politically stratified way of knowing and acting that is unsettling of the epistemic and political frameworks within which it was produced.

Indian Division enrollees were part of a program that was geared toward using and conditioning their bodies—repossessing them in a colonial act of violence that would fuel the U.S. empire—and yet, in being tools of such a project, they were in a position to ensure that the Cherokee people would still be here and be dynamic and sovereign. In negotiating this initiative and assigning their actions meanings and ends that were contrary to the project and yet within it, they created a Qualla Boundary that could serve simultaneously as a settler frontier and as wholly other space—one that was entirely Cherokee, not because it was unchanged or known and made through projected “traditional” Cherokee methods, but because it was a horizon for

³³⁴ Duncan, *Cherokee Heritage Trails Guidebook*, 3.

Cherokee futurity and survivance. This included Cherokee epistemologies and bodies of knowledge, and it included the insight and authority gained from the vantage of a conscious tool of the hegemonic settler science with which the Cherokee people had no choice but to engage.³³⁵

Traditional views on science and technology tend to focus on moments of invention or the origins of modern science and thought. This is often true even in Indigenous and postcolonial views of science. New work in STS has shown the importance of consumers, users, and lower level technicians.³³⁶ However, even this was denied to Indigenous people, and also to other racialized and queered bodies, who were cloistered in recycling positions or as objects. The enrollees at the Qualla Boundary were not enacting resistance against settler frontier sciences, nor was settler science the touchstone by which the Eastern Band defined their ways of knowing and acting in the world. Rather, they took settler sciences and technologies up and enacted their

³³⁵ Gerald Vizenor describes “survivance” as “an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry” Gerald Robert Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), vii). I use survivance as an alternative for “resistance” which forever casts Indigenous peoples as reactionary and defined in reference to a colonizer. At the same time, survivance as an analytic describes more accurately the politics of the Eastern Band in the 1930s than Audra Simpson’s brilliant “refusal,” largely due to the influence of red progressive like Fred Bauer who were invested in their identities as U.S. citizens, but also due to the Eastern Band’s counter-influence and the layering that happened at the Qualla Boundary. See Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*, 2014.

³³⁶ See Sandra G. Harding, *Sciences from below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities*, Next Wave (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Clapperton Chakanetsa Mavhunga, *Transient Workspaces: Technologies of Everyday Innovation in Zimbabwe*, Mobility Studies (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2014); David Arnold, *Everyday Technology: Machines and the Making of India’s Modernity*, Science.Culture (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013); Gabriela Soto Laveaga, *Jungle Laboratories : Mexican Peasants, National Projects, and the Making of the Pill* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Alexander M. Nading, *Mosquito Trails: Ecology, Health, and the Politics of Entanglement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

own dynamic and changing (though no less Indigenous) ways of navigating and relating to the spaces they were tending around them.

Science and technology are rarely analyzed as critical components of any Indigenous nation's history. In 1933, John Collier addressed an audience of Diné (Navajo) parents and students upon their return from boarding school:

I have been listening to the discussion of the absorbingly interesting problems of how the Navajo Tribe can win a future for itself here on this Navajo land... and that problem, which is as interesting as any facing any people on earth, must be solved through the application of technologies and knowledge... the incalculable power and value of knowledge, and of the mastering of machinery and facts... The whole modern world depends upon the application of knowledge to the problems of life.³³⁷

He then shifted to speak directly to the students “as Indians.” He recalled that it was “only a few hundred years ago that the so-called white race emerged into that stage of history where men began to acquire knowledge through systematic investigation,” but all that was good and noble and moral about the white race had predated that development. And so too, all that was good about Indigenous people was to be found in their existence outside “that stage of history where men began to acquire knowledge through systematic investigation.” Outside our position as inexplicable objects, settler temporality and scholarship has excluded Indigenous peoples from the history of science, and this has often been mirrored in historiography and theory in Indigenous studies which either ignores science altogether or uncritically generalizes its definition so that it may describe both Indigenous and settler epistemologies—albeit with some

³³⁷ United States. Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Talk by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, John Collier, to the Returned Students of the Navajos at Program of the Returned Students, Fort Wingate, New Mexico, July 7, 1933.*

alterations in the Indigenous context, including the incorporation of religious and cultural knowledge.³³⁸

Insisting on the specificity and violence of settler science and describing the Indian Division as a repossession project spurred by imperialist nostalgia could be viewed as a macabre or perhaps ungenerous account of the New Deal and the United States in the twentieth century more broadly. My rendering of Progressive sciences and technologies as frontier sciences and technologies of self mobilized in a moment of imperialist nostalgia is not the typical narrative of the period, which tends to imagine the 1930s as the beginning of an era of reconciliation. This recasting is suggestive of the extent to which ongoing colonization is *the* defining feature of United States. I believe that to be the case, but this story could only ever be about the Eastern Band, and this account is their history, as well. Knowledge production and technological knowhow are rarely cast as critical components of Cherokee cultural and political formation. It is in that intervention in which I am most interested and through which find a far more encouraging narrative.

The Indian Division concerned Eastern Band lands, their bodies, politics, and relations. What I want to suggest is that in taking up Eastern Band bodies as technologies of empire, the Indian Division took up Eastern Band politics, history, and knowledge along with them. This top down application of scientific management was fractured on the complex landscape it sought to simplify and repossess. Indian Band initiatives were reworked in the service of Eastern Band

³³⁸ For an example of the latter, see Cajete, *Native Science*. I am extremely indebted to Cajete for his theories on Native science. I hope here to build on Native science as a contemporary epistemic category, a condition Cajete was integral in establishing, by recognizing the specificity of “science” as a non-Indigenous category historically and investigating what it means for science to be taken up in Indigenous contexts, especially in light of our history with it as a violently hegemonic tool of settler colonial hegemony.

visions of politically, culturally, and economically secure futures that were then being negotiated in the tribal council—the commodification of ethnicity in the service of economic security; the criteria for establishing belonging and authority in a post-reorganization world; educational and bodily autonomy; access and the meaning of infrastructural development, and so on. Indian Division enrollees, of course, failed to enact the intended directives of the program, even while their lands and bodies were conditioned by them. The result was a geographically, and perhaps more importantly, epistemologically, stratified Qualla Boundary, where frontier sciences and technologies were made through transgressing borders, and Eastern Band Native sciences and technologies were made through expanding political and economic horizons.

Epilogue

In 2016, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation made national headlines when they donated \$50,000 to the water protectors preventing the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock. This was the largest lump sum donated to them at the time.³³⁹ The Eastern Band, however, was not the only nation to contribute to Standing Rock. The protests and movement at Standing Rock constituted the largest international Indigenous political action in recorded history. I remember the pride I felt when every nation of the Haudenosaunee sent large delegations of people willing to put their bodies on the line in the defense of Dakota lands. Most nations took similar actions, many of whom had deep historical divides and histories of animosity that they put aside to attend to this issue. Even beyond Turtle Island, representatives of Indigenous peoples from all over the world—Palestine, New Zealand, Australia, nations and communities across Africa, Latin America, and Asia—all sent message of support and solidarity,

³³⁹ “Council Approves \$50,000 to Support Standing Rock Sioux.”

and travelled to join the water protectors.³⁴⁰ In the wake of the violent police action and similarly violent infrastructure development that followed, what we have been left with is not a failure. Just like the eerily similar Wounded Knee was not a failure of Indigenous resistance. It was a new moment of Indigenous resurgence and solidarity, and it has become a marker of hope for the decolonization of Indigenous resistance in the future.

The parallels between Standing Rock and the Indian Division are striking. Both are instances of different eras of U.S. frontier sciences and both mark a moment when “Indian” (or more accurately “Indigenous” today) solidified as an international category solidified. Both saw the imposition of settler infrastructures of domination and concerned the future of colonized land. In both cases, however, Native sciences flourished. Water protectors used their bodies as tools of resistance and Indigenous knowledge production. They claimed epistemic authority in their vulnerability and relation to land, their knowledge of settler scientific assessment, and in their claims to understand the needs of future generations. Eastern Band enrollees used their bodies in a similar way, as tools that could never be used in quite the way demanded by settler sciences by virtue of their humanity and Indigeneity.

There are also crucial differences. International Indigenous identity was taken up as a means of visibility and solidarity at Standing Rock, while “Indian” was a means of de-specification, racialization, and thingification in the Indian Division. Native science is an international category exactly because it is practiced when “Native” is a category that has currency. Much like western or settler science, it is made through a certain political and

³⁴⁰ Elbein, “The Youth Group That Launched a Movement at Standing Rock”; Wanshel, “New Zealand’s Native People Are Showing Their Support For Standing Rock In A Powerful Way”; “African Samburu Tribe in Solidarity with Standing Rock”; Zogby, “Palestinians And Standing Rock Native Americans Share A Struggle For Justice.”

epistemic order. It is not simply a question of Indigenous agency or traditional knowledge, though both are certainly a part of it. This epistemic order includes also settler colonialism, Indigenous governance, nested sovereignty, and all the numerous lands and frameworks built to have these seemingly contrary conditions co-exist. Jarrett Blythe contributed to an Eastern Band Native science as much as, if in different ways from, his cousin Fred Bauer. By the same token, Dakota water protectors were contributors to a Native science tradition in as much as Crow oil drillers or Salish whalers are today. Resisting the watchtower view, Native science proves itself to be as layered a project as the territory on which it was cultivated and which shaped it in return.

6. Walking to the Future in the Steps of Our Ancestors: Postwar Haudenosaunee Science, Epistemic Sovereignty, and Queer Time

On July 3, 1991, Onondagan Turtle Clan Faithkeeper Oren Lyons met former White House Press Secretary Bill Moyers on Onondagan land in upstate New York for an interview on Moyers's Public Access Television program. Lyons, a representative of the Haudenosaunee—known also as the Six Nations, or Iroquois—attempted to communicate critical Haudenosaunee political concepts and insight, like the Great Law of Peace, and Six Nations traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Yet he was repeatedly undercut, as Moyers steered their conversation instead toward crime, drugs and alcohol, and violence in Haudenosaunee territory (and all across Indian Country) as definitive markers of Indigenous modernity.³⁴¹ When Lyons turned the conversation back to the importance of TEK, Moyers exclaimed,

More and more people are turning to Natives, to Indians and saying, “Share your knowledge with us.” But don’t you think honestly, now, practically—it is too late? For how many years have we had the dominant note, the clarion trumpet of “conquer the earth,” you have dominion over the earth. We’re building cities to create habitats far-removed from this. Our mentality is part of that “civilization”

³⁴¹ TEK refers to a range of different Indigenous national and cultural bodies of knowledge and epistemologies that describe nonhuman and environmental relations, rooted in generations upon generations of Indigenous peoples living in and with such knowledge. Some commonalities between different varieties of contemporary TEK are a focus on systems thinking and interconnectivity, knowledge transmission that is oral and social, a lack of disciplinary boundary work, the inclusion of religious and moral insight, and environmental management practices which attempt to minimize the exhaustion of resources (including planting mutually beneficial crops, controlled burning, and migration). See Cassandra M. Brooks and Lisa T. Brooks, “The Reciprocity Principle and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Understanding the Significance of Indigenous Protest on the Presumpscot River,” *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* 3.2 (2010): 11–28; Lyn Carter, “Recovering Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK): Is It Always What It Seems?” *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* 5.1 (January 12, 2009): 16–25; Melissa K. Nelson, “Indigenous Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Persistence in Place,” in *The World of Indigenous North America*, ed. Robert Allen Warrior (New York: Routledge, 2015): 188–214.

now and what you're talking about is wonderful and wise, the stories are profound and instructive and yet irrelevant—to this modern world.³⁴²

Unperturbed, Lyons replied, “It may be irrelevant at the moment. We don’t preach here in this, our country, you know. We don’t proselytize . . . as a matter of fact, we try to protect what we have from intrusion.”³⁴³

The interview featured many exchanges of this kind, wherein Moyers proposed a “realistic” reading of contemporary affairs. Lyons for his part, playing the role of a diplomatic faithkeeper and Longhouse adherent, refused to preach, though he did allow himself the occasional incredulous and exasperated expression (see Appendix, figure 17). Lyons instead put forward a complex case for the importance of TEK and Haudenosaunee science and ways of relating, and he did so in accordance with a political philosophy that was obviously very foreign to Bill Moyers, who could not imagine an epistemic sovereignty that was not totalizing and absolute. In this chapter, I trace the Haudenosaunee epistemic sovereignty and TEK’s premodern queer temporality in the postwar period through the early 1990s. I first present the ontological, geographic, and political origins of the Haudenosaunee, and explore how these philosophies and senses of self were picked up and deployed in visions of how the Haudenosaunee Great Law ought to be interpreted in a settler colonial and toxic landscape.

In the wake of postwar industrial development that inhibited access to Haudenosaunee territories and contaminated the St. Lawrence River (turned seaway) and the bodies of those who lived with it, scientists, activists, and political and economic authorities in Haudenosaunee territories identified epistemic sovereignty—their subject relation to objects of study and right to

³⁴² Bill Moyers, “Oren Lyons the Faithkeeper,” Moyers and Company, 57:05, July 3, 1991, <http://billmoyers.com/content/oren-lyons-the-faithkeeper/>.

³⁴³ BillMoyers.com, *Oren Lyons the Faithkeeper*.

enforce (or protect) their knowledge as truth—as a key element in negotiating conflicting visions of decolonization and prosperity. Lyons represented a branch of Longhouse thought that advocated for a Native science (including TEK) approach to the question, that funneled their efforts into the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment, founded in 1987. This group produced scholarship that proposed definitions of scientific partnership, consultation and risk, and instituted studies rooted in Mohawk research paradigms that were aimed toward not only compiling data, but healing cultural and bodily trauma.

In 1992, Haudenosaunee delegates brought these discussions to an international stage at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED-Rio Earth Summit) and the international Indigenous Kari-Oca Conference. Both meetings were prompted by mounting fears of anthropogenic climate change and threats to global biodiversity, both of which constitute “our ancestors’ dystopia,” as environmental philosopher Kyle Whyte has written, in that they indicate a severe depletion in cultural markers, nonhuman kin, and freedom of movement for Indigenous people.³⁴⁴ U.N. representatives at the Rio Earth Summit feared this vision of dystopia for everyone else. In this context, TEK inhabited a queer discursive time-space, in which it acted as a “radical potentiality”—what Jose Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia* describes as “a thing that is present but not actually living in the present tense.”³⁴⁵

At the Earth Summit, the Indigenous lack of present tense was due to a supposed premodern state, what seemed to them to be an enviable orientation as delegates struggled to

³⁴⁴ Kyle Powys Whyte, “Our Ancestors’ Dystopia: Indigenous Conservation and the Anthropocene,” in *The Routledge Companion to the Environmental Humanities*, ed. Ursula K. Heise, Jon Christensen, and Michelle Niemann (London: Routledge, 2017).

³⁴⁵ José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 9.

imagine a future structured by a definition of humanity not set by the narrative of Western scientific progress. Theories of posthumanity abound in the climate change era. The Anthropocene, the proposed geological epoch marked by humanity's position as a prominent force in the earth's geosystems, has invited social scientific analyses of the end of humanity and nature alike.³⁴⁶ In this posthuman and post-nature view, landscapes have become more-than-human and less-than-nature, crafted by automated technologies and their wastes that now determine both human and natural history. This supposed faltering of the human-nature dichotomy has been mobilized to justify both continued environmental extraction and dispossession as well as to calls to "stay with the trouble" and elevate interspecies collaboration.³⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the Indigenous repudiation of present tense in the Kari-Oca Declaration, on the other hand, highlights the futurity inherent in radical potentialities. By refusing to assert the relevance of TEK in the modern world—echoing Oren Lyons's televised statement to Bill Moyers—the declaration, which Lyons helped to draft, queered western epistemic sovereignty. As such, the temporal positioning and epistemic virtues of TEK provide a critique of posthuman

³⁴⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty argues, for instance, that humanist boundaries between human and nature dissolve when the human figure becomes an integral component of nature as a global force, and natural history is then understood as synonymous with human history. See Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35.2 (January 1, 2009): 197–222. Importantly, he also argues that anthropocenic subjectivities are at odds with renderings of the postcolonial subject in postcolonial theory. See Chakrabarty, "Postcolonial Studies and the Challenge of Climate Change," *New Literary History* 43.1 (May 2012): 1–18. This kind of thinking was already circulating in the late 1980s in the work of environmentalists like Bill McKibben, who diagnosed the "end of nature" in humanity's expanded reach into a previously considered independent natural world. See McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989).

³⁴⁷ Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

models of the Anthropocene, even those that purport to undermine human-centeredness. In this chapter's coda, I will reflect on conceptions of posthuman geographies in the Anthropocene as seen from, and subverted by, the perspective of Haudenosaunee TEK.

The Great Law and Epistemic Sovereignty

The Haudenosaunee approach to making and sharing knowledge transnationally that emerged in the latter half the 20th century was framed around three origin stories. The first and oldest, the story of the Sky Woman, concerns the origins of Turtle Island. The Sky Woman originally lived in the Upper World, before she fell through the roots of the tree at the center of that world and fell to a water covered Earth, bringing with her tobacco, strawberries, corn, beans and squash. As she fell, the animals of the Earth dove down to the surface and created a continent for the Sky Woman to inhabit. After Sky Woman's death, part of her body was used by her sons to make the moon and the rest was buried in the Earth, continually providing nourishment for subsequent generations. Her sons in turn created many of the features of Turtle Island, both negative and positive, including humans and nonhumans.³⁴⁸ The physical and ontological entanglement of Haudenosaunees with nonhuman and environmental relations was always already an important facet of Haudenosaunee thought.

The second, which is a geographic origin story, narrates the story of the people's migration to the Northeast and the emergence of the individual nations of the Haudenosaunee. The Five Nations (later Six Nations when the Tuscarora joined the confederacy in 1722) did not become truly the Mohawk, Oneida, Seneca, Onondaga, and Cayuga until they settled in the region south of the St. Lawrence River, north of the Suquehanna, and east of the Niagara

³⁴⁸ See Shenandoah, *Skywoman*.

peninsula. Originating in the Southwest, their long journey saw several factions break away, establishing the Cherokee, Pawnee, and other nations. The Six Nations came to be defined by the lands they lived with and their position relative to one another. The Onyota'a-ka (Oneida), the People of the Standing Stone, are the western most nation named for the guiding stones of their territory. The Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk), the People of the Flint and the Keepers of the Eastern Door, named for the flint that form the basis of their trading networks and technologies, are responsible for guarding Haudenosaunee territory against southeastern nations. The Onondage (Onondaga), the People of the Hills, live on the rolling hills at the heart of Haudenosaunee territory. The Gayohkohnyoh (Cayuga), the Dwellers of the Swamp Lands, live in the marshlands west of the Onondaga, and the Onondawahgah (Seneca), the People of the Great Hill, are the Keepers of the Western Door.³⁴⁹

When exactly the two previous origins occurred is not recorded or specified, though our nations were settled in these territories by at least 1000 B.C.E.³⁵⁰ The final origin story, the origin of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Great Law of Peace, is more recent, dating back to the mid 15th century.³⁵¹ Kaia'nereh:kowa, the Great Law of Peace, is the constitution of the Six Nations. Ending a period of war that was caused by a lack of "good-minded" leadership, the Great Law of Peace, which includes 117 articles recorded on wampum belts, detailed the terms of the alliance between the Six Nations, including specific roles each would play and checks and balances on both the transnational and national levels. The qualities of good-mindedness, as exemplified in the ideal qualities of a chief were described in the Great Law as:

³⁴⁹ See George-Kanentiio, *Iroquois on Fire*, 2.

³⁵⁰ Ibid, 3.

³⁵¹ Wallace, *White Roots of Peace*.

Being mentors of the people for all time. The thickness of their skin shall be seven spans nine [tsatahniironkarakeh], which is to say that they shall be proof against anger; offensive action and criticism. Their hearts full of peace and good will, and their minds filled with a yearning for the League, with endless patience. Their firmness shall be tempered with a tenderness for their people. Neither anger nor fury shall find lodging in their minds and all their words and actions shall be marked by calm deliberation.³⁵²

The Great Law was brought to the Haudenosaunee by the Great Peacemaker in order to avoid the future abuses of power and belief in the inherent right to dominion over others (human and otherwise).

The Great Law sets the organization of the democratic council fire between the Six Nations, medicines and their institutional production, the qualities of proper leaders, the establishment and function of the Warrior Society, and the role of clan mothers as the ultimate arbiters of governance. The second wampum reads:

Roots have spread out from the Tree of Great peace [the white pine tree representing the confederacy]: one to the north, one to the east, one to the south and one to the west. These are the Great White Roots and their nature is Peace and Strength. If any man or any nation outside the Five Nations Shall obey the laws of the Great Peace (Gayanerekowa) and shall make this known to the statements of the League, they may trace back the roots of the Tree. If their minds are clean and if they are obedient and promise to obey the wishes of the Council of the League, they will be welcomed to take shelter beneath the Tree of the Long Leaves [author note: more accurate translation would be “ever fresh leaves,” i.e. pine].³⁵³

The Great Law of Peace establishes the sovereignty of the Six Nations individually and includes multiple wampums for not only how to initiate those who wish to follow the Great Law, as seen above, but also many more specifically on military and diplomatic mechanisms to encourage peace and good-mindedness with and in other nations. It also sets the rules for the Warrior

³⁵² Ohontsa Films: Mohawk Nation News, *Gayanerekow: The Great Law of Peace as Brought to the Confederacy of the Iroquois by Degawawida the Peacemaker*, wampum 24.

³⁵³ Ibid, wampum 2.

Society, whose primary functions include “protection, defense, and welfare of the people. These duties may take many forms, such as keeping the peace, teaching, speaking to the people, repossessing lost lands, maintaining human rights, diplomatic relations with other native nations and any other work that promotes the welfare of the people.”³⁵⁴

The Haudenosaunee continued to promote and work within the framework of the Great Law in dealings with Europeans. The guswhenta, or the two-row wampum, was extended to the Dutch in 1613 and later extended to the young Canadian and United States settler states. The two-row wampum, featuring two distinct purple rows separated by white, “embodies the philosophy that two nations and traditions can co-exist and influence one another while demonstrating a mutual respect that resists efforts to control the other’s destiny.”³⁵⁵ This has often been envisioned as a canoe and sailboat travelling downstream together. However, settler approaches to relations with Indigenous peoples and lands made canoe travel across Haudenosaunee territory a challenge going forward. The state of New York had managed by 1789 to secure seven million acres of land from the Haudenosaunee collectively, and by the mid-nineteenth century Haudenosaunee lands were surrounded on all sides by railroads, densely settled counties, and increasingly industrialized canals.³⁵⁶ The ability to travel freely through the lands of the Haudenosaunee had been an important facet of the Great Peacemaker’s message—the Great Law includes provisions for important status of runners to transmit information, for example—but by the second half of the 19th century, their lands had been reduced to island reservations.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, wampum 36.

³⁵⁵ Fox et al., *What Are We Leaving for the 7th Generation?*, 21.

³⁵⁶ See Hauptman, *Conspiracy of Interests*.

Haudenosaunee experiences with the disastrous impact of the sort of western scientific management of land that would be later be questioned at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 have been numerous. Some of the most prominent issues concerned the St. Lawrence River. In 1896, the New York state legislature formed the St. Lawrence Power Company which was to develop infrastructure capable of utilizing the St. Lawrence as a source of energy.³⁵⁷ Settler interest in the river, which is central to Haudenosaunee ceremony, food, and sense of self, had previously been restricted to trade routes, but hydroelectric power and seaway capacity greatly increased its economic viability at the turn of the century. Ten years after the St. Lawrence Power Company was founded in 1896, Ontario Hydro was formed, and in 1930 New York governor Franklin D. Roosevelt urged the state legislature to pass the Power Authority Act, which would establish agencies capable of cooperating with Ontario Hydro in the international St. Lawrence Seaway project. The seaway was imagined as a source of cheap energy in the absence of monopoly that would “preserve and enhance the scenic beauty” of Niagara Falls and the St. Lawrence.³⁵⁸

The St. Lawrence Seaway posed numerous threats for the Haudenosaunee, even before industrial contamination followed in its wake. The Akwesasne Mohawk sought legal recourse for their land disputes against the St. Lawrence Power Company in 1929, but their case was dismissed for want of jurisdiction.³⁵⁹ Later in 1954, a band of Mohawks occupied traditional territories in the Mohawk Valley, west of Albany for two years before their longhouse was burned to the ground by local authorities.³⁶⁰ These legal measures and protest occupations in the

³⁵⁷ Hauptman, *The Iroquois Struggle for Survival*, 128.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *Deere v. St. Lawrence River Power Co.* 32 F.2d 550 (2d Cir. 1929).

³⁶⁰ George-Kanentiio, *Iroquois on Fire*, 32.

early postwar period were framed in vocabularies of freedom of religion, claiming that the purchase of territory around the St. Lawrence River in preparation for the seaway prevented Mohawk religious practice.³⁶¹

The Great Depression and World War II delayed congressional approval of the St. Lawrence Seaway, though land had been set aside for it for decades. In 1954, the Senate approved the Wiley-Dondero Act, establishing the Seaway Development Corporation. It was then that construction began, and it was a massive undertaking, exceeded in size in the United States only by the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River. The St. Lawrence Seaway consists of dredged lake beds and a series of deep canals capable of lifting ships six-hundred feet as they travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes. It also includes two hydroelectric dams, the Moses-Saunders Power House and Long Sault Spillway Dam, both of which were built on Mohawk lands. Furthermore, New York State transportation officials were forced to reroute Route 37 through Mohawk lands due to this seaway construction. 130 acres of Mohawk land was claimed to build the Cornwall-Massena International Bridge as a result. Between the United States and Canada, the project cost approximately one billion dollars.³⁶²

The new source of hydroelectric power drew a number of industrial companies to the area, including General Motors, The Aluminum Company of America, and Reynolds Metals, and between these three companies alone well over 2,000 jobs were created for local (largely non-

³⁶¹ For more on shifting legal land reclamation tactics as they relate to Indigenous religious freedom, sovereign status, and science, see McNally, "NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BEYOND THE FIRST AMENDMENT."

³⁶² Hauptman, *The Iroquois Struggle for Survival*, 128.

Haudenosaunee) residents.³⁶³ General Motors set up their facility in Massena, New York, directly upstream from the Akwesasne (St. Regis) Mohawk community, leaving the Mohawks disproportionately vulnerable to the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) that the company pumped into the St. Lawrence between 1959 and 1980.³⁶⁴ PCBs were a component of hydraulic fluids used in dye-casting machines.³⁶⁵ The U.S. Congress banned domestic production of PCBs in 1978 (two years before General Motors stopped pumping it into the river) due to evidence that they were toxic to humans, potentially leading to skin conditions like chloracne, dermal and ocular lesions, hormone irregularities, lowered immune responses, birth defects, poor cognitive development, and cancer.³⁶⁶

How does one practice good-mindedness while being poisoned by the water that has been a key element of group-identification for thousands of years? How could the Warrior Society teach, recover stolen land, and spread the Great Law when the sovereignty of the Six Nations had been the object of termination policies for centuries? Finally, how can one maintain the Great Law of Peace and its intended goal to prevent human abuse and claims to total dominion in the context of a settler empire that was premised on doing just that? These were the questions posed to Haudenosaunee chiefs, religious authorities, tribal councils, and scientists in the 1980s and 90s. Many located the answers in legal and economic sovereignty. The Oneida, for example, had initial successes in a series of land reclamation cases, particularly the Oneida I case, which set

³⁶³ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Documents, “St. Lawrence River At Massena Remedial Action Plan,” II-12.

³⁶⁴ “GENERAL MOTORS (CENTRAL FOUNDRY DIVISION) Site Profile.”

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ “ATSDR - Public Health Statement.”

the precedent that Indian land cases were under federal jurisdiction due to treaty status.³⁶⁷ Others, pejoratively labeled “Bingo Chiefs,” sought to alleviate poverty by investing in the casino as a source of revenue, and in refusing to acknowledge the settler border that runs through their territory, leading to what Canadian and U.S. police authorities label and prosecute as contraband and smuggling.³⁶⁸ Two groups, however, sought answers specifically in their interpretation of the Great Law. Longhouse chiefs and religious authorities and the Warrior Society, both of whom were authorized by the Great Law and empowered clan mothers to take action, diverged on the question of how the Great Law of Peace should be read in a settler colonial context, especially one in which settler sciences and relations to land were endangering not only Haudenosaunee political sovereignty, but the integrity and survival of Haudenosaunee lands and nonhuman relations.

The Warrior Society took up its centuries old obligation to take military action when the political and epistemic sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee is threatened. In 1990, the Warrior Society occupied disputed Mohawk lands in Oka for 78 days.³⁶⁹ Oka, land near what is also known as Quebec, was especially important as a burial site for Mohawk ancestors and its acquisition had been protested through legal and other means for decades.³⁷⁰ In 1989, when local courts approved Club de golf d’Oka plans to expand a golf course onto these disputed lands, the

³⁶⁷ Oneida Indian Nation of New York v. County of Oneida.

³⁶⁸ For recent popular coverage of Akwesasne and its negative and deeply racist and colonial associations with organized crime, see “At Akwesasne, Mohawks Are Caught in the Middle of U.S., Canadian Border Procedures”; Sommerstein and Akwesasne, “‘We Didn’t Put That Border Here’ - Mohawks Fight a Problem of Geography and Identity.”

³⁶⁹ See York, *People of the Pines*.

³⁷⁰ Canada, *Kanehsatake*.

Warrior Society headed by Kanehsatà:ke Mohawk clan mothers and other women authorities occupied the area in protest. When the Quebec police force then deployed concussion grenades and tear gas in an effort to force them to disperse, the clan mothers authorized warriors to take up their arsenal, resulting in a 15-minute shoot out and the Quebec police retreating. During this original standoff, there were approximately 30 warriors behind the barricades.³⁷¹ That number later swelled to nearly six hundred as Warrior Society Mohawks from Akwesasne, Kanesatake, and Kahnawake joined in the coming months³⁷² At the same time, other Mohawk Warrior factions blockaded the Mercier Bridge and Routes 132, 138, and 207, resulting in massive local shutdowns and confusion.³⁷³ Quebec was forced to request federal military and Mounty assistance.³⁷⁴

The Mohawks at Oka ultimately stood down on their own accord months later after Kahnawake groups negotiated a stand down at Mercier Bridge, again at the behest of clan mother leadership.³⁷⁵ The golf course expansion was ultimately cancelled, and the federal Canadian government purchased the land from developers for \$5.3 million dollars.³⁷⁶ What is now called the “Oka Crisis” in Canadian historiography concerned a disagreement over leadership, land management, and the proper way to establish consensus. Oka officials were not following the Great Law—they were exacting dominion over Mohawk lands and peoples and they had failed

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² Winegard, “The Forgotten Front of the Oka Crisis.”

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Canada, *Kanehsatake*.

³⁷⁵ See Leblanc, “AT THE SACRED INTERSECTION OF POLITICS AND WAR.”

³⁷⁶ Lackenbauer, “Carrying the Burden of Peace.”

tests of diplomacy and good will. The Warrior Society interpreted literally the Great Law mandate that in the event that negotiation and sovereignty are undermined, military action and forced acceptance of the Great Law of Peace is an acceptable path forward. It worked.

At the same time, traditional Longhouse peace chiefs and religious authorities like Oren Lyons interpreted the Great Law in a different way, focusing on the stipulations for peace chiefs. In thinking about the rule of a peace chief in a settler colonial context, they turned increasingly toward the two earlier origin stories as framing narratives, in which the natural relations are literally related through the connecting Sky Woman and national identities were made through identification with environments.³⁷⁷ In accordance they developed a vocabulary and practice of Haudenosaunee science and TEK, and a radical reading of epistemic sovereignty in the Great Law. While the Warrior society would take up questions of land dispossession, Longhouse peace chiefs targeted the ever-increasing toxicity and contamination of the St. Lawrence River. In 1985 Ward Stone, a wildlife pathologist for New York State made a bold pronouncement in his independent and case breaking report on the toxicity of the St. Lawrence River near Akwesasne: “Akwesasne is the worst place in the world to be a duck.”³⁷⁸ PCB contamination from waste disposal in the St. Lawrence had become so acute that turtles and ducks in the river could register as toxic waste on their own.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ In 1987 Sam Gill reported that he could find no evidence that any American Indian group recognized a Mother Earth goddess until the twentieth century, at which time the goddess was co-constructed by both Indians and academics. This thesis only works if we apply a very limited definition to the term goddess. See Gill, *Mother Earth: An American Story*.

³⁷⁸ Tomsho, “Dumping Grounds: Indian Tribes Contend with Some of the Worst of America’s Pollution,” A-1.

³⁷⁹ Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment Documents. “Superfund Cleanup at Akwesasne: A Case Study in Environmental Injustice,” 14.

In 1987 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed the General Motors facility on a Superfund list, indicating that an investigation was a high priority. Over seven thousand people in St. Lawrence County were employed in manufacturing at the time the EPA conducted its first environmental impact study in 1990. That was of a total population of one hundred and sixteen thousand.³⁸⁰ In 1991 the EPA found that General Motor's contaminated Superfund site near Akwesasne would cost nearly one hundred and thirty-eight million dollars to address. That made it the most expensive Superfund site in the country. There were no plans for on-site treatment. Clean up required the removal of PCB sediments from the river, which GM completed in 1995, eight years after Ward's announcement that Akwesasne had become the worst place in the world to be a duck.³⁸¹

The contaminated waters at Akwesasne posed the same threat to humans as they did to ducks. The same year Ward Stone broke the story about conditions at Akwesasne, Katsi Cook, a Mohawk midwife and clinical instructor at University of Albany, spearheaded a research study for Akwesasne women to test PCB levels in breast milk called the Mothers' Milk Project. Cook wrote, "You're not going to find a lot of women that went away to the university and then came back to the community with degrees in environmental engineering. It's hard to get the women involved although they are so impacted by all of this... Now [with the Mothers' Milk Project] women are learning to apply science in their everyday lives."³⁸² Cook's project involved her own body, which was also at risk, and was conducted over the course of many years, during which

³⁸⁰ *Ibid*, II-14.

³⁸¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Documents, "EPA Selects Cleanup Action for Contaminated Soils and Sediments at the General Motors Superfunding Site in Massena, New York."

³⁸² LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 19.

time she not only tested PCB levels, but she also worked as a midwife advocating for traditional births outside of biomedical procedures in hospitals as a means of “rebirthing” the Mohawk Nation.³⁸³ Ultimately, Cook’s test results showed that as mothers ate less fish from the St. Lawrence, their PCB levels lowered to a level that she deemed safe enough for continued breast feeding, and though both she and her test subjects profoundly resented that their usual eating and ceremony habits had been disrupted, Cook saw a beauty in their response.³⁸⁴ In 1990 interview, she said, “The beauty of the response of the mothers is that they saw everything in a bigger picture. Many of us bless the seeds, pray to corn, and continue a one-on-one relationship with the earth.”³⁸⁵

At that time, 1987, Cook, along with Seneca scientist Henry Lickers and others, had already founded the Akwesasne Task Force on the Environment (ATFE) in 1987, which would publish extensively on the question of how exactly researchers should go about knowing the conditions of Haudenosaunees and their lands. In 1990, the ATFE compiled, “Superfund Cleanup at Akwesasne: A Case Study in Environmental Injustice,” which outlined the issues on the General Motors Superfund site. In the case study, the task force connected the Haudenosaunee experience to a wider history of environmental racism, but they insisted that the case was altered by the Indigenous context. At Akwesasne, the EPA was responsible not only to

³⁸³ Fitzgerald et al., “Fish Consumption and Breast Milk PCB Concentrations among Mohawk Women at Akwesasne”; Cook, “Berry Plants in Women’s Medicine;” *Ibid*, 19.

³⁸⁴ On the changes to Mohawk diets forced by St. Lawrence toxicity, director of the environmental health branch of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne said, “Many of the families used to eat 20-25 fish meals a month. It’s now said that the traditional Mohawk diet is spaghetti” (LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 18).

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

a community dealing with toxics, but with a community with a long history of identifying with and making knowledge through its relationship to the environment that was now unsafe. The ATFE advocated instead for a holistic risk assessment approach that weighed cultural and health-based parameters equally, and they lobbied for the involvement of Akwesasne residents at every stage of the process, from planning to dissemination, of the process.³⁸⁶ The ATFE developed partnership models that would protect Mohawks from the imposition of EPA assessments, and that would at the same time, make space for the EPA to take up Mohawk methodology. Mary Arquette and Maxine Cole, both members of the ATFE with professional scientific degrees wrote, “The Creator has given us the duty of maintaining peaceable relations between the other nations of the natural world and ourselves.”³⁸⁷ They argued that the Haudenosaunee had an obligation to maintain the integrity and Good Mindedness of not only their own nations, but of those nations and creatures (human and otherwise) with which they share the world.

TEK in Space-Time before 1992

The link cultivated between indigeneity and sound environmental relations was not new in the 1990s, particularly not in North America. The roots of the “ecological Indian” imaginary—the popular trope in settler discourse that envisions Indigenous land practices and religious traditions as inherently non-disruptive and harmonious—can be traced in part to turn-of-the-century shifts in conceptions of nature.³⁸⁸ As seen in Chapter 5, following economic and

³⁸⁶ Arquette, et al. “Holistic Risk-Based Environmental Decision Making: A Native Perspective,” 259.

³⁸⁷ Arquette and Cole, “Restoring our Relationships for the Future.” 338.

³⁸⁸ Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*; Cronon, *Uncommon Ground*.

environmental crises in the first half of the 20th century, like the Dust Bowl and the 1929 US stock market crash, progressive reformers like John Collier, head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the administration under Roosevelt, viewed indigeneity as a balm for the ills of western civilization; something to be preserved and circumscribed for posterity, much like the national park lands established at the time.³⁸⁹ That orientation soon became a staple of environmentalist discourse, as evident in the “Keep America Beautiful” campaign’s infamous public service announcement from 1971, featuring Iron Eyes Cody as the “crying Indian chief.”³⁹⁰ This is not to say that Indigenous people have not taken up the cause of protection of nonhumans against colonial abuses. The “ecological Indian” is a distortion of Indigenous practice, not a fabrication. Indigenous focus on environmental activism as a core political and ethical value was well

³⁸⁹ John Collier, *On the Gleaming Way: Navajos, Eastern Pueblos, Zunis, Hopis, Apaches, and Their Land; and Their Meanings to the World* (Denver: Sage Books, 1962).

³⁹⁰ “The Crying Indian: ‘Keep America Beautiful’ Commercial,” *NBC Nightly News*, New York, NY: NBC Universal, October 15, 1978. In this ad, Iron Eyes Cody, a Sicilian-American actor, rows his canoe along a pristine river. As he travels, lush greens and browns give way to bleak gray in his encounters with industrial landscapes, skyscrapers and iron bridges. He steps onto the paved shore of the river and observes bustling city traffic and urban life. As the passenger of a passing car suddenly throws litter at his feet, the camera zooms in to see him shed a single stoic tear. The advertisement was released during a period in which the appropriation of Indigenous arts and religions in US settler counterculture and the environmental movement was at its height. The Keep America Beautiful PSA marks a shift in settler notions of Indigenous people that parallels a shift in their understanding of the land. Both the crying chief and the natural environment were at risk of disappearing under concrete, steel, and trash. As Chapter 5 argued, at the turn of the 20th century, reservations and national parks circumscribed Native peoples and land, respectively, for rational management through science (anthropology and ecology). Previously, both Indigenous people and the lands they inhabited were understood as part of a savage wilderness. Indigenous people and land have historically been conflated in the settler imagination, which has justified colonization by erasing Indigenous agency and territorial claims. For more on US settler conceptions of wilderness, nature, and the environment see Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). For more on US settler conceptions of Indigenous people see Robert F. Berkhofer, *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Knopf, 1978.)

established by the time those romantic tropes emerged. Indeed, the first protest (and later armed conflict) concerning a dam project was on the Presumpscot River in what is now also known as Maine, and was staged in Boston by Polin, a Wabanaki leader. In 1739, he proclaimed: “I have to say something concerning the river which I belong to.”³⁹¹

The international stage for these protests emerged in the mid-1970s and Native nations and communities lobbied the United Nations for political recognition throughout the decade. Then newly established, the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations—whose express purpose was to protect the fundamental freedoms of minority Indigenous populations in a postcolonial landscape—first met with Indigenous delegates in Geneva on July 5, 1982. Haudenosaunee representatives Oren Lyons and Cayuga Bear Clan Mother Carol Jacobs questioned the working group’s priorities. Lyons later recalled:

We went to Geneva—the Six Nations, the great Lakota nation—as representatives of Indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere, and what was the message that we gave? There is a hue and a cry for human rights—human rights, they said, for all people. And the Indigenous people said: what of the rights of the natural world? Where is the seat for the Buffalo or the Eagle? Who is representing them here in this forum? . . . We are Indigenous people to this land. We are like a conscience; we are small, but we are not a minority; we are the landholders, we are the land keepers; we are not a minority, for our brothers are the entire natural world and we are by far the majority.³⁹²

When Bill Moyers, in 1991, observed that more and more people were turning to Indigenous knowledge, he was right in theory. While there had been increasing awareness of TEK—or at least, a romanticized settler view of Indigenous knowledge—for years there had also been a great deal of friction. Native knowledge could not be extracted from Native people and politics, the survival of which unsettled the neocolonial landscape.

³⁹¹ Brooks and Brooks, “The Reciprocity Principle and Traditional Ecological Knowledge,” 12.

³⁹² Oren Lyons, “Our Mother Earth,” in *Seeing God Everywhere: Essays on Nature and the Sacred* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, Inc., 2003), 105.

Rio's Great Epistemic Break

A year later, the fragility of that landscape came into sharper focus. The agenda and principles developed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit were the first produced by the UN to officially recognize the value of Indigenous “traditional knowledge and practices.” And, unlike the 1972 Stockholm Conference, the Rio Earth Summit explicitly addressed climate change, and expressed a deep anxiety about its ramifications.³⁹³ The latter can be explained by the growing visibility and weight of climate change research in the 1980s and the founding of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, whose findings supported the reality of anthropogenic climate change and threats to global biodiversity.³⁹⁴

From June 3–14, 1992, the UNCED brought together 178 countries, representatives of 1,500 nongovernmental organizations, and a press corps of approximately 7,000 at the Rio de Janeiro convention center in Brazil to discuss the impending crisis. While the tone struck by the Rio Earth Summit was positively cheery in comparison to subsequent meetings on climate change and global environmental health, then-UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali did not shy away from the monumental shift in discourse and self-understanding that climate change would necessitate. He boldly pronounced in his opening remarks:

In the past, the individual was surrounded by nature so abundant that its immensity was terrifying. . . . All victories have been victories over nature, from the wild beasts menacing the cavemen to the distances separating communities. . . . Yet, “the time of the finite world” has come to an end . . . there are no more oases to discover, no more “new frontiers.” Progress, then, is not necessarily

³⁹³ Stanley Johnson and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992: Rio de Janeiro), *The Earth Summit: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)* (London: Graham & Trotman/Martinus Nijhoff, 1993), 415.

³⁹⁴ Spencer R. Weart, *The Discovery of Global Warming* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 173.

compatible with life. . . . It is this great epistemological break which the Earth Summit may ultimately symbolize for historians.³⁹⁵

Progress—as the ultimate political good, core tenet of truth-making, driver of empires, and author even of the UN—would need to be abandoned for more humble objectives. But the epistemological break Boutros-Ghali predicted never came to be; or, if anything, it was more of a fracture, the effects of which remain to be seen.³⁹⁶ And yet, the provocation did invite imagined alternatives.

Later in his opening address, Boutros-Ghali characterized Indigenous people as “repositories of much of the traditional knowledge and wisdom from which modernization has

³⁹⁵ Johnson and UNCED, *The Earth Summit*, 55. Brazil) United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Rio de Janeiro, *The Earth Summit: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)*, International Environmental Law and Policy Series (London ; Boston: Graham & Trotman/Martinus Nijhoff, 1993), 55.

³⁹⁶ Perhaps the most immediate evidence against such an epistemic break was the fact that the George H.W. Bush administration, although declaring the US a “leader, not a follower” in environmental protection, signed only a watered down version of the Rio Agreement. My assessment is based in part on the use of “sustainable development” as a keyword at Rio, and the reformulated commitment to a universal progress narrative in “leapfrogging” discourses that also emerged in the early 1990s. For early examples of these discussions see Ashoka Mody and Carl Dahlman, “Performance and Potential of Information Technology: An International Perspective,” *World Development* 20.12 (December 1992): 1703–1719; Cristiano Antonelli, *The Diffusion of Advanced Telecommunications in Developing Countries* (Paris: OECD Publications and Information Center, 1991). To this day, when policy makers in the Global North talk about climate change mitigation and the Global South, they do so within the framework of “leapfrogging,” meaning they are primarily concerned with so-called developing countries “catching up” in such a way that bypasses the especially carbon heavy stages of development marked by previous technological and economic change in the Global North. For more recent examples see Richard Perkins, “Environmental Leapfrogging in Developing Countries: A Critical Assessment and Reconstruction,” *Natural Resources Forum* 27.3 (August 2003): 177–188; Rainer Walz, “Competences for Green Development and Leapfrogging in Newly Industrializing Countries,” *International Economics and Economic Policy* 7.2–3 (August 2010): 245–265; Hisham Zerriffi and Elizabeth Wilson, “Leapfrogging over Development? Promoting Rural Renewables for Climate Change Mitigation,” *Energy Policy*, 38.4 (April 2010): 1689–1700; OECD, *International Science and Technology Cooperation: Towards Sustainable Development* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2001).

separated most of us.”³⁹⁷ That is, TEK was framed as exclusively premodern—and, as an innate feature of premodern humanity rather than something that is made or practiced. Produced at the close of the summit, Agenda 21 (the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests) mentioned Indigenous peoples over 100 times, most often in lists of vulnerable populations to be protected. In the objectives of Chapter 26, which dealt exclusively with Indigenous peoples, Agenda 21 granted: “the lands of Indigenous people and their communities should be protected from activities that are environmentally unsound, or that Indigenous people concerned consider to be socially and culturally inappropriate.”³⁹⁸ Most of Chapter 26 covered legal recognition and protection for Indigenous peoples and the ways in which “sustainable development” could be achieved without violating the UN’s commitment to Indigenous recognition. However, the fact that Indigenous peoples needed the same protection as the environment precluded them from Boutros-Ghali’s vision of human history as the story of human domination over nature, and this was reflected in the document’s treatment of Indigenous people as objects and resources of and for international policy.

Native Space at Kari-Oca

Held just before the Rio Earth Summit, the Indigenous conference on the environment at Kari-Oca was attended by representatives from over 200 communities, tribes, and nations from

³⁹⁷ Johnson and UNCED, *The Earth Summit*, 55.

³⁹⁸ Agenda 21: Program of Action for Sustainable Development; Rio Declaration On Environment and Development; Statement of Forest Principles: The Final Text of Agreements Negotiated By Governments At the United Nations Conference On Environment and Development (UNCED), June 3–14, 1992, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil (New York: United Nations Dept. of Public Information, 1993).

Asia, Africa, Europe, the South Pacific, and the Americas. Together they drafted the Indigenous Peoples Earth Charter addressing Indigenous rights, territory, development strategies, biodiversity, and science. In the Kari-Oca Declaration, they stressed that the authority of Indigenous peoples lay in their positionality, which caused the UN in chapter 26 to categorize indigeneity as vulnerable and in need of protection. A powerful statement of collective futurity—“We, the Indigenous Peoples, walk to the future in the steps of our ancestors”—bookended the declaration. Indigeneity was framed in terms of rootedness: “We cannot be removed from our lands. We, the Indigenous Peoples are connected by the circle of life to our lands and environments.”³⁹⁹ The declaration claimed authority on the basis of vulnerability and non-universal knowledge—a markedly different source than that claimed by the UN.

In 1992, a journalist traveling with Haudenosaunee delegates to the Kari-Oca Earth Conference in Brazil was asked by Maria Pinta, a Mapuche woman, to inform the elders at Kari-Oca that the Native Mapuche people were still alive, despite Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet’s strategic announcement of their extinction in the 1980s.⁴⁰⁰ In the 19th and 20th centuries, and now in the 21st, the non-native notion of Native cultures and peoples vanishing was ubiquitous.⁴⁰¹ This vanishing race theory, discussed previously in Part I, is rooted in social Darwinism, posits that Indigenous people will either be displaced by superior white societies, or

³⁹⁹ World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment, and Development, “Kari-Oca Declaration and Indigenous Peoples’ Earth Charter,” Kari-Oca, Brazil, May 25–30, 1992.

⁴⁰⁰ Elisabet Sahtouris, “Rio: The Indigenous Way,” *Lifeweb*, 1992, <https://ratical.org/LifeWeb/Articles/rio.html>.

⁴⁰¹ Warren, “Vanishing Point.”

assimilate and therefore no longer be Indigenous.⁴⁰² Ongoing genocide and assimilation policies fuel that misconception, but it remains a categorical truism in the colonial mindset and its expression in the human sciences, which, in the words of anthropologist Johannes Fabian, took Indigenous peoples as objects in the “there and then” to be known by the “here and now.”⁴⁰³ Indigenous people are denied history as they are frozen in a moment of pre-contact; classifying indigeneity as fragile and fleeting furthermore reinforces non-Indigenous claims to land and authority.

Due to the prominence of the vanishing Indian myth, when Indigenous communities demanded rights and recognition at decibels too loud to ignore, they could only do so as inexplicably premodern subjects somehow emerging in late modernity. It is in this sense that TEK, as held by Native people, acted as a potentiality in the early 90’s. TEK was acknowledged as existing, but it could not exist in the present tense. Jose Muñoz writes,

The queer futurity that I am describing is not an end but an opening or horizon. Queer utopia is a modality of critique that speaks to quotidian gestures as laden with potentiality. The queerness of queer futurity, like the blackness of a black radical tradition, is a relational and collective modality of endurance and support.⁴⁰⁴

Like queerness, indigeneity is a resource for making futurity, in that its (im)possible existence is predicated on, and constantly remade by, a collective modality of endurance and support. It arises from the continuous and difficult work of Indigenous peoples walking toward that opening, or horizon.

⁴⁰² Robert E. Bieder, *Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986).

⁴⁰³ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 151.

⁴⁰⁴ Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 91.

Queer Time and Epistemic Sovereignty

In 1995, the HETF presented an “Indigenous strategy for environmental restoration” to the UN at the Summit of Elders, which was the first comprehensive Indigenous response to the UN’s Agenda 21.⁴⁰⁵ In 2002 and again in 2012, the HETF participated in anniversary meetings of the Kari-Oca Conference. They have altered the terms under which they interact with settler scientists and academics, forging epistemic partnership models with forestry institutions in Canada and with the EPA in the US.⁴⁰⁶ However, after all this, even in the larger global context, HETF scientists, researchers, and spiritual advisers refused to proselytize.⁴⁰⁷ In 2007, James T. Ransom, the current executive director of the HETF, and a former Akwesasne Chief (2003-2010), said,

“The one thing that I’ve learned over the years about it [sovereignty] is that it can become the longest four-letter swear word that I know when somebody abuses it.

⁴⁰⁵ Keith Johnson, Noel J. Brown and Christopher D. Stephens, “Summit of the Elders: Haudenosaunee Environmental Restoration Strategy, *Akwesasne Notes New Series* 1.3–4 (Fall 1995): 66–69,” https://ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/EldersSummit.html.

⁴⁰⁶ F. Henry Lickers, “Haudenosaunee Environmental Action Plan,” *Akwesasne Notes New Series* 1.3–4 (Fall 1995): 16–17, https://ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/HEnvActPlan.html; Mary Arquette, Maxine Cole, Katsi Cook, Brenda LaFrance, Margaret Peters, James Ransom, Elvera Sargent, Vivian Smoke, and Arlene Stairs, “Holistic Risk-Based Environmental Decision Making: A Native Perspective,” *Environmental Health Perspectives* 110 (April 2002): 259–64.

⁴⁰⁷ Daniel R. Wildcat’s *Red Alert! Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2009) provides a counterexample, here. But even his promotion of TEK provides a critique of western modes of political and epistemic authority. Wildcat worked extensively with Vine Deloria Jr. and Steve Pavlik in the early 2000s, and all three advocated Native sciences as ardent critique of Western scientific hegemony and moral degeneracy. See Vine Deloria, Steve Pavlik, and Daniel R. Wildcat, *Destroying Dogma: Vine Deloria, Jr. and His Influence on American Society* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2006); Vine Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum 1995); Vine Deloria, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 2001); For more on the politics of Indigenous refusal, see Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

Particularly when individuals defend inappropriate actions by hiding behind it, that's the danger for us."⁴⁰⁸ Haudenosaunee sciences were being produced and continue to be within a discourse that questions the normativity and settler colonized definition of sovereignty itself.

However briefly, in 1992 the wisdom of the fundamental basis of Western science and the broader claim of modernity—human sovereignty over nature—were questioned. Bill Moyers's depiction of modernity as cityscapes and dominating civilizations, and Boutros-Ghali's view of human history as scientific progress through the conquest of nature, both positioned Western science as the normative structure for all human history and territory. Western epistemic sovereignty functions according to a hierarchy of agents and objects of knowledge. Its internal logic demands theoretical unity, which is consolidated through discursive and technological progress. It necessitates competition from within its system; alternative or incompatible concepts are relegated to another sphere (such as religion) or time (TEK).⁴⁰⁹ The renewed rhetoric and institutional mode of Haudenosaunee TEK in the 1990s queered Western epistemic sovereignty. In other words, as radical potentiality suspended in colonial pasts and futures—outside the

⁴⁰⁸ Ransom, James. "Sovereignty Today."

⁴⁰⁹ See Michael D. Gordin, *The Pseudoscience Wars: Immanuel Velikovsky and the Birth of the Modern Fringe* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2012). Gordin explores the fact that boundary work—the process of determining what is and is not science (or what is and is not pseudoscience)—is part of the making of scientific knowledge and communities in the first place. It is only in areas where the exclusive authority of science seems under threat that terms like pseudoscience are deployed. Gordin's example covers the popular work of Velikovsky in the 1950s, which had been published by an academic publishing house. Similarly, TEK has been called an "ethnic pseudoscience" (H. David Brumble, "Vine Deloria, Jr., Creationism, and Ethnic Pseudoscience" *American Literary History* 10.2 (July 1998): 335–46). Furthermore, even fairly traditional accounts of how scientific knowledge is derived and transformed, in the history and philosophy of science, assume a competitive framework in which one paradigm must be replaced by another. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) and Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

present tense and yet present—TEK subverted the Western scientific demand for competition and stratification.

Native actors at Rio and HETF and ATFE members in Haudenosaunee territory had no cause to settle the seeming contradiction between their claims to authority and their vulnerable positionality. Haudenosaunee epistemic sovereignty does not function according to the same ordering of agents and objects. Rather, it situates human agents of knowledge within a lateral system of nonhuman and environmental relations. This was reflected by Oren Lyons's call for representation of the nonhuman at the UN in the 1980s. And it was argued again in the Kari-Oca Declaration, which envisioned a circle connecting Indigenous peoples to nonhuman environments. It also manifested in HETF environmental philosophies that proposed Native-informed environmental restoration projects and Indigenous research methodologies in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Haudenosaunee TEK recognizes natural objects of study without claiming dominion over them. Similarly, its pluralism tolerates alternate claims to sovereignty within the same sphere. Oren Lyons did not fall for Bill Moyers's question of relevancy in 1991 for that reason. TEK's out-of-timeliness does not undermine such knowledge, but in fact strengthens its resiliency. Haudenosaunee epistemic sovereignty can be shared and it can be defiantly held, but it can neither be imposed nor proselytized.

Coda

What does a non-hierarchical epistemology and queer temporal position afford when viewing the posthuman landscape of the climate change era? The spatial context for all these

discourses is what Ann Stoler and others have called the “ruins of imperial formations.”⁴¹⁰ Settler states, former metropolises, and postcolonies are all haunted by the specter of colonialism—the geographic, architectural, epistemic, and historical framework of dehumanization, slavery, and extraction.⁴¹¹ Ruins and ruinations are spatial and temporal. In this epoch, they exist in the more-than-human and less-than-nature landscapes, and in the discourses on history and time deployed to justify, challenge, and make sense of them. As a potentiality, TEK disrupts the logic that labels the geological horizon as posthuman. Boutros-Ghali’s definition of human history at Rio in 1992, which precluded postcolonial Indigenous action, and the critique of minority rights in relation to nonhuman representation at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations’ both show that not everyone was afforded humanity in the first place. Furthermore, Indigenous epistemic sovereignty exists outside the human-nature dichotomy. Here, the human is not a problem to move beyond. Like the dystopian ruin that has already been a fact of life for Indigenous peoples for centuries, it is a condition that must be inhabited and nurtured so that our voices may carry into the future.

⁴¹⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

⁴¹¹ All the various terms proposed to reframe the Anthropocene: the Capitalocene, Necropocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene, and others engage or resurrect the ghosts of colonialism differently. They highlight the ruinations of capitalism, necropolitical networks, or, in the case of the Chthulucene, the very fact of living with (and within) ruins. They change the way we are meant to understand geology and the meaning of geology in the world around us. See Jason W. Moore, ed. *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016).

Epilogue--“Hōkūle‘a is in the past”

Canoes, Indigenous Futurism, and Horizon Epistemologies

In his 1993 debut sci-fi novel, *Warpath*, Tony Daniel opens with a description of the view from Canoe Hill, between the Indian village Doom and settler city Jackson, on the planet Candle, hundreds of years into the future and lightyears away from Earth. “Imagine *this* print,” the settler protagonist, Will James, tells the reader:

A postcard to send home to your folks on Earth... This print will be a reminder and register of your absolute surprise that first day when you climbed Canoe Hill... It is a painting made, you might think, in the late 1830s on Earth, in the old United States of America. It depicts a frontier town... You look above the buildings of Doom and feel a little disgust, for you find that the painter has got his perspective all wrong. A few canoes are crowded above the village, as if they are hanging in the sky. You know they *must* be farther away... You mentally try to correct it... Boom—epiphany: this is *not* a painting after all. They *are* hanging in the sky above the village [emphasis in the original]⁴¹²

For James, finding a postcard-perfect replica of a 19th century U.S. frontier town in space is surprising, but not unnatural. Discovering futuristic Indigenous technology, a hovering space canoe, however, is so wrong and so contrary to his understanding of the proper order of the world, that it inspires a sense of disgust—a repulsion that simultaneously attracts him to the object of his distaste, resulting in an epiphany.⁴¹³

Candle is one of hundreds of Native “colonized” planets in the *Warpath* universe. Perpetually pre-contact, a mysterious “mental trick” involving a “spirit animal” enabled their 13th century

⁴¹² Daniel, *Warpath*, 1.

⁴¹³ As Philip Deloria has written, finding Indigenous people in contemporary spaces and making use of technologies at all can be jarring for settler observers, let alone in futuristic scenarios like the one posed by Daniel (Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*); For more on the “moral epistemology of disgust” and colonial knowledge production, see Ragab, “Two Students and a Corpse: The Semantics of Disgust in the Making of Colonial Knowledge.”

Mississippian ancestors to travel through time and space in canoes. Of all the futuristic tech detailed by our incredulous settler protagonist, including sentient geo-stabilizing digital weather systems and interplanetary travel along radio waves, the spacefaring canoes are by far the most sensationalized. They are at once signs of settler technological inferiority—they were more than a thousand years late to the space exploration game in this story, after all— but also signifiers of the ultimate inevitability of settler hegemony. White tardiness here was actually due to their privileged technological authority back on Earth, which foreclosed the spiritual closeness with nature needed for canoe space travel. In this scenario, the settler imaginary of technological development along a linear frontier progression cultivated the correct privileged relationship to space, resulting in their categorical timeliness, extraplanetary 19th century frontier town and all. They graduated to space travel at exactly the right time and therefore maintain mastery over it. Space NDNs, on the other hand, are fantastical in Daniel’s story because they are premature, and their technology’s disgusting epistemological orientation is a symptom of that prematurity.⁴¹⁴

This epilogue concerns the horizons of Native science and technology. In contrast to the settler frontier sciences and technological development discussed in chapter 5, I explore the history of canoes as temporal technologies that cultivate a horizon-oriented epistemology, and I analyze the role canoes play in Indigenous futurism and Native science. In the past fifty years, a surge in international Indigenous canoe building and travel revitalization programs has forcefully challenged discursive modes of relegating Indigenous people and technologies to the past. The canoe as a present technology poses a new set of questions—what sort of relationships and

⁴¹⁴ See Cornum, “The Space NDN’s Star Map.” NDN has been used as a shorthand and alternate spelling of Indian in order to distinguish between North American and South Asian Indians. More recently, on Native Twitter it has grown to mean “not dead Native” (Bebaayaad, Migizi. Twitter Post. September 5, 2013, 1:21PM. <https://twitter.com/deejayndn/status/375670151141548032>).

worldviews are engendered by canoe travel? What epistemologies, politics, and histories are animated in their use? The answers to these questions have prompted anthropologists in the “cosmic humanities” and Indigenous futurists to take up the canoe as a future technology that can provide a model of space as something other than just another (or, indeed, even the final) frontier.

Disgusting Technologies: Non-Native Investigations of Canoes

As jarring as space-faring canoes might have been to Tony Daniel’s protagonist, there is nothing novel about the canoe as a technology of extremely long-distance travel. Not unlike the timeline in *Warpath*, Indigenous peoples in the South Pacific had been using canoes to travel distances that were considered inconceivably vast for other seafaring technologies for thousands of years before European colonial expeditions first reached their shores in 15th century.⁴¹⁵ The “how” and “why” of that travel was and continues to be the subject of heated academic debate for non-Natives, and that debate has depended on the belief that the canoe is a past technology, abandoned in favor of western scientific seafaring and navigation, and only knowable through conjecture, modelling, and theory.

The images of and notes on canoes recorded by British Royal Navy Captain James Cook and his crew during their missions throughout the South Pacific in the late 18th century have served as the basis of western academic debate about the seafaring capacity of canoes for centuries.⁴¹⁶ During his first scientific expedition to the Pacific, commissioned by the Royal Society in 1766, Cook identified the wa’a kaulua, a Polynesian double hulled canoe, as a vessel

⁴¹⁵ Finney, “Tracking Polynesian Seafarers.”

⁴¹⁶ See Haddon, *Canoes of Oceania*.

capable of traversing the sometimes thousands of miles between islands in the region. Cook was no expert on canoes, but he had a passing familiarity with Haudenosaunee models designed to navigate the St. Lawrence River in North America after his previous involvement in the French and Indian War, and he recognized how these double-hulled vessels with minimal drag were designed for long distances.⁴¹⁷ However, as Glen Coulthard and Frantz Fanon before him have pointed out, “recognition” in the colonial context is no less fraught than misrecognition.⁴¹⁸ In this case, Cook’s recognition of the utility and importance of canoes enabled him to identify and destroy them as a disciplinary measure against the Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians)—directly contributing to the settler supposition that canoes were always already of the past.⁴¹⁹

As this temporal designation was made manifest in the wake of hundreds of years of genocide and colonial epistemic violence, canoes as a technology of the past in settler discourse were able to speak only to the question of origins. In the 18th century, Europeans developed all manner of explanations for Indigenous presence in the South Pacific, including polygenetic theories, extreme geological events, accidental drifting as a result of bad weather or trade winds, the so-called “accidental settlement hypothesis” that was revived as a popular theory again in the 20th century, and migration not from Indonesia to the east, as historically asserted, but instead from the Americas.⁴²⁰ By the close of the 19th century, most theorists agreed that the Indigenous

⁴¹⁷ Captain Cook, “Charts, Plans and Drawings by Captain Cook on Board Endeavour,” section 33.

⁴¹⁸ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

⁴¹⁹ Beaglehole, *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, 230–32.

⁴²⁰ See “Anthropology”; Haddon, *Canoes of Oceania*; Finney, “Contrasting Visions of Polynesian Voyaging Canoes. Comment on Atholl Anderson’s ‘Traditionalism, Interaction and Long-Distance Seafaring in Polynesia’”; Carhart, “Polynesia and Polygenism.”

peoples of Oceania *had been* skilled navigators in possession of canoes capable of travelling the extremely long distances between their islands, though exactly how canoes could work against trade winds and doldrums was still a mystery to them. These theories were supported by generations of scientific research, beginning with summarized oral histories and linguistic analysis in the 19th century, archeological analysis in the early 20th, and most recently, genetic and chemical tracers and computer simulations of migration.⁴²¹ Wa'a kaulua could be known historically or theoretically, but never experientially or relationally.

Hōkūle'a: The Spaceship of the Ancestors

There are two origin stories of the Hōkūle'a, the first wa'a kaulua built in over 600 hundred years in 1976. It has been represented in anthropological literature, the subject of contentious debates in science journals, and received popular write-ups heralding it as the

⁴²¹ Of course, linguistic and archeological inquiry continued to be important features of the Polynesian seafaring field. Now, one can find all three varieties of method being employed and debates between them. For oral history and linguistic investigations, see NÆSS and HOVDHAUGEN, "THE HISTORY OF POLYNESIAN SETTLEMENT IN THE REEF AND DUFF ISLANDS"; Walworth, "Eastern Polynesian"; "LINGUISTIC SUBGROUPING WITHIN POLYNESIA: THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT." For archeological assessments of the Indigenous settlement of the South Pacific, see Johnson, *In the Midst of a Prodigious Ocean*; Valentin et al., "Early Lapita Skeletons from Vanuatu Show Polynesian Craniofacial Shape"; S and J, "The Hakaea Beach Site, Marquesan Colonisation, and Models of East Polynesian Settlement." For recent genetic work, see Burley, Weisler, and Zhao, "High Precision U/Th Dating of First Polynesian Settlement"; Walter et al., "Mass Migration and the Polynesian Settlement of New Zealand"; S and J, "The Hakaea Beach Site, Marquesan Colonisation, and Models of East Polynesian Settlement"; Knapp et al., "Complete Mitochondrial DNA Genome Sequences from the First New Zealanders." Finally, for more on the "accidental migration" hypothesis and arguments against the overall effectiveness of South Pacific seafaring technologies, see Anderson, "Polynesian Seafaring and American Horizons"; Finney, "Contrasting Visions of Polynesian Voyaging Canoes. Comment on Atholl Anderson's 'Traditionalism, Interaction and Long-Distance Seafaring in Polynesia.'"

achievement of one forward-looking anthropologist, Ben Finney.⁴²² As a masters student in anthropology at the University of Hawai'i in the early 1960s working on the history of Polynesian surfing, Finney regularly encountered the accidental settlement hypothesis, at the time most vehemently defended by Thor Heyerdahl, who persistently called Polynesian canoes "rafts."⁴²³ Finney objected to the hypothesis, but made no headway in theoretical arguments. Later, as a doctoral student at Harvard University working on migration, he concluded that only a demonstration of Polynesian seafaring could dissuade the large contingent of people in his field who held fast to the hypothesis. Beginning in the 1970s, Finney set out to build a double hulled canoe, based largely off images from Captain Cook's records and descriptions of canoes in the traditional anthropological literature, to be sailed according to traditional navigation practices, first by Tahitian captain Mau Piailug and later by Native Hawaiian captain Nainoa Thompson. Their first voyage from Hawai'i to Tahiti in 1976, and subsequent experimental voyages, provided Finney the data necessary to displace the accidental settlement hypothesis and develop new technical and sociological theories of Indigenous seafaring.⁴²⁴

In an alternative origin story, Hōkūle'a, or "Star of Gladness," was a dream of time travel and a return to new destinations. Navigator Nainoa Thompson, recalled:

Growing up in Hawai'i in the 1960s, I found my Hawaiian culture ebbing away. It was a confusing time for me and I felt lost between worlds that seemed in conflict. All that changes one night when Herb Kane introduced me to the stars and explained how my ancestors had used them to find their way across a vast ocean to settle all of Polynesia. At that moment, my vision of my ancestry became timeless and alive in those stars... Our canoe, and our dreams have now carried us over one 150 thousand miles of ocean. It has been a process of finding ourselves,

⁴²² Finney, *From Sea to Space*; Finney, *Hokule'a*; "Ancient Navigators' Methods Confirmed."

⁴²³ Heyerdahl, *Kon-Tiki*; Heyerdahl, *Early Man and the Ocean*.

⁴²⁴ Finney, *Sailing in the Wake of the Ancestors*.

not only as Hawaiians, as natives to these islands, but also as native to planet Earth.

Herb Kane was Ben Finney's primary (and often unnamed) collaborator. Part of a diasporic Native Hawaiian community from the Midwest on the continent, Kane was primarily interested in using the canoe as a vehicle for cultural rebirth. To him, the Tahiti trip was only important if the canoe was accepted by his community as useful and liberating. Kane, captain and navigator Mau Piailug, and many of their crewmates defined success by the number of Tahitians who greeted Hōkūle'a upon her arrival in 1976—over half the island. Others, including Finney, measured the trip according to its technical feat and scientific validity.

An original crewmember once called Hōkūle'a "the spaceship of the ancestors." The canoe's presence not only made tangible their presence, but also encouraged planetary thinking and a constant eye on the stars. Hōkūle'a animated the past as her use in the present evoked a different orientation toward the future. While practicing the navigation techniques that were passed down over centuries, the crew of the Hōkūle'a located themselves in reference to an island that was always just beyond the horizon. A method Ben Finney studied at length, this constant shifting of orientation to an always unseen island just ahead and to the right is how captains Mau Piailug and Nainoa Thompson and others had been taught to stay on course when the stars were obscured. It is a method that requires constant connection to one's medium of travel. Finney observed with wonder that Thompson would never sleep more than twenty

⁴²⁵ Lowe, *Hawaiki Rising*, ix.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.* The disparity between the stated goals of the voyage between crew members ultimately erupted in a physical fight upon their arrival in Tahiti.

minutes at time during their voyages. Any longer and Thompson would lose track of his surroundings and future.

Similarly, the Hōkūle‘a reinforced Indigenous approaches to environmental relations that had so long created confusion among non-Native scholars studying South Pacific seafaring. Even before his first voyage as captain, Thompson expressed anxiety about his ability to sail through the doldrums—vast areas where winds alternately die down and then unpredictably gust, and where cloud cover obscures celestial directional cues. Both he and Finney were unsure how exactly the labor of the oars-people would push them through or how they would determine which way to forge ahead when the winds did pick up. Thompson reported that almost immediately upon reaching the doldrums he knew what to do: step back and work with the unpredictable wind patterns. On the Hōkūle‘a’s first voyage, the doldrums were agony—days without moving under the hot sun, but the crew simply waited, and the slow movement pushed them to faster moving currents. On subsequent trips the doldrums were chaotic—fast moving winds and absolute darkness. The wind was not always gone and when it did pick up, often unpredictably, the crew would work with it, often going much faster according to the unpredictable gusts than their previous training taught them was prudent. It was this combination of patience, intent, and confidence that had confounded anthropologists for centuries. Surely, if Polynesian voyagers had not developed mechanisms to work against the terrain, then their travel must have been accidental.

⁴²⁷ Finney attributes a navigator’s lack of sleep to a possible magnetoreception utilized by Indigenous seafarers that allows them to internally determine their direction according to magnetic fields they can sense. Finney and others argue that sleeping “resets” this internal sense and therefore could be quite dangerous for Indigenous navigators who cannot turn to the other visual cues for navigation (Finney, “A Role for Magnetoreception in Human Navigation?,” 505).

Returning to Ourselves: Horizon Epistemologies and Native Science

In 1992, the Polynesian Voyaging Society and the University of Hawai'i organized a conversation for university students and the Hōkūle'a crew with the crew of the space shuttle Columbia, then in orbit. A student asked Lacy Veach, the pilot of the space shuttle who was from Hawai'i, about the differences and similarities between canoes and space travel. Veach responded, "Both are voyages of exploration. Hōkūle'a is in the past. Columbia is in the future."⁴²⁸ How Hōkūle'a was in the past despite its immediate presence (half the conversation took place literally on the canoe) was not discussed. This temporal orientation—relegating Indigenous knowledges and technologies to the past, denying their present existence—should be familiar by now. However, there are answers to questions of Hōkūle'a's temporality that do not simply reiterate that narrative. That the students were thinking about the differences between space travel by contemporaneous rocket ships and canoes is telling. What actually are the differences? Does voyaging and exploring always mean the same thing?

Toward the end of his career, Ben Finney became increasingly involved in a field he termed "the cosmic humanities."⁴²⁹ Finney argued that we ought to look to Indigenous Polynesian seafaring practices as a model for space exploration. This was based not so much on the material experience of travelling by canoe, nor on the methods of navigation that developed alongside it, which has been my focus here. Rather, he argued that migration in the South Pacific created a different kind of culture—a voyaging one. Written into the fabric of Polynesian patterns of culture was an expectation of ongoing travel and mechanisms that ensured this would

⁴²⁸ "Astronaut Lacy Veach Day of Discovery."

⁴²⁹ Finney, "Cosmic Humanities?"

happen smoothly—economic patterns, for example, that encouraged successive generations to move on.⁴³⁰ This orientation, Finney insisted, would be necessary for space colonization. We would need a cultural framework to keep us going through the vast distances of space.

That there is a tradition and thriving culture of voyaging and travel in the Indigenous South Pacific has certainly been evidenced by the sense of homecoming embarking for new places elicited in the Indigenous crews of Hōkūle‘a. I agree with Finney that it is productive to think through Indigenous structures when imagining space travel. And we are not alone. Indigenous futurists have taken up “space canoes” as a theme in contemporary Native science fiction. Anishinaabe artist, writer, and video game designer Elizabeth LaPensée, for example, uses the space canoe in multiple medias, including comics, video games, and paintings (see figures 20 and 21 in the Appendix). The space canoe represents Indigenous connection to the planet, imagines how that connection can be expansive and transformative, and projects indigeneity through alternative timelines—ones not marked by the prematurity or untimeliness, and accompanying disgust encountered in *Warpath*.

While Finney insisted that we take cultural lessons, a broad and anthropologically determined term in his case, from Indigenous seafaring, I think we need to think about the epistemological, technical, and material impact of canoe travel in a Native science context. The physical act of voyaging by canoe for the crew of the Hōkūle‘a made them exceptionally aware of their responsibilities to the Earth as a planet. It anchored them in the past as they were drawn (by necessity and hope) to the future—to just beyond the horizon. It made them think of the

⁴³⁰ The phrase “patterns of culture” is in reference to Ruth Benedict’s seminal work. The usage is semi-ironic, given Benedict’s position in the legacy of settler anthropology that I discuss in Part 1, but it is appropriate for Finney’s framing of Polynesian seafaring culture. See Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*.

relations between navigators and oars-people. It encouraged patience and being with environmental conditions. It encouraged an image of the horizon not as a frontier to be conquered, but as a moving relational point, and this in turn fostered different ways of knowing the world around them—a horizon epistemology. On one hand, this epistemology has been remembered and passed down over thousands of years. On the other, it has been remade through its position as an object of obsession for western and settler science and as a point of asserting Indigenous temporality, futurity, and sovereignty. It is a Native science at the same time it is an Indigenous epistemology. Space (and science, for that matter) need not be a politically and materially recognizable frontier, like the one depicted in *Warpath*. It can be a horizon that changes in relation to ourselves. It can be a “returning to ourselves,” as Elizabeth LaPensée says, which is an alternate translation of “biskaabiiyaang,” the Anishinabemowin word for “decolonization.”

Conclusion

I set out to trace the history of Native science as an episteme that is not synonymous with Indigenous epistemologies, but instead incorporates them as they exist in a settler colonial context. That context was constituted in part by a settler science unique from western colonial science more generally that systematically and cyclically sought to appropriate and terminate Indigenous peoples, bodies, and lands in the making of capital (cultural and physical), nationhood, and belonging. In this nested sovereignty context, Indigenous epistemologies have been both the object of hegemonic settler sciences and practiced creatively within it. Indigenous peoples contributed to a Native science as they continued in various moments and modes that unsettled, fractured, and fundamentally altered settler sciences. At the same time, Native science shaped according to the various ways in which Indigenous peoples survived and cultivated spaces and relations that were totally illegible to the settler gaze.

Settler and Native sciences transformed dramatically between the mid-nineteenth century and today. In the early years of the Red Progressive era, settler sciences transitioned as Indian policy and settler perceptions of land shifted. Settler sciences were practiced increasingly in civil and academic institutions, the American Academy of Sciences, Smithsonian, and a growing number of universities as the settler dream of unending conquest and expansion confronted the reality of finite space and ongoing indigeneity that could not be converted. At the same time, Indian policy, including the end of the treaty era, boarding school education, and allotment, was premised on a vanishing race hypothesis and continued to rely on scientific assessments of indigeneity to inform termination via assimilation programs. It was in this particular context that the Red Progressive firsts emerged—elite Indigenous scientists and physicians who navigated the political and epistemological effects of being native informants, representative Indians,

objects, and not-quite scientific authorities. Figures like Carlos Montezuma, Susan La Flesche Picotte, and Francis La Flesche were some of the first to negotiate settler sciences in this way. The result was a Native science marked by queer and crip failures that revealed embedded alternatives to the settler science ideal these firsts worked so hard to achieve.

As the Progressive era wore on in the early 20th century, Indigenous governance and settler Indian policy shifted once again. Indigenous nations debated visions of sovereign futures, negotiating reservation capitalism, enrollment and community belonging, and resource management, while the settler empire confronted a profound crisis. Unchecked frontier sciences based on the fetishization of the frontier as a space of knowledge production had resulted in environmental degradation, economic collapse, and a loss of identity. The New Deal (Indian and otherwise) was marked by a scientized imperialist nostalgia that sought to create new internal frontiers. Indigenous bodies and lands were cast as tools and objects of that project through the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps—Indian Division. Native science was practiced in this context as Indigenous nations were tasked with carrying out this new policy. Here Native science was a fracturing and layering epistemology.

Going into the postwar period, Indigenous nations were further confronted with industrialization, toxicity, and settler scientific appropriation and termination. During this period, Native science shifted dramatically. In addition to being a practice of failure and fracturing, Native science developed as an actor's category, as seen in the work of Akwesasne and Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Forces. As a resource of resistance and refusal, Native science unsettled settler science, which was dependent on presupposed categorical definitions of science and indigeneity. By the end of the twentieth century, Native science was a term deployed on international stages at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and Kari-Oca Conference, where the

temporality and sovereignty of Indigenous knowledge as science framed how we understand humanity, history, and scientific authority in the climate change era.

Native science as a lens and disciplinary marker highlights the epistemic agency of the objects of colonial normative knowledge production and gestures toward previously little considered mechanisms by which indigeneity survives. For all the hegemonic discourses that frame indigeneity as fleeting and dilutable, indigeneity, as a political positionality and as peoples, has remarkable durability.⁴³¹ It continues to survive genocide, erasure, and anthropologists.⁴³² Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein recently wrote on colonial unknowing:

Produced and practiced in concert with material violences and differential devaluations, colonial unknowing strives to preclude relational modes of analysis and ways of knowing otherwise. It is in this sense that we contend that colonial unknowing is always itself a response, an epistemological counter-formation, which takes shape in reaction to the lived relations and incommensurable knowledges it seeks to render impossible and inconceivable.⁴³³

Settler science, when understood in this way, has a history as it continues to “[take] shape in reaction to the lived relations and incommensurable knowledges it seeks to render impossible and inconceivable,” but Native epistemologies have been black-boxed even in this scholarship. Indigenous knowledges are defined by their likeness to what we imagine and know our ancestors

⁴³¹ For more on settler colonial theory, enduring indigeneity, and the role of “Indianness,” see Byrd, *The Transit of Empire*; Kehaulani Kauanui, “‘A Structure, Not an Event’”; Franklin, Njoroge, and Reiss, “Tracing the Settler’s Tools.”

⁴³² The burden of anthropology was expressed best by Vine Deloria Jr. in *Custer Died for Your Sins* in 1969: “Into each life, it is said, some rain must fall. Some people have bad horoscopes, others take tips on the stock market. McNamara created the TFX and the Edsel. Churches possess the real world. But Indians have been cursed above all other people in history. Indians have anthropologists” (78).

⁴³³ Vimalassery, Pegues, and Goldstein, “Colonial Unknowing and Relations of Study.”

knew. They are the objects against which settler science makes itself, either through cultivated ignorance, termination, or appropriation, but how could Indigenous epistemologies have gone unchanged through all this? After all, we have changed—we have cultivated new relationships; we have reinvested in our obligations to our lands and to each other through recurring hardship; we have reinterpreted our philosophies and interwoven them with allied scholarship and solidarity with other colonized peoples; and we have developed beautiful and complex theories and mechanisms for survival and protection. This work has always been rooted in the epistemes of ancestors and in the unpayable debt we owe them and future generations, but that does not mean these epistemologies are identical or fixed in time.

This black-boxing and essentialization happens across numerous fields, and often those who are attempting to push against “epistemicide” and colonial scientific hegemony exhibit the greatest tendency to essentialize and black-box Indigenous knowledge.⁴³⁴ I will provide three representative examples—one each from environmental history, history of science, and Indigenous studies. First, environmental history: in 1983, Bill Cronon's field defining *Changes in the Land* argued for the presence of Indigenous environmental knowledge and management in the north east and traced the history of Indigenous environments under Indigenous knowledge regimes and settler colonial ones. His work was a milestone in how Indigenous peoples were represented in environmental history, transforming how we approach the archive and challenging the ubiquitous belief that if Indigenous peoples do not radically transform the environment, then we must not impact it at all. However, while he explores Indigenous knowledge had impact on the environment, his consideration of how Indigenous epistemologies continued as settler land-relations became increasingly normative lacks historical imagination and analysis of Indigenous

⁴³⁴ Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*.

sovereignty. Indigenous environmental knowledges are asserted only to provide a more accurate counterpoint to settler science, and they are colonized and suppressed thereafter.

On the other hand, “subaltern” knowledge and technology has become a keyword in the history of science. In contrast to how historians of science usually approach Indigenous peoples— as objects of science, rather than as producers of Indigenous epistemology, constituting part of the history of science—these new studies have sought to make Native and western sciences commensurable.⁴³⁵ In “Subaltern Technologies and Early Modernity in the Atlantic World,” Marcy Norton offers a capacious definition of technology so that Indigenous technologies, like hammocks and plants, could emerge in a history of science account of the Atlantic World. Norton’s work represents a recent turn toward animal and material studies and the idea of “entanglement” in colonial contexts, which attempts to displace the issues we find in Cronon’s work, where colonial hegemony makes Indigenous knowledges (and importantly their history) invisible. However, in making “technology” mean any tool, Norton loses sight of how specifically entanglement happens at the epistemological level, which includes how Indigenous bodies and epistemologies (and the associated “technologies” that Norton takes up) were already taken up as technologies of colonial science, as well. Furthermore, this is part of a body of scholarship that looks to give the subaltern (which for Norton includes the Indigenous) agency and to make it commensurate. In looking to grant agency (itself a condescending and problematic project) and reveal commensurability, however, we lose track of the epistemological

⁴³⁵ For more traditional accounts of Indigenous peoples as objects against which settler science and discourse occurs, see Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics*; Lemov, *Database of Dreams*; Kowal, “Orphan DNA”; Chaplin, *Subject Matter*. These studies are important contributions to studies of colonial science, but they lack counterparts that address the richness of the epistemologies and production of Indigenous peoples, as well.

and political importance of incommensurability for Indigenous knowledges in settler contexts, and we minimize the violence suffered and work done to survive in these spaces.

In discussions about Native science in Indigenous studies, it is difficult to discern whether or not Native science has a history of at all, or more specifically, it is difficult to discern if Native science has a history that is distinct from Indigenous epistemologies more generally. In his foreword to Greg Cajete's *Native Science* (2000), Leeroy Littlebear writes, "Using the word 'science' is in many ways arbitrary, and it can be said to relate specifically to the ways in which people come to know something, anything at all."⁴³⁶ To call Indigenous epistemologies science is simply and accurately to call them a way a of knowing. "Science" then is adopted to make these knowledges commensurate with but distinct from settler science in that they incorporate and value other ways of knowing, cultural and religious ways primarily, and there has been debate over whether or not commensurability is achievable or even a goal worth pursuing.⁴³⁷ These discussions and their contemporary political contexts are rooted in Indigenous contributions to STS, wherein the cultural specificity or "localness" of western science and its deficits are exposed in order to chip away at settler scientific hegemony.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ Cajete, *Native Science*.

⁴³⁷ See Brayboy, Jones, and Castagno, "Indigenous Knowledges and Native Science as Partn"; Villegas, Neugebauer, and Venegas, *Indigenous Knowledge and Education*; Brayboy, Jones, and Castagno, "Indigenous Knowledges and Native Science as Partners"; El-hani and Souza De Ferreira Bandeira, "Valuing Indigenous Knowledge."

⁴³⁸ See Tallbear, "An Indigenous Reflection on Working Beyond the Human/Not Human"; Harding, *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader*; Simmons, "Settler Atmospherics — Cultural Anthropology"; Deloria, *Red Earth, White Lies*; Deloria, *The World We Used to Live In*; Biolsi and Zimmerman, *Indians and Anthropologists*; Deloria, "Tribal Colleges and Traditional Knowledge"; Wildcat, "Introduction."

However, Native scientists, and advocates and critics of Native science fail to take into account that settler science is not only culturally located, but also historically situated. It has changed over time, as has Native science. In looking at Native science as something with a long history and different modes of production and relation to Indigenous politics and epistemologies, I seek to move beyond debates about the differences and similarities between settler (or as we more often say western) and Native science, whether or not we want to be legible to it, and how to formalize Native science institutionally. Rather, in thinking about Native science historically and something that is not synonymous with Indigenous knowledge more generally, we could instead look at the epistemological work incommensurability does, explore the ways in which settler science has always already been susceptible to influence, or discuss the merits of different modes of Native science as political tools.

One aspect of Indigenous epistemologies that is unique and contributes to a recognizable ethos found across numerous traditions, are their long, long history (not necessarily change over linear time, but movement through various Indigenous temporalities), resulting in adaptable methodologies, deep relationality, and noncanonical bodies of knowledge. That history never ended. I am arguing against black boxing and historiographical isolation of Indigenous knowledges. The objects of settler reactionary knowledge regimes have their own histories. I have done this by tracing the kinds of knowledges and methodologies developed by Indigenous peoples as objects, tools, and producers in settler scientific regimes. In focusing on firsts as the beginning of my story in that sense, I argue for a continuity—Red Progressive firsts did not step into settler sciences and shed other epistemologies in the process of achieving settler scientific credentials. They brought with them indigeneity in all its manifold expressions—their relations (human and otherwise), political and religious ideology, and the legacy of being marked as a tool

and object. At the same time, I make the case for an acknowledgement of a non-settler normative significance to firsts—the Red Progressive firsts and numerous other unnamed Indigenous Native scientists inhabited a unique position that provided new ways by which Indigenous peoples could survive and undermined settler supremacy.

This is the case whether or not they intended to do so. the Red Progressive struggle and often failure to decolonize intellectually did not undo the Native scientific effects of their work. Contemporary science initiatives in Indian Country that are not rooted in an explicit historically and epistemological critique of settler science, like the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, do not under such effects either. The firsts are an especially powerful example of the extent to which Native science has profoundly impacted settler sciences. The narrative presented in *Native American Doctor* which tries to pull Picotte into the fold of settler history is violent in its erasure, but it does highlight the extent to which settler science internalizes the Indigenous. In being profoundly reactionary, settler science is also extremely reliant and open to the influence of that which it appropriates.

This work has proposed three new terms for the history of Indigenous and settler knowledges on Turtle Island: settler science, frontier science, and Native science. Each of these provides a new way of thinking about settler colonialism, colonial sciences, and Indigenous epistemes. I have discussed settler science and frontier science largely as they relate to the making of Native science. Of the three, Native science has been the least studied in the broader historiography, and even when it has as a term been deployed as a term by actors, its meaning is different than the one I propose. Settler and frontier sciences are present in the historiography of U.S. sciences, but they are not named as such and many of their features are under-analyzed. However, each of these categories presents its own research agenda and set of questions. Native

and settler sciences, which include frontier sciences as a particular mode, are inextricably bound. One does not exist in the absence of the other, as they are rooted in the settler colonial and in Indigenous political positionalities.

An effect of the lack of engagement with indigeneity in postcolonial studies is that the field is also disconnected from the rich scholarship and theory in settler colonial studies. Settler sciences are unique, rooted in a settler colonial epistemic complex that displays its own logics and ends. They are constituted by the impulse to appropriate and eliminate the Indigenous as part of a nation- and identity-building project. Frontier sciences have been most considered in U.S. historiography. In fact, the frontier in general has always been represented, perhaps overrepresented, in studies of U.S. history as especially important to the nation's character and ascendance as a global power. Historians of technology discussed the importance of railroads, irrigation technology, weapons, and the impact the imaginary of the frontier has had on everything from U.S. democracy to pop culture.⁴³⁹ What I offer here in proposing frontier science as a distinct field is to consider the epistemology of these technologies and relation to U.S. history. These represent a specific way of knowing that fetishizes the frontier and also destroys the object of its fetish. Finally, Native science has been most carefully considered in this dissertation. I have analyzed it through numerous theoretical lenses and historical moments—queer and disability theory at the turn of the 20th century, survivance and fracturing in the New Deal era, and epistemic sovereignty, refusal, and queer time in the postwar and climate change eras. As I have argued, Native science as a disciplinary category and analytic can offer an escape from essentializing comparisons between western science and Indigenous knowledge, complicate

⁴³⁹ See White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*; White, *Railroaded*; Worster, *Dust Bowl*; Worster, *Rivers of Empire*; Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*; Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*; Fiege, *Irrigated Eden*.

and elevate discussions of agency and science, and help frame the horizons of Indigenous knowledge going into the future.

Appendix

PART I

MAGAZINE SECTION

Sunday World-Herald.

OMAHA, NEBRASKA, FEBRUARY 16, 1912.

EIGHT PAGES

First Gardening in Nebraska---How Corn Came

FRANCIS LA FLESCHÉ
SON OF OMAHA CHIEF
WHO HAS WRITTEN THE
HISTORY OF THE TRIBE
FOR THE GOVERNMENT

AN OLD OMAHA PHILOSOPHER

AN OLD INDIAN MUD HOUSE

STANDING A SKIN

Story of the Omahas' Planting and the Beginning of Agriculture in the Great Food State—Legend of the Corn and the Ceremony of the Primitive Farm Told by One of the Tribe, Showing the Thriftiness and Industry of These First Tillers of the Soil.

A SHORT STORY BY FRANCIS LA FLESCHÉ, SON OF OMAHA CHIEF, WHO HAS WRITTEN THE HISTORY OF THE TRIBE FOR THE GOVERNMENT.

DRESS UP COSTUMES WORN BY MEN AND WOMEN

HARD CORN SONG OF THE OMAHA INDIANS

THE WOMAN IN THE PICTURE

THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

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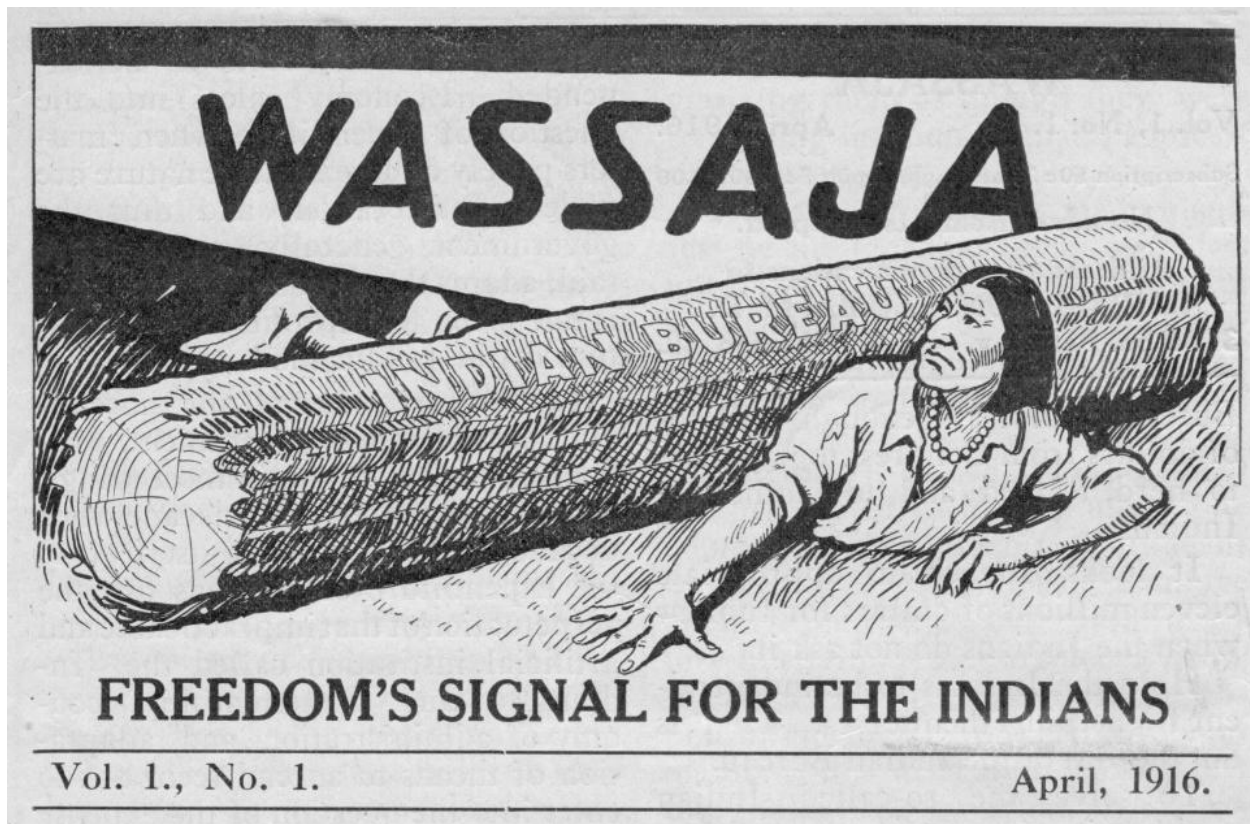
THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

THE FIRST GARDENING IN NEBRASKA

Figure 1 "First Gardening in Nebraska," Sunday World Herald, February 16, 1912.
Source: Clippings, Box 3. La Flesche Family Papers.



*Figure 2 Wassaja Issue 1, Volume 1, April 1916.
Source: Carlos Montezuma Papers, Arizona State University*

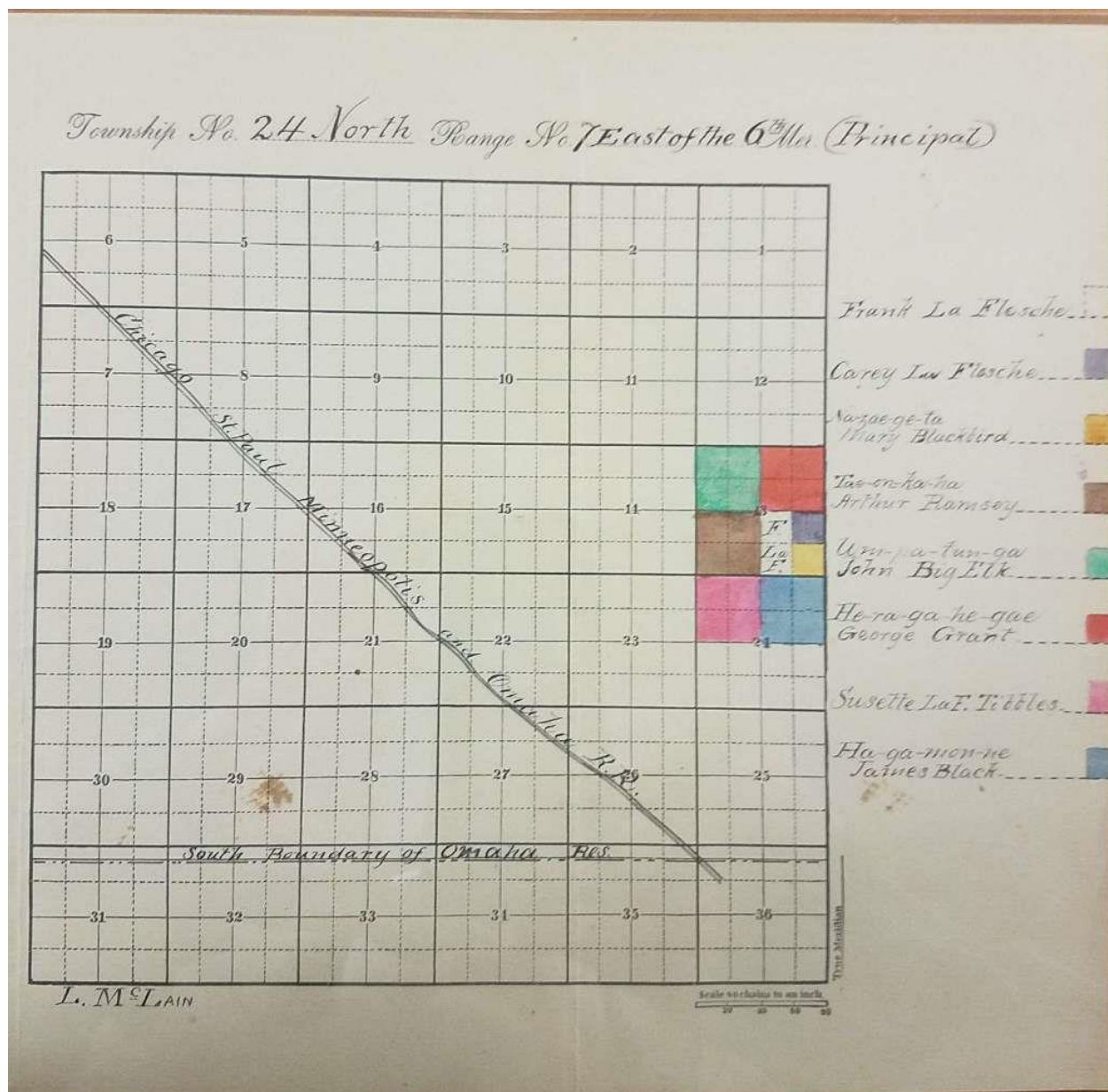


Figure 3 Allotment Map of the Estate of Joseph La Flesche (Principle Chief)
 Source: La Flesche Family, 1900-1930. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers, Box 14.

Here is an example of the kind of mapping allotment necessitated. Allotment was not only a matter of making land property and property private, though that was central to the project, but it was also about making land infinitely divisible through the introduction of grid architecture and differently institutionalized familial antagonism.



*Figure 4 Postcard featuring Susan La Flesche Picotte's Hospital, dated May 2, 1914.
Source: Omaha Tribal Affairs, 1907-1918, Box 15. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers.*

Picotte often said that regular doses of sunshine and fresh air were the most important aspects of good health. One of the most unique things about the “first reservation hospital” as her community saw it, was all the windows— far more proportionally than any Omaha homes had at the time.



*Figure 5: Joseph "Iron Eyes" La Flesche n.d.
Source: Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers, Box 33 MS 4558 Series 27 and 28*

Joseph La Flesche is remembered as an assimilationist, and that is reflected in the media that survived him. He is often depicted constructing houses, tending fields, and attending church. The audience is meant to presume here that he is constructing a settler style home.



*Figure 6: "Alice Fletcher carrying allotment reports" taken by Jane Gay, 1892.
Source: Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the history of Women in America, 20036030_1*

The fact that Alice Fletcher journeyed so far west in pursuit of her study was considered an oddity. In her diaries, she would often remark on the difficulty of living on the frontier as a white woman. She is often depicted against the backdrop of open and rugged western spaces, her settler and conservative clothes a contrast. Her ability to withstand these space was understood as evidence of her singularly motivated allotment campaign, which is what this photo is meant to convey.



*Figure 7: [Portrait (Profile) of Francis La Flesche wearing business suit and hat], April 21, 1903.
Source: BAE GN 4805, Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives*

There is an unusual number of photos of Francis La Flesche available to us—more than of Alice Fletcher, for example, who was often accompanied on her travels by her own photographer. Due to his ambiguous position as an object, curiosity, and supposed example, La Flesche’s appearance was always up for consumption and debate. There are numerous profile shots of La Flesche in various costumes. Here is his settler-style depiction, which is often offered directly next to images of him in “traditional” Omaha garb. I have opted not to include the latter, as it only serves to recreate that visual narrative. This image is included, instead, to illustrate the gaze of the camera when it turns to La Flesche.



*Figure 8: Francis La Flesche delivering an address, n.d.
Source: Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers, Box 33 MS 4558 Series 27 and 28*

Though it was rarely directly stated by his peers, images of La Flesche and his ability to succeed in a discipline predicated on his termination evidence that he was a compelling speaker and performer. Above is an especially engaging picture of La Flesche delivering a lecture. Judging by the implement in his hand, it was likely on Omaha or Osage music.

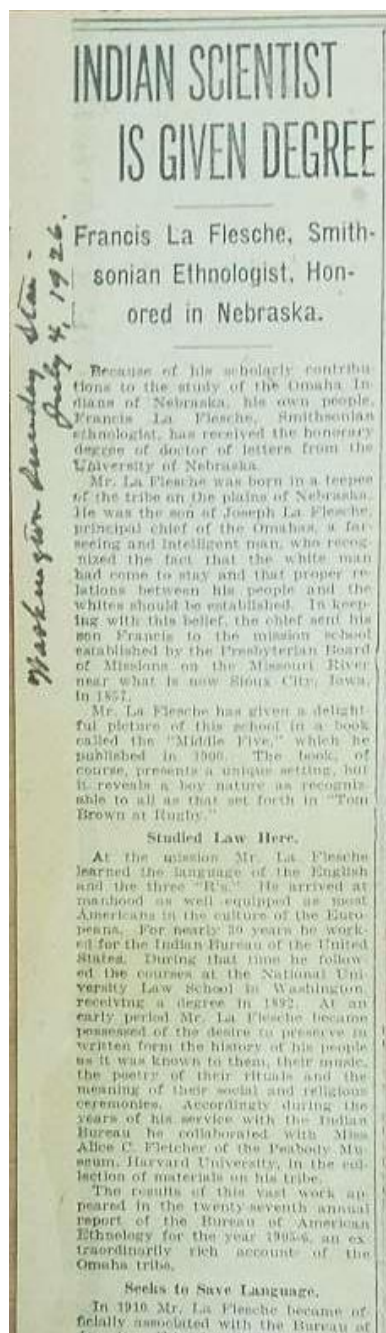


Figure 9: "NATIVE SCIENTIST IS GIVEN DEGREE," *Washington Sunday Times*, July 4, 1926.

Source: Box 17 MS 4558 Frances La Flesche Papers, Series 16.

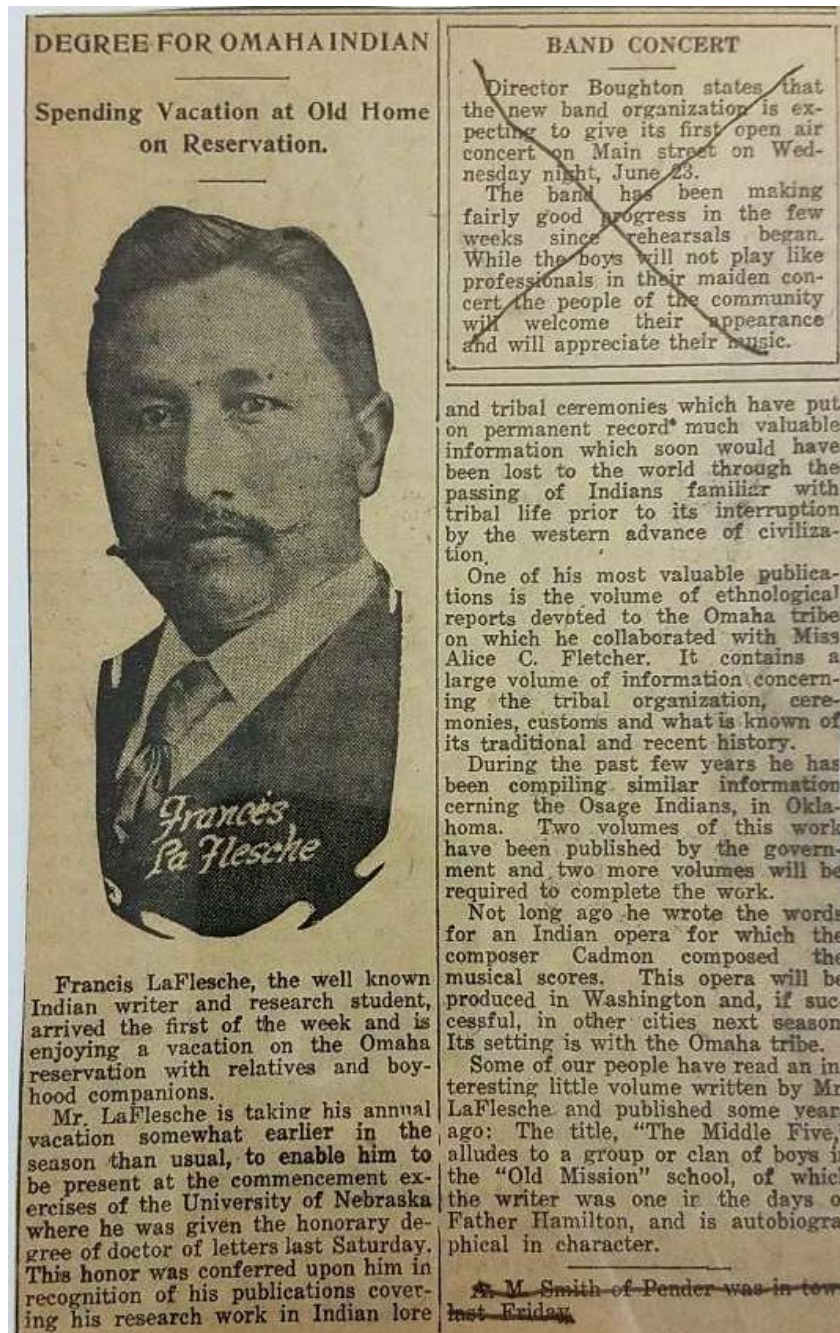


Figure 7: "Degree for Omaha Indian," *The Walthill Times*, Walthill, Nebraska, June 10, 1926.

Source: Box 17 MS 4558 Frances La Flesche Papers, Series 16.

These are illustrative examples of La Flesche's presence in the media. Both articles concern La Flesche's 1926 honorary degree from the University of Nebraska. The article on the right refers to La Flesche at one point as a research student, despite his long-standing appointment at the Bureau of Ethnology, and the left's "Indian Scientist" pronouncement showcases how that position is noteworthy.



Figure 8: The Medicine Man, sculpted by Cyrus E. Dallin in 1899, bronze on granite base. Location: Dauphin Street west of 33rd Street, East Fairmont Park.

Source: The American Association for Public Art

It is important to remember this image as one reads La Flesche's address on medicine men from 1903. He refers to the statue toward the end of his address and says that it is significant that the man is almost naked—that Indigenous knowledge is truthful in its lack of adornment and in its closeness to nature. La Flesche engaged with stereotypes of indigeneity that were harmful. In looking at this statue and critiques of representation that could be made of it—the friendly welcoming stance of the man, his headdress that bears no resemblance to any specific nation, his nudity as La Flesche addressed the crowd on a cold winter day—I am reminded of the importance of being critical of narratives of resistance and agency. La Flesche, like all of us, internalized colonial logic and narratives, and it is hard work interrogating those. We honor the difficulty of his choices and his work in science, not only due to settler violence, but also due to the violence reproduced in our communities as a result.



*Figure 9: "The Vanishing Race-- Navaho (1904) by Edward S. Curtis.
Source: Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution*

Curtis's photographs have been reproduced time and again in publications—many critiquing him. I have included this image because it provides a visual representation of destructive salvage. Salvage has been under-theorized and uncritically applied historically, and it is in looking at the stuff of salvage, like this, like La Flesche's texts and collected materials, that we can draw out the subtle (and not so subtle) differences between the varied practices that have come to be called salvage.



Figure 10: Wajapa Feather

Source: Box 14, La Flesche Family 1900-1930. Alice Fletcher and Francis La Flesche Papers

This feather was attached to the letter Francis La Flesche received informing him the Wa-ja-pa, Francis' father's friend, had died. Wa-ja-pa is everywhere in the earlier materials of the Francis La Flesche archive. From Francis's experiences travelling with him and visits with relations and leaders in nearby nations to Alice Fletcher's reliance on him during some of her earliest forays into Nebraska, Wa-ja-pa is palpably present. In fact, someone with no previous knowledge of La Flesche's own family history might suppose Wa-ja-pa was his father. The fact that this feather was so lovingly preserved is extremely telling in my opinion. It is a reminder for me as I consider eliteness and family in the La Flesche archive not to naturalize the settler family structure. The settler family unit is not the only way to raise children, and it was certainly not the only Omaha way. Wa-ja-pa was clearly an important influence for La Flesche. His eliteness and influences were not just derived from his biological mother and father.



Figure 11: "Died September 5, 1932."

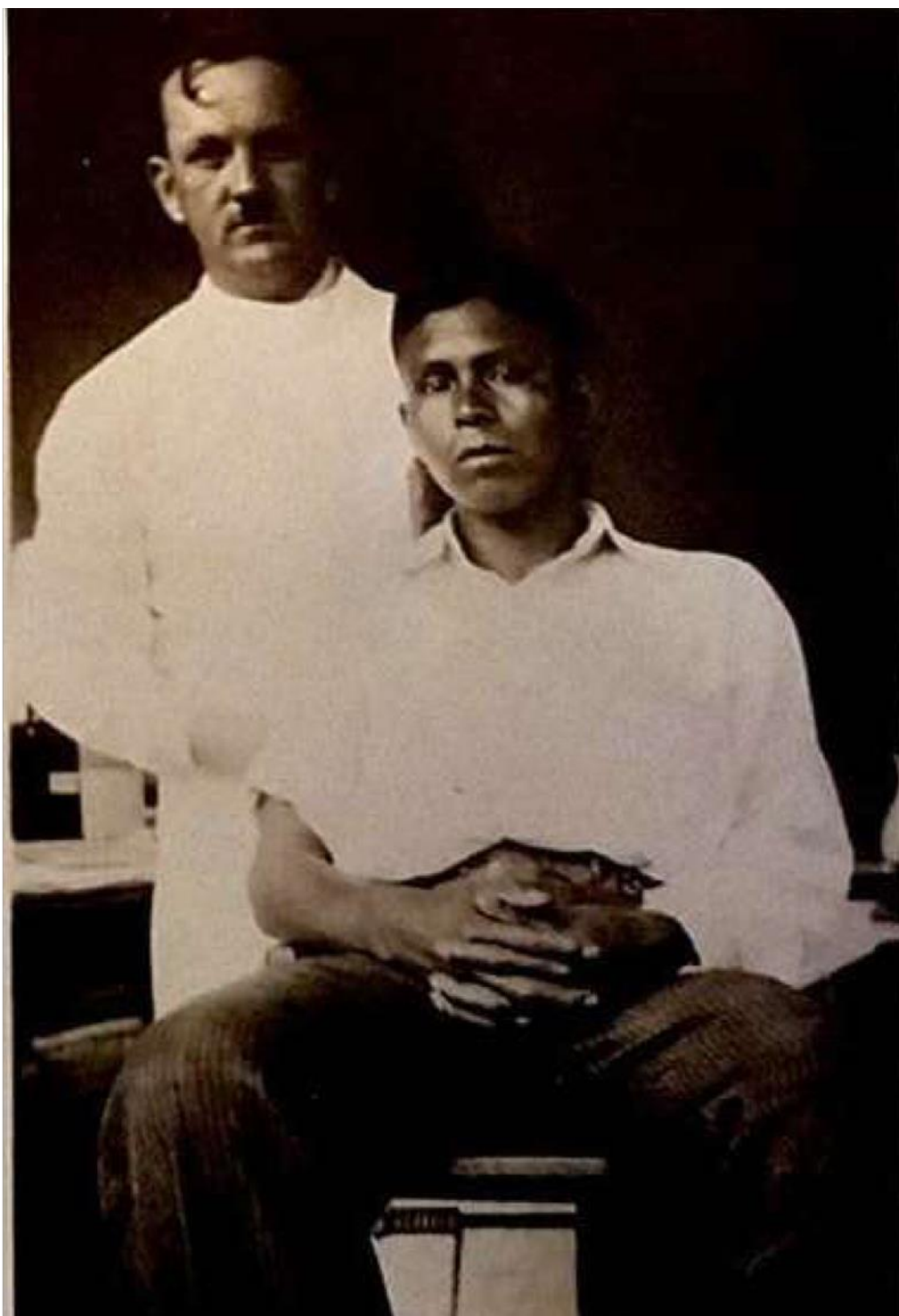
Source: Item gn_03939b1, Glass Negatives of Indians (Collected by the Bureau of American Ethnology) (1850s-1930s), National Anthropology Archive, Smithsonian

This was one of the last pictures ever taken of La Flesche. It has been used in the historiography as an example of his hybridity—settler clothes and buffalo hide. I am far more interested in how it was deployed in 1932. Numerous newspapers took this image and edited out La Flesche's shirt, showing him wearing the buffalo hide alone. Indigeneity was mapped onto La Flesche no matter what.

PART II



Figure 12: "Post Office and Business Buildings, Cherokee, N.C., 1935"
Source: North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill

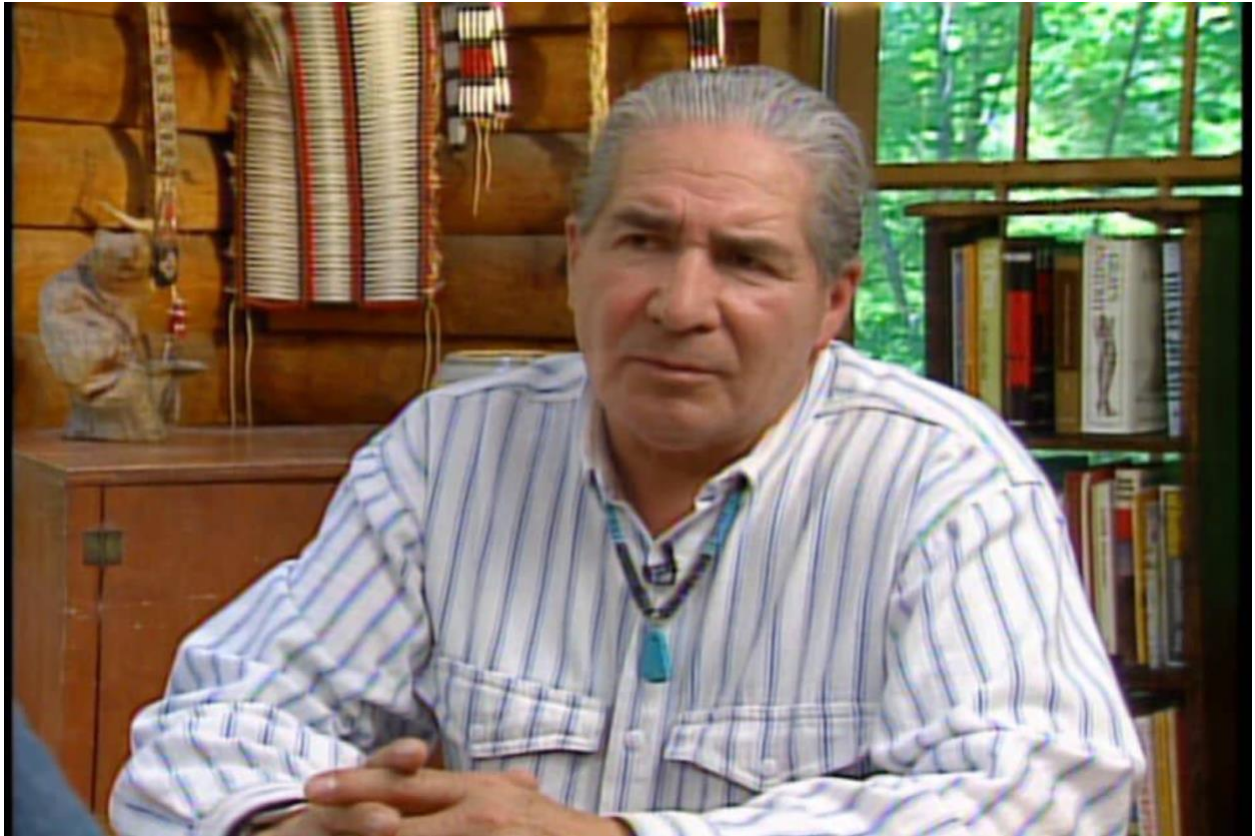


*Figure 13: Health Survey of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, June 5-17, 1933
Source: BIA RG 75, Entry 781, National Archives, Washington D.C.*



Figure 14: Farmers attending a forestry meeting and demonstration at farm of Johnson Owl, Cherokee Indian Reservation Swain County.

Source: Agricultural Extension and Research Services (UA023.007), North Carolina State University



*Figure 15: Oren Lyons on Bill Moyer's 1991.
Source: screenshot from "Oren Lyons Faithkeeper, 1991" (<https://vimeo.com/63824649>)*



Figure 16: Guswenta or Two Row Wampum.

Source: <http://www.oneidaindiannation.com/the-guswenta-two-row-wampum-belt-is-a-symbol-of-sovereignty/>

The two-row wampum is a legal Haudenosaunee document and treaty. The belt is read as follows: “You say that you are our Father and I am your son. We say, we will not be like Father and Son, but like Brothers. This wampum belt confirms our words. These two rows will symbolize two paths or two vessels, travelling down the same river together. One, a birch bark canoe, will be for the Indian People, their laws, their customs, and their ways. The other, a ship, will be for the white people and their laws, their customs and their ways. We shall each travel the river together, side by side, but in our boat. Neither of us will make compulsory laws or interfere in the internal affairs of the other. Neither of us will try to steer the other’s vessel (quoted from Archuleta, *The National Museum of the American Indian: Critical Conversations*, 202).”



*Figure 17: Kutsi Cook on the Environmental Vision Workshop in 2002.
Source: Kutsi Cook Papers, Sophia Smith Collection. Smith College*

EPILOGUE



Figure 18: On the River of Spacetime, Elizabeth LaPensée (2016)



Figure 19: Returning to Ourselves, Elizabeth LaPensée (2016)

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