

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Acknowledgments xvii

Introduction: Toward a Rhetoric of Relations 3

1. Plains Pictography and Embodied Resistance at Fort Marion 22
2. Plains Sign Talk: A Rhetoric for Intertribal Relations 50
3. Lakota Students' Embodied Rhetorics of Refusal 70
4. Writing Their Bodies in the Periodical Press 97

Afterword: Carlisle's Rhetorical Legacy 120

Notes 127

References 133

About the Author 141

Index 143

PREFACE

In October 1879, Colonel Richard Henry Pratt began his experiment in Indian education at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Prior to opening the school, Pratt had fought in the Civil War, commanded a unit of Buffalo Soldiers in Oklahoma, and served in a cavalry regiment during campaigns against Indigenous nations of the Southern Plains. Pratt's military background makes clear the settler-colonial violence behind the off-reservation school even as his rhetoric promised a new era of progress for the American Indian. Pratt developed his strategy of Indian education at Fort Marion in Florida between 1875 and 1878, when the War Department appointed him warden of seventy-two prisoners of the allied Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe tribes. Based upon his success "civilizing" the prisoners and hoping that Pratt had finally provided a solution to the Indian Problem, the federal government gave him the abandoned Army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to open the first off-reservation boarding school.

Between 1879 and its closing in 1918, Carlisle would house over 10,000 students and serve as a prototype for boarding schools on and off reservations across the continent. While we now view the school through the lens of its hulking ambition and generational impacts, Carlisle opened with very few students—eighty-two children, both boys and girls from the Lakota Rosebud and Pine Ridge agencies in South Dakota and some relatives and recruits of Fort Marion prisoners. The War Department demanded that Pratt focus his recruiting efforts on Lakota youths to dismantle resistance to the US government only three years after Custer's defeat at the Battle of the Greasy Grass (Little Big Horn), reasoning that Western tribes would be deterred from acting against the US government if their children were hostages thousands of miles to the east.¹ Parents agreed to a three-year term for their children to attend school. This study focuses on these first students because their rhetorical tactics formed in an environment of early intercultural contact. The school's curriculum and philosophy were not yet fully formed, which made space for students to incorporate their existing literacies into their educational environment.

They found opportunities to rebel and to refigure the scope of rhetorical possibility at school. Ultimately, I argue that these early students developed communicative tactics at school that aimed to bring about their visions of Indigenous futurity once they returned to their homelands.

Carlisle became the educational arm of a body of US government policies that culminated in the 1887 Dawes Act. We now recognize this period as the Assimilation Era. As Siobhan Senier summarizes, the Dawes Bill “proposed to divide up communally held tribal lands ‘in severalty,’ allotting a Jeffersonian 160 acres to each head of family. The Indian land would be held in trust for twenty-five years, at the end of which time American Indians would be made U.S. citizens and given individual titles to that land” (Senier 2001, 5). While supporters touted the legislation as a means to finally extend full citizenship to Native peoples, the most lasting effect of the bill was to open massive tracts of land to white settlement. Ultimately Native Americans lost 90 million acres, or two-thirds, of their landholdings (Senier 2001, 5). As historian Frederick Hoxie argues, assimilationist policies proceeded in two phases. The first operated on the belief that Native Americans could earn citizenship by proving their civilization—that is, by adopting the language, culture, and individual land ownership of settler society. This study focuses on students reacting to the educational policy conditions of this first stage. The second phase involved a continued effort to incorporate Native Americans into Euro-American society without the promise of full citizenship and equality (Hoxie 1984, xxi). At Carlisle, the second phase brought about a shift in pedagogical priorities, from a complete curriculum in trades, language, and arts and sciences to a strictly vocational program so that Indian students could become laborers and servants for Euro-Americans. This study focuses on Carlisle’s first years because they show an assimilationist worldview in process, with gaps in logic and implementation and a significant degree of intercultural negotiation around what the future would look like for Native peoples in North America.

A number of scholars have turned their attention to the off-reservation boarding school, examining both the particularities of individual institutions (Child 1998; Landrum 2019; Lomawaima 1994) and the philosophy, policies, and social impact of the movement writ large (Adams 1995; Archuleta, Child, and Lomawaima 2000; Fear-Segal 2007; Gram 2015; Katanski 2005; Lomawaima and McCarty 2006). Interest in the off-reservation boarding school has stretched across disciplines from history to American studies, literature, Native American / Indigenous studies, education, and linguistics. In each case, Carlisle features prominently as the earliest attempt at what would become a national trend.

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Each of these scholars has contributed to how we understand the day-to-day experiences of students and how they negotiated the schooling process through “creativity, adaptability, and resistance to the federal agenda of transformation” (Lomawaima 1994, xi). My study is unique in its narrowly focused time frame and scope. Rather than examining the forty-year tenure of Carlisle, I focus on the years 1875–1885 and the very first students at Fort Marion, Hampton, and then Carlisle to enter into the government assimilationist project through education. This narrow scope allows me to read the archive closely for rhetorical practices that students engaged, revised, and developed to face a new era of colonization. By centering my attention on the earliest students, I follow the thread from colonial violence in the Indian Wars on the Southern Plains to colonial violence in the boarding school. Most importantly, the scope of this study allows us to understand assimilationist education as an inconsistent, developing, and negotiated process where Indigenous rhetors—prisoners, students, and leaders—impacted the curriculum, norms, and practices of the institutions in which they were confined.

The boarding school movement is one of many historic and ongoing attempts by the United States to achieve what Audra Simpson calls its “monocultural aspirations” (2014, 22). As such, boarding schools attempt to extinguish markers of ethnic and national difference such as clothing, hair, labor practices, and, most significantly, language. As Fear-Segal and Rose argue,

the purpose of the education campaign matched previous policies: dispossessing Native peoples of their lands and extinguishing their existence as distinct groups that threatened the nation-building project of the United States. These objectives were effectively masked from the white public by a long-established American educational rhetoric that linked schooling to both democracy and individual advancement. (Fear-Segal and Rose 2016, 2)

Through benevolent rhetoric, the nationalistic aims of the boarding school came to be seen as not only the best thing for the United States but also the best thing for thousands of Indigenous young people who were legally required to attend boarding school after the passing of the compulsory attendance law in 1891. In the early years, however, attendance was not compulsory, and Pratt had to rely on diplomacy and coercion to recruit students. Students’ early resistant rhetorics at school—such as hunger striking or running away—impacted how Pratt’s project was received by their nations at home. Every time a student became sick or died or when parents visited and found their children being mistreated, it became more difficult for Pratt to recruit and retain students. In

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this sense, student resistance was particularly powerful during their first term, and the strategies they developed would continue to reemerge in fights for territorial and intellectual sovereignty for decades to come.

As often as scholars have studied the resistant strategies of students, they have also noted the ways that boarding schools became spaces for the development of pan-Indian or intertribal identities.² Robert Warrior identifies Fort Marion as the site where the earliest form of intertribal sociality developed as prisoners shared songs and developed “the ethic of respect for particularity and sameness that remains an ideal of intertribal gatherings and organizations” (Warrior 2005, 107). Brenda Child points us to the “Star of Bethlehem” quilt design that girls learned at Carlisle, which has since been incorporated into tribal life of the Upper Midwest, where star quilts are now the most highly prized item at giveaways during tribal ceremonies. She writes, “[L]ike the star blanket the boarding school has become part of our pan-Indian identity” (Child 1998, 4). The concept of a rhetoric of relations advanced in the following pages contributes to how we understand the boarding school as a site of intertribal coalition development. By demonstrating how expressive traditions such as Plains Sign Talk and pictography—technologies already used for intertribal communication on the Southern Plains—became shared rhetorics among youths from different nations at Carlisle, I argue that these rhetorical relations pushed back against the pressure for students to learn only English as a shared tongue. Also significant are the ways that resistance became a common ground where students from different nations built loyalty to one another through their shared opposition to school authorities (Lomawaima 1994, xiii). When I discuss Ernest White Thunder conceiving of his fellow students as the audience for his hunger strike or Harriet Mary Elder writing about how her fellow students behave better than the Euro-American children she meets at Sunday School, we can see how students banded together to maintain their Indigenous identities at an institution designed to reroute their energies toward settler cultural practices.

Even as this study focuses on the innovative rhetorics that Carlisle students and Fort Marion prisoners used to ensure tribal survivance, it is equally important to understand the violent constraints within which these rhetors acted. As Brenda Child has argued, “punishments for speaking tribal languages included beatings, swats from rulers, having one’s mouth washed out with soap or lye, or being locked in the school jail” (Child 1998, 28). At Carlisle, “punishments ranged from being locked in the guardhouse for a week at a time to dietary restrictions, to occasional beatings” (Katanski 2005, 56). At Fort Marion and Carlisle,

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punishments were handed down by peers in military-style tribunals to displace the responsibility for the cruelty from Pratt and other school authorities and further break down the students' solidarity with one another. As Risling Baldy has pointed out as well, "survivors of the boarding school experience report that they were victims of rampant physical and sexual abuse often perpetrated by boarding school officials, teachers, and government agents" (Risling Baldy 2018, 15). Many of the embodied and material rhetorics that I discuss in the following pages cannot be understood outside the context of the corporeal forms of abuse and coercion that occurred and continue to have generational impacts in Indigenous communities. Each of these elements of the boarding school experience—resistance, violence, intertribal coalitional development, homesickness, and running away—illuminate the conditions and constraints under which the earliest students lived and told their stories.

This book has two primary aspirations. The first is to bring the embodied and material rhetorics of Carlisle students—what I term the *rhetoric of relations*—into the ongoing scholarly conversation on Indigenous expressive traditions. My archival methodology is indebted to decades of scholarship that places Native American alphabetic literary and autobiographical texts in relation to other textual and extra-textual practices ranging from wampum belts to pictographic writing to the Cherokee syllabary to Plains hide painting to basket weaving and beyond. Lisa Brooks (2008), Matt Cohen (2010), Ellen Cushman (2011), Stephanie Fitzgerald (2008), and Philip Round (2010), to name just a few key figures, have demonstrated how performance and orality interact with textual and material productions to make meaning in Native American / Indigenous rhetoric. My task, as I see it, is to demonstrate how the material and embodied facets of Native American communication became tools for survivance in the particular forms that captivity took in the Assimilation Era—imprisonment at Fort Marion and other US military sites, sequestration in off-reservation boarding schools, and "outing" on Pennsylvania farms. This study shows how—in the surveilled, carceral environment—embodied and material practices allowed Indigenous rhetors to engage in covert and strategic continuance of their cultural identities. Ultimately, I argue these relational rhetorical modes allowed Indigenous prisoners and students, as well as their audiences, to imagine a future for Indigenous nations beyond the immediate conditions of violence and erasure during the Assimilation Era.

The second ambition of this book is to illuminate the fantasy of benevolence that propelled settler colonization during this period. I aim to dispel such fantasies in our contemporary rhetorical landscape as

well. Education has been and continues to be a site where the benevolent impulse allows language and literacy educators to standardize, limit, and erase their students' means of expression. This is a nationalistic and assimilationist practice that serves the interests of the settler state, not the students we claim to empower through education. This book seeks to illuminate the extraordinary expressive repositories that Indigenous rhetors draw upon to survive, persist, and build futures from within the institutions that perpetrate violence against them. This study looks to and beyond the written word—to pictographic writing, hunger striking, sign language, periodical publication, suicide, and more—to trace the full scope of rhetorical modes that Indigenous prisoners and students engaged within their respective captivities. This study traces processes of assimilation and resistance to dispel the fantasy of benevolence and replace it with an account of settler violence and Indigenous survivance in the Assimilation Era.

A NOTE ON NAMING AND TERMINOLOGY

To clarify some of the choices I have made, as well as the areas where ambiguity in naming can illuminate the experiences of Carlisle students, it is useful to enumerate the approach I have taken to the names of students and their nations. Whenever possible, I refer to the peoples making up the First Nations of North America as either *Indigenous*, *American Indian*, or *Native American*. I use the terms interchangeably in an attempt to be inclusive of the largest scope of intellectual traditions in the fields of Native American / Indigenous studies. Documents often refer to Native nations by misnomers or imprecise language, such as *Sioux*, and I will regularly reframe those misnamings when I am not using direct quotes and refer to Native peoples by the names they call themselves. Any mistakes I have made are entirely my own fault and no reflection of the work of my generous teachers.

I use the term *Indian* to represent a figuration of settler society. The term *Indian* appears often in the writings of Richard Henry Pratt, for example, and when referring to his writing, I use the term to underline his racist and colonial views. The term *Indian* also allows me to talk about the rhetorical construction of Indigenous peoples deployed by settlers, and I often use the term to indicate how settler society creates shifting images of Indigenous peoples to justify their ongoing, unjust occupation of the American continent.

The names of students present another set of challenges. To create clarity and consistency across various archival documents and ensure

that readers can easily find these students' texts in digital repositories such as the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center, I refer to students most often by the names they had at school. I will indicate parenthetically, whenever possible, their names before coming to school. Students' names were changed almost immediately upon entering Carlisle. In some cases, such as Ernest White Thunder, the student received their father's name as a surname to codify a patrilineal line of descent. In other cases, students were called by names that have no connection to their kinship relations or the names they are called in their communities. Rutherford B. Hayes is an example of this pattern. Finally, some students are anonymized in the periodical record such as the "Nez Perce girl" discussed in chapter 4. I have attempted to match these anonymous students to records that give Anglicized versions of their names, in this case Harriet Mary, then Harriet Mary Elder, then Harriet Mary Stuart. Close attention to how these students' names changed over time will give the reader insight into the ways that Carlisle authorities demonstrated their power to name and order things in the world. While using multiple names or naming students or their nations in ways that differ from the documentary record, I may be introducing a level of ambiguity to the stories that follow. It is my hope that readers can transform this ambiguity into awareness about how the power to name is a fundamental aspect of self-determination. Carlisle's documentary record attempts to erase Native names, and this study uses naming as a reparative act.

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Introduction

TOWARD A RHETORIC OF RELATIONS

On June 25, 1880, photographer John N. Choate captured the slate of a Cheyenne student (re)named Rutherford B. Hayes. The top of the slate shows a series of words: apple, get, grew, all, trees. Below appears a short composition about a boy named Frank, in an apple tree, who plans to give an apple to Ann. Next is a letter composed to the student's father, informing him that "this here at Carlisle all the boys and girls like very nice school some boys and girls read in book every day work hard." At the bottom, a series of equations appears next to a pictographic rendering of a warrior riding a horse, labeled John Williams, the name of an Arapaho boy who started school the same day as R. B. Hayes¹ and was likely his classmate and friend. These inscriptions, erased for other lessons, have been preserved for 140 years in Choate's print.

The slate is a snapshot of the processes whereby the Carlisle Indian School attempted to assimilate Native children into cultural norms of whiteness. Everything from the student's assigned name to the composition about apples to the letter home indicates what, for Richard Henry Pratt (1973, 260) and his colleagues, could "kill the Indian, save the man."² Simultaneously, we glimpse another rhetorical tradition—a tradition that makes meaning within the communicative ecosystem of the Southern Plains, a tradition that is illegible to Carlisle's teachers. R. B. Hayes depicts a horse, a technology of war introduced by the Spanish in 1540 and long since an integral part of life for the Cheyenne, Comanche, Arapaho, and other Plains tribes. While the student learns alphabetic literacy, he produces pictographic literacy beside his newly acquired English words. He figures his Arapaho classmate as a warrior astride his horse, inscribing their shared story in both the English alphabet and Plains pictography. Just as his ancestors incorporated the horse into the fabric of tribal life, this student at school thousands of miles from home attempts to do the same with the English language.

This student's composition is not well-known. He did not become a famous essayist writing against settler colonialism in the late nineteenth

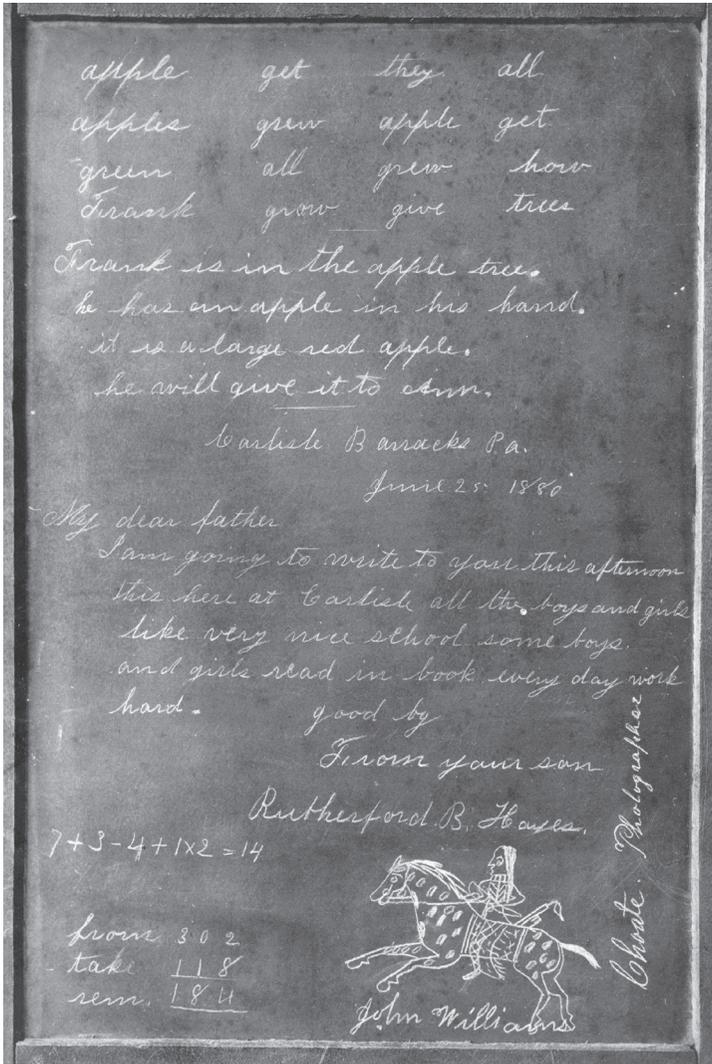


Figure 0.1. Indian School student's slate dated June 25, 1880. Photo by John N. Choate. Courtesy, Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, PA.

century. He did not go on to publish a memoir of his time at boarding school. His ephemeral text is only preserved through the lens of a photographer who viewed it as a cultural curiosity. But if we want to understand how the history of composition has been intimately, even inextricably linked with colonization, then this student's work illuminates the complex processes whereby educators who believed completely in

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their own benevolence became instruments for the dispossession and de-culturation of Native peoples. In this book, I enumerate the dynamic routes of assimilation and resistance that characterized language and literacy training in the first years of the Carlisle school. My goal is not only to emphasize the colonialist history of American writing education but also to demonstrate how students developed multimodal, embodied rhetorics to resist and repurpose alphabetic literacy. I term these tactics *the rhetoric of relations*. As scholars engaged in the teaching of writing today, we cannot ignore the past and ongoing assimilationist motives of writing education. By grappling with this history, we can refuse to be well-intentioned yet complicit in ongoing processes of cultural erasure in our writing classrooms.

As I have pored over the texts produced during Carlisle's early years (photographs,³ periodicals, letters, government reports, autobiographies), I have been struck by the impossibility of what I find—students like R. B. Hayes resisting and surviving the cultural genocide imposed on them. For one thing, these are young people still forming national identities—the first students ranged in age from seven years old to young adulthood. Their youth led the government to choose them for an acculturation experiment. For another, their texts are not only coerced but highly mediated. Students know that their teachers and the superintendent will read everything. They could be punished physically or humiliated in campus newspapers for making mistakes. In addition, these students are sick from new and strange food, an unfamiliar climate, and institutional epidemics such as tuberculosis, trachoma, measles, pneumonia, mumps, and influenza (Adams 1995, 125). To reckon with this rhetorical situation is to confront the impossible.

And yet, I am reminded of Gerald Vizenor's (1994, 41) story about watching a boy dancing at the Wahpeton Indian School in North Dakota, many years after Native children's first boarding school experiences at Carlisle:

The observers participated in one of the most treacherous simulations of the tribal heart, a dance in chicken feathers to please the missionaries. Would we have been wiser to denounce the child at the time, to undermine the simulations of the dance in the presence of the superintendent? We should have told the child then and there our honest reaction to his dance, but we were his audience of solace. How could we be the assassins of his dreams of survivance?

Survivance is not elegant in this story. It is not pure or unadulterated tribal continuance. It is a process of performance, compromise, incorporation, humor, and discomfort. Survivance, a combination of survival

and resistance, has become foundational to the study of Native rhetorics; yet in efforts to understand how rhetoric became a tool of survivance for Indigenous peoples of the late nineteenth century, we have too often focused on individuals whose texts appear in periodicals and books with a largely Euro-American readership. Zitkála-Šá, Charles Eastman, Sarah Winnemucca, and Luther Standing Bear achieved high levels of alphabetic literacy and gained access to the Euro-American print public sphere. My study locates rhetorics of survivance both in and beyond the written word because without a capacious and embodied rhetorical lens, early Carlisle students are impossible to recognize as “fully human subjects capable of tactical refigurings” (Powell 2002, 405). It is through embodied and material rhetorics that Richard Henry Pratt’s first students pushed back against assimilationist education and maintained their cultural identities in the face of intractable odds.

I have termed these diverse and broad-ranging communicative tactics a “rhetoric of relations” in reference to the Lakota cultural symbol and ceremonial benediction *Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ*, or “all my relations.” The orientation of human persons in ethical relation with non-human persons on a shared land base is echoed in the Kiowa maxim “behold, I stand in good relation to all things” and resonates with the cosmologies and lifeways of many Indigenous groups in the Americas (Lookingbill 2007, 31). “All my relations” encapsulates the belief that externally dissimilar beings share a common interiority; hence members of the Lakota Nation view themselves in relation to the Buffalo Nation and ascribe personhood and interiority to the stones, water, and plant life that share their homelands (Posthumus 2018, 15). Drawing on the writings of Vine Deloria, anthropologist David C. Posthumus (2018, 39) argues that American Indian beliefs and lifeways are “situated, temporal, experiential, and relational.” This orientation is key to understanding Indigenous embodied and material rhetorics at Carlisle. I locate the rhetoric of relations in four distinct yet interrelated sites of interpretation and world making. First and foremost, this is a book about how relations among different forms of media (gesture, speech, writing, image, and embodied performance) generate meaning for Indigenous groups; second, I am interested in how these relational media shift relations of power between settler and Indigenous rhetors; third, I focus on how particular forms of Indigenous expression such as Southern Plains Pictography or Plains Sign Talk generate intertribal relations that, in turn, generate new possibilities for collective action; finally, I delineate a relational practice for scholarly work in the archive that attends to positionality, spatiality, and responsibility such that Indigenous rhetorics

can emerge in opposition to the settler institutions (colleges and universities, libraries, federal archives, special collections, and historical societies) that seek to contain them.

Indigenous rhetorics materialize from common experiences of colonization but also from a common relationship with and orientation to the lands of the American continent. Andrea Riley Mukavetz and Malea Powell (2015, 140–141) have argued that Indigenous practices of making arise from relations with the land, animals, and spirits who persist here: “This orientation to that set of relations, and the responsibilities that arise from maintaining ‘right’ relations, then forms the ambiguous boundaries of something we call Indigenous rhetorical practices.” At Carlisle and Fort Marion, Indigenous rhetors developed communicative means to shift relations and reorient themselves to nation and land. These rhetorics emerge from the experience of the off-reservation boarding school as a particular site of colonial violence and intertribal connectivity. While one narrative of the boarding school experience is that of great trauma and loss, a coexisting story is one of Pan-Indian identity development and the incorporation of Euro-American literacy practices and technologies into the existing relations to land and language that Riley-Mukavetz and Powell describe. As Scott Richard Lyons has discussed, the narrative of the boarding school experience as trauma is so powerful that it has “colonized” even the memories of former students who did not themselves experience terrible abuses in school. Lyons (2010, 22) calls for “boarding schools to receive more complex treatment in the realm of public memory.” I put forward the framework of a rhetoric of relations as a promising ground to explore what that complexity might look like.

This book demonstrates how a rhetoric of relations concretizes the workings of Indigenous rhetorics in the context of settler colonization, particularly in the period of heightened violence and coercion known as the Assimilation Era. Two key thinkers in Native American / Indigenous studies, Christopher Teuton (Cherokee) and Lisa Brooks (Abenaki), have theorized a relational framework for Indigenous communicative practices. For Teuton, oral, graphic, and critical impulses create balance between the affordances and drawbacks of each expressive form. He argues that oral discourses afford “a relational, experiential engagement with the world through sound-based forms of communication . . . they offer the potential for a more direct social engagement” (Teuton 2010, xvi). In contrast, graphic forms afford “the permanent recording of cultural knowledge in formats that will allow for recollection and study” (xvii). What Teuton terms the critical impulse “is always

undercutting, always making messes, always disrupting things when they seem to be functioning well enough.” The three impulses function in relation to ensure cultural survivance, which demands “a community’s active engagement with the worldview its members continually construct” (xviii).

Lisa Brooks (2008, xxi) has argued similarly that Native writers “spin the binary between word and image into a relational framework,” challenging the oppositional thinking through which settler scholars have long viewed communicative systems. *Precisely because* Indigenous rhetors construct stories in these relational media, their tactics are invisible to the Euro-American soldiers and teachers who decode language within a binary orality/literacy paradigm. *Precisely because* they draw on media that demand experiential engagement with the shifting conditions of the world, Indigenous rhetors persist in their expressive traditions by disrupting, shifting, and revising the communicative rules of assimilationist education.

A rhetoric of relations pushes back against the oral/literate divide that has characterized too much scholarship in rhetoric and composition. In other words, if settler scholars conceive of Indigenous Americans as only engaging history, memory, and story through oral practices, then we miss the embodied and material rhetorics that go hand in hand with oral modes. Counterintuitively, it is this very dichotomous thinking by settler teachers and scholars that allowed embodied and multimodal rhetorics to flourish in the boarding school system. Because settler teachers did not think of pictographic writing or Plains Sign Talk *as meaningful language*, they were unable to surveil, forbid, or punish these forms of tribal continuance. The archive allows us to glimpse student rhetorics beyond the alphabetic literacy forced upon them. When we learn to recognize and interpret these practices, we can better understand how Indigenous students drew upon the communicative reservoirs of their home cultures to survive boarding schools and create a future for Indigenous presence in the Americas.

NATIVE AMERICAN / INDIGENOUS STUDIES SPEAKS BACK TO RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

This project follows in the footsteps of Scott Richard Lyons and Malea Powell, two scholars whose work demands that Indigenous worldviews hold a central position in any study of communication, persuasion, and writing in the American context. I have grappled with Lyons’s term *rhetorical sovereignty*, what American Indians want from writing, and

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Powell's "rhetorics of survivance," the *use* of writing by Native peoples, to make sense of Carlisle students' rhetorical tactics. These young people are barred in many ways from rhetorical sovereignty, "the inherent right and ability of *peoples* to determine their own communicative needs and desires . . . to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and language of public discourse" (Lyons 2000, 449, original emphasis). Carlisle demanded that they give up the notion of peoplehood. Boarding schools aimed to detribalize, de-historicize, and reconstruct students' identities as English-literate subjects of the United States. And yet they did *use* writing, and like Sarah Winnemucca and Charles Eastman, their use of writing must be "seen as deliberately rhetorical, consciously and selectively interpretive with a specific audience's needs in mind" (Powell 2002, 406). In the chapters that follow, I read the texts of Native rhetors using their words and bodies to make meaning in the impossible rhetorical situation of assimilationist education.

Scholars have long viewed literacy as a contested site in the contact zone⁴ between European and Indigenous cultures, yet Eurocentrism and settler-colonial fantasies continue to bear an undue and often invisible influence on literacy studies. European beliefs about writing historically privileged Western culture and justified the earliest colonial incursions into the Americas. As Stephen Greenblatt (2003, 9) has shown, Columbus and his contemporaries believed their "literal advantage" (the advantage of writing) connected them directly with God and conferred on them a unique ability to conceive of history. Centuries later, Great Divide proponents Eric Havelock, Jack Goody, and Walter Ong exemplify the powerful grip such colonizing beliefs retained into the twentieth century. In varying iterations, they proposed that literacy and orality create fundamentally different social conditions and that the literate side of this opposition carries more cultural and cognitive value.⁵ When rhetoric and composition theorizes literacy and orality, then, we do so in ways that are fraught with colonial baggage. We have too often accepted and perpetuated the myths of Euro-American colonization that demand we un-see the literate and expressive forms of Indigenous nations.

Despite the growing presence of Native American and Indigenous scholars and scholarly approaches in literacy and rhetorical studies—exemplified by such thinkers as Malea Powell, Scott Lyons, Qwo-Li Driskill, Lisa King, Ellen Cushman, Emily Legg, Andrea Riley Mukavetz, Angela Haas, and others—colonial views of literacy continue to restrict the accuracy and scope of analysis in a number of historically focused fields. Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Caroline Wigginton,

and Kelly Wisecup (2018, 417) argue that the beliefs of the continent's first colonists continue to restrict the materials and methods used by today's scholars:

Colonists' emphasis on alphabetic literacy and insistence that trustworthy history take written forms continue to orient both historiographical practices and conceptions of the literary, despite the ongoing importance of oral traditions and nonalphabetic materials for Native authors and communities . . . allowing genres such as the captivity narrative, novel, and sermon and forms of literacy such as alphabetic writing to orient our literary histories can silence Indigenous literary and intellectual histories while leaving to the side or framing through colonial categories the diverse media and oratorical practices on which native people drew.

Given the fraught role (mis)understandings of Indigenous expressive traditions play in the fields of literary, historical, and rhetorical studies, this book focuses on the wide range of embodied, textual, and graphic forms boarding school students engaged as well as how those forms were rendered invisible or illegible to the colonial gaze.

To address the ongoing limitations of settler-colonial mythos in studies of literacy and rhetoric, I rely heavily on John Duffy's notion of "rhetorics of literacy," a concept that carves a path forward from the faulty premises of the Great Divide thesis. Duffy (2007, 60) maligns the binary of literacy and orality as a "twentieth-century expression of the nineteenth-century tradition of anthropology." A rhetorics of literacy methodology defines the two key terms at play in the following interrelated way: *rhetoric* is "the ways of using language and other symbols by institutions, groups, or individuals for the purpose of shaping concepts of reality," and *literacy* is the technical contrivance through which that concept of reality moves through the world (15). Because Indigenous expressive traditions so frequently fall under the mischaracterizations of colonial audiences such as ethnographers, anthropologists, and educational reformers, rhetorics of literacy is an ideal framework for the type of situated and historicized work I am engaging here. We can begin to ask, what social beliefs and political agendas underlie curricular decisions? What motives prompt teachers to reward some communicative modes while pathologizing others? What global systems are implicated in institutional norms? Literacy does not exist outside of the personal, cultural, institutional, transnational, historical, or rhetorical realms Duffy has identified (193–200). To understand the Carlisle school language curriculum is to make sense of the complex web of forces that made Indigenous language eradication possible.

This book traces how meaning was constructed and negotiated within the Carlisle school itself but also within the various publics the school

aimed to influence. These publics include the Protestant religious and missionary organizations that called themselves the “Friends of the Indian,” agents and bureaucrats of the federal government, Indigenous leaders and collectives, as well as a wide swath of the Euro-American public interested in Indian policy and Indian education after the Indian Wars on the Southern Plains. Indigenous and Euro-American rhetors also addressed internal audiences made up of Fort Marion prisoners and jailers and, later, Carlisle authorities and students. These competing rhetors deployed strategies in print, graphic, and embodied media to impose their worldviews on one another and shift the field of power relations in which they interacted. Indigenous rhetors drew upon what K. Tsianina Lomawaima (1994, xiii) calls “the markers of identity inherited from home and learned at the school—tribal background, language, degree of blood, physical appearance”—to reconstitute their orientations and audiences as tribal ways of life came under new forms of attack. The rhetorical history traced in the following pages demonstrates how the colonial scene is one of persuasion, where meaning comes unhinged from existing tethers for both colonizer and colonized. New possibilities for inter- and intra-cultural relations emerge as both groups adapt to one another’s communicative technologies. Revising such expressive traditions as Plains Sign Talk, pictographic writing, embodied performances of bravery and self-sacrifice, and strategic engagements with print, Fort Marion prisoners and Carlisle students showed that Indigenous rhetorical traditions would not disappear beneath the imperative of assimilation.

Because I am invested in unsettling the ongoing and tacit conception of a single, Euro-Western rhetorical tradition, I draw centrally on scholarship in Native American / Indigenous studies to engage with the multiple, competing, and equally rich rhetorical traditions that come into contact through settler-colonialism in the Americas. I borrow the term *expressive tradition(s)* from Mt. Pleasant, Wigginton, and Wisecup (2018). I appreciate the term in its capaciousness and use it as an umbrella concept to demarcate the various textual and extra-textual (i.e., oral, performative, material, embodied) practices deployed by Indigenous Americans within their rhetorical repertoires. My focus on the communicative world of the Americas is a deliberate one that grounds the experiences of students at off-reservation boarding schools within the history of both colonization and Indigenous cultural productions before and in opposition to that colonization. In this sense, my project follows Damián Baca’s (2010, 3) call for rhetorical histories that account for how Indigenous artists and writers have “responded and continue to

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respond to imperialist teleology and Western expansion.” By studying the workings of Indigenous rhetorics under the particular historical conditions of assimilation, I demonstrate how Indigenous cultural resilience emerges from their communicative practices, particularly the elasticity of those practices and their ability to change over time.

This project is indebted to recent scholarship that places Indigenous literary, historicist, graphic, and material expressive forms at the center of scholarly inquiry. As Birgit Brander Rasmussen (2014, 259) has argued, colonial techniques such as the destruction of historical documents and limiting scholarly definitions of literacy work to make Native American writing systems invisible to settlers and settler scholars. In the past decade, research on media, cultures of print, and book history has led to a rich body of work on Indigenous communicative techniques beyond the written word.⁶ The work of this volume is to join this conversation with new insights into how the body enters Indigenous expressive action in relation to graphic and written forms. My goal is to further our understanding of how relational rhetorics reverberate in the graphic, material, and textual documentary history that is readily available in nineteenth-century archives.

The body has a fraught history in rhetorical studies and an equally fraught history in scientific racism of the nineteenth century. Karma R. Chávez (2018, 242) has articulated how the body serves as both an “abstract and actual rhetorical concept” in rhetorical studies. At times, this book approaches the body from each angle. First, I am interested in how Native American/Indigenous bodies were racialized at Fort Marion and Carlisle and in the nineteenth-century settler imagination. I discuss shifting theories of race and their impact on curriculum at Carlisle in chapter 2. In this sense, this book conceives of the “Indian” body as an abstraction that is imagined to have fixed biological or cultural differences from the Euro-American body. Part of the racialization of Native Americans in the Assimilation Era involved conceiving of the Indian as culturally disabled in relation to the imagined “advanced” US culture. As Siobhan Senier (2012) has argued, attributing disability to Indigenous peoples is a tool for resource extraction: “Once Indigenous people have been pathologized, labeled ‘the Indian problem,’ the path is clear for colonial exploitation. Native dis-ability means that they are unable to manage their own resources—their children, their trees and game, their uranium. Native mortality means that their land is available for the taking.” The Carlisle school is a chilling example of how US government policy generated Native disability materially (through institutional diseases like tuberculosis, pneumonia, and trachoma)

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and discursively (by pathologizing Native languages and cultures). To understand how the Indigenous body came to be viewed as disabled and in need of institutional intervention, I interrogate how—to borrow from Duffy (2007, 15)—rhetoric is reality shaping. In the Assimilation Era, the rhetoric of Indians disabled by their culture generated massive institutional energy for the reform of reservation life and Indian education. Racialized beliefs led settler military and educational workers to surveil, control, incarcerate, attire, and otherwise violently interact with Indigenous bodies at Fort Marion and Carlisle.

How Indigenous rhetors reacted to that violence demonstrates the ways the body can be a “vehicle for rhetorical performance” and “an often ignored but important site of rhetorical invention” (Chávez 2018, 243). When I put forward a rhetoric of relations, I mean to create a framework that conveys not only the rich repository of meaningful embodied acts Fort Marion prisoners and Carlisle students performed but also the ways other expressive traditions document those meaningful embodied acts. A good example appears in chapter 1, where I read Etahdleuh Doanmoe’s Fort Marion sketchbook not as the story of his journey from savagery to civilization (which is Richard Pratt’s interpretation and the reason he treasured and preserved the text) but rather as a graphic history of the embodied resistance of Doanmoe’s fellow prisoners. I argue that the sketchbook subversively reproduces the suicide and escape attempts undertaken by other members of his intertribal group of captives. The sketchbook, then, represents not an enclosed documentary history itself but a historical text working *in relation* with Kiowa oral histories. These subtle sketches of suicide attempts or violence against the guards would be made legible in oral re-tellings of the pictographic text yet remain invisible within the Euro-American jailers’ interpretive frameworks. Embodied actions and experiences enter the documentary record again and again in these archives, serving as sites of resistance when alphabetic literacy itself was a tool of coercion and surveillance.

At off-reservation boarding schools, educators scrutinized and surveilled the bodies of the Native students. According to Pratt (1964, 2), students would not be able to learn English until their bodies were appropriately de-indigenized. He wrote in early 1880, “The daily [English] sessions were short, and not much was effected until blankets had disappeared.” As long as the children wore markers of their tribes on their bodies, Pratt was sure they could not learn English. As Penelope Kelsey (2013, 199) argues, “While the physical conformity of Indigenous bodies was sought most immediately, the minds of pupils were the ultimate site of contestation.” In this way, an embodied set of codes and

norms preceded English-language training. Jay Dolmage (2014, 4) calls this phenomenon the “rhetorical push-and-pull [of disability] not just wherever we might recover disabled bodies, but also when we find any supposedly ‘abnormal’ body—foreign, raced, feminized, sexualized, diseased, aging.” Indigenous bodies became abnormal to justify policies of assimilation.⁷

This book views the body as both a site of trauma and racialization *and* a site of individual, tribal, and intertribal survivance at Fort Marion and the Carlisle school. Cutchá Risling Baldy articulates the importance of the body as a medium for survivance in her recent work on Hupa women’s coming-of-age ceremonies. Following the “violent and repeated violations of Native children through inappropriate surveillance and also physical violations of their bodies” at boarding school, Risling Baldy (2018, 15, 21) discusses the revitalization of coming-of-age ceremonies as a type of “embodied decolonization.” The following chapters suggest that even within the constraints of the military prison and the boarding school, prisoners and students took part in processes of embodied decolonization that built resilience within these spaces and carved out a path for emergent intertribal movements of cultural revitalization and self-determination in the twentieth century and beyond.

A RELATIONAL PRACTICE IN THE ARCHIVE

When I enter spaces to engage with documentary evidence of the Carlisle school, I do so as a white woman teacher, following the path of other white women teachers who came before me. In many ways, this archive is familiar. In many ways, this collection of documents is intended for me. As many readers will know, the work of teaching and administration creates reams of documents that make little sense to those outside a particular institution’s walls. These texts emerge from the immediate exigencies of running a school or managing a classroom. Richard Pratt created another layer of institutional memory when he invited photographer John Choate to document the activities and faces of his pupils; even these images are familiar to me as an education worker. Through such evidence as photographs, worksheets, reports, and letters, institutions tell stories about themselves. These stories are collective, bureaucratic fabrications that reproduce the institution and its values across time and space. Settler institutions of the nineteenth century were obsessed with the posterity of their stories. The repositories of these stories are very sturdy. They have thick walls and dry vaults. They have folders and boxes and acid-free paper. These stories live on

in the Cumberland County Historical Society and the Dickinson College Special Collections. They live in the National Archives in Washington, DC, where you can find hundreds of letters exchanged between the US Indian Bureau and Richard Pratt. These stories live in memorial plaques around the city of Carlisle and on the grounds of the Army War College, even in the cemetery of students who died at Carlisle, which has been relocated to the very edge of the active army base today. Settler forms of documentation reflect settler beliefs about language, history, and memory. The privileged position of alphabetic literacy is made clear. Anything written down on paper is more likely to be preserved. The settler society justifies our presence through the sheer volume of words we have written on the lands of the American continent. It is as though documentation of assimilationist efforts proves that assimilation occurred.

To understand this archive, I have looked closely at both the bureaucratic and photographic documentation of these institutions. Each type of text tells a part of the story. Lessons appear on chalk boards in the backgrounds of classroom photographs, on photographs of slates, in annual reports. I find a collection of student math problems: “If one bar of soap costs three cents, how many will you get for fifteen cents?” I find lists of books in expense reports sent to the US Indian Bureau for approval. I find photographs of students sitting at their desks or marching around the grounds or laboring in the tin shop and the print shop. I read about sewing lessons and a reading room where children can find English-language periodicals to read in their limited free time. Each of these elements tells part of the story.

Amid the boxes and folders and PDFs of student newspapers, the process of making meaning is daunting. I find this process best theorized by E. Cram (2016, 111) as *archival ambience*: “how archival environments act as a medium that orients bodies, feelings, and sensations relative to their memorializing contexts.” Cram illuminates how queering the archive involves a practice of positionality and relationality. In their words, “The relationality of archival ambience generates a landscape of feeling, and affectability begets conditions for archival invention” (115). Developing a relational practice demands that I contend with my own affectability in the archive of this settler institution. Unlike Malea Powell (2008, 117), who has written about her experience as “an Indian talking about what it means to be an Indian in the archive, what it means to be the object looking back, the objectified engaged in the process of making knowledge about the processes that led to my objectification,” I find myself all too comfortable amid the detritus of old English lessons. I realize that these teachers are no so different from myself. I, too, write reports to

document learning outcomes. I, too, engage in quotidian bureaucratic writing. I, too, negotiate the standardizing influences of institutions when I read and respond to my students' written work. Barring a critical, de-colonial praxis, my work would not be so different from that of these teachers whose documentary evidence has been preserved for posterity.

All of this is to say that my archival practice is constrained by the realities of settler-colonial institutions, epistemologies, and technologies of inscription and memory. As such, I approach the Carlisle archive with great humility, not to determine what *did* happen but, in the vein of Jacqueline Jones Royster's (Royster and Kirsch 2012, 71) concept of *critical imagination*, "what might likely be true based on what we have in hand." And I am not critically imagining alone. Scholarship in Native American / Indigenous studies provides a powerful set of methodologies and interpretive frameworks to reread Indigenous media that has made its way into imperial archives. I am thinking of Stephanie Fitzgerald's (2008) reading of Mohegan history as inscribed on a painted basket or Marge Bruchac's work on repatriating wampum belts to the communities whose history is inscribed therein. I am thinking of Ellen Cushman's (2011) excellent book on the Cherokee syllabary, where she explores how Cherokee cosmologies, epistemologies, and sovereignty inhere within the syllabary itself.⁸ When I work in the Carlisle archive, these methodologies teach me how to interpret students' writing, students' embodied practices, and the graphic media in which students inscribed their stories.

As I move and think through the documents that have been assembled in colonial edifices such as the Dickinson College Special Collections, the Cumberland County Historical Society, Yale's Beinecke Library, and the US National Archives, I acknowledge my responsibility to chronicle not only the stories of Indigenous rhetors but also the stories of the teachers and administrators who abused their power and understood that abuse through myths of their own benevolence. My aim is to bring to light the legacy of colonial violence that lives within the practice of teaching English while also revisiting the texts and performances of students who faced that violence. As Powell (2008, 121) articulates, the archival scholar is responsible for remembering that archival materials are not "simply available objects; no, they are alive, and their harvest requires the appropriate gestures of respect, friendship, honor, and good will." These gestures work against the imperial impulse toward salvage ethnography and theft that has led museums and archives to hold sacred, cultural, and historical materials away from the Indigenous nations for whom they are a vital part of life and memory. I also take seriously Gesa Kirsch's (Royster and Kirsch 2012, viii) insight that "archival

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records are never simply transparent. Just as a collection of records is established from an interested perspective, it is also read from an interested perspective.” Emily Legg, too, has argued that our material histories “are also value laden because they were ‘worth’ archiving.” As such, archival scholars must redirect the values and impulses behind colonial practices of collection and preservation. Legg (2014, 73) insists that “we must begin by undoing the practice of unseeing, especially writing practices and educational models of underrepresented peoples.” We only have access to the Fort Marion and Carlisle materials because Richard Pratt and his cohorts maintained careful records as part of their bureaucratic responsibilities to the federal government. Carlisle materials were read and collected to document the imagined end of Indigenous life in America and necessarily limit our full understanding of students’ rhetorics of survivance.

Following Powell, Kirsch, and Legg, I insist that there are ways to engage the Carlisle archive that lend powerful insight into the workings of Indigenous rhetoric and resistance. As Jacqueline Emery (2017, 5) asserts in her recent edited collection of boarding school texts, “Boarding school newspapers are an untapped archive for scholars working to recover early Indigenous writings and to challenge the restrictive assimilationist-resistance binary that has dominated narratives of the boarding school experience.” Scholars are increasingly reading these periodicals against and beyond their assimilationist performances to better understand how students developed “tricky and subtle” strategies of critique (13). By revisiting student texts that are uncomfortably aligned with the boarding school philosophy, my own project extends our understandings of Native American writing in the Assimilation Era. More important, however, I am interested in how students conceived of and enacted survivance through their engagement with and revision of their nations’ expressive traditions. I argue that no archival study can look at alphabetic writing alone to capture the strategies of these students. Embodied, graphic, and material rhetorics exist all over this archive and illuminate how students were always exploring their English-language learning in relation to their existing repertoires.

Diana Taylor uses the term *repertoire* in contrast to “archive,” and part of my work here is to bring these two terms into relation. For Taylor (2003, 19), the archive “exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, cds, all those items supposedly resistant to change.” The repertoire, in contrast, “enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible

knowledge” (20). Taylor is attuned to how culture travels and changes through ephemeral acts with bounded temporalities and audiences. I contend that the Fort Marion and Carlisle archive demonstrates how the archive and the repertoire act in concert to create forms of memory that may only be legible to cultural insiders with an interest in retaining the secrecy of their communal knowledge. I am thinking of the many ways embodied performances enter this archive, such as how Etahdleuh Doanmoe captures the ephemeral, embodied acts of bravery that Cheyenne chiefs Gray Beard and Lean Bear perform on their journey from Fort Sill to Fort Marion. Or how Ernest White Thunder’s hunger strike and death enter and shape the written record through letters, petitions, x-marks, nonfiction, and treaty negotiations decades after his embodied acts. These performances accrue meaning not only for their immediate audiences but also for broader publics that emerge and shift due to colonial conditions of the late nineteenth century. When I say that hunger striking or running away reverberates in the print public sphere, I am talking about how the archive of preserved, written texts is not a static form of memory. This is memory that evolves as political possibilities change for Indigenous peoples in their ongoing fight for self-determination and the end to settler colonization.

As conditions of possibility change, so, too, does the meaning of the archive. I make sense of the shifting political implications of the Carlisle archive in Ann Cvetkovich’s (2003, 7) formulation of an archive of feelings—“an exploration of cultural texts as repositories of feelings and emotions, which are encoded not only in the content of the texts but in practices that surround their production and reception.” For Cvetkovich, trauma challenges how we think about archives by putting “pressure on conventional forms of documentation, representation, and commemoration, giving rise to new genres of expression, such as testimony, and new forms of monuments, rituals, and performances that can call into being collective witnesses and publics” (7). While Cvetkovich comes to the concept through her study of lesbian performances and engagements with queer trauma, I find her work particularly helpful in understanding how Carlisle students and Fort Marion prisoners encoded their stories in ways that would reverberate in public decoding processes long after their experiences of incarceration. Prisoners at Fort Marion and students in Carlisle’s first years are undoubtedly experiencing unprecedented forms of trauma, and this impacts how they encode their experiences. In some cases, these rhetors take genres from their national traditions into new spaces, using Plains Sign Talk on the Carlisle campus or creating pictographic histories with colored pencils

and paper instead of buffalo hide and paint. In other cases, they develop new genres of expression such as running away or using stories of their bodies to encode their traumatic experiences into periodical print. In still other cases, these rhetors perform ceremonies such as the Sun Dance in entirely new ways to gesture toward a return to good relations with their communities even though they cannot communicate with their relatives in their homelands. These forms of embodied and material expression build a future when there will be new possibilities beyond the constraints of the moment. In this sense, Fort Marion and Carlisle documentary evidence can be assembled into an “archive of feelings” that generates the conditions of possibility for intertribal and sovereign publics of Indigenous resisters into the twentieth century and beyond.

The following chapters approach the early years of the Assimilation Era through close attention to archival and periodical documents related to the Carlisle Indian School. Chapter 1 examines the archive of relational rhetorics deployed by Fort Marion prisoners as they aimed to construct the futurity of their nations on the shifting ground of settler colonization. I argue that Fort Marion prisoners engaged in a rhetoric of relations to make settler violence visible even as settler rhetoric insisted on US national innocence. These prisoners also engaged in performances of personal sacrifice for the benefit of the group, both for their immediate audience of fellow prisoners and their communities in their homelands. This chapter focuses on how individual prisoners recognized that while they may not have had a future as individuals, their texts, their communities, and their homelands did. This is the story the Fort Marion prisoners tell in media ranging from pictographic sketches to the Sun Dance ceremony to suicide.

Chapter 2 weaves through logics of language, race, and disability in the Assimilation Era and how these competing and overlapping logics impacted the earliest Carlisle language and literacy curriculum. Indigenous students’ use of Plains Sign Talk (PST) serves as a grounding case study in how Indian languages were interpreted by educational reformers and how that interpretation impacted everyday lessons. In an extraordinary feat of un-seeing Indigenous literacies, Pratt based his English-only curriculum on the assumption that Indians and the deaf would benefit from an identical, gesture-based approach. This interpretation of PST had far-reaching effects for pedagogy and curriculum at Carlisle. But as in all cases throughout this book, Plains Sign Talk remained a powerful rhetoric of relations and resistance as Pratt and his contemporaries (mis)interpreted this language as evidence of Indigenous cultural disability.

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Chapter 3 examines the embodied rhetorics of a student named Ernest White Thunder within the larger context of Lakota refusal of allotment policies of the 1880s. Ernest was among the first group of students to come to Carlisle from the Sicangu Oyate, or Burnt Thigh Nation, at the Rosebud Agency in South Dakota. He entered school at age eighteen and went on a hunger strike to resist the curriculum and his captivity away from his homeland. This chapter pushes back against the notion of rhetoric as a set of persuasive communicative strategies to most expediently bring about a desired result. Rather, drawing on the work of Audra Simpson, I argue that an Indigenous rhetoric of relations is not expedient. It is better understood as “the phenomenon of people thinking and acting as nationals in a scene of dispossession” (Simpson 2014, 33). Ernest White Thunder refused to abandon his national identity in the face of overwhelming colonial pressure, and he used his body to communicate that refusal when all other forms of resistance failed. In so doing, he modeled a rhetoric of refusal that would ignite further refusals by members of his nation as they came to terms with the deaths of their children and how the boarding school project fit within larger settler-colonial tactics to dispossess the Lakota of their land.

Chapter 4 turns to students who did not explicitly reject the curriculum for assimilation they encountered at Carlisle but who molded their rhetorical tactics in ways that blended alphabetic and embodied forms to envision new ways for their nations to exist in the Assimilationist Era. While previous chapters focus primarily on embodied rhetorical forms such as Plains Sign Talk or hunger striking, chapter 4 looks at how students wrote about their bodies in Carlisle’s periodical press, creating a relational rhetoric of body and text. In so doing, they registered their resistance while also meeting the demands of their first and most critical audience—their teachers. Because students were so limited in what they could say—punished for speaking in their own language, humiliated for making mistakes in English—and even more limited in what they could write, I argue that students used their bodies to circulate meaning among their peers, with their distant families, and with their unknown but imagined Euro-American readers.

The book closes with a brief discussion of the legacy of Carlisle and how the school’s visual culture has found new purchase in an era when once again the federal government is taking children away from their families to achieve the goal of a monoculture coterminous with the territorial boundaries of the nation-state. By looking at the many ways we see Carlisle in our contemporary rhetorical environments, I argue

for the necessity of a relational framework for interpreting Indigenous rhetoric, from the textual to the graphic, material, performative, or embodied. The political purchase gained by remixed, revised, and repurposed Carlisle materials demonstrates the power of Indigenous rhetoric to continue challenging the myth of American innocence while opening new possibilities for a future beyond the limited imagination of the settler state.