MISSIONS UNACCOMPLISHED:

FEMALE MISSIONARIES,

NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS, AND MEDIA IN THE

NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN WEST

By

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Abstract: Two-faced. Deceitful. Insincere. These words summarize the actions of Anglo-Americans toward Native peoples in the United States in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Under the guise of maternal instinct female missionaries and activists contributed to assimilationist agendas put forth by the United States Government. This thesis will examine the life of Caroline Weldon, an activist with the National Indian Defense Association (NIDA) in the historical record and three modern media depictions: two Derek Walcott works, *The Ghost Dance* (1990) and *Omeros* (1992), and the film *Woman Walks Ahead* (2017).

Caroline Weldon did not act alone in Dakota Territory, rather she is a single example for a larger trend. By using an array of unconventional sources, the story of Weldon's contemporaries Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows have become apparent. Combined together, media depictions and the historical record provide a better understanding of four women who have eluded historian's attention for many years. It is my hope that the lives of Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows will shed a new light on an old history.

This story is broken into two parts: Part I explores the historical role of Caroline Weldon and assimilation policy in the final two decades of the nineteenth century and Part II analyzes the role media has played in shaping historical memory and legacies. The historical legacy of Caroline Weldon has grown with each and every newspaper article, book, play, and movie based on her life. As historians have had access to modern technologies, new sources on Weldon and the nineteenth century have allowed her story to be told and re-told.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABCFM – American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
AMA – American Missionary Association
IRA – Indian Rights Association
NIDA – National Indian Defense Association
WNIA – Women's National Indian Association

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

This thesis uses the terms 'Native Americans,' 'Native peoples,' and 'Indigenous peoples' interchangeably. The Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota peoples were more commonly known as the Sioux – this is not a name that they gave themselves, but for the sake of clarity it is used in this thesis. Sioux comes from a French word meaning "enemy" or "little snakes." The Sioux are a nation of Northern Native Americans on the Northern Great Plains, they found themselves there after being forced westward by other Native American tribes such as the Ojibwas. When possible the proper names as described below have been used.

There are three divisions among the Sioux: the Dakota (Eastern), Nakota (Middle), and Lakota (Western) divisions. These groups further break down into the Oceti Sakowin "Seven Council Fires," which are seven individual tiyospayes or family divisions. The number seven is significant in Sioux culture. The Santee division is comprised of four tribes. The Mdewakanton "People of Spirit Lake" and the Wahpekute "Leaf Shooters" live on Flandreau. The Sisseton "People of the Marsh" and Wahpeton "Leaf Dwellers" live on the Sisseton Reservation. The Yankton division is comprised of two tribes. The Yankton "End of Camp Circle Dwellers" live on the Yankton reservation. The Yanktonais "Little End Dwellers" reside on Crow Creek. The Teton Sioux are comprised of the seven tribes. The Oglala "They Scatter Their Own" live on the Pine

Ridge Reservation. The Sicangu "Burned Thighs" reside on the Rosebud and Lower Brule Reservations. The Hunkpapa "End of the Circle" live on Standing Rock Reservation. The following four tribes live on the Cheyenne River Agency: the Miniconjou "Planters Beside the Stream," Sihasapa "Black Foot," Oohenunpa "Two Kettles," and Itazipco "Without Bows."[1]

There are a handful of terms used in this thesis that are considered problematic and offensive today in the twenty-first century. Words like "savage," "squaw," and "freak" were commonly used in the nineteenth century in relation to Native Americans. When used in this thesis they are put in quotation marks and used in the context of nineteenth-century thinking. It is also important to acknowledge the use of the term "two-face" in this thesis. Even a term that seems straightforward in the vernacular of today has deeper and more nuanced meaning for Lakota people, and thus I use it only in limited context here.

[1] *Political Organizations: The Oceti Sakowin or Seven Council Fires (the Sioux),* South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota, Accessed February 23, 2020, https://history.sd.gov/Archives/Data/Archives/organizations.aspx; and "Oceti Sakowin – The Seven Council Fires." Minnesota Historical Society. Accessed April 14, 2020. http://www.mnhs.org/sevencouncilfires.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION & HISTORIOGRAPHY

Two-faced. Deceitful. Insincere. These words summarize the actions of Anglo-Americans toward Native peoples concerning allotment and its repercussions in the United States in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Under the guise of maternal instinct female missionaries and activists contributed to assimilationist agendas put forth by the United States Government. These women took on different identities, victim of circumstance or "white savior," when Native people did not comply with their purported assimilationist agendas. This thesis will examine the life of Caroline Weldon, an activist with the National Indian Defense Association (NIDA) in the historical record and three modern media depictions: two Derek Walcott works, *The Ghost Dance* (1990) and *Omeros* (1992), and the film *Woman Walks Ahead* (2017). Women's stories are typically left out of the traditional narrative. Caroline Weldon's life is relatively unknown and its selection for multiple media depictions is astounding. The depictions of her life from the nineteenth-century to the twenty-first century have greatly impacted the rumors

swirling about the story of this mysterious woman. This study is broken into two parts: Part I will explore the historical role of Caroline Weldon and assimilation policy in the final two decades of the nineteenth century and Part II will analyze the role that media has played in shaping historical memory and legacies.

The narrative of this thesis mainly focuses on the historical character Susanna Karolina Faesch Valentiny Schlatter, more commonly known as "Caroline Weldon." She moved to the United States with her mother as a young child where her name was Americanized to "Caroline." Almost immediately her identity was being reshaped and remolded and she accepted this. Viewed as a place of opportunity, several European groups migrated to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. Many came to America from the early 1800 to 1860, then another wave arrived from 1880-1910.[2] In search of economic mobility, Weldon's stepfather Karl Heinrich Valentiny opened a physicians practice in Brooklyn, New York. While in New York, Weldon had a conversation with a Native American man which sparked her lifelong fascination with Native peoples. She later became an activist lobbying for their rights, though she too ultimately believed that assimilation was the only way to protect Native Americans. She later worked among the Lakota Sioux on Standing Rock Reservation as an advisor to Sitting Bull. Weldon was not the only woman arguing for assimilation; many individuals took part in the assimilation of Indigenous people across the American West.

[2] For more information on immigration to the United States in the nineteenth century see Joseph P. Ferrie, *Yankeys Now: Immigrants in the Antebellum United States, 1840-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1982); and Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Contemporaries of Weldon, Mary Collins and Corabelle Fellows also partook in the assimilationist agendas put forth by organizations labeled "friends of the Indian."

This thesis will build on the works of W. Fletcher Johnson, Stanley Vestal, David Humphreys Miller, and Eileen Pollack. W. Fletcher Johnson wrote the first scholarly chapter on Caroline Weldon's story in 1891. Then historian Stanley Vestal mentioned Weldon in a biography of Sitting Bull in 1932. Next, historian David Humphreys Miller published an article on the story of Weldon in 1964 building on the work of Vestal adding some details that are mostly speculative. The most complete historical account of Caroline Weldon is Eileen Pollack's book, published in 2002, which is a combination of Weldon's story and the author's personal research journey.[3] Weldon's story has grown as more research and information has become available through new technology.

W. Fletcher Johnson was the first historian to mention Caroline Weldon in a historical account. Printed in 1891, *The Red Record of the Sioux: Life of Sitting Bull and History of the Indian War of 1890-'91* (1891) details the life of Sitting Bull.[4] Johnson correctly identifies her as "Caroline Weldon," which is important because all other historians who have written on Weldon's life have called her "Catherine." Johnson quotes from her letters and analyzes the content in between. This depiction of Weldon discusses the consequence of false newspaper articles giving her a bad reputation.

Published a decade after the tragic death of Caroline Weldon in a house fire in Brooklyn, New York, on March 15, 1921, historian Stanley Vestal mentioned Weldon in

[3] Glenda Riley, "The Future of Western Women's History," *The Historian* 66, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 541-42.

[4] W. Fletcher Johnson, *The Red Record of the Sioux: Life of Sitting Bull and History of the Indian War 1890-'91* (Edgewood Publishing Company, 1891), 318-331.

a historical monograph in 1932, *Sitting Bull: Champion of the Sioux, A Biography*.[5] Vestal mistakenly referred to her as "Catherine" Weldon and claimed that she was Sitting Bull's "white squaw."[6] Vestal most likely made this assumption based on nineteenth-century newspapers which claimed such things. Vestal described Weldon's two trips to Standing Rock Indian Agency in Dakota Territory in the spring of 1889 and 1890.

The story of Weldon lay dormant for the next thirty years until historian David Humphreys Miller published "Sitting Bull's White Squaw" in *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* in 1964.[7] Miller included a picture in his article who he wrongly identified as "Catherine" Weldon. Miller provided a more detailed account than Vestal. This article lacks citations and some of the information reads very similar to Vestal's *Sitting Bull* and *New Sources on Indian History*. Miller attempted to describe Weldon's outward appearance, but most of the descriptions appear to be speculative. The works *Omeros* (1992) and *The Ghost Dance* (1990) rely heavily on Miller's descriptions of Weldon and James McLaughlin.

The most comprehensive study of Caroline Weldon's life is Eileen Pollack's *Woman Walking Ahead: In Search of Catherine Weldon and Sitting Bull* (2002). The common misconception about Caroline Weldon is that her name was "Catherine." This began when a newspaper misprinted her name and was reified by Vestal's *Sitting Bull*

[5] Caroline Weldon passed away on March 15, 1921 at Holy Family Hospital after suffering burns from her clothing catching fire in her home at 284 Baltic Street. She was also referred to as "Mrs. Kate Weldon." "Woman Dies of Burns," *Times Union* (Brooklyn, New York), March 16, 1921, "Caroline Weldon," *The Standard Union* (Brooklyn, New York), March 16, 1921; and Stanley Vestal, *Sitting Bull, Champion of the Sioux: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1932).

[6] It must be stressed here that the term "squaw" is a derogatory name. Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman state that "squaw" or "princess" is the equivalent of "whores" or "ladies" in Anglo culture. Laura F. Klein and Lillian A. Ackerman, *Women and Power in Native North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 5.

[7] David Humphreys Miller, "Sitting Bull's White Squaw," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 14, no. 2 (1964): 54-71.

chapter. Pollack described Weldon as an Anglo, middle-class activist, a role that several women in her economic status fulfilled.[8] Women were often labeled as "benevolent reformers." Many historians have written on women's "benevolent" work. For example, historian Peggy Pascoe's *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (1990) explained women's reform work and moral conditions of the American West and some of the ways women were able to wield power to help minorities and those in unfortunate situations within the structure of the mission.[9] Through these organizations women were able to gain agency in shaping their identities.

Weldon took on a maternal colonialist mindset when approaching the Lakota. She referred to them as "My Dakotas" and chastised Sitting Bull in several letters when he did not comply with her wishes.[10] Historian Margaret Jacobs explored the concept of "maternal colonialism" within indigenous boarding schools in *White Mother to a Dark Race* (2009).[11] Created to aid in the process of assimilation, the boarding schools were

[8] Barbara Welter's article "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" argued that middle- and upper-class Victorian women were confined to the home in urban America in the nineteenth century. Many middle- and upper-class women did not oppose this arrangement. The working class women did not have the luxury to stay in the home and often were forced to find work to feed their families. Certain individuals crossed the line and this made people uncomfortable as crossing boundaries was not widely accepted. Women like Weldon challenged the very core of the stereotypical Victorian woman in nineteenth-century America. This caused much slander around her name in nineteenth-century media. Pollack, *Woman Walking* Ahead, location 1052/7518. For more information on middle-class reformers see Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151-74; and H. Elaine Lindgren, *Land in Her Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 218.

[9] Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Additionally, Historian Lori Ginzberg studied the topic of women's benevolent work as a business in Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

[10] "Mrs. Weldon's Address to the Indians – 'My Dakotas,' (undated)" in Stanley Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History, 1850-1891; the Ghost Dance--the Prairie Sioux; a Miscellany* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), 111-115.

[11] 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). For more information on relations between Anglo women and Native Americans

institutions of strict schedules and rules. Focusing largely on the 'surrogate mother' role white women played in the schools, Jacobs illustrated how many women had good intentions, but achieved poor results. Removed from their families and everything familiar, many Indigenous children endured brutal and inhumane treatments through the assimilation process in such schools.

Appalled by the conditions in the schools, several Native American rights grouped formed to provide a "better" option. For example, groups like the Indian Rights Association (IRA), Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), and the National Indian Defense Association (NIDA) argued that Indigenous children needed an Anglo education to be successful in the mainstream society. Involved with NIDA, Caroline Weldon advocated for education and even attempted to become a teacher. Considered a "radical" organization, NIDA argued for certain Native practices and autonomy. Historian C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa argues that NIDA "supported a series of policy reforms that rejected forced assimilation and focused instead upon using mechanisms of the Federal Government to provide resources and opportunities for Indigenous nations protecting the integrity of communally-held land."[12] NIDA did encourage some "notions of assimilation," but were strongly opposed to "coercive assimilation and dispossession." They opposed allotment because it did not take Native Americans' opinions into

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

[12] C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa's *Crooked Paths to Allotment* includes one of the most comprehensive studies on NIDA. He argued that the development of the settler state in the nineteenth century coupled with the attack of mainstream reformers caused the agenda of NIDA to fail. Genetin-Pilawa argued that Native Americans had more agency than most historians acknowledge. In Genetin-Pilawa's account Native Americans played an active role in shaping allotment for their people. Employing a bottom-up look at Native American rights organizations, Genetin-Pilawa has used a revised approach to an old history. This is a significant contribution to the historiography of assimilation policy. C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 11-12.

account.[13] NIDA was considered the exception when it came to Native American rights reform groups because of their policies.

In her Master's Thesis *In Defense of "Poor Lo": The Council Fire's Advocacy of Native American Civil Rights 1878-1889* (1992), Jo Lea Wetherilt Behrens argued that NIDA viewed Native Americans as an "exceptional minority."[14] *The Council Fire* editors, Alfred B. Meacham and Drs. Thomas and Cora Bland argued that education was the answer to the acculturation of Native Americans if mainstream society expected allotment to achieve success.

Education as a whole changed throughout the nineteenth century. Women began attending school in larger numbers leading to the advent of the "New Woman." Historian John M. Rhea argued that the idea of the "New Woman" is traceable to the 1860s when some women began taking professional roles in their communities, mainly as advocates for reform. The New Woman was often an educated individual who participated in both the public and private sphere. This allowed women the freedom to choose how they spent their time, but such choices were often limited by race and class. Weldon fit into the category of a "New Woman" as a middle-class Anglo female. She had the ability to challenge social and political boundaries in the nineteenth century because she had access to resources that others did not.[15]

Another unique aspect of Weldon's life was that Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa Lakota Chief, proposed marriage to her. Interracial marriages were not unheard of in the

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[13] Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 129-130.

[14] The idea of an exceptional minority implied that Native people needed an Anglo American education before they could be successful. Jo Lea Wetherilt Behrens, "In defense of "Poor Lo": The Council Fire's advacy of Native American civil rights, 1878-1889" (Master's Thesis, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 1992).

[15] Not only was Weldon an educated woman, but she was a divorced, working woman with a bastard child.

nineteenth century, but they were relatively rare for middle and upper-class women.[16] Supposedly, Sitting Bull told Weldon that it would be acceptable because he had heard of Chaska and Corabelle Fellows' marriage in 1888. Corabelle Fellows recounted her first marriage to author Kunigunde Duncan in *Blue Star: The Story of Corabelle Fellows Teacher at Dakota Missions 1884-1888* (1938). This collaborative work described the decisions made by Fellows to teach on a Native American reservation and marry a Santee Sioux man - a controversial decision as she had been a Washington socialite. Similarly, a few years later Elaine Goodale married Dr. Charles Eastman, a Santee Sioux who was the physician at Pine Ridge Agency. *Sister to the Sioux: The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885-1891* (1978) edited by Kay Graber uncovers Goodale-Eastman's desires to help and teach the Sioux.[17] She was an advocate for day schools on the reservations, believing that the students would go home and teach their families, thus allowing assimilation to take place more efficiently. Their marriage allowed them both to move fluidly between Sioux culture and mainstream culture, while never being fully included in either of them.[18]

[16] Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 116 and Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 753/7518.

[17] Elaine Goodale was a white woman from Mount Washington, Massachusetts who desired to teach Native Americans and assimilate them into Anglo culture. Elaine Goodale-Eastman, *Sister to the Sioux: The Memoirs of Elaine Goodale Eastman, 1885-1891*, ed. Kay Graber (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978). For more information on the life of Elaine Goodale Eastman see Theodore D. Sargent, *The Life of Elaine Goodale Eastman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

[18] For more information on interracial marriage see Margaret D. Jacobs, "The Eastmans and the Luhans: Interracial Marriage between White Women and Native American Men, 1875-1935," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 23, no. 3 (2002): 29-54. For more information on racial tensions in families see Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Andrew R. Graybill, *The Red and the White: A Family Saga of the American West* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013).

The previous two examples illustrate how interracial marriage took place, but was not common and was typically frowned upon by Anglo society.[19] While interracial marriage was controversial, extending basic human rights (i.e. land, privacy, food, etc.) to Native peoples was considered more controversial. Viewing their worth as tied to land ownership, Anglo men sought to obtain more land. Inhumane treatment of Indigenous people directly correlates to the inherent greed of the Anglo man desiring to make Native people look like himself, but not desiring to give him full rights. The Anglo man wanted the best land for himself and believed this would be achievable through allotment. Thus, middle-class female reformers became maternal colonialists to aid in the assimilation process through allotment.

Various Native American rights organizations in the late nineteenth century employed female missionaries and teachers to become agents of assimilation.[20] The missionaries and reformers possessed duplicitous intentions. They wanted to help Indigenous people for the benefit of the Anglo population. Allotment and assimilation freed land for Anglo settlers to make money which was always the ultimate goal. The politicians and reformers packaged the policy of allotment to appear beneficial to Native Americans because they could not outright state that they were going to take the land. Middle- and upper-class Anglo Americans most often made up the majority of reformers. Many lived on the East coast of the United States, possessing time and resources to devote toward reform efforts for Native people. Wage-workers and immigrants often did

[19] For a deeper study on the roots of miscegenation see historian Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[20] While the women missionaries and teachers employed on reservations were "New Women," they intended to assimilate Native American people into Anglo culture of the United States. For more information see Carolyn A. Haynes, *Divine Destiny: Gender and Race in Nineteenth-Century Protestantism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008).

not have the time, nor the resources to invest in such groups. A sizable portion of the middle-class reformers were women who wanted to "civilize" Native Americans. Overlooking Native culture or simply not understanding it, the Anglo reformers desired to eradicate and replace it. Anglo Americans also sought to assimilate other immigrant cultures into mainstream society in the nineteenth century. The Anglo reformer's greatest desire was for everyone in the United States to look, think, and act like them – they wanted immigrants, African Americans, and Native Americans to emulate their lifestyle. When minority groups did not comply, coercive legislation was evoked and implemented causing a crisis in the American West.

Francis Paul Prucha's *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (1976), explored assimilation through the eyes of missionaries and Native American rights organizations.[21] Prucha argued that reformers were white humanitarians who sought the Americanization of Native people. He also argued that humanitarians could be seen as one group with similar goals, but this argument is debatable as several different societies enlisted women as employees on the reservations in the West. Mission schools allowed women to work alongside men implementing Biblically based education; education was viewed as the most basic form of assimilation. Mission schools were utilized by the government because they were self-funded and usually not government funded. Historian Frederick E. Hoxie studied the impact of multiple organization's campaigns to assimilate Native peoples in *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (2001).[22] Hoxie explored Anglo and

[21] Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis: Christian Reformers and the Indian, 1865-1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976).

[22] Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001).

Native American viewpoints in constructing a narrative centered on the Dawes Act and the impact on Native American society.

Mission based and reform organizations possessed different motivating factors for supporting assimilation. Missionary societies desired to Christianize Native Americans, while some of the reform organizations simply wanted to educate Indigenous people to Anglicize them. Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows each had different reasons for supporting policies of assimilation. Often overlooked by history, these women played a crucial role in assimilation in Dakota Territory from 1884-1891. Though the women appear to have had good intentions, they implemented complex methods to aid in the "crooked paths to allotment."[23] The story of assimilation is dominated by Anglo male perspectives and prominent women; this thesis intends to show that several less well-known women were involved in different capacities as well adding nuance to the story.[24] Weldon, Arnold, Collins, and Fellows illustrate how women were equally instrumental in advancing the process of assimilation.

In addition to forced education and assimilation, Native Americans were vulnerable to exploitation largely by outsiders. Defined spheres of influence existed for all in the nineteenth century leading to common stereotypes based on race and class. Show business, a single example, exploited Native peoples and cultures for monetary gain, while at the same giving Native peoples an opportunity to exploit show business for personal monetary gain. The most common stereotypes of Native Americans included "uncivilized savage," "irredeemable heathen," and "noble savage." These negative

[23] Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*.
[24] One of the prominent women involved in assimilation policy and allotment was Alice Fletcher.

images carried over into early film and are still prominent and problematic today.[25] Meanwhile, Anglo stereotypes for men revolved around the ideas of masculinity and protecting their families. Anglo women stereotypes centered on their role in conjunction to men: reformer, soiled dove, or a helpmate. Many images of historical characters had manifested in the United States by 1890 and the "closing" of the American frontier, forcing many American citizens to ponder what came next.

Officially occupied, the land in the West continued to be a place of contention between Native Americans and Anglo settlers. Indigenous people were robbed of their land and the Anglo man voraciously wanted more. Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Frontier in American History* (1893) also known as "The Frontier Thesis," established that the frontier line had closed according to the 1890 Census.[26] Turner's thesis contained many problems, yet historians overwhelmingly relied on it in American Western studies for decades. The relatively few historians who debated Turner's Frontier Thesis and questioned its merit as the basis of American Western history did little to diminish its stature in defining the field.[27] Turner himself amended his argument later in his life, adding more nuance to the story of the West. This seminal work is problematic because it largely excluded Native Americans and women from the narrative of the American West;

[25] For more information on Native American stereotypes in film see Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998); M. Elise Maruddio and Eric L. Buffalohead, *Native Americans on Film: Conversations, Teaching, and Theory* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky, 2013); LeAnne Howe, Markowitz Harvey, and Denise K. Cummings, *Seeing Red: Hollywood's Pixeled Skins: American Indians and Film* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2013); and Klein and Ackerman, *Women and Power in Native North America*, 241-245.

[26] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920).

[27] Historian Ray Allen Billington was staunch Turner supporter in the 1950s and 1960s, while New Western Historians like Patricia Nelson Limerick and Richard White question the validity of Turner's work.

this is mainly a masculine Anglo-Saxon history intended to justify the colonialist tendencies of conquest. The history of the American West should be presented from opposing angles, as people from differing cultural backgrounds see things from different views.

Finally, this thesis will discuss the role that media and popular culture played in the creation of identity and historical memory. Portrayed in numerous ways from the nineteenth century to the present, the mythical American West incorporates historical record and legend to create synthesized misconceptions of what actually happened. Media and popular culture played a crucial role in shaping the identity of female missionaries and reformers, often portraying the women's "best" actions. Often, media fails to acknowledge the complexity of historical characters – choosing to overlook or ignore the difficult choices women faced daily (i.e. family, friends, media, etc.). Caroline Weldon and her contemporaries utilized nineteenth-century media to shape their perceived identity in the West, while modern media influences their historical legacy today. Using Critical Theory as a lens of analysis allows for the juxtaposition of the historical record and modern media depictions in examining and removing the social constraints that typically stall further analysis. Critical Theory seeks to complicate and discuss structures of power.

The American West has been prevalent in popular culture for many years in films, books, music, television shows, and much more. Literature and film are crucial pieces of evidence in understanding the West as a region – real or romanticized. Richard Aquila's *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (1996) explores how

different avenues of entertainment portrayed the Western genre.[28] Aquila argues that popular culture was crucial to shaping the idea of the American West in media. Americans and Europeans played an equally significant role in shaping and sustaining the legends created in this region. Working to debunk the myth of the American West, many historians are still trying to understand the impact of Western culture on society.

Western literature also played an important role in shaping western reputations. Dime novels, "quality novels," and pulp fiction magazines allowed western stories to thrive and be consumed by large audiences. *The New Western History: The Territory Ahead* (1998) edited by Forrest G. Robinson argued that items of popular culture are crucial pieces of evidence for understanding the West and the impact it had on society.[29] Discussing popular culture, gender, race, and historical interpretations, this study is important in examining the lives of relatively unknown characters like Caroline Weldon and her contemporaries.

Nineteenth-century society changed rapidly due to industrialization, shifting land boundary lines, and changing social structures. The ideas surrounding gender and power wavered in the midst of such drastic societal change. Women began stepping outside of the home to reform their communities. Additionally, female reformers viewed Indigenous communities as another extension where they could implement their work.

Continuing in the trend of examining Western novels and literature Victoria Lamont's *Westerns: A Women's History* (2016) debunks the idea that Western novels

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[28] Richard Aquila, *Wanted Dead or Alive: The American West in Popular Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

[29] Forrest G. Robinson, *The New Western History: The Territory Ahead* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998). For example, Louis S. Warren's analysis of Buffalo Bill and *Dracula* is an example of comparing historical record with contemporary literature. Louis S. Warren, "Buffalo Bill Meets Dracula: William F. Cody, Bram Stoker, and the Frontiers of Racial Decay," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 4 (2002): 1124-1157.

were only written by men, revising a century old history.[30] She examined the lives of several female authors from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who impacted the creation of the Western genre and frontier mythology. These books implemented many of the common stereotypes of the Western novel, but some had female leads. This book is a huge contribution to the study of females in Western popular culture. Lamont argues that "western authority was structured within complex relations of class, gender, and region that resulted in very different choices for each author."[31] Female authored westerns appeared alongside works by male authors, but the publishing industry shuttered them. Concluding this important study, Lamont calls future scholars to continue examining the popular western, overturning conventional "gendered generic categories" and acknowledging that female authors have contributed to this genre since the beginning.[32]

Finally, this thesis will examine *Woman Walks Ahead*, a movie about Caroline Weldon. Film synthesizes historical information and media interpretations to create a lasting historical legacy. With increased screen time many people are turning to media to learn new things. Decades of study illustrate how Western films overwhelmingly operate with a set of specific conventions. Among the most consistent tropes, "Westerns are about conflict: they consistently pit the lone hero, often as not on behalf of the community, against enemies who impede 'progress' – the land itself, Indians, criminals

[30] Victoria Lamont, *Westerns: A Women's History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016). For more information on female authored westerns see Jane Tompkin, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Nina Baym, *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

[31] Lamont, *Westerns*, 7.

[32] Ibid., 155.

and those who abuse power."[33] Seeking to rectify this image, in recent years, some artists, writers, and movie producers have sought to present the diverse populations who lived in the West.

For example, *Woman Walks Ahead* (2017), a female-led Western, centers on the life of Caroline Weldon. Film critics argue Director Susanna White has attempted to re-vision the Western as a film genre.[34] White acknowledged changing Weldon's story to make it more "movie friendly," claiming *Woman Walks Ahead* was an attempt at a "feminist western."[35] *Woman Walks Ahead* debuted amidst societal upheaval in the United States. Contemporary feminism is prevalent in society in the twenty-first century with many women and allies fighting for the same things that have been fought for decades. The #MeToo movement grew out of contemporary feminism, gaining prominence with many people pushing back against injustices against women.[36]

Media created by female producers and authors is becoming more and more prevalent in the twenty-first century. Female writers, directors, and painters bring an authenticity to the Western story that their male counterparts fail to capture. "Male history has chosen not to tell female stories. And I think it's time to redress the balance," insisted *Woman Walks Ahead* Director Susanna White.[37] White claimed her intention was

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[33] David Hamilton Murdoch, *The American West: The Invention of a Myth* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2001), ix.

[34] Lewis Knight, "True story behind Woman Walks Ahead – real tale behind Sitting Bull and Jessica Chastain's Wester," *Mirror*, September 5, 2018, https://www.mirror.co.uk/film/woman-walks-ahead-true-story-13128462.

[35] Kate Erbland, "'Woman Walks Ahead': Jessica Chastain and Susanna White Share 5 Tips for Making a Feminist Western About Native Americans," *IndieWire*, June 28, 2018, https://www.indiewire.com/2018/06/woman-walks-ahead-jessica-chastain-susanna-white-female-diverse-western-1201979264/.

[36] "Culture in 2018: Trends That Will Shape Society," *Deutsche Welle*, Accessed June 15, 2020, https://www.dw.com/en/culture-in-2018-trends-that-will-shape-society/a-41885154.

[37] Raquel Laneri, "How a Brooklyn widow became the Victorian era's 'Hanoi Jane," *New York Post*, June 28, 2018, https://nypost.com/2018/06/28/how-a-brooklyn-widow-became-the-victorian-eras-hanoi-jane/

to put women back into Western history and she accomplished this by shedding light on Caroline Weldon, a relatively unknown historical character.

Elaborating on his decision to cast Weldon in his literary works, Derek Walcott stated, "You see the mental conscience of a country does not reside in a man, it resides in a woman. A man treats it politically and that is not sufficient. Conscience is feeling."[38] By including women's perspectives in the historical narrative a clearer picture is presented. Women's stories need to be told.

This thesis is broken into two parts. Part I will describe the historical character Caroline Weldon, her contemporaries, and a handful of organizations involved in the assimilation process. Chapter 2 describes Caroline Weldon's personal life from 1850-1888. This chapter will discuss her early years, marriage, affair, divorce, and decision to align herself with the National Indian Defense Association. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the Pratt Commission of 1888 and the legislation concerning Native American rights beginning in the 1880s. Chapter 3 will discuss the events of 1889 in relation to the Dawes General Allotment Act, Sioux Bill, Crook Commission, and their effects on the Great Sioux Reservation. This chapter also discusses Caroline Weldon's time spent in Dakota Territory and the story of NIDA member Lucy Arnold. Chapter 4 introduces Mary Collins, a Congregationalist missionary. It also describes the Ghost Dance, Weldon's departure from Dakota Territory, and the tragic events of December 1890. Tensions had resulted from allotment and coerced assimilation over several decades. Chapters 2-4 rely on census records, government documents, newspapers, and

[38] Patricia Ismond, "Women In Walcott's Theatre," *Obsidian III* 5, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2004): 141 & 145-146.

organization records to build the stories of Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, and Mary Collins and their role in the assimilation process of Native Americans.

Part II discusses the role of media in shaping historical memory and historical character's lasting legacies. Chapter 5 illustrates how contemporary nineteenth-century media played an important role in shaping historical identity. This chapter discusses Caroline Weldon's newspaper reputation and the life of Corabelle Fellows. This chapter concludes by juxtaposing Weldon, Fellows, and Collins reputations in the newspapers and how social status played an important role. Chapter 6 analyzes three modern depictions of Caroline Weldon: two Derek Walcott works *The Ghost Dance* (1990) and *Omeros* (1992), and the film *Woman Walks Ahead* (2017). This chapter will showcase how media and popular culture impact historical memory of women and the assimilation process. Chapters 5 and 6 rely on media and popular culture depictions of Caroline Weldon from the nineteenth-century to the twenty-first century.

Splitting this thesis into two parts allows for a closer examination of multiple sources surrounding the life of Caroline Weldon. By using an array of sources, the stories of Caroline Weldon's contemporaries Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows have become apparent. Combined together, media depictions and the historical record provide a better understanding of four women who have eluded history for many years. Nineteenth-century media and modern productions allow for the amplification of women's voices in the American West. Middle-class women are often relegated to supporting roles in the history of Native American rights reform though they played an enormous role in shaping assimilation policy and the implementation of it. These women truly believed that they were doing what was best for Native Americans without

understanding the culture that they so desperately wanted to eradicate. Women like Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows' stories add an interesting lens to study assimilation policy in Dakota Territory in the late nineteenth century. It is my hope that the lives of Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows will shed a new light on an old history.

PART I

TRUE STORY: THE HISTORICAL RECORD

The historical record is the first piece of information that one must look at when learning about a historical character. Some historical characters leave behind an ample paper trail making a historian's job easier, while others leave behind almost nothing. The women in this study – Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows – range on this spectrum. Some of these women left behind many papers and writings, while the others left almost nothing, but each played an important role in the assimilation process in Dakota Territory from 1884-1891. Caroline Weldon and Corabelle Fellows were household names thanks in part to scandalous newspaper articles, while Mary Collins and Lucy Arnold were relatively unknown women only mentioned in a handful of articles.

The historical legacy of all four women is important and will be explored in Part I. To understand the motivations of these women and their organizations requires an in depth look at where they came from and what heavily influenced their decisions. Weldon,

Arnold, Collins, and Fellows were able to move fluidly between Native culture and mainstream society. This is not to say that there were not consequences for their actions, but they had the option unlike people of other minority groups.

Historian Sandra Myres claimed women on the frontier "endured, indeed prevailed, and discovered a resilience, an inner store of courage and the means to overcome the obstacles presented by frontier living."[39] The lives of Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows illustrates how women from different backgrounds were able to establish themselves in the American West. As more women's stories are uncovered it is my hope that these stories will continue to be implemented in the larger narrative of the American West in the late nineteenth century.

[39] Sandra Myres, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 165.

CHAPTER II

1850-1888

Caroline Weldon's actual life according to the historical record is much more interesting and nuanced than the media depictions of it. The goal of this chapter is to explain how she became "Caroline Weldon," what organizations influenced her decisions, and the people involved in the process. This chapter relies heavily on written Anglo sources, but it should be noted that Native sources for this time period are not as abundant. This chapter will describe Weldon's early life through her years as an activist with NIDA, while also discussing the lives of Sitting Bull and Indian Agent James McLaughlin. Additionally, this chapter will discuss the creation, evolution, and platforms of the Indian Rights Association (IRA), Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), and the National Indian Defense Association (NIDA). Finally, this chapter will illustrate how Caroline Weldon was not the only woman working for NIDA in Dakota Territory - it will briefly look at the life of Mrs. Lucy B. Arnold, a day school teacher as well.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, thousands of Americans—white, black, and of various European ethnic backgrounds— began moving westward, expelling many Native Americans from their homelands. The United States acquired much of what is now considered the West in distinct stages: the Louisiana Purchase 1803, the annexation of Texas in 1845, the acquisition of Oregon Territory in 1846, and the Mexican Cession of 1848. Initially, the land was divided into territories, enticing many settlers to trek westward in search of Manifest Destiny. Soldiers forced many Indigenous people onto reserved tracts of land paving the way for the settlers. The Indian Appropriation Act of 1851 implemented "reservations," furthering the process of relocating Indigenous peoples. The government believed this would prevent conflict between Native people and encroaching settlers, but they were wrong with conflict continuing to escalate.[40]

Weldon was European, she was born in Klein-Basel, Switzerland to prominent parents, Anna Maria Barbara Faesch and Johann Lukas Faesch. They had three children, Elisabeth Alberta, John Friedrich Albert, and Susanna Karolina. Caught "consorting with" Karl Heinrich Valentiny, Anna Maria Barbara received a finalized divorce notice from her husband on September 19, 1849. Valentiny was a family friend whom Johann Faesch knew from his time in the military. Ripping the family apart, the divorce resulted in Susanna Karolina going to live with her mother, while her siblings lived with her father.[41] With scandal surrounding his name, Valentiny chose to move to America the

[40] The process of officially moving Native peoples off of their lands began with Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal. The majority of the encroaching settlers were Anglo Americans.

[41] The Faesch children had the following birthdays: Elisabeth Albertina (April 20, 1832), Johan Friedrich Albert (September 5, 1842), and Susanna Karolina (December 4, 1844). There is no record as to why Susanna Karolina was sent to live with her mother, and her siblings with their father. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 6332/7518.

following year. He sent for Anna Maria and her daughter in 1852. Anna Maria married her lover upon arrival in America and the family settled in Brooklyn, New York.

The remolding of Susanna Karolina's identity began the moment she set foot on American soil, with the Americanization of her name to "Caroline" and the adoption of her stepfather's last name, Valentiny. [42] Though her outward identity may have begun adapting to the United States, Caroline maintained contact with her biological father, and there seems to have been some thought to "finishing" her education in Europe. Caroline returned to Switzerland to study with her cousins in 1863.[43] Excelling in language and art, she groomed her talents with her studies. She also traveled to Basel to spend time with her father. Meanwhile, in the United States the Civil War ended in early 1865 and the United States began the process of Reconstruction. Caroline returned to Brooklyn, New York in the late 1865.[44]

Sometime in her early years, Caroline developed a fascination with Native American culture. Perhaps her time in Switzerland inspired her to pursue further knowledge about these peoples. Many Europeans had romanticized ideas about the American West, often inspired by the paintings of George Catlin or one of the numerous traveling Wild West shows.[45] After her trip to Switzerland, Caroline might have declared

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[42] Caroline Valentiny," New York State Census, 1855, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn City Ward 06, pg # not given; and "Caroline Vlenting," Eighth U.S. Census, 1860, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn Ward 6, District 3, 891.

[43] Caroline was nineteen years old when she first returned to Switzerland. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 6382/7518.

[44] She was not listed living with her mother and stepfather in the 1865 New York State Census taken in June. Caroline was twenty-one years old when she returned to the United States. "Charles Valenting," New York State Census, 1865, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn.

[45] Perhaps Caroline saw William F. Cody's "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" in a live performance. She might have been inspired by his lifestyle to change her identity and remake herself in the American West. For extensive research on the life of Buffalo Bill see Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005); and Joe Dobrow, *Pioneers of Promotion: How Press Agents for Buffalo Bill, P.T. Barnum, and the World's Columbian Exposition Created Modern Marketing* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018).

her intentions to paint Native Americans like Catlin. Her stepfather was not amused with her romantic notions of Native Americans and worked to find a suitable marriage. Soon, her stepfather met Claudius Bernhard Schlatter, a fellow Prussian.

Claudius Bernhard Schlatter (1840-1910), a Prussian military surgeon, arrived in American with instructions to find Valentiny for help.[46] Schlatter opened an allopathic practice on Columbia Street and spent much time at the Valentiny home, reminiscing about Prussia. [47] Eventually, Schlatter asked for permission to marry Caroline and Valentiny readily encouraged the match, hoping that familial responsibilities would distract his stepdaughter from what he deemed an obsession with Native Americans. This almost appears as if it could have been an arranged marriage, which Caroline probably opposed, but she did not want to upset her stepfather. Caroline accepted Schlatter's proposal, and the wedding took place on August 20, 1866 in Kings County, New York.[48] The couple moved to Brooklyn's Third Ward, allowing Schlatter to continue working in his practice, while Caroline kept house.[49] Her stepfather considered the marriage a good match; in reality the couple's relationship was a nightmare.

Caroline contained an artistic free spirit, while her husband worked constantly leading to a tense relationship. Once married, Schlatter forced Caroline to give up painting, a hobby she had done for years as evidenced in letters from her father after she

[46] Claudius Schlatter was the son of Porral and Barbara Schlatter. His parents were from Switzerland. "Claude B. Schlatter," Brooklyn, New York; *New York City Death Certificates*; *1910*.

[47] Allopathic medicine required a doctor to give a patient medicine to counteract whatever was making a person ill. "Bernhard Claude Schlatter," *Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804-1929,* 54:724.

[48] "Claude Schlatter," New York Extracted Marriage Index, Kings County, New York, August 20, 1866, certificate 341.

[49] Schlatter was around five years older than Caroline. "Claude B. Schlatter," Ninth U.S. Census, 1870, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn Ward 6, Roll: M593_948; Page: 301B; and "Caroline Schlatter," New York State Census, 1875, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn Ward 6, E.D. 09.

returned to Brooklyn.[50] Caroline was a talented painter of portraits and landscapes. She would have harbored a resentment toward her husband who forced her to give up her beloved hobby.

Meanwhile, the United States Government implemented colonialist policies toward Native Americans from the outset of the nation, imposing treaties through reckless military leaders.[51] Some used anachronistic tendencies encouraging terrorism as a tactic to subdue Indigenous people. Multiple treaties between the Sioux and US Government stated that Native Americans would retain ownership of their lands. Ultimately, the US Government failed to uphold many of the agreements and used coercive tactics to take the land.[52] The commissioners, Indian agents, and US Army were all involved in the taking and redistributing of land. In an answer to the previous group, politicians, legislators, and reformers attempted to shape Native identity in the late nineteenth century.

The US Government held the most power over Native American policy via all three branches of power, executive, legislative, and judicial. From 1881-1893 machine politics illustrated how quickly the dominant political party changed, making it difficult to pass legislation.[53] For example, the office of the President shifted between political

[50] Her father had asked her for a portrait of herself because he had given his away to a family friend in Basel. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 6423/7518.

[51] For more information on colonialism applied to the Sioux see Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For a more in depth look at Native American history see Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).

[52] Some of the treaties include the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868 and the "agreement" of 1877.

[53] Machine politics monopolized reform agendas allowing one party to control a city or region.

parties.[54] Flourishing in an arena of political uncertainty, machine politics allowed campaigns of assimilation and severalty of Native peoples to become topics of contention. These were not new topics of concern, rather ones that thrived in the greed and uncertainty of the late nineteenth-century political machine. Forcing or "recommending" Native severalty directly links to legislation passed in the early 1850s.[55]

Additionally, reform organizations played an influential role in politics. Initially, Native American reformers rallied against the so-called "Indian Ring," in Washington, D.C.[56] Assimilation of Native Americans into mainstream society was the main goal of reform organizations, though each group had a slightly different method for how to achieve "success."[57] The IRA, WNIA, and NIDA all had differing opinions on the assimilation legislation proposed for the Great Sioux Reservation.[58]

Several commissions traveled on behalf of the United States Government to Dakota Territory throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. Surveying land and counseling with Indigenous peoples was their main goal. The commission needed to accomplish these goals so that the US Government could purchase Native land and open it to settlers.

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[54] Republican Chester A. Arthur was the twenty-first President of the United States from 1881-1885. Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, was the twenty-second President from 1885-1889. Republican, Benjamin Harrison was elected the twenty-third President from 1889-1893.

[55] Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 12-13.

[56] The "Indian Ring" corruptly intended to make a profit at the expense of Native Americans.

[57] Assimilation and reform were also important ideas put forth by the US Government and Presidents as well. For more information on the relationships between the United States Government and Native Americans see Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984).

[58] They all supported severalty in the Coke Bill which required two-thirds Native American male adults to consent to land sells. In 1884, the IRA and Lake Mohonk Conference created a pamphlet to show support for the Coke Bill. The Coke Bill had been in legislative limbo since 1880 when Texas Senator, Richard Coke had introduced it. Despite the support from the IRA and Lake Mohonk Conference, the Coke Bill never passed due to machine politics of a divided United States Congress. The House of Representatives was controlled by the Democrats and the Senate was controlled by the Republicans. This allowed machine politics to flourish. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 41-43 & 47.

In November 1882, former Governor of Dakota Territory Newton Edmunds received instructions to journey to the Great Sioux Reservation with a commission to introduce the first in a series of controversial pieces of legislation to the Sioux. Intending to gather enough signatures to pass the bill which would divide the Great Sioux Reservation into six smaller reservations, the Edmunds Commission promised each Sioux band exclusive ownership of their new reservation.[59] The bill passed the House of Representatives, but failed in the Senate due to machine politics and senators allied with the IRA.[60] The Edmunds agreement was not approved by Congress because it did not gather the necessary three-fourths of adult Sioux male signatures as stipulated by the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868).[61]

Established on December 15, 1882 by Herbert Welsh, the IRA was largely comprised of Quakers from Philadelphia. Inspired by the poor conditions on the Sioux agencies, the IRA began working with the Board of Indian Commissioners.[62] Shocked at the willingness of the Edmund's Commission to disregard the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 and the required three-fourths adult male signatures, Welsh lobbied against the Edmunds Agreement. Welsh visited Dakota Territory a second time in the spring of 1883 and became concerned with the US Government's attempt to reduce land owned by the

[59] The six smaller reservations were to be Standing Rock, Cheyenne River, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Lower Brulé, and Crow Creek.

[60] Herbert Welsh and the IRA opposed the bill that the Edmunds Commission wanted to pass. Welsh went to Washington, D.C. in February 1883 to lobby against it. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 40.

[61] Robert W. Larson, "A Victor in Defeat," *Prologues Magazine,* National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall 2008), https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/fall/gall.html

[62] Valerie Sherer Mathes, "Nineteenth Century Women and Reform: The Women's National Indian Association." *American Indian Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 6; and Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 33-34.

Sioux.[63] Historian Francis Paul Prucha suggested that the IRA was the most "businesslike" of all of the organizations.[64]

Soon, the IRA joined forces with the WNIA to broaden their reform base. Historian Valerie Sherer Mathes argued that the WNIA and IRA had similar goals so "the women changed the name of their organization to the Women's National Indian Association with the understanding that the Indian Rights Association would not allow female members."[65] This separation did not last long and the WNIA felt they were in the shadow of the IRA.[66] The men of the IRA participated in politics, while the women of the WNIA performed the domestic roles of lobbying and missionary work.[67] The women intended to "turn the Indian man into an Indian version of Thomas Jefferson's yeoman farmer and the Indian woman into the ideal model of 'domesticity' and prepare her for the 'cult of true womanhood.'"[68] The Anglo-women believed that only they could truly reach the Native woman and save her from "barbarism and superstition."[69] Working in tandem, these organizations comprised a significant number of the "mainstream" Indian rights organizations which later challenged NIDA.

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[63] Welsh spent five weeks living among the Sioux in May and June. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 26.

[64] Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis,* 138.

[65] Involved in Native American reform for several years under two other names, first, the "Indian Treaty-Keeping and Protective Association" and second, the "National Indian Association," the group rechristened themselves Women's National Indian Association in October 1883. Sherer Mathes, "Nineteenth Century Women and Reform," 6.

[66] Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 33.

[67] Helen M. Wanken, ""Women's Sphere" and Indian Reform: The Women's National Indian Association, 1879-1901," (PhD Dissertation, Marquette University, 1981); and Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 138.

[68] Sherer Mathes, "Nineteenth Century Women and Reform," 14.

[69] *The Women's National Indian Association: Report - Missionary Work* (United States: Women's National Indian Association, 1888), 8.

Caroline's husband filed for divorce in January 1883, accusing her of having relations with Christopher J. Stevenson at a house on Clinton Street in Hoboken, New Jersey.[70] Caroline and Stevenson soon moved from New Jersey, either because someone recognized them or because Caroline discovered she was pregnant. Adding to the scandal in which Caroline found herself, Stevenson left her and returned home to his wife, having apparently neglected to tell Caroline he was a married man. One can speculate as to why Caroline chose to leave her home, but nothing can be confirmed because she left no record of this time in her life. It appeared that Caroline's life path began mimicking that of her mother's. Presumably, Caroline did not have the social stature or the funds required to obtain a divorce on the grounds of impotence, but it is possible that she sought the attention of another man because she wanted children. Regardless of her reasons for leaving her husband, Caroline chose to move back in with her mother and stepfather at 178 Baltic Street in 1880, though she was legally still married to Schlatter.[71]

Finalized on July 23, 1883, the divorce contained a "chilling coda:" Claudius Schlatter could marry again freely at any time, but Caroline was not allowed to remarry unless her ex-husband "shall actually be dead."[72] Perhaps, Schlatter attached the coda as a way to punish Caroline for her adulterous behavior. Schlatter soon remarried a woman

[70] Caroline left Schlatter's home in June 1876 according to the divorce proceedings he filed. Christopher J. Stevenson's name was actually James C. Stevenson. He would reverse his names to hide his identity, thus giving him the ability to control who knew who he actually was. He and his wife, Jane had many children before 1873. Their next child was born in 1878. This time frame allows for speculation that he was living with Caroline in this window of time. He then chose to return home and reconcile the situation with his wife, leaving Caroline deserted and pregnant. It is assumed that Caroline's son was born sometime in the spring or summer of 1877. This would provide evidence as to why the child was named Christie, after a man she would have been fond of. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 6468/7518.

[71] There is no record of a child living with Caroline at the time. It is unknown where the child was or if her parents even knew about her son. "Cal Schlatter," Tenth U.S. Census, 1880, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn, Roll: 842; Page: 298C; Enumeration District: 038.

[72] Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 6535/7518.

named Henrietta Kunz, a doctor's widow, and took over the physician's practice at No. 158 Seventeenth Street in Brooklyn.[73]

Left without a husband or a home, Caroline found refuge among the working women of Brooklyn. She found employment at Bentley's Fancy Embroidery where she excelled due to artistic talents.[74] While Caroline worked and provided for her son Christie, many Native American rights organizations were organizing and fighting injustice against Indigenous peoples. As an educated woman, Caroline followed what was happening in the newspapers and would have had discussions with her neighbors. She lived in this bohemian neighborhood periodically throughout her life.

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People began congregating to discuss Native American rights. A group of men met in the home of Reverend Alfred Riggs on the Santee Reservation in Dakota Territory to discuss the pending Sioux Agreement in Congress.[75] These discussions continued in October 1883 when Albert and Alfred Smiley hosted a conference at Lake Mohonk, New York with the intention of giving various reform groups a place to congregate and share ideas.[76] Alfred Smiley stated that the goal of the conference was "to unite the best minds interested in Indian affairs, so that all should act together in harmony, and so that the

[73] Schlatter and Henrietta married in 1884. Dr. John Jacob Kunz (1833-1882) succumbed to blood poisoning from an operation on July 24, 1882. Kunz was a practicing doctor from Germany living in Brooklyn, New York. "Dr John Jacob Kunz," Find a Grave Index, Accessed March 3, 2020. Henrietta performed "domestic duties" while her new husband, Schlatter continued practicing medicine. "Henrietta Kunz," Tenth U.S. Census, 1880, Kings County, New York, Brooklyn, Roll: 844; Page: 339B; Enumeration District: 060.

[74] Bentley's Fancy Embroidery was located at No. 330 Fulton Street. "Rejected by the Sioux," *Richmond Dispatch* (Richmond, Virginia), February 10, 1891. Later in her life when Weldon returned to Brooklyn she again took up embroidering as a wage earning job to support herself. She is listed as an embroider in a handful of Census records.

[75] Reverend Alfred Riggs was a Congregational missionary and this meeting took place in 1883. This group was comprised largely of Anglo men.

[76] The Lake Mohonk Conference met annually to share their updates and express concerns for the future. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis,* 143.

prominent persons connected with Indian affairs should act as one body and create a public sentiment in favor on the Indians."[77] This conference advocated for "the Indian need for land in severalty, education, and the full privileges of citizenship, including the ballot;" all pieces of assimilationist rhetoric.[78] Reform groups desired to integrate Native people into the "mainstream" society of the United States.[79] Enrolled members of the group included both sexes, with many prominent women appearing among the speakers, especially those connected to the WNIA. Likewise, the IRA had much influence at the Lake Mohonk Conference, especially among the Board of Indian Commissioners.[80] At the conclusion of the Lake Mohonk Conference, Lobbyist Charles Painter and Senator Henry Dawes drafted the Dawes Sioux Bill with the improvements discussed.[81] The improved bill passed the Senate in April 1884, but failed to pass the House committee.[82]

Major divisions became apparent between leading Native American rights activists over the method of assimilation. The IRA believed that the only way to protect Native Americans was to pass legislation forcing them to become Americanized citizens. Another group formed to combat the mainstream activists, the National Indian Defense Association advocated for a less direct method of assimilation.[83] NIDA argued that

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[77] Ibid., 144.

[78] This group consisted largely of wealthy white individuals who sought to better the plight of the Native Americans and referred to themselves as "friends of the Indian." The attendees endorsed assimilationist policy put forth by the US government through 1916. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 34-35.

[79] To integrate Native peoples into the "mainstream" society reform groups had to figure out how to reshape Native identity. Reform groups desired to change Native people's lifestyles into similar versions of their own.

[80] Typically expected to be passive attendees, this conference allowed women to speak. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 46.

[81] These changes were led by the IRA's Herbert Welsh. He realized the land would be reduced anyway and opted to find a route that would be 'fair' to all: the Sioux, settlers, and railroads.

[82] The Senate did not attempt to make changes and let the bill fade away.

[83] The National Indian Defense Association (NIDA) was created on November 28, 1885 in Washington, D.C. Here they adopted a constitution, declaration of principles, and elected officers to fulfill temporary jobs until December 15, 1885. The first elected officers were President Dr. James W. Denver,

education was the answer to "successful" assimilation.[84] Allotment, Dr. Bland argued, should be influenced by Indigenous people after they received an education in the Anglo system. Depending on perspective, some might consider Dr. Bland's views sympathetic to Native people, while others might argue that he exuded a paternalistic attitude.[85] Dr. Bland and NIDA "believed that land allotment would threaten the balance between state and federal authority to the detriment of all citizens."[86] It appears that Dr. Bland and NIDA had the best intentions for Native people of all the reform groups fighting for rights on their behalf.

Rendered Senate approval on February 25, 1886, the Sioux Bill created by Senator Henry Dawes provoked Native American rights organization to speak out.[87] The next step was obtaining the approval of the House, but this was a failure for the Dawes Sioux Bill because it became trapped in discussion among the committee when the first session of the Forty-Ninth Congress closed in August 1886. The IRA and NIDA had gone head to head before the House committees arguing for and against the Sioux Bill. NIDA gained ground in 1886 by successfully stalling legislation in Congress.[88]

Vice President Dr. Byron Sunderland, and Secretary Captain Luther H. Pike. "Will Look After Poor Lo.," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), November 30, 1885.

[84] The split between organizations took place in 1885, when Bland (NIDA) began lobbying for "conservative" approaches to the "civilization" of the Native Americans, which included stalling the allotment of Native land. Bland argued that Native people had not received enough education in the Anglo-American system to be successful on allotted land or to make decisions that would best impact their future. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 166.

[85] Dr. Thomas Bland published several books during his stint in Native American reform. The following books relate to the work in this thesis. Thomas A. Bland, *A History of the Sioux Agreement: Some Facts Which Should Not Be Forgotten* (Washington, 1889); Thomas A. Bland, *The Indian – What Shall We Do with Him?* (Washington, D.C., 1887); and Thomas A. Bland, *The Indian Question* (Boston, 1880).

[86] Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 114.

[87] Soon, Henry L. Dawes, Senator from Massachusetts presented the General Allotment Act, better known as the Dawes Act. For more information on the Dawes Act see Hoxie, *A Final Promise*.

[88] Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 133.

Gathering together several times in 1886, NIDA's meetings had one main goal: stopping the Dawes Sioux Bill.[89] Dr. Bland published scathing remarks in *The Council Fire* regarding the bill.[90] Meeting on December 21, 1886 to discuss the Dawes General Allotment Act, NIDA chose a committee to "appear before the conference committee of the Senate and House and oppose adoption of the bill or secure if possible radical amendments."[91] NIDA appealed to President Cleveland to veto the Dawes General Allotment Act claiming that the inadequate compensation planned for the Sioux should be reconsidered. The proposed compensation included "a few cows and bulls and $1,000,000" in exchange "for 9,000,000 acres of excellent soil. In other words, the government wants to buy their land for 23 cents an acre and sell it for 50 cents."[92] Arguing this was not a fair trade, NIDA reprimanded the United States Government for still owing the Sioux money from previous land purchases.

[89] NIDA's next meeting took place on December 30, 1885 at 922 F Street. They discussed two things at the meeting: whether or not the laws of the United States should apply to reservations, and who should be appointed to a committee to represent NIDA at a conference of the board of Indian Commissioners to be held on June 14, 1886. The men selected for the committee were General James W. Denver, Dr. Byron Sunderland, William M. King, C.B. Shafer, Fred P. Stanton, Hon. A.J. Willard, and Professor J. Owen Dorsey. The next meeting was to take place at Dr. Sunderland's church in the middle of January. The NIDA meeting on January 11, 1886 took place at the First Presbyterian Church. NIDA had male and female members in their organization, "one lady and eighteen gentlemen were elected members." They scheduled the next meeting for January 22, 1886 at Reverend Sunderland's church at 41/2 street between C and D streets northwest. There were several notable speakers and some students from the Carlisle Indian School who "sang and delivered recitations" as well. On February 24, 1886, Dr. Bland argued against the opening of the Great Sioux Reservation in front of the house subcommittee on public lands. NIDA opposed this idea while the IRA was for opening the land, among these men were Bishop Hare and Prof. C.C. Painted. "Friends of the Red Men," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), December 31, 1885; "Local Briefs," *The Washington Critic* (Washington, D.C.), January 12, 1886; *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), January 20, 1886; "The Indian Defense Association," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), January 23, 1886; and "The Big Sioux Reservation," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), February 25, 1886.

[90] *The Council Fire* was the publication produced by NIDA. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 57.

[91] Denver headed this committee. The membership of NIDA is listed as 457 illustrating significant growth in its first year as an organization. "Opposing the Dawes Bill," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), December 22, 1886.

[92] "General News," *Jamestown Weekly Alert* (Jamestown, North Dakota), April 15, 1886.

Despite NIDA protests, President Cleveland signed the Dawes General Allotment Act on February 8, 1887, permitting the Secretary of the Interior to survey lands on Native American reservations, dole out allotments, and negotiate the purchase of surplus lands to the United States Government.[93] Attempting to secretly survey Native American reservations, the Indian Bureau intended to begin dividing land into allotments immediately. They did not want to give NIDA a chance to discuss the Dawes General Allotment Act with Native people because they had a record of success of convincing Native people not to sign away their land for allotment and the Indian Bureau needed to stop this.[94]

Intending to stop the practical execution of the Dawes General Allotment Act on reservations, Dr. Bland stated, "Against this coercive act we protest, and we are resolved to make our protest in the courts of the United States, provided any Indian tribes should ask us to do so. We have high legal authority for the opinion that the act is unconstitutional; hence we are hopeful of success in the effort to defeat its execution."[95] *The Memphis Appeal* correctly claimed that opposition groups to the bill were "gaining boldness and volume."[96] The Vice President of NIDA wished "that a wall of adamant high as the stars and permanent as heaven might be erected around the Sioux Reservation" to protect Native people from allotment.[97] NIDA continued to strategize on

[93] The Dawes Act did not apply to the "Five Civilized Tribes" (Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole), the Osage, Miamies and Peorias, and Sacs and Foxes in Indian Territory. Additionally, the Seneca Nation of New York Indians in the state of New York and the "strip of territory in the State of Nebraska adjoining the Sioux Nation on the south added by executive order" were not a part of the Dawes Act. This was because they had adopted many Anglo cultural ideas. Forty-Ninth Congress, Session II, *Statutes at Large*, Chapter 119, February 8, 1887.

[94] *Press and daily Dakotaian* (Yankton, South Dakota), April 5, 1887.

[95] "Indian Land Question," *The Memphis Appeal* (Memphis, Tennessee), June 27, 1887.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Dr. Byron Sunderland was the Vice President of NIDA at this time. *Lancaster Daily Intelligencer* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania), May 28, 1887.

ways to help Native Americans affected by the legislation surrounding the Dawes Act. *The Memphis Appeal* suggested that "the Dawes statute of the Interior Department" could "force the greater part of the Indians to become citizens and land owners in simple fee." It went on to state that the bill would "wage" an "exterminating war on the old tribal communism."[98] Representatives of NIDA traveled to reservations to explain the ramifications of the Dawes General Allotment Act which included the US Government taking "surplus" land from allotment and selling it to settlers.[99] Goals of the Dawes General Allotment Act included assimilation of Native Americans into mainstream society, pressuring them with force to turn from their traditional culture. Indigenous people chose to work with NIDA agents such as Caroline Weldon or Lucy Arnold to defeat the Dawes General Allotment Act.

Traditional gender lines began blurring in the mainstream society in the nineteenth century with many young women taking on professional roles. They became known as "New Women." This newfound freedom gave middle-class and wealthy women the opportunity to join organizations like the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA) or the National Indian Defense Association (NIDA). Many Anglo women failed to see that Native American women began losing power in their communities through forced assimilation. Native American women held important roles in their communities – roles with power that made Anglo Americans uncomfortable.[100]

[98] "Indian Land Question," *The Memphis Appeal* (Memphis, Tennessee), June 27, 1887.

[99] In the end, some land was purchased while much was taken. Generally, Native people wanted to continue holding land in common rather than taking individual allotments.

[100] For more information on the relationship between Anglo women and Native American women see Riley, *Women and Indians on the Frontier*; and Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women in the Fur Trade Society of Western Canada, 1670-1830," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1984): 9–13.

Women like Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows capitalized on their gender and used it as a way to escape the confines of Victorian womanhood. While these women challenged mainstream ideologies, it must be acknowledged that by forcing assimilation onto Native peoples they were forcing the very shackles of domesticity onto new victims. Middle-class reformers sought to free themselves from the bonds of Victorian womanhood and found a new prisoner to take their place. Reformers did not understand the role of women in Native culture and desired to make them into replicas of a "good" Victorian woman.

Caroline followed the lobbying accomplished by Native American rights groups, learning as much as she could and studying their platforms. She could not join just yet because of familial responsibility. Out of a sense of duty, Caroline refused to leave New York while her mother, now a widow, was alive. She passed away on April 8, 1887, leaving $2,000 to her daughter.[101] Mrs. Valentiny did not mention Caroline's son in her will. Perhaps this silence was an attempt to save the family more disgrace as Caroline was a single, divorced mother with a bastard child. Before she could leave New York, Caroline had to appear before the Surrogate Court of Kings County in regard to her mother's estate.[102]

Packing her bags and withdrawing her personal savings, Caroline prepared for the journey to Dakota Territory.[103] Before she could leave, Caroline knew she needed to re-create her identity and throw away the shackles of a scandalous past. Familiar with the

[101] $2,000 was a large sum of money in 1887.

[102] The court date was set for July 14, 1887. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), June 18, 1887.

[103] Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead,* location 6551-6567/7518.

story of William F. Cody, “Buffalo Bill,” perhaps she read sensationalized newspaper accounts of the show man in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* or *The New York Clipper*. Buffalo Bill’s Wild West performed several times in New York, so one could speculate that Caroline attended one of his performances. Observing this master of skillfully weaving truth and myth together, perhaps Caroline drew inspiration from Cody to reinvent her own identity.

First, she needed a name that would nobody would recognize. Pondering for a while, Caroline finally decided on Weldon. Weldon. Yes, she liked the sound of that. As an educated woman, Caroline most likely studied English history while in Switzerland so it is not hard to speculate that she had probably heard of the diocese of Weldon in Northhamptonshire. With her talent for language, perhaps she liked the significance “Weldon” in old English. It translated from "waella" meaning a spring and "dun", a mound or hill or possibly "dene", a valley.”[104] She envisioned herself to be a “spring” of knowledge traveling to help the Sioux Nation, or perhaps Caroline considered that if NIDA could defeat the Allotment Act at Standing Rock it would be seen as “The City on a Hill.” Regardless of reasoning, she became identified as “Caroline” or “Catherine” Weldon.[105] Additionally, Caroline chose to present herself as a widow, though her ex-husband was still alive. She would have done this to protect her new identity, attempting to bury her scandalous past. Perhaps Caroline identified as a widow so that she could grieve the life that she lost. In the end, Caroline Weldon assembled her new Western identity piece by piece.

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[104] “Last Name: Weldon,” *Surname DB: The Internet Surname Database*, Name Origin Research 2017, Accessed February 23, 2020, https://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Weldon

[105] She identified herself as Caroline, the reporters called her Catherine. This was most likely a mishearing of her name. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 6567-6583/7518.

Next, Caroline Weldon needed to assume membership in a group so she had a sense of belonging. Remembering her passion for the plight of Native Americans, Weldon began comparing and contrasting numerous reform groups she had so often read about. Ultimately, she became a member of the "radical" National Indian Defense Association (NIDA) working with Drs. Thomas and Cora Bland. Tasked with writing letters to notable chiefs on behalf of NIDA, Weldon successfully accomplished this and was then summoned to visit with the chiefs in 1888. She had to decline the invitation from Dr. Bland due to illness. Weldon later reminisced on the invitation in a letter to Oglala Chief Red Cloud, "Last spring I received an invitation from Dr. Bland in Washington to come and meet you there. I am a member of the N.I.D.A. & he wished me to go and talk the Sioux question over with you and the other members. I was ill & could not go at the time."[106]

Following the proposed legislation in Congress and knowing the Pratt Commission would visit the Great Sioux Reservation in 1888, Weldon wrote letters to Sitting Bull that summer to keep him "informed of all the movements of the Commissioners" and supplied him "with maps and price lists of land." Weldon asserted, "I did not want the Dakotas cheated."[107] A blatant problem existed, as Sitting Bull did not receive all of the letters sent by Weldon. Major James McLaughlin (1842-1923), the Indian Agent at Standing Rock intercepted many of them. Familiar with NIDA, McLaughlin did not want members of the organization to visit Standing Rock. He feared NIDA would incite unrest among the Sioux in his charge. Hoping to dissuade Weldon

[106] "Mrs. Weldon to Chief Red Cloud, July 3, 1889" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 95.

[107] Ibid., 95. For more information on the life of Sitting Bull see Vestal, *Sitting Bull*; Robert M. Utley, *Sitting Bull: The Life and Times of an American Patriot* (New York: Holt Paperbacks Henry Holt and Company, 1993); and Bill Yenne, *Sitting Bull* (Yardley: Westholme, 2008).

from coming to Standing Rock, McLaughlin actively chose not to reply to her letters. Weldon, a woman of grit and determination, did not let McLaughlin's silence deter her. She packed her bags and began her journey to the Dakota Territory in June 1889. James McLaughlin and Caroline Weldon's stories were, in some ways, very similar; so much so that perhaps McLaughlin saw Weldon as a threat to his own self-made identity.[108] Though McLaughlin never changed his name, there is evidence that he wrestled with who he was and what his life purpose was supposed to be. McLaughlin was born in Roxborough, Ontario in 1842; he lived and worked there until immigrated to the United States in April 1863.[109] McLaughlin married Marie Louise Buisson, a Mdewankaton woman of mixed heritage on January 29, 1864.[110] Working as a blacksmith at Fort Totten to support his family, McLaughlin volunteered to move to Devil's Lake Agency with Major William H. Forbes in 1871 where he would have a higher paying position. McLaughlin gained practical experience working at Devil's Lake hoping one day to become an Indian Agent. Realizing this dream in 1876, Paul Beckwith selected McLaughlin to oversee Devil's Lake Agency. Five years later, Father Joseph A. Stephan selected McLaughlin to head Standing Rock Agency.[111] Successfully climbing

[108] For more information on the life of James McLaughlin see James McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910); and Louis Pfaller, *James McLaughlin, the Man with an Indian Heart* (New York: Vantage Press, 1978).

[109] James McLaughlin was the son of Felix (~1807-1887) and Mary McLaughlin, immigrants to Canada from County Auntrim, Ireland. McLaughlin's parents never left Stormont, Ontario. "Felix McLaughlin," Ontario, Canada, *Deaths and Deaths Overseas, 1869-1947, MS935*; Reel: *49; and* "James McLoughlin," Census of Canada, 1851, Stormont County, Canada West, Schedule: A; Roll: C_11752; Page: 21; Line: 39.

[110] James McLaughlin became a United States citizen in November 1865. Louis Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 1-4; and "MAJ James McLaughlin," Find a Grave, Accessed March 4, 2020.

[111] Devil's Lake Agency was created under the Peace Plan established by US President Ulysses S. Grant in the 1870s. Forbes died on July 20, 1875 and McLaughlin assumed he would be granted the position of Indian Agent, but he was not. Paul Beckwith was selected. Tensions between the men grew, Beckwith dismissed McLaughlin in the spring of 1876. In a turn of events Beckwith met with McLaughlin and appointed him the new Indian Agent and resigned in May 1876. McLaughlin assumed control of Standing Rock Agency in 1881. Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 27-60. For more information on Grant's Peace

the social ladder from blacksmith to Indian Agent, McLaughlin feared Weldon would challenge his authority. McLaughlin knew Weldon was a member of NIDA and she had traveled to Standing Rock with the intention of stymying the allotment of Native reservations.[112]

Policy see Robert M. Utley, "The Celebrated Peace Policy of General Grant," *North Dakota History* 20 (July 1953): 121-42.

[112] Vestal, *Sitting Bull*, 271-272; and Miller, "Sitting Bull's White Squaw," 56. Scholar Penny Woollard has suggested that it was Sitting Bull's authority that McLaughlin feared most. Weldon was helping Sitting Bull by translating maps and thus she was undermining McLaughlin's authority. Penny Woollard, "Derek Walcott and the Wild Frontier: The Ghost Dance," *49th Parallel*, Volume 23 (Summer 2009), 5.

CHAPTER III

1889

Caroline traveled to Dakota Territory for the first time in 1889 intending to lobby against the Sioux Bill. Here fellow NIDA member, Lucy Arnold's story intersects with that of Weldon, as do those of the Sioux Bill and the Crook Commission. In order to understand the magnitude of the decisions taking place in Dakota Territory from 1889-1890, an in depth look at the Sioux Bill is necessary. Passed on March 2, 1889, the Sioux Bill intended to divide the Great Sioux Reservation into six smaller reservations and sell "excess" reservation land to settlers.[113] The *Annual Report of the Department of the Interior* for 1889 stated that "a great tide of immigration will at once set Dakotaward upon the opening of the reservation."[114] The white population desired to move onto a parcel of land one-third the size of Pennsylvania.[115]

[113] The Fiftieth Congress took place from December 1887 – March 1889.

[114] United States Department of the Interior, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior: 1889*, Volume III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), 281.

[115] John Gregory Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 486.

Allotment acreage varied according to age and marital status: individual head of households received 320 acres, single persons and orphans received 160 acres, and single persons under 18 received 80 acres.[116] Land amounts doubled if used for grazing, not farming. Native persons taking an allotment received a patent in fee for twenty-five years.[117] In addition to allotment, the *Omaha Daily Bee* reported, "The Dawes Act proposes that the Sioux tribes shall cede one-half of their reservations, amounting to 11,000,000 acres, and receive in return 25,000 cows, 1,000 bulls, agricultural implements, seeds, school houses and the means of educating their children."[118]

While, coercion of Indigenous people took place across the United States, the case of the Great Sioux Reservation is significant because they had signed treaties with the US Government within the previous fifteen years guaranteeing them the land on the reservations. The Sioux had no desire to give any land back. Deceptive, conniving, and self-serving are the best ways to summarize the interactions of the US Government with Native people. Rightfully upset, some bands of Sioux agreed to hear what NIDA had to say. It should be acknowledged here that NIDA might have been trying to assuage the immediate situation, but in the long run they too were proponents of assimilationist agendas.

[116] The Sioux argued that the land should be broken down into fair and equal amounts, not the certain allotted number of acres. This argument was based on the fact that Native Americans viewed the reservations as being owned by all that lived there, so it made sense that they would individually get the same amount of land. Office of Indian Affairs, *Fifty-Eight Annual Report to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 16-17.

[117] George Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, ed. Martin F. Schmitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 283.

[118] "Why the Sioux Do not Sign," *Omaha Daily Bee* (Omaha, Nebraska), September 8, 1888.

The Crook Commission intended to travel to Dakota Territory to explain the bill to the Sioux and give them an opportunity to "touch the pen" peacefully.[119] Bullying the Sioux of the lower agencies into signing the bill first, the Crook Commission purposely left Standing Rock out of the discussion until the end because a majority of the influential chiefs resided there.[120] The Crook Commission knew if Standing Rock resisted first, the other reservations would follow.[121]

The *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* announced Caroline Weldon's arrival to Dakota Territory on June 7, 1889.[122] Sent by NIDA to inform Sitting Bull of the consequences of the bill, Weldon worked closely with the Hunkpapa chief as his advisor.[123] As a wise leader of the Hunkpapa, Sitting Bull understood that NIDA and Weldon had agendas to achieve. He allowed Weldon to work amongst the Hunkpapa because he viewed her as a valuable asset due to her education. Sitting Bull listened as she interpreted the shifting boundaries put forth by the US Government in the Dawes General Allotment Act and Sioux Bill. After earning the trust of the Sioux, she spent much of her time with Sitting

[119] George Crook was a well-known man on the Plains having been involved in many of the Indian wars. "Touching the pen" would signify acceptance of the new law because the majority of Native Americans could not read or write in English. Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, 284.

[120] For more information on negotiations see Hoxie, *A Final Promise.* See also Frederick E. Hoxie, "The End of the Savage: Indian Policy in the United States Senate, 1880-1900," Chronicles of Oklahoma 55 (Summer 1977): 157-179.

[121] They met with the chiefs on the Rosebud on Monday, June 3-7. The translators between the commissioners and chiefs were Louie Richard, Charles Tackett, and Loui Bordeaux. Next, they visited Pine Ridge and gradually convinced the chiefs there to sign the agreement. The Lower Brule signed the agreement with little coercion. Crook stated that the Crow Creek Agency was difficult to work with. Next, they visited the Cheyenne Agency which Crook said was "the most difficult of all." The commission did not gather the signatures that they needed at Cheyenne River. Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, 284-287.

[122] Supposedly Christie was with her. "Personal," *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* (Bismarck, North Dakota), June 7, 1889.

[123] She also translated letters for Sitting Bull into other languages, preventing Anglo men from manipulating his words.

Bull's family. Weldon quickly learned the Dakota language by completing daily tasks, keeping a running log of acquired words, and studying Dakota language books published by Reverend Stephen Return Riggs and Doctor Thomas Williamson.[124] She made a concerted effort to communicate in the Native tongue.[125]

Agent McLaughlin did not like Weldon due to her involvement in NIDA. He approached her while she was staying at the Parkin Ranch located around twenty-five miles north of Standing Rock Agency on the Cannon Ball River.[126] According to Weldon their conversation revolved around NIDA claiming McLaughlin "spoke of Dr. Bland & said that he had no foot hold or influence whatever at Standing Rock," she continued "I did not answer, & I do not *know* whether he was aware that I am a member, but I think he is else he would not have spoken of the N.I.D. Asso."[127] Knowing that an outright admittance of membership in NIDA would have her removed from Standing Rock, Weldon chose to keep silent. Through silence Weldon accessed a freedom of choice when it came to her outward identity.

Weldon did not act alone on behalf of NIDA in Dakota Territory, rather she is simply the most discussed in contemporary accounts. Another woman, Lucy B. Arnold,

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[124] Reverend Stephen Return Riggs and his wife Mary were missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) to the Sioux living in Minnesota in the 1850s. He translated many documents into the native language, including the New Testament. He produced the *Dakota Grammar and Dictionary* in 1852. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, 52. For more information on Reverend Stephen Return Riggs from 1837-1877 see Stephen Return Riggs, *Mary And I: Forty Years With the Sioux* (Chicago: W.G. Holmes, 1880).

[125] "Miscellaneous Notes in Sioux and English in Mrs. Weldon's Handwriting, Found in Sitting Bull's Cabin After His Death" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 115-117.

[126] Weldon was staying at the Parkin Ranch because she did not have permission to be on the reservation yet. Agent McLaughlin had to control the population of the reservation and because she was White she was not allowed to formally live on Standing Rock. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 399/7518.

[127] "Mrs. Weldon to Chief Red Cloud, July 3, 1889" Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 93.

who was also involved with NIDA is mentioned briefly in a single newspaper article.[128] As a day school teacher, she served in several locations in Dakota Territory. She was always listed as the main instructor, though she sometimes received help from an assistant.[129] Arnold exemplified the "New Woman" of the late nineteenth century with her involvement in NIDA and professional role as an educator.

Teaching at the Black Pipe day school at the Rosebud Agency when the Crook Commission came to visit, Arnold translated between the Sioux Chiefs and commissioners.[130] She had acquired knowledge of the language while teaching in her classroom.[131] An article in the *Iron County Register* described a ceremony for the Crook Commission; Arnold translated on behalf of twenty Sioux Chiefs and also presented an elaborate "feathered tail dress" to Charles Foster. After conversing amongst themselves, Chief Swift Bear announced that Foster would from then on be known as "Young Man Proud of His Tail." She communicated this title to Foster and the commissioners were

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[128] Born in 1846, Lucy Arnold was a white female teacher from Virginia. Arnold was most likely a Catholic woman, and taught music at Father McNamara's school in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1869 before switching to secular education "Father McNamara's School," *Wilmington Journal* (Wilmington, North Carolina), August 27, 1869.

[129] The day schools were different than the boarding schools. Day schools were located on the reservations allowing children to live at home and attend classes. The day school was used as a slower vehicle of assimilation compared to the off reservation boarding schools. First, Lucy Arnold was employed at the "agency in Dakota Territory," then the Black Pipe Day School, then at Standing Rock's industrial school, and finally with the Hualapai and Yaua Supai Indians. For example, Sarah C. Harris was Arnold's white female assistant teacher at Black Pipe. Both Arnold and Harris were appointed to the Dakota reservations from Washington, D.C. "Lucy B. Arnold," *Official Register of the United States, Containing a List of the Officers and Employees in the Civil, Military, and Naval Service Together with a List of Vessels Belonging to the United States:* 1887 – Agency, Dakota Territory, pg. 564; 1889 - Black Pipe, Dakota Territory, pg. 629; 1891 - Day school, South Dakota, pg. 715; 1895 - Standing Rock, North Dakota, pg. 779; 1897 - Standing Rock Agency, North Dakota, pg. 804; and 1899 - Hualapai and Yava Supai Indians, pg. 934.

[130] "Big Injun Charley," *Iron County Register* (Ironton, Missouri.), June 20, 1889.

[131] Black Pipe was the oldest government run day school on the Rosebud with a capacity to instruct 30 students, though extra students were not turned away. Indian Agent L.F. Spencer reported "The schools have been prosperously carried on, with the exception of that at Black Pipe, which, though the oldest in operation upon the agency, yet the pupils speak less English than at any other of the camp schools." Office of Indian Affairs, *Fifty-Eighth Annual Report to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 159 & 382.

delighted, though they were not happy for long.[132] NIDA had circulated letters to the Sioux at the Rosebud Agency angering the commissioners, who threatened to charge NIDA with treason.[133]

The ceremony held at Rosebud illustrated the commissioners going through the motions in an attempt to gain more signatures for the Sioux Bill, fearing that a rejection of the ceremony would jeopardize their mission. This ceremony illustrated how easily identity and proscribed agendas became fluid in the West in order to achieve a complex, multi-sided goal. The commissioners did not intend to respect Native culture; rather they manipulated the media of the nineteenth century to aid their objective in the newspaper article.[134]

Weldon moved to Standing Rock Agency in July 1889, but was dismissed for publicly confronting Agent McLaughlin after he would not grant permission for Sitting Bull to leave the reservation. Weldon likely wanted to take Sitting Bull to the Cheyenne River Agency to rally the Lakota against the Sioux Bill and she blatantly accused McLaughlin of being "afraid of a woman & of a woman's influence," she proceeded to storm out of the Agent's office.[135] Newspapers seized the opportunity to publish

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[132] Charles Foster was previously the governor of Ohio. "Big Injun Charley," *Iron County Register* (Ironton, Missouri), June 20, 1889; and Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 185.

[133] NIDA regularly encouraged Native people to reject Federal policies. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, 26-27; and Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 131.

[134] Later Lucy Arnold moved Washington, D.C. and took her adopted Sioux son, Acita "Herbert" Zitkolaze with her. She enrolled him at St. John's College where he excelled in violin and his studies. By adopting a Sioux son, Arnold was practicing maternal colonialism. "City Items," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), February 10, 1897; "St. John's College," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), June 21, 1898; "Annual Reception," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), February 22, 1902; "Joint Pupil's Recital," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), June 2, 1902; "Herbert Zitkola-ze Dead," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), December 2, 1904; and "Lucy B. Arnold," Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900, Washington, District of Columbia, Enumeration District: 0048, 16.

[135] "Mrs. Weldon to Chief Red Cloud, July 3, 1889" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 94.

sensationalized accounts of the exchange between Weldon and McLaughlin. *The Omaha Daily Bee* claimed Weldon

> flew into a rampage and declared her intentions to see her political friends in Washington and secure Major McLaughlin's removal. Those who came from Standing Rock state that she used the most scathing and abusive language to the major, and accused him of using the Indians as prisoners. So abusive and threatening was her language that the agent positively ordered her to leave the reservation.[136]

Weldon's confrontation with McLaughlin had undesired consequences, as she had to find a place to stay close to the reservation so she could continue advising Sitting Bull on the Sioux Bill. The Crook Commission was due to arrive any day and she wanted to ensure that 'her Dakotas' were well informed. The actions taken by Weldon show her dedication and perseverance in fighting for Native American rights.

Finally, the Crook Commission arrived at Standing Rock on July 25, 1889, lacking six hundred signatures needed to pass the Sioux Bill. McLaughlin announced that he would need a minimum of three days to convince the Sioux in his charge to agree with provisions set forth in the bill. Buying himself some time, McLaughlin secretly met with some of the chiefs. He convinced them that the US Government would take their land either way, arguing that signing the bill would be their best opportunity to receive compensation. Soon, a large council gathered in regard to the Sioux Bill and Sitting Bull attempted to attend, but was promptly escorted away by the Indian Police by the order of McLaughlin.

Almost always at odds with one another, the tension between Agent McLaughlin and Sitting Bull arose from the forced relocation of the Hunkpapa to the Great Sioux Reservation. McLaughlin's goal was to ensure a smooth transition from traditional Sioux

[136] "Sitting Bull's Mash," *Omaha Daily Bee* (Omaha, Nebraska), July 1, 1889.

practices to "mainstream" Anglo ideologies. Remembering the days when the Lakota would roam the plains hunting buffalo and subsisting off the land, Sitting Bull fought relentlessly against systematic assimilation and was labeled a "non-progressive Indian."[137] Some other Lakota bands did begin the assimilation process and were denoted as "progressive Indians" by contemporary observers. Exhausted from fleeing the US Army and not desiring to see his people to suffer any longer, Oglala Chief Red Cloud became an early convert to the reservation system. Red Cloud also became a member of NIDA and Weldon wrote to him. In a letter addressed to Red Cloud, Weldon claimed that Sitting Bull had become a member of NIDA, she then continued questioning the amount of "protection for defenceless women" at Standing Rock.[138] Weldon chose to portray herself as a victim of Agent McLaughlin's schemes, creating the identity she needed to survive in Dakota. She wrote to Red Cloud figuring he would give her a sympathetic ear.

Weldon was not the only victim of newspaper aggression, NIDA received critical commentary from Herbert Welsh of the Indian Rights Association via the newspapers.[139] Historian C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa argued that "the IRA supported dispossession and coercive assimilation" of Native people, while NIDA fought "against the idea of forced assimilation and dispossession."[140] It is possible the newspapers sought to tarnish Weldon's reputation in order to cause harm to NIDA. Herbert Welsh of the IRA had conducted several smearing campaigns against Bland and NIDA in Washington, D.C.

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[137] For more information on Lakota and Sioux traditions see Gregory O. Gagnon, *Culture and Customs of the Sioux Indians* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011); and Pekka Hämäläinen, *Lakota America A New History of Indigenous Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

[138] "Mrs. Weldon to Chief Red Cloud, July 3, 1889" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 93 & 95. Dr. Bland and Chief Red Cloud worked together as well. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 196.

[139] Herbert Welsh had been involved in Native American reform for a few years at this point as he had founded the Indian Rights Association (IRA) in 1882.

[140] Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment*, 154-155.

newspapers.[141] The IRA had connections across the United States so it is plausible that they asked newspapers to print false stories about Weldon because of her involvement with NIDA. Weldon was one of the more outspoken women involved with NIDA, besides Cora Bland. She was a woman who was challenging mainstream Indian rights ideology. Perhaps organizations like the IRA and WNIA saw Weldon as a threat and sought to lessen her influence by portraying her as a loose woman.

In the end, the Crook Commission did gather enough signatures at Standing Rock to pass the Sioux Bill. Refusing to accept outright the Anglo ways forced upon Native people, Sitting Bull and the "traditionalists" continued their cultural practices.[142] Though Weldon failed to stop the Sioux Bill at Standing Rock and make it "the city on a hill" for other Native people resisting allotment, she continued supporting Sitting Bull, writing letters for him and providing encouragement when she deemed necessary.[143]

Adjourning on August 12, 1889, the Crook Commission went to Mandan and Chicago with more than the required three-fourths adult male signatures needed, allowing the US Government to open the Great Sioux Reservation for allotment.[144] There was speculation that Crook made promises to the Sioux in order to gain their signatures. He implemented hollow methods to obtain signatures - on the surface it appeared as though he wanted to help the Sioux, but in reality he was on assignment for the US Government. For example, Crook allowed traditional practices like Native dances to occur during negotiation and he bribed starving people with food. Lastly, in a blatant abuse of power,

[141] Ibid., 134.

[142] Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa had a reputation for supporting the traditional Lakota way of life accessing their Native agency and identity.

[143] Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 120-121.

[144] Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, 287-288.

Crook would not allow Native men to tend their farms until they signed the agreement.[145] Detestable, desperate, duplicitous handlings of Native American land and treaties were not new, rather this trend was the norm implemented by the US Government.

Weldon returned to New York in the fall of 1889, but continued corresponding with Sitting Bull and other NIDA activists.[146] She continued watching the legislation concerning the Sioux unfold. Early in 1890, President Harrison accepted the signatures for the Sioux Agreement. The results were devastating. Indigenous people were coerced into selling half of their land and many fell into destitution.[147] The Great Sioux Reservation went from twenty-two million acres to thirteen million acres, broken into six smaller reservations.[148] Later in life General George Crook remorsefully stated, "The principle of allotment did not bring happiness or civilization to the Indians. Leasing of land to the whites became a common and disastrous practice."[149]

1889 was an eventful year in Dakota Territory. The Crook Commission coerced enough Native people into signing the Sioux Bill, thus opening the Great Sioux Reservation for allotment. NIDA members Caroline Weldon and Lucy Arnold did everything in their power to prevent the Sioux Bill from passing, but were unsuccessful. Soon, Caroline Weldon returned to New York for the winter, but would return to Dakota Territory again in 1890 enjoy the "freedom of the wilderness."[150]

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[145] Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 63; and Louis S. Warren, *God's Red Son: The Ghost Dance Religion and the Making of Modern America* (New York: Basic Book, 2017), 215.

[146] Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 121.

[147] The Sioux would lose far more during the allotment years. Hagan, *The Indian Rights Association*, 63.

[148] The smaller reservations and Sioux who lived there were Oglalas and northern Cheyenne on Pine Ridge Reservation, the Brulés on Rosebud, and the Hunkpapas on Standing Rock. Congress then ordered a ten percent cut in funding for the Sioux to reduce the federal budget. Many Sioux faced illness and starvation as a result. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 375-376.

[149] Crook, *General George Crook: His Autobiography*, 288.

[150] Johnson, *The Red Record of the Sioux*, 331.

CHAPTER IV

1890

Weldon returned to Dakota Territory in 1890 desiring to build a permanent home for herself and her son. Upon arriving she found the Sioux in worse condition than the previous winter. Rations had been cut to one-fifth of what the US Government allowed, their land holdings had shrunk from allotment, and their attitudes were close to rock-bottom.[151] Soon, a new religion began sweeping the Great Plains known as the Ghost Dance and the Sioux wanted to know more. Weldon was skeptical and this caused tension between her and her friends.

Native Americans across the West sought ways to cope with Anglo invasion and destruction. Some sought comfort in traditional practices. Rapidly sweeping across the Northern Plains, the Ghost Dance was a syncretic religion that closely mimicked Christianity. This was a peaceful religion created by Wovoka, a Paiute prophet who

[151] Ibid., 331.

intended to promote cooperation and Indian futurism.[152] Barred from violence, the participants of the Ghost Dance viewed their religion as "a prayer for peace."[153] Early in the spring of 1890, Kicking Bear, Short Bull, and eleven others from Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Agencies traveled to the camp of Wovoka to learn the teachings. Some scholars argue the Sioux implemented a militant twist to the Ghost Dance provoking concern from some Anglo residents surrounding the reservation, though McLaughlin believed the concern pointless.[154] Historian Louis Warren argued that some Anglo Americans "mistook it [the Ghost Dance] for a war dance," which prompted concern.[155] This misunderstanding led to higher tensions in the Dakotas for a few months and ultimately, tragic death for many Native Americans. Anglo reformers and citizens of the Dakotas did not deem it necessary to listen to the concerns of Indigenous people.

Returning to Standing Rock in May 1890, Weldon ironically asked McLaughlin for permission to "take a claim on the 'New Land' ceded by the majority of Indians last year." She intended "to build a house upon it, and have certain days set apart for Ind. Women and girls to come to me for instruction in useful domestic accomplishments."[156] McLaughlin promptly denied her application. Weldon's request undermined the work she had tried to accomplish one year earlier, as the Sioux Bill she lobbied against gave her

[152] The Ghost Dance combined elements of traditional Native American religion with those of Christianity. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 358-363. For an in depth study of the Ghost Dance see Warren, *God's Red Son*.

[153] Warren, *God's Red Son*, 34.

[154] The first recorded concern came from a Pierre man, Charles L. Hyde, who reported on May 29, 1890 that the Sioux were planning an uprising. Interestingly, the Indian Agents did not report anything suspicious for some time. McLaughlin reported to the commissioner of Indian Affairs on June 18, 1890 that he had been among the Sioux for nineteen days and had seen no issues. Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 124.

[155] Warren, *God's Red Son*, 34.

[156] "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin, April 5, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 99; and Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 4781/7518.

the option to ask for a piece of land on the reservation. Perhaps, Weldon requested land so she could attempt to establish a life for herself and her son, Christie away from the crowded noisy streets of Brooklyn.[157] Weldon claimed a desire to "spend the remainder" of her life in Dakota "among or near" her Lakota friends.[158]

After McLaughlin rejected Weldon's request to live on the reservation, she next asked for permission to teach in the day school.[159] McLaughlin replied, "There is no vacancy now existing in our Grand River Schools, and I do not deem it necessary to establish an Industrial School in that neighborhood at the present time."[160] Denying Weldon the ability to live or teach on Standing Rock, McLaughlin was attempting to block Weldon's influence among the Lakota. In the aftermath of McLaughlin's rejection, Weldon sought the help of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Thomas J. Morgan and NIDA's Dr. Thomas Bland. Dr. Bland unsuccessfully lobbied Commissioner Morgan to let Weldon teach without pay, but from the goodness of her heart.[161]

McLaughlin accused Weldon of agitating the Lakota when he discovered he could not control her actions. Weldon challenged McLaughlin's authority and identity as the Indian Agent which led him to use her as a scapegoat for his lack of control at Standing Rock. A single example of their differing agendas was food. The agency did not provide enough rations for sustenance so Weldon purchased food for the Lakota with her personal

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[157] Weldon sent for her son Christie when school ended. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead,* location 6616/7518.

[158] "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin, April 5, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History,* 98.

[159] Weldon wanted to teach women how to sew and perform domestic tasks. She would have taken her practical experience from Bentley's Fancy Embroidery and taught the women how to sew. Eileen Pollack has suggested that Lucy Arnold was granted the teaching position at Standing Rock that Weldon applied for. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 3766/7518.

[160] McLaughlin replied to Weldon's request to teach on July 11, 1890. Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 126.

[161] Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 127; and Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 3817/7518.

money because they could not leave the reservation to hunt buffalo. Slowly starving from lack of rations and poor soil for farming, the Lakota accepted Weldon's "gifts" leading McLaughlin to disdainfully report to the Indian Bureau that, "This woman is located just outside this reservation… Sitting Bull has been a frequent visitor to her house, and he has gotten more insolent and worthless with every visit he has made her, the lavish expenditure of money and other gifts upon him enabling him to give frequent feasts and to hold councils."[162]

Weldon and McLaughlin did agree on one thing: their dislike of the Ghost Dance. Created by the Paiute prophet Wovoka, the Ghost Dance was a peaceful religion. Indigenous people clung to the Ghost Dance as a source of hope when everything around them appeared seemingly hopeless. Historian Louis Warren argued the Ghost Dance was "not armed resistance but a path toward accepting many government demands while, at the same time, retaining Indian identity and community and resisting assimilation."[163] Typically not understanding the meaning behind the Ghost Dance, many Anglo-Americans protested against it. Weldon wrote letters to McLaughlin concerning the Ghost Dance in June 1890, pleading with him to take pity on the Hunkpapa. [164] Kicking Bear traveled to Standing Rock on October 9, 1890 to preach the Ghost Dance religion and the Hunkpapa began participating.[165] Viewing the Ghost Dance as the demise of the

[162] *Arizona Republican* (Phoenix, Arizona), October 28, 1890. Rations were being cut on the reservations so that the Indian Agents had more control. The Indian Agents were asserting dominance over Native Americans in their care. Woollard, "Derek Walcott and the Wild Frontier," 4.

[163] Warren, *God's Red Son*, 10.

[164] The Ghost Dance was a religious movement among the Native Americans. They believed if they performed the special dance that the white man would be destroyed and the land would be restored to its former glory. They also believed that the dead Indians would be brought back and the buffalo would be restored. See more in Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, 5; and Warren, *God's Red Son*.

[165] For a transcript of Kicking Bear's Speech see Kicking Bear, "Address at the Council Meeting of Hunkpapa Sioux, Great Sioux Reservation," October 9, 1890, *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, The University of Maryland, voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/kicking-bear-address-at-the-council-

Lakota, Weldon advised against participation in the religion. Sitting Bull ignored her. Lacking influence over Sitting Bull, Weldon shifted her mindset to assimilation by force. After all, assimilation had been at the root of Weldon's goals all along and she began exuding a maternal colonialist mindset, inadvertently implying that she possessed cultural superiority over the Lakota. Lamenting the grasp of the Ghost Dance on the Lakota, Weldon claimed that Kicking Bear was ruining the "work" she had accomplished over the past few years. Weldon stated, "My heart is almost breaking when I see the work of years undone by that vile imposter."[166] Upset that the Lakota had deviated from her path for their "success," Weldon criticized the Sioux in a patronizing speech titled "My Dakotas."[167] Weldon did not understand the peaceful nature of the Ghost Dance and wanted to put an end to it. Weldon, like other Anglo Americans, viewed the Ghost Dance as a threat to their safety.

With tensions surrounding the Ghost Dance escalating, McLaughlin wrote Commissioner Morgan on October 17, 1890 listing his concerns.[168] Days later Weldon wrote again to McLaughlin expressing her concerns regarding Sitting Bull and the Ghost Dance. This letter had a different tone than her previous letters, suggesting that her attitude toward the Lakota had shifted.[169] Weldon, now identified as a traitor by the

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meeting-of-hunkpapa-sioux-great-sioux-reservation-9-october-1890/. For an interpretation of Kicking Bear's speech see Jason Edward Black, Kicking Bear, "Address at the Council Meeting of Hunkpapa Sioux, Great Sioux Reservation," (9 October 1890), *Voices of Democracy* 3, (2008). The Ghost Dance was also active on Pine Ridge and the Rosebud Agencies, the Ghost Dance had begun making the Indian agents and US military nervous, so they began moving soldiers to the area. The agents feared an uprising among the Sioux.

[166] "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin (undated)" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 101.

[167] "Mrs. Weldon's Address to the Indians – "My Dakotas," (undated)" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 111-115.

[168] To read the letter Agent McLaughlin wrote to Commissioner Morgan see Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 128-132.

[169] This letter was dated October 24, 1890.

Lakota, acknowledged that some of her old friends felt "very bitter" toward her because she disapproved of the Ghost Dance.[170] Writing a few months later to Sitting Bull, Weldon proclaimed "you know best that I opposed the dance, & always counciled against war, & opposition against the Gov't… I always hoped you would keep your people in check; you had assured me that for my sake you would not fight against the white people anymore."[171] Native American rights activists and reformers shifted sides, following complex self-serving agendas. Middle-class female reformers experienced newfound freedoms in a public role, seeking to improve social conditions in the United States as long as those changes aligned with their vision for reform (i.e. assimilation).

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Many Native American rights activists opposed the Ghost Dance because it countered their agenda.[172] Like Weldon, Mary C. Collins was against the Ghost Dance. Collins had been a Congregational missionary on the Grand River at Standing Rock since 1885. She moved to Standing Rock because she wanted to be a missionary, not a teacher as she had been in Oahe.[173] Collins arrived at Standing Rock before the Dawes General Allotment Act and built a home without permission from the Indian Agent or Lakota.[174] Collins was a proponent for the Dawes General Allotment Act believing it was her right to live there.

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[170] "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin, October 24, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 102.

[171] "Mrs. Weldon to Sitting Bull, December 1, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 108-109.

[172] Warren, *God's Red Son*, 21-53.

[173] It is important to note that during this time period "The Missions among Indians had been transferred from the American Board to the American Missionary Board." Mary C. Collins, *Autobiography of Mary C. Collins in Her Own Handwriting,* Manuscript Collection, South Dakota Digital Archives, South Dakota State Historical Society, 44.

[174] "Dakota Images," *South Dakota History*; and Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead,* 37 & 88.

Eventually, Collins earned the trust of the Sioux and attempted to understand their culture before she forced her Christian beliefs on them.[175] Asserting that her intention was to encourage the Lakota to find God for themselves, Collins actually intended to use Christianity as a vehicle for assimilation into Anglo society. Traveling a large area surrounding Standing Rock to visit and care for the sick in their homes, Collins began fostering relationships of trust.[176] If the Lakota trusted her, she could slowly begin integrating assimilationist tactics like education. "The Indians proved anxious to learn" Collins claimed, so "I started a little school and taught them to read."[177] Located on the Grand River, Collins' school eventually enrolled five of Sitting Bull's children.[178] She recalled that her "plan in teaching these people was never to do anything for them that I could make them do for themselves, thus preparing them to do the things necessary to their own good."[179] A few years later Collins found herself in conflict over the Ghost Dance with some of the Lakota to whom she had been ministering to.

It should be noted here that Mary Collins and Caroline Weldon most likely did not like each other because of the organizations they were involved with: Weldon with NIDA and Collins with the American Missionary Association (AMA).[180] The women worked with the Lakota at the same time and fail to mention one another in their writings.

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[175] "Dakota Images," *South Dakota History.*

[176] Collins, *Autobiography,* 68.

[177] "Typescript research materials regarding reservation and agency life," Box 113, FF 4, pg. 24, Walter Stanley Campbell Collection, Native American Manuscripts Collection, Western History Collections, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

[178] Sitting Bull was against sending his children to the school initially, but ultimately sent them there for an Anglo education. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead,* 38.

[179] Collins, *Autobiography,* 17.

[180] The AMA was associated with the IRA. The IRA and NIDA were still clashing over Native American rights reform as evidenced by newspapers and organizational records.

One thing is for sure: both opposed the Ghost Dance, along with Agent McLaughlin. This appears to be the only thing that Weldon, Collins, and McLaughlin *all* agreed on.

Continuing to question the motive of the Ghost Dancers, McLaughlin visited Sitting Bull's camp in the early winter of 1890 to reprimand him for his participation in the Ghost Dance. Sitting Bull casually suggested that "he and the agent make a trip to the West in search of the new Messiah."[181] McLaughlin declined, implying it would be a pointless waste of time and returned to Fort Yates. Acknowledging that Sitting Bull would not stop the Ghost Dance from taking place, McLaughlin hoped for the day when tensions would disappear. This day never came.

Soon, many Anglo citizens faced a choice: stay in Dakota or leave. Widespread hysteria caused many townspeople surrounding the reservation to flee when they heard the Sioux were congregating in groups to sing and dance.[182] Perhaps the residents were veterans or witnesses of earlier Indian wars and they felt it necessary to move their families out of a deep sense of fear, considering it foolish to wait for the consequences.

Tensions surrounding the Ghost Dance persuaded Weldon to leave Dakota. It does not appear that Weldon faced imminent danger, but her new status as a "traitor" to the Lakota might have played a role in her decision to leave. Weldon and her son Christie boarded the *Abner O'Neal* in November 1890 journeying to Kansas City, Missouri to visit family.[183] Tragedy struck. Christie had stepped on a nail while at Standing Rock and though it had appeared to have healed, lockjaw set in while they were aboard the

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[181] Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 137.

[182] McLaughlin visited Sitting Bull's camp on November 15, 1890. Historians claim that only a portion of the Sioux people participated in the Ghost Dance. There were hundreds of Sioux who did not adhere to this new religion. This panic was caused by rumor, racial prejudice, and biasness. Most claims put forth by the people surrounding the reservation were unfounded.

[183] They were going to visit Weldon's nephew and his wife. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 2651/7518.

steamship. More commonly known as tetanus, Lockjaw had no cure in 1890. Succumbing to tetanus would have been a long painful, miserable death with the bacteria entering the bloodstream causing the victim to suffer from muscle spasms leading to other complications resulting in death.[184] The poor boy died in Pierre and his body was laid to rest in Kansas City.[185] Weldon painstakingly wrote that her son had suffered terribly, "He did not like to die, but clung to life & to me; for day & night. I could not leave his side & held his hands until he died."[186] Many critics seized the opportunity to accuse Weldon of spending too much time with the Sioux and not enough time caring for her son.

Penning a letter to Sitting Bull, a grief-stricken Weldon informed the chief of Christie's death. She appears to genuinely have beseeched Sitting Bull to mourn with her and heed the warnings she gave him while in North Dakota. She stated, "The papers are full about the Indians, and that they make war upon the white people… I always advised you & your people for their own good and the day will surely come when you all will know it. War can do no good, only hasten your destruction."[187] Though several townspeople had fled the area surrounding Standing Rock, many Anglo settlers chose to stay, living in constant fear of a Sioux uprising. The contemporary media rapidly spread rumors leading to greater hysteria in more of the towns.

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[184] "Symptoms and Complications: Tetanus," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Accessed March 3, 2020, https://www.cdc.gov/tetanus/about/symptoms-complications.html

[185] *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* (Bismarck, North Dakota), November 21, 1890. For more information on steamboats in Dakota Territory see Tracy Potter, *Steamboats in Dakota Territory: Transforming the Northern Plains* (Charleston, The History Press, 2017).

[186] "Mrs. Weldon to Sitting Bull, November 20, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 103.

[187] Ibid., 104.

Shunned by the Lakota, Weldon still claimed to be their friend and have their best interest at heart, but her attitude toward them shifted. She adopted a condescending tone, curtly stating, "If I spoke harsh to you sometimes, forgive me; a true friends warning is not always pleasant to hear. I meant it for the best."[188] Believing that only she knew what was right for the Lakota, Weldon had cultivated a "White Savior" complex, unknowingly or not. She audaciously referred to the Lakota as "My Dakotas" as though she owned them.[189] Her attitude continued to drive a deeper wedge between herself and the Lakota.

Weldon continued writing letters to Sitting Bull. Disappointed with how the Lakota reacted to her behavior, she claimed to have given her "heart and soul" to the Lakota and that "their welfare alone" was her priority.[190] Weldon concluded another letter stating,

> I wish you would try to live an honest, noble life, & do what is right in the eyes of God, & let your heart be true to those who deserve it, that when death comes to both of us we may not be eternally separated, but meet again in a better world. I have made great sacrifices for you and your people, & you & they have stolen my heart and soul away from my own relatives, & made their hearts bad with grief & jealousy. Should you and the Dakotas lightly forget "*Tokaheya mani win*" then all my years of love have been in vain. I send my farewell to you all & to my brother "*hohecikana*." [191]

Weldon cared for the Indigenous peoples, molding her new Western identity around helping them. When the Sioux did not comply with her pre-destined plan for their lives she became haughty. The more the Sioux deviated from her desired path, the more apparent Weldon's assimilationist agenda became. Split between two dichotomies, victim

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[188] Ibid., 104.

[189] "Mrs. Weldon's Address to the Indians – "My Dakotas," (undated)" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 111-115.

[190] "Mrs. Weldon to Sitting Bull, November 23, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 106.

[191] Ibid., 106-107.

and "savior," Weldon faced an inner battle. She crafted an image as a 'friend' to Sitting Bull, but perhaps she knew that association with him would hide the shame of her scandalous past. After all, that was Weldon's goal in moving to Dakota Territory.

With tensions still high, many military and political leaders began discussing options for quelling the Ghost Dance. One solution offered was to add military personnel to the Indian Police and soldiers stationed in the Dakotas. Another solution offered involved the famed showman William F. Cody, an old acquaintance of Sitting Bull.[192] He had taken Sitting Bull on tour with the Wild West show in 1885. The situation that followed was a clear case of reality and popular culture coming together. The collision of popular culture and reality allowed the historical record to be largely influenced. By asking Cody to visit Sitting Bull, the military was essentially asking a showman to do them a favor. This example illustrates how interconnected all aspects of society were in the nineteenth century.[193]

Returning from a string of performances in Europe, Buffalo Bill's Wild West arrived in New York in November 1890. Hastily, Major General Nelson A. Miles telegrammed Cody asking him to come to Chicago to discuss the possibility of talking with Sitting Bull. After their meeting, Nelson gave Cody a message stating "You are hereby authorized to secure the person of Sitting Bull and deliver him to the nearest

[192] Buffalo Bill had taken Sitting Bull on tour with the Wild West show in 1885. For more information on the relationship between Cody, Sitting Bull, and Native Americans in Buffalo Bill's Wild West see Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 319-324; and Deanne Stillman, *Blood Brothers: The Story of the Strange Friendship between Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017).

[193] For more information on shifting changes in the nineteenth century see Robert Wiebe, *The Search For Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

Commanding Officer of U.S. Troops…"[194] Cody arrived in Mandan, North Dakota on November 27, 1890. He immediately telegraphed Agent McLaughlin that he would arrive at Fort Yates that evening, but this did not go according to plan and Cody only made it to the Parkin Ranch. Cody arrived at Fort Yates the next day. Meanwhile, McLaughlin worked tirelessly to have Cody's orders rescinded, insisting that his Indian Police would arrest Sitting Bull when the time was right. What happened next is open to historical interpretation. Some accounts say that Cody became drunk at the Fort, while others say that was not the case.[195] Regardless, Cody never saw Sitting Bull and left Standing Rock after his orders were rescinded on November 29, 1890. [196] A concatenation of events took place between Cody's departure and Sitting Bull's attempted arrest.

Two weeks after Cody's departure, McLaughlin ordered the arrest of Sitting Bull on the grounds of not collecting his rations and his children not being in school. But McLaughlin's plans changed when he heard that Sitting Bull planned to visit Pine Ridge at the invitation of Short Bull.[197] Gathering the Indian Police on December 14, 1890, McLaughlin briefed his men on the chaos that Sitting Bull's presence would bring at Pine Ridge if they failed to capture him.[198] The Indian Police rode into Sitting Bull's camp on the morning of December 15, 1890, surrounding the two cabins on Grand River.

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[194] Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 139.

[195] Mary Collins recalled Buffalo Bill's visit to the agency and claimed he had been drunk. Collins said that Cody had been told that Sitting Bull was coming to Fort Yates so he turned around and went back. "Typescript research materials regarding reservation and agency life," Box 113, FF 4, pg. 30, Walter Stanley Campbell Collection, Native American Manuscripts Collection, Western History Collections, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

[196] Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 139-145.

[197] McLaughlin did not like the idea of Sitting Bull leaving Standing Rock Indian Agency. It should be noted that Sitting Bull followed the proper procedure for procuring permission to leave. Sitting Bull wrote a letter asking for permission that was delivered by Bull Ghost on December 12, 1890. McLaughlin replied to Sitting Bull on December 13 pleading with him to stay at Grand River and abandon the religion. Pfaller, *James McLaughlin*, 146-151.

[198] Ibid., 146-151.

Agreeing to go peacefully with the Indian Police, Sitting Bull walked out of the house, but one of his wives began wailing to alert others in the camp. The Ghost Dancers swarmed the Indian Police demanding them to release Sitting Bull. Remembering their orders from McLaughlin, the Indian Police refused and chaos ensued. Catches-the-Bear fired a shot at the arresting officer, Bull Head, hitting him. Bull Head then attempted to retaliate and accidentally shot Sitting Bull. The Lakota in the camp began shooting and Red Tomahawk shot Sitting Bull in the back of the head. Close range shooting took place for several more minutes resulting in several deaths.[199]

Invading Sitting Bull's home in the aftermath of his murder, agency personnel found a portrait Weldon painted of him and fragments of paper in her handwriting containing translations of words and phrases. Scribbled on an undated fragment of paper, one of the most intriguing finds contained the following inscription, "You had no business to tell me of Chaska. Is that the Reward for so many years of faithful friendship which I have proved to you?"[200] Chaska, a Santee Sioux man, had married day school teacher Corabelle Fellows in March 1888. Many newspapers ran sensationalized stories about the couple, especially after they agreed to make an appearance on the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit.[201] Weldon's fragment of paper illustrates mainstream

[199] Warren, *God's Red Son*, 281-282.

[200] Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 116. Author Eileen Pollack speculates who "Chaska" is in the notes section of her book *Woman Walking Ahead*, but I disagree with her conclusions. I believe that Chaska was the husband of day school teacher Corabelle Fellows. Caroline Weldon became upset because she did not want to marry Sitting Bull. The story of Corabelle Fellows and Chaska is further explored in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

[201] Chaska's Americanized name was Samuel Campbell. For more information on the life of Corabelle Fellows see Kunigunde Duncan, and Bruce David Forbes, *Blue Star: The Story of Corabelle Fellows, Teacher at Dakota Missions, 1884-1888* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1990). The Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit was located in the Midwest. They appeared once in 1888 and again in 1889 drawing large crowds. They were seen as "freaks" because of their marriage. Many people were against miscegenation in the late nineteenth century.

opinion on miscegenation in the late nineteenth century. Historian Stanley Vestal explained that Sitting Bull proposed marriage to Weldon and she reacted with a negative attitude. Unbeknownst to her, she had been performing many household duties which made a proposal to join Sitting Bull's family a logical choice in his mind.[202] Telling of her true feelings, Weldon's reaction proved that she believed Native people deserved rights, but she did not want to be married to a Native American man. As many Anglo people in the nineteenth century, Weldon considered herself above Indigenous peoples.

Several accounts were written and published in the aftermath of Sitting Bull's murder, illustrating the importance perspective and agenda. Some lamented the passing of a great man, while others breathed a sigh of relief that Sitting Bull could no longer cause "trouble" amongst the Sioux. Agent McLaughlin sent an account of Sitting Bull's death to Herbert Welsh to include in the IRA publication claiming newspapers were printing false stories and he would remedy this by giving a "statement of the facts."[203] Self-servingly, McLaughlin insisted that Sitting Bull had "behaved very badly" and had been "growing more aggressive" since the departure of the Sioux Commission in 1889; he described the original plan for Sitting Bull's arrest and what happened when he discovered Sitting Bull's plan to visit Pine Ridge.[204] McLaughlin recounted that he acted

[202] Lakota culture allowed men to marry widowed women as a way to provide protection for them, Sitting Bull would have been following the tradition of his people. Weldon was offended as an Anglo, Victorian woman to be proposed to by a man who already had multiple wives. Eventually, Weldon and Sitting Bull worked out an agreement and continued to work together for Lakota rights. Vestal, *Sitting Bull*, 274-275.

[203] James McLaughlin, *Account of the Death of Sitting Bull and of the Circumstances Attending It*, (Philadelphia: Indian Rights Association, 1891), 1.

[204] McLaughlin, *Account of the Death of Sitting Bull*, 3; and McLaughlin, *My Friend the Indian*, 213.

quickly and sent the Indian police to Sitting Bull's cabin to arrest him.[205] This account stated that Sitting Bull was going to come peacefully until his son, Crow Foot, began to taunt him. Then some of the warriors opened fire on the policemen trying to arrest Sitting Bull; he was shot, the men holding him were shot, and several more died in the ensuing chaos.[206] Desiring this to be the dominant narrative, McLaughlin continued using his position as Indian Agent to further shape his identity. This account implied that McLaughlin was the "hero" who removed "danger" and malfeasance from Standing Rock. Like Weldon, McLaughlin had no qualms adopting the "White Savior" complex to bolster his public persona.

A separate, but related tragedy took place a few weeks later at Wounded Knee Creek. Chasing Chief Spotted Tail's band of Miniconjou along with some Hunkpapa, the US Army's Seventh Cavalry surrounded the unsuspecting Indigenous peoples forcing them to make camp at Wounded Knee Creek.[207] First, the Army pointed four large guns at the camp from the top of the hill and then began attempting to take Miniconjou and Hunkpapa weapons. Nobody can confirm exactly what happened next, but a scuffle ensued leading to a gun being fired. Raining a barrage of bullets on the Sioux men, women, and children, the soldiers killed without discrimination. It was a massacre,

[205] Henry Bull Head (First Lieutenant of Police) and Charles Shave Head (First Sergeant of Police) were the Indian policemen in charge. Both died from injuries afterward. McLaughlin, *Account of the Death of Sitting Bull*, 7.

[206] Fearing for their lives, many of the people in Sitting Bull's camp fled, 372 men, women, and children intended to join the people of Pine Ridge. Unsuccessful, many Sioux were captured with 227 taken to Fort Sully and 72 to Pine Ridge. McLaughlin, *Account of the Death of Sitting Bull*, 5-8.

[207] The Hunkpapa Lakota were Sitting Bull's people. They had most likely fled to Pine Ridge in the aftermath of his murder to join the other Ghost Dance adherents who lived there.

leaving nearly three hundred mangled bodies littered the snow.[208] The Wounded Knee Massacre is often seen as the closing of a chapter in Native American and Western history and the Indian wars appeared to be over. NIDA resurfaced briefly in the aftermath of Wounded Knee, but soon faded from the public spotlight closing a chapter in Native American rights advocacy. Historian Jo Lea Wetherilt Behrens argued that Wounded Knee marked the "culmination of a century of tragedy for American Indians and the demise of the only organized group of humanitarian reformers truly interested in protecting the civil rights" of the Native Americans.[209] As NIDA faded away from the national spotlight, the IRA, WNIA, and other organizations continued to fight as "friends of the Indian." Many American citizens were appalled by what took place at Wounded Knee Creek. Many organizations had to rethink their strategies of assimilation, but continued to pursue the idea of acculturation.

Caroline Weldon and James McLaughlin reinvented their identities on the plains of North Dakota in the late nineteenth century. They both came from humble beginnings and recognized the flexibility available through white privilege in shaping their identities in the American West. "Weldon walked ahead of most whites," wrote author Eileen Pollack.[210] Though perhaps this statement gives a bit too much credit to a woman who had similar ideas to most Americans in the United States at this time. Yes, Weldon did

[208] A few days later a party from Pine Ridge went to Wounded Knee Creek to bury the bodies, but they were not prepared for what they saw. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis,* 363.

[209] Jo Lea Wetherilt Behrens, "In Defense of "Poor Lo": National Indian Defense Association and *Council Fire's* Advocacy for Sioux Land Rights," *South Dakota History: South Dakota State Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 24, Nos. 3 and 4, (December 1994), 173. Native American culture did not disappear, as Native people held onto their agency, all despite mainstream culture's attempt to eradicate their people. This is truly a testimony to Native American strength and resilience in the face of adversity.

[210] Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead,* 15.

help the Lakota in some ways, but in others ways she abandoned them. Weldon was more focused on creating an identity for herself, while playing a role in Native American activism at Standing Rock. Pollack argued that Weldon supported Sitting Bull and moved to Dakota to live "among the Indians, not to study or convert them or transform them into whites, but to help them live as Indians."[211] The evidence suggests otherwise; Weldon moved to Standing Rock with assimilationist agendas much like her contemporaries.

After moving back to New York, Weldon attempted to disappear into the folds of history. Thankfully she was not successful.[212] Derek Walcott included the elusive woman in two of his works in the 1990s, and the 2017 film *Woman Walks Ahead* centers on Weldon's time spent in Dakota Territory; depictions of Weldon range in these three examples of modern entertainment. Part II will explore how modern media affects the portrayal of historical characters and how this plays a role in historical memory.

[211] Ibid., 5-6.
[212] James McLaughlin continued to play a prominent role in politics for many years.

PART II

TWISTED LEGACIES: MEDIA & POPULAR CULTURE

Inspiring Americans and Europeans to dream about a perceived lost era, media and popular culture centered on the story of the American West has long been a pervasive global phenomenon. Portrayals of the West take place in several avenues including Western films, television shows, books, magazines, video games, and theme parks. Many depictions of the West illustrate a mythical, romanticized utopia, where the "good guy" always wins. Especially prevalent in film and literature, Western stereotypes included Anglo-Americans and Native Americans, with an occasional appearance by minority groups or immigrant populations. Typically centering on an independent, self-sufficient, heroic Anglo-American man, the stories of the West ostensibly revealed "the finest values of the nineteenth-century Protestant ethic, individualism, self-reliance, courage, and a love for freedom" in America.[213]

[213] Gerald D. Nash, "The West as Utopia and Myth," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 41, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 72.

Historian Paul Hutton has explored changing film depictions of US Army officer George A. Custer in the article "From Little Bighorn to Little Big Man: The Changing Image of a Western Hero in Popular Culture." Hutton claimed that "heroes are not born, they are created" in the West.[214] Depictions of Custer began in the nineteenth century in show business. Buffalo Bill integrated a 'heroic' reenactment of Custer's Last Stand into the Wild West in 1897 titled, "Mixed Bloods Against Full Bloods."[215] Hutton argued that depictions of Custer and Native Americans changed in film over the twentieth century due to evolving racial conscience. The 1920s and 1930s saw a general debunking of historical figures by showing the "clay feet of idols."[216] Awakened in the 1950s and 1960s, a racial conscience began to spread throughout America forcing a reexamination of old legends.[217] Hutton concluded that "as the values of society change so does its vision of history."[218]

Building on Hutton's claim that "heroes are not born, they are created," it is only logical to suggest that female led Westerns will soon give girls new heroes to look up to.[219] Though media depictions often take creative liberties causing the story to be false, they will be useful in showing that women were capable of being strong and independent in the West. Media depictions of women like Caroline Weldon will continue to become

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[214] Paul A. Hutton, "From Little Bighorn to Little Big Man: The Changing Image of a Western Hero in Popular Culture," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (January 1976): 19. Robert M. Utley is another historian who has written extensively on Custer from the 1950s to the 2000s. One can observe the evolving shift in the numerous he authored.

[215] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 408.

[216] Hutton, "From Little Bighorn to Little Big Man," 33.

[217] Ibid., 38.

[218] Ibid., 45.

[219] Ibid., 19. Robert M. Utley is another historian who has written extensively on Custer from the 1950s to the 2000s. One can observe the evolving shift in Custer's story in the numerous works he authored. Robert M. Utley, *Custer and the Great Controversy: The Origin and Development of a Legend* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1962); Robert M. Utley, Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); and Robert M. Utley, *Custer and Me: A Historian's Memoir* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).

increasingly more important in illustrating the diverse roles women took on in the nineteenth century. By examining contemporary newspapers, and comparing these portrayals to *The Ghost Dance, Omeros*, and *Woman Walks Ahead* it will be shown that media depictions of Caroline Weldon varied, but all were important for crafting the historical legacy that she is known by today. Often these depictions were different because they had to meet a writer's agenda causing the inaccuracies. When viewed as a foundation for further research and study, historical interpretations from the media become useful. In turn the glamorized version of history can be harmful, allowing myths to become popular reified knowledge.

The following two chapters will examine the portrayals - or lack thereof - Caroline Weldon and her contemporaries in media and popular culture. Chapter 5 will examine the lives of Caroline Weldon, Corabelle Fellows, and Mary Collins in nineteenth-century media. Chapter 6 will explore three modern depictions of the life of Caroline Weldon: *The Ghost Dance* (1990), *Omeros* (1992), and *Woman Walks Ahead* (2017). In analyzing the modern depictions, this chapter will discuss the importance of popular culture and media's impact on historical memory.

CHAPTER V

NINETEENTH-CENTURY MEDIA

Media and popular culture in the nineteenth century revolved around literature, shows, and newspapers and all played a significant role in informing public opinion. Most Americans citizens had access to one of these things. Reaching the most diverse audience, newspapers played the largest role in spreading popular culture because they were printed in the dominant language of a community. Newspapers were printed and consumed at the local, regional, and national level. Newspapers became widely available in the latter half of the nineteenth century due to the industrial revolution and modernization of society. Newspapers published both real and heavily sensationalized stories, and everything in between. These accounts had an ability to play a large role in shaping a person's identity, especially female, middle-class reformers.[220]

[220] It is important to note that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach for how a person's identity was shaped by newspapers.

Contemporary newspapers were one of the first forms of media to begin shaping Caroline Weldon's identity without her consent. Originating in Bismarck and Sioux City publications (North & South Dakota), stories about Weldon were eventually picked up by newspapers in the East allowing the stories to be published all over the United States.[221] Aptly showing how opinions of Weldon varied from disgust to praise, the *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* stated, "A Mrs. Weldon, a white woman from the east, who has more money than brains, is living with Sitting Bull at present and the Indians report her to be converted to his doctrine."[222] This reporter showed apparent disgust with Weldon and her involvement on Standing Rock via his words. In contrast, another article stated in praise, "Mrs. Weldon is a very intelligent and highly educated lady. She has been working the past summer among the Indians at Standing Rock agency as a disciple of the religious ideas of Dr. Bland…"[223] As illustrated by the two articles written by separate authors, differing opinions of Weldon existed alluding to opposing positions on Native American rights. Published a few weeks apart, these articles illustrate how rapidly opinions shifted in the contemporary press allowing complex reputations to develop around these women. Opinions most likely shifted along social and political lines, as more speculations and details became available in the newspapers more people would have read her story and formed their own conclusions about her motives for helping Native Americans.

More often than not newspapers referred to Weldon by vile names, accusing of her of things that were not true because of her involvement with the Sioux. For example,

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[221] The papers call her different names, the following is a list of names under which stories about her can be found: Catherine Weldon, Mrs. C.W. Weldon, Mrs. C. Weldon, Mrs. C. Wilder, Caroline Weldon, Mrs. C. Welden. "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin, April 5, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 99.

[222] "An Indian Prophet." *Bismarck Weekly Tribune.* (Bismarck, North Dakota), October 31, 1890.

[223] "Pierre Capital, 15:" *Bismarck Weekly Tribune.* (Bismarck, North Dakota), November 21, 1890.

a headline from *The Helena Independent* that read "Stuck on an Indian," accused her of being Sitting Bull's "white squaw."[224] Widespread access to newspapers allowed people to formulate opinions concerning Weldon and Sitting Bull, true or not. For instance, another headline read, "Sitting Bull's Romance. His Domestic Relations with a White Woman, Said to be Refined and Educated," creating more scandal around Weldon's name.[225] Newspapers implied frankly that she had an affair with Sitting Bull - the exact scandal Weldon had been trying to escape from her past affair with Stevenson. Deeply upset and probably angry, Weldon insisted she viewed Sitting Bull as a father figure and consistently claimed there was no sexual relationship between them. Regardless, many people chose to disassociate with her because of the implied miscegenation and involvement with the 'radical' NIDA. Exhausted from the slander, Weldon wrote a letter to Indian Agent James McLaughlin stating she was "disappointed" by the "most insulting libels" headlining the newspapers in relation to her name. [226] She insinuated that McLaughlin aided in the publishing of such stories once writing, "It is a brave noble deed for a strong powerful man (created to protect woman) to trample upon, to annihilate woman."[227] Published again and again, the false stories angered Weldon because they affected the new identity she had crafted for herself in Dakota Territory.

Described in various ways throughout her life, Weldon's reputation in the newspapers illustrates what consequences a falsified narrative could have on a real person's historical identity. Additionally, Weldon's case proved that gender played a

[224] "Stuck on an Indian," *The Helena Independent* (Helena, Montana), July 2, 1889.
[225] Jamestown Weekly Alert, December 25, 1890.
[226] "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin, April 5, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 99.
[227] Ibid., 99.

significant role in an individual's identity in the media. Being a woman, Weldon was shamed for leaving her home to have an affair, but her contemporary William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") was rarely penalized for consorting with women other than his wife.[228] Rather, the newspapers lauded Cody's success as a showman and businessman, but rarely preyed on his private, personal life. Boldly stepping outside of the private sphere, Weldon challenged the gender norms and was excoriated because of it. Weldon's involvement with NIDA sparked the smear campaign against her name. Prevalent in the nineteenth century, the bonds of gender publicly allowed Cody to live his life however he wanted, but punished Weldon for challenging the dominant social norms.

Illustrating the impact of newspapers, the lives of Caroline Weldon and William F. Cody are useful in studying the role that media played in the nineteenth century. Newspapers were not the only source of media, by the end of the nineteenth century other forms of entertainment had grown in popularity. As spectacles and humbuggery grew in popularity, Weldon's contemporary Corabelle Fellows married a Sioux man. Rare in the nineteenth century, Fellows' marriage was viewed as a "freak show" and she received an offer for a contract with the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit.[229] Her marriage caused her life to be turned into a spectacle.

"Kunigunde Duncan," the pseudonym for free-lance writer Flora Isley (1886-1971) was the only author to publish a book on Corabelle Fellows' life.[230] Corabelle

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[228] Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, 325, 345, 518, and 524.

[229] For more information on "freak shows" see Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988). For more information on dime museums see Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird & Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

[230] By taking a pseudonym, Isley was controlling the public perceptions of her life. Taking a pseudonym was common for authors to do. Perhaps Flora Isley adopted the name "Kunigunde Duncan" because it sounded more masculine. "Kenneth Isley Collection of Bliss Isley and Flora Isley Papers," Series

Fellows described her time teaching in Dakota Territory to Duncan in 1938. Then an elderly woman, Fellows described invitations to attend sacred dances, gathering beans in the field with Sioux women, but most importantly the name she received, "Wichipitowan" or "Blue Star" because of her blue eyes.[231] Later she was known as "Little Blue Star" because of her small stature.[232] Outwardly, it appeared that the Sioux accepted Fellows into their daily lives. First, a description of her early years is needed to understand her decisions later in life. Corabelle Fellows (1861-1938) was born in Illinois and raised in Washington, D.C. [233] She was the daughter of Nellie and Homer Fellows, who worked at the Pension Department in Washington, D.C.[234] As a result, she knew many prominent members of society.[235] With these connections Fellows taught private lessons for a few years and then began teaching publicly in the D.C. area.[236]

Embodying the "New Woman" through teaching, Fellows soon decided a traditional life on the East Coast would not fulfill her ambitions. [237] She sought to reinvent herself and sought involvement with the WNIA's educational efforts.[238] Fellows

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1: Box 4, FF 1-6, Special Collections & Univeristy Archives, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas, Accessed April 17, 2020.

[231] Duncan, *Blue Star*, 70; and Ameilia Stone Quinton, *Missionary Work of the Women's National Indian Association and Letters of Missionaries* (Philadelphia: The Association, 1885), 14.

[232] Duncan, *Blue Star*, 92.

[233] "Corabelle Fellows," Tenth U.S. Census, 1880, Washington, District of Columbia, Enumeration District: 038, Roll: 122; Page: 325D.

[234] "Homer Fellows," *Official Register of the United States, Containing a List of the Officers and Employees in the Civil, Military, and Naval Service Together with a List of Vessels Belonging to the United States, 1863-1959*, Washington, District of Columbia, 1891, 480.

[235] For example, she was friends with Laura Sunderland, the daughter of NIDA leader Reverend Byron Sunderland. Fellows had spoken with President Cleveland while attending Sunderland's church. These connections allowed her to gain influence in the missionary world. "Saintly City Doings," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 7, 1888.

[236] Corabelle Fellows is listed as a teacher in Washington, D.C. in 1882 and 1884. She was located at 1st Pre ch 44 uw. "Corabelle Fellows," *Washington, District of Columbia, City Directory,* 1882; and "Corabel Fellows," *Washington, District of Columbia, City Directory,* 1884.

[237] Fellows was twenty-five years old and single when she left her home in Washington, D.C.

[238] The Women's National Indian Association (WNIA) supported the education of Native Americans all across the United States and sending missionaries and teachers to Dakota Territory. These women were to be agents of change forcing assimilation and new identities upon the Sioux. The WNIA

left Washington, D.C. on November 20, 1884 and arrived at Santee a few days later, working with Alfred Riggs for seven months while she learned the culture and language.[239] After becoming proficient in the language, Fellows went to Oahe to work with Alfred's younger brother, missionary Thomas L. Riggs, who continued her training. Upon completing her training, Riggs sent Fellows to the Oahenoupa village on the Cheyenne River.[240]

While working at Cheyenne River, Fellows met Elizabeth Winyan, a Native woman who converted to Christianity while living in Minnesota. Winyan had been involved in the Great Sioux War "and rendered great assistance in the escape of families during the massacre of" 1862.[241] After assuming a new faith Winyan chose the name "Elizabeth," because she liked it best.[242] Like Mary Collins, Winyan moved to the

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continually attempted to fund more programs across the West. At the end of the annual WNIA report there was always a section on progress at the established schools and the proposed schools to build.

[239] Fellows' training was very rapid, but it appears to have been effective. Kunigunde Duncan and Bruce David Forbes, *Blue Star: The Story of Corabelle Fellows, Teacher at Dakota Missions, 1884-1888* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1990), xvi, xxiii, & 64.

[240] Duncan, *Blue Star*, xxii-xxiii.

[241] "State News," *Turner County Herald*, (Hurley, South Dakota), June 7, 1894. The Dakota War took place in the latter half of 1862 between the Dakotas and Anglo-settlers in Minnesota. The Dakota began a series of raids on August 17, 1862, soon volunteer groups were sent to stop the raids, but this was unsuccessful. The Dakota were defeated on September 23, 1862 at the Battle of Wood Lake. There were 498 trials held with 300 men formally charged. United States President, Abraham Lincoln pardoned all but 39 sentences. Led to the gallows on December 26, 1862, the 38 warriors faced death with courage in Mankato, singing songs until the end. Settlers crowded around the gallows, the spectators cheered when the Dakota warriors had been killed. Many people came to watch the execution as a spectacle; this is significant because it was the largest mass execution in United States history to date. Many more women, children, and elderly were forced to spend the winter on Pike Island. Then Minnesota chose to void all treaties with the Dakota and forced them to move to Nebraska. Dakota executions took place until 1865. "Holocaust & Genocide Education: Native American," Holocaust and Genocide Studies, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota, Accessed February 8, 2020, https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/native-american. For more information on the Dakota War see Kenneth Carley, *The Sioux Uprising of 1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1976); Duane P. Schultz, *Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862* (New York: St. Martin's, 1992); and Gregory Mincho, *Dakota Dawn: The Decisive First Week of the Sioux Uprising, August 17-24, 1862* (New York: Savas Beatie LLC, 2011).

[242] This can viewed as another example of the Americanization of Native peoples. Duncan, *Blue Star*, 123. For an in depth look at the role of Native women in North America see Klein and Ackerman, *Women and Power in Native North America*. This book redefines the role of gender in Native societies, challenging the dominant narrative.

Missouri River to teach under Reverend Thomas L. Riggs in 1876. Winyan had learned some Anglo reformer's ideas by staying for a time at the government agency.

Patiently answering Fellows' questions, Winyan taught her about Native American culture. Fellows referred to Winyan as "Ina" or mother speaking of their trust of each other.[243] Fellows recollected, "Singlehanded, and against tradition as old as her race, Elizabeth, an old-maid Sioux Indian, was bossing a camp… she had learned of me and my courage at the agency and had sent for me to help her accomplish this thing. Did I not have the wisdom she lacked? Did she not have the strong body I did not have? The two, together, could do it!"[244] This passage illustrated assimilation taking place. Living with Winyan before her marriage, Fellows chose to learn Cheyenne so she and Winyan could communicate verbally. Recalling a conversation from a blizzard, Fellows stated:

> How we talked! Really talked, there in that rude cabin, shut away from the rest of the world. She asked and answered, and I asked and answered until that day with its closeness of spiritual touch became a high light of my whole life. People rarely talk, have real communication. I made much progress in the Cheyenne tongue, too, that day, for Ina knew only "meat, sugar, flour, soap, beans," in English – necessary words at the agency store – and would make no effort to learn more.[245]

Fellows and Winyan worked together for a time before Fellows moved to Rosebud to continue her mission work. Winyan stayed and spent fourteen years working among the Sioux.[246] Upon her death, the Congregational missionaries established a church at Cheyenne River and they named it the Elizabeth Winyan Memorial Church.[247]

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[243] Duncan, *Blue Star*, 125.
[244] Ibid., 124.
[245] Ibid., 128.
[246] This newspaper article claimed that Winyan worked under S.R. (Stephen Return) Riggs on the Missouri River, but that is not accurate. T.L. (Thomas L.) Riggs, his son was stationed on the Missouri River. "State News," *Turner County Herald,* (Hurley, South Dakota), June 7, 1894.
[247] "State News," *Turner County Herald,* (Hurley, South Dakota), June 7, 1894.

Sources written from a Native American woman's perspective are rare. Many Native women, like Elizabeth Winyan, have their stories told from an Anglo perspective. While these records are important, they do not quite grasp the authenticity of the true experience that Native women had during the allotment era. The lack of words written by Native women make accounts like this important because it gives historians an idea of what took place. Native women's stories in this time illustrate a special kind of courage. Their communities were invaded by Anglo reformers and missionaries yet they were able to preserve Native culture while confronting assimilation.

Corabelle Fellows left Cheyenne River and continued her mission work at the Rosebud. Unfortunately, she had to return to Washington for six months before receiving a full-time "appointment from the government to teach a school at Swift Bird's camp or reservation, fifty-five miles from Fort Bennett."[248] Excited to return to Dakota, Fellows planned to teach the Sioux traditional domestic skills with the intention of assimilation.[249]

Fellows taught for a few years, then married a Santee Sioux man named Samuel Campbell, or "Chaska," the son of 'mixed-blood' Indian trader Antoine Joseph Campbell (1825-1913) and Santee Sioux woman, Hanyetusnawin.[250] Antoine Campbell was in the United States Army and most likely met Hanyetusnawin on a trip to Santee. Their relationship was most likely an affair, because Campbell had a wife and children in Minnesota, yet he is listed on the Santee Indian Census Rolls for many years. Chaska's

[248] "Saintly City Doings," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 7, 1888.
[249] Duncan, *Blue Star*, 85-87.
[250] Chaska meant "First Child Born." The accounts are conflicting as to how long Corabelle was teaching before she married Chaska. "Says She Will Wed the Sioux," *News and Citizen* (Morrisville, Vermont), April 5, 1888; "Samuel 'Chaska' Campbell," Find a Grave, Accessed April 17, 2020; and "Joseph Campbell," Eighth United States Census, 1860, *Brown County, Minnesota*, no district, 250.

mother died when he was a child so he was raised by the Episcopal clergyman at Fort Bennett.[251]

Displeased when they learned of the planned marriage, Corabelle's friends and parents tried to convince her otherwise, but she refused to change her mind, stating, "I love Chaska, and Chaska loves me, and I shall marry him. He means to be a good, true, honest husband. I have always avowed that no matter whom I loved, I would marry him, and I love Chaska and I shall marry him just as sure as I live."[252] The wedding took place on March 16, 1888 performed by J.W. Hanford at St. Stephen's Episcopal Mission, about ten miles from Swift Bird's Camp.[253] Following the wedding a reporter asked Fellows what the Sioux thought of the marriage, and she exclaimed, "Oh, they were delighted. The old and young men called me sister, and so did the maidens and squaws. They were afraid they were not attentive enough."[254] Crafting her story to make herself appear accepted into the Sioux culture, Fellows claimed they called her "sister." Fellows remembered her students bringing her gifts after the wedding and claimed she "was now nearer them since I had married a man of Indian blood. Now I was "Sister Blue Star." Her students proceeded to call Chaska "Mr. Blue Star."[255] The newspapers were silent when it came to actual Native Americans' reaction to Corabelle Fellows in their community. The only sources are recounted through an Anglo lens. There is a significant lack of Native women's voices in this exchange and in this time frame.

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[251] Duncan, *Bluestar,* 183.

[252] This article was most likely a circular piece printed by many newspapers. "Says She Will Wed a Sioux," *News and Citizen* (Morrisville, Vermont), April 5, 1888.

[253] J.W. Hanford was the camp missionary and priest. It is important to note that Indian Agent Charles McChesney did not forbid the marriage of Corabelle and Chaska. "Saintly City Doings," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 7, 1888.

[254] Fellows' word choice is important to note, "Squaw" was considered a condescending term. "Saintly City Doings," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 7, 1888.

[255] Duncan, *Blue Star*, 204.

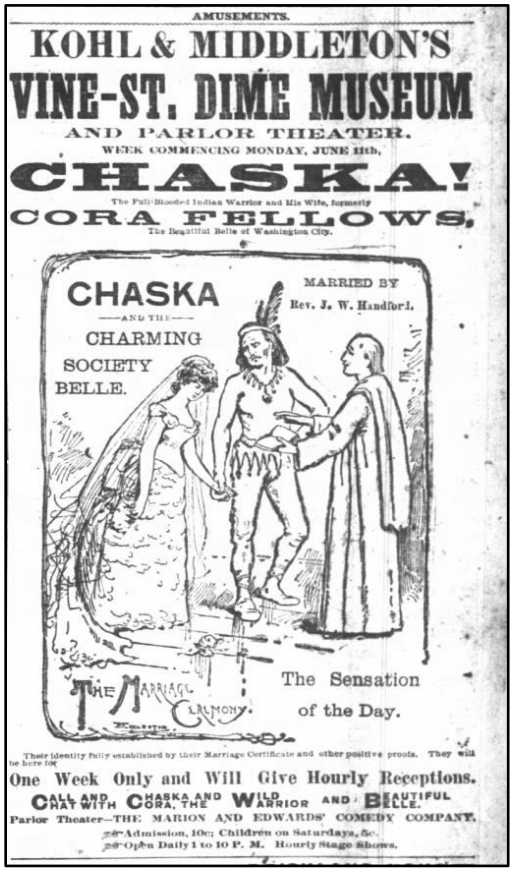
Newspapers wrote scandalous articles about Fellows and her husband for months.[256] Corabelle did not believe the public should be concerned with her personal life.[257] Destroying her public image, the newspapers portrayed her as "the ex-Washington belle who sacrificed society to teach school on an Indian reservation."[258] Recognizing her talent for teaching, Corabelle made a conscious choice to leave Washington and the elite social life behind. Corabelle desired to embrace her role as a "New Woman" by teaching;

Figure 1: Ad run by the Kohl & Middleton Dime Museum for Corabelle and Chaska's first tour on their dime museum circuit. They made appearances across the Midwest in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Cincinnati. This ad clearly presents the assimilation process taking place.
St. Paul Daily Globe (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 6, 1888.

[256] "Chaska and Cora," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 7, 1888; and "Don't Like Cora's Actions," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 10, 1888.
[257] "His Siouxness and Spouse," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota.), July 1, 1888.
[258] "Full Fledged Freaks," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 6, 1888.

she was never a victim, rather she consciously challenged the social and gender hierarchy.

Settling on a farm near Swift Bird's Camp on the Cheyenne Agency after their marriage, Corabelle and Chaska did not have enough money to purchase their land and were soon contacted by an agent with the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit.[259] Approached because interracial marriage was seen as 'unusual' at this time, Corabelle and Chaska were offended and initially refused. One newspaper article claimed that Corabelle did not take the museum job and felt insulted to be called a "freak."[260] After some reconsideration and negotiating the terms of the contract with an agent with Kohl and Middleton, she and Chaska agreed to appear on the Kohl and Middleton circuit, accepting this position as a way out of poverty. The agreement stated the couple would receive $5,000, all expenses paid for their trip and time in the city, and the


AMUSEMENTS.

KOHL & MIDDLETON'S

VINE-ST. DIME MUSEUM

AND PARLOR THEATER.

WEEK COMMENCING MONDAY, JUNE 11th,

CHASKA!

The Full-Blooded Indian Warrior and His Wife, formerly

CORA FELLOWS,

The Beautiful Belle of Washington City.

CHASKA

—AND THE—

CHARMING SOCIETY BELLE.

MARRIED BY Rev. J. W. Handford.

The Sensation of the Day.

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

Their identity fully established by their Marriage Certificate and other positive proofs. They will be here for

One Week Only and Will Give Hourly Receptions.

CALL AND CHAT WITH CHASKA AND CORA, THE WILD WARRIOR AND BEAUTIFUL BELLE.

Parlor Theater—THE MARION AND EDWARDS' COMEDY COMPANY.

Admission, 10c; Children on Saturdays, 5c.

Open Daily 1 to 10 P. M. Hourly Stage Shows.

Figure 2: Corabelle and Chaska ad from Kohl and Middleton Cincinnati location. *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (Cincinnati, Ohio), June 10, 1888.

[259] The agent wanted the couple to exhibit themselves on the dime museum circuit owned by Charles E. Kohl and George Middleton. The portrayal of Native Americans in museums was seen as a lucrative business and can be traced back to P.T. Barnum.

[260] "Wanted as Freaks," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (St. Paul, Minnesota), April 2, 1888; and "Mrs. Chaska Will Not Be a Freak," *The Dickinson press* (Dickinson, North Dakota), April 7, 1888.

museum would purchase the couple's farm and present it to them after they fulfilled their contract.[261] Recognizing the lucrativeness of a public tour, the couple believed $5,000 was fair for their time and the scrutiny they would face. This was a significant amount of money in the late nineteenth century – the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museums would have to admit hundreds of thousands of patrons to compensate the couple's salary. Dime Museums were popular in the Midwest with thousands of people visiting weekly to see the new exhibits, shows, and menagerie.

Viewed as a spectacle, Corabelle and Chaska exploited the double-standard on miscegenation. Upon viewing several advertisements for Corabelle and Chaska's tour with Kohl and Middleton's Dime Museums the assimilation or lack of assimilation process becomes apparent. A single ad portrays the couple in Euro-American dress, while all other


KOHL & MIDDLETON'S
KOHL & MIDDLETON'S
KOHL & MIDDLETON'S

SOUTH SIDE DIME MUSEUM,
Clark-st., Near Madison.

Week Beginning Monday, May 28th.

The Honeymoon Continues
—OF—
CORABELLE FELLOWS
The Society Pet, and
"Cutting Crow Chaska,"
Billing and Cooing at the Museum.

AUTOGRAPH WEEK
—OF—
MR. AND MRS. CHASKA.
Ladies bringing their albums will receive without charge the Autographs of the celebrated Chaska and his Washington bride.

CHASKA
RECEIVING HIS
Spotless Angel Bride.

THEIR AUTOGRAPHIC SOIREES.

10 A. M.	Morning Receptions.	DAILY
TO	Midday Conversations.	FROM
10 P. M.	Afternoon 5 O'Clocks.	10 A. M.
DAILY.	Evening Tete-a-Tetes.	TO 10 P. M.

The Fashionable Social Event.

Carriages arriving will approach facing south from Madison-st.

THEATRE No. 1—PROF. ABT'S "FATA MORGANA."
THEATRE No. 2—MOHN & HOGAN'S SURPRISE CO.

Figure 3: Ad for Corabelle and Chaska Appearance in Chicago. Corabelle Fellows is portrayed as a "white savior" coming to save Chaska. *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), May 27, 1888.

[261] "In General," *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* (Bismarck, North Dakota), April 6, 1888; "Must Have 'Chaska,'" St. *Paul Daily* Globe (St. Paul, Minnesota), April 22, 1888; Chaska Will Come," *St. Paul Daily*

advertisements portray Corabelle as a "white savior" and Chaska in Native dress. Two very *different* ads were run by the *Chicago Tribune* on May 27, 1888 for Corabelle and Chaska's appearance. An image on page 5 showed Corabelle and Chaska in Euro-American clothing (**Figure 4**), while the advertisement on page 15 portrayed Corabelle as an angel above Chaska in Native clothes (**Figure 3**). This is a clear example of how newspapers showed differing depictions of the assimilation process. The newspapers and press agents for the museum knew what images would draw in an audience. By showing two opposing images, the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum was able to manipulate their paying audience.

Aware of the political turmoil in the United States surrounding the Dawes General Allotment Act and the distributing of Native

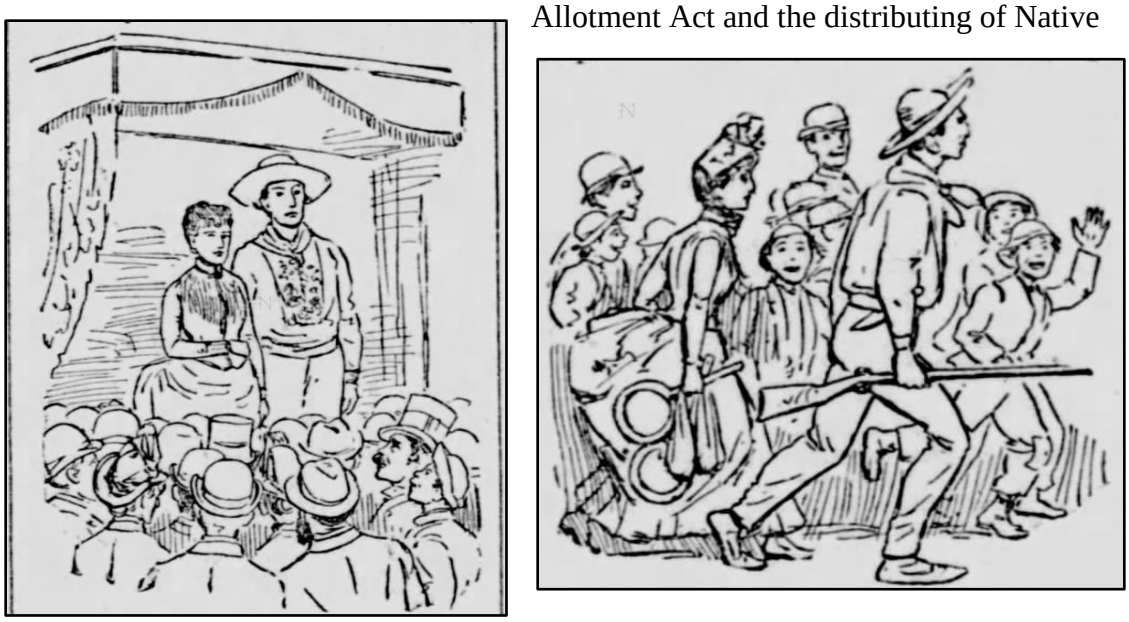


Figure 4: Corabelle and Chaska appearing at Kohl & Middleton's Dime Museum in Chicago. This ad was run the same day as the "white savior" image on the previous page. This image suggested the assimilation process had taken place for Chaska. *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), May 27, 1888.

Globe (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 5, 1888; and "The Freaks Arrive," *Daily Yellowstone Journal* (Miles City, Montana), May 8, 1888.

lands, the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit presented Corabelle and Chaska in an allegorical fashion as the combining of "civilization" and "savagery." Knowing Corabelle had been a teacher on the reservation, perhaps Kohl and Middleton wanted to illustrate the "civilizing" effect education could have on Native people. The Pratt Commission was preparing to travel to Dakota Territory to visit the reservations to gather signatures while Corabelle and Chaska were touring the Midwest. There is no record of Kohl and Middleton's thoughts on allotment, but they were businessmen and capitalized on every chance they had to make money.

In an interesting turn of events, some dime museums recognized the money that was being made by Chaska and Corabelle so they began exhibiting impersonators. The *Galena Daily Gazette* observed that a Chicago museum exhibited two people claiming to be Corabelle and Chaska to 60,000 museum patrons in a two week period.[262] Another newspaper article read "The latest success in the freak way has been the Indian Chaska and his white wife. They cleared $4,000 and had all their expenses paid for a four week season in Chicago, but retired at the end of it, as they did not fancy the business."[263] This could possibly have been the impersonators because Chaska and Corabelle travelled to different locations on the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit, typically only staying at one place for one to two weeks.[264]

After completing their contract with the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit, Corabelle and Chaska toured the East at their leisure making stops in several

[262] "Illinois," *Galena Daily Gazette,* (Galena, Illinois), May 24, 1888.

[263] "The Earnings of Freaks," *The Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia), July 29, 1888.

[264] The evidence suggests that this was impersonators because Corabelle and Chaska typically did not stay in one place more than 2 weeks. The newspaper advertisements illustrate how they moved throughout Kohl and Middleton's Dime Museum circuit. Additionally, an article ran that claimed there were impersonators in Chicago. When checking the ads the actual Corabelle and Chaska appear to have been in another city.

cities. The couple even met with President Cleveland before returning to Dakota Territory.[265] An article titled "Chaska and Bride" published in the *St. Paul Daily Globe* referred to Corabelle and Chaska as "freaks" returning to their home on the Cheyenne Agency.[266] The word "freak" is significant here, because it implied that Corabelle and Chaska were set apart from the rest of the Agency. It is worth remembering that Corabelle claimed that no one could pay her enough money to be seen as a "freak," yet she did took the job and title anyway.

Corabelle claimed to have learned about the Dawes General Allotment Act, while in Washington.[267] The *St. Paul Daily Globe* wrote that Corabelle "stated that her mission at Cheyenne agency was to use her influence with the Indians toward securing their signatures for the commission. Chaska would surely sign, and, since she has just returned from Washington and learned the full merits of the bill at the Indian department and the Indian Rights association, she felt that it was to the Indians' interest to sign."[268] The article further elaborated that she had spoken with several chiefs and many were "satisfied with the Dawes bill, and unless something happens within the next two days these Indians will sign without parley."[269] By signing the agreement put forth by the Pratt Commission, the Sioux would be signing away their rights to the land and forced to take an allotment. Ultimately, Pratt called off the commission before reaching Cheyenne River because he could not gather enough signatures.[270]

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[265] "Culture Has Spoiled Chaska," *Phillipsburg Herald* (Phillipsburg, Kansas), April 5, 1889.

[266] "Chaska and Bride," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), September 15, 1888.

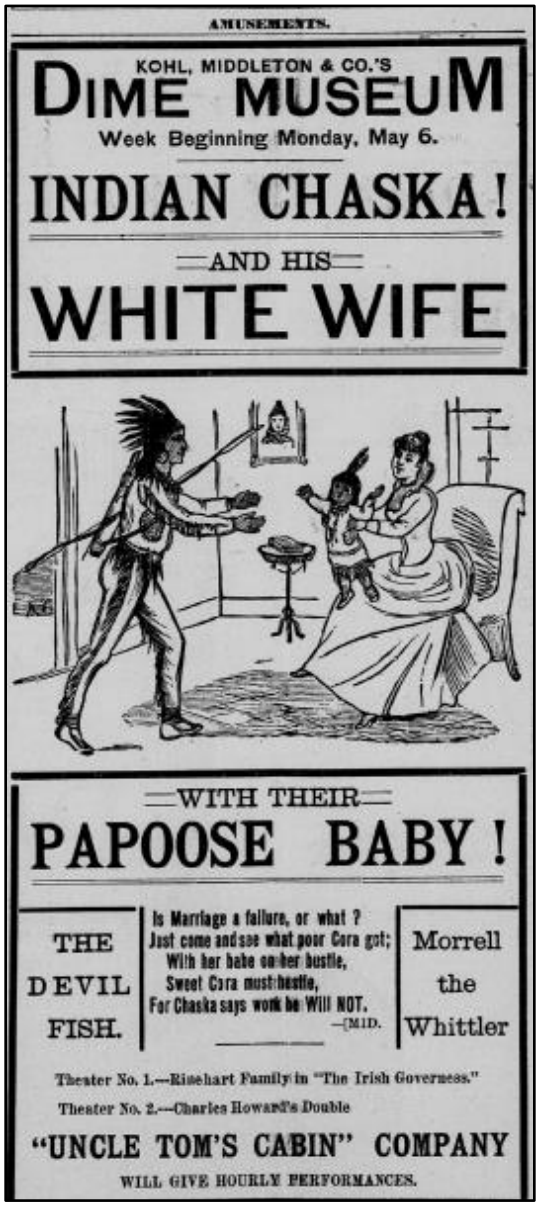
[267] To see a complete report of the Pratt Commission see United States Department of the Interior, *Annual Report for the Secretary of the Interior: 1888* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888). See also Prucha, *American Indian Policy in* Crisis, 182.

[268] "Among the Tawnies," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), September 15, 1888.

[269] Ibid.

[270] "Sioux Commission," *The Warner Sun* (Warner, South Dakota), August 10, 1888.

Figure 5: Ad from Corabelle and Chaska's second appearance in the Kohl & Middleton Dime Museums. They brought their child and he was the focus of the attraction. This ad was run a year later and the newspapers chose to portray Chaska and the child in Native dress implying that assimilation had not taken place.
St. Paul Daily Globe (Saint Paul, Minnesota), May 5, 1889.



Assimilationist agendas were still enforced on the reservations and when Native people did not readily comply, military reports and newspapers published false accounts attempting to sway public opinion. For example, scathing accounts written about Chaska implied that he was lazy and not good at farming.[271] This accusation cannot be confirmed nor denied, but most likely the newspapers printed it to slander Chaska's name and create sympathy for Corabelle for not being "properly" cared for.

Eventually, Corabelle and Chaska had three children together. Their son, Chaské (Claude) was born on December 23, 1888, Wilbur was born in 1890, and they had a daughter in 1892, Florence DeEtte.[272] Not

[271] "One Little Injin," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), December 25, 1888.
[272] The children were given French sounding names which could have either come from Corabelle's background in education or from the fur trade which had been established with Native Americans for years. *The Sully County Watchman.* (Clifton, South Dakota), October 1, 1892.

hesitating to publish horrendous headlines about their children, the *St. Paul Daily Globe* wrote "Marriage is not a failure. Mrs. Chaska has a son, not a papoose, which means that the Indian problem can be solved by the intermarriage of foolish white maidens and dusky warriors."[273] After the birth of their first son, the couple was short of money again. They chose to embark on another tour with the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit, making several appearances across the Midwest.[274] The advertisements for this tour often included the baby in Native dress, exploiting curiosity about Indigenous people as shown in **Figure 5**. The pictures and advertisements in the *St. Paul Daily Globe* implied that a "papoose" baby would have been less human than an Anglo child. The racism in regard to the child is blatant, much like the pictures and articles written about Chaska.

After several years, tensions arose in the marriage of Corabelle and Chaska. There is an interesting disconnect in the sources concerning what happened to their relationship: there are two *very* different accounts. First, newspapers claimed that Chaska eloped with a Native woman on the Santee Reservation where their family had been living after the second tour with the dime museums. According to the Washington D.C.-based *Evening Star*, Chaska abandoned Corabelle and their children in January 1894; it was soon discovered that he had eloped with a young Native woman. Corabelle waited for him to return to their family, but he never did. She moved her children to a small town in southern Nebraska and Chaska returned to Cheyenne River two weeks later with his new

[273] "Questions Solved," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), January 7, 1889.
[274] *St. Paul Daily Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), February 25, 1889; and "Scattering Shots," *Bismarck Weekly Tribune* (Bismarck, North Dakota), February 22, 1889.

bride, Minnekadinctum.[275] Corabelle wanted to file for divorce.[276] The second account claimed that Corabelle grew tired of her husband and living on the reservation and that she left him.[277] Still another newspaper claimed that Corabelle returned home, but never officially filed for divorce. These accounts are very different, but show tensions in mainstream society surrounding the marriage of an Anglo woman and Native American man. According to the sources and the time period, it appears that tension arose in the marriage of Corabelle and Chaska over their relationship. The evidence suggests that they chose to 'divorce' and move on with their lives. There are no legal records of the marriage or divorce because Native American marriage ceremonies "were not binding under Anglo-American law."[278] As a result, Fellows had the opportunity to leave her first marriage without repercussions.

Perhaps Fellows grew frustrated with the lack of assimilation and she decided to leave after spending several years on the Northern Great Plains in rebellion of her parents' wishes. Fellows decided she had enough of this lifestyle, she had stooped to the position of exhibiting herself in a dime museum to provide for her family and she left. Separating from Chaska, Corabelle remarried an Anglo man in 1896.[279] Corabelle's three children from her previous marriage lived with her, then she had three more children with

[275] "Deserted by Chaska," *Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), February 20, 1894; and "The Woeful Ballad of Cora Belle and Her Faithless Indian Lord," *The Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia), April 22, 1894.

[276] "Eastern Melange," *Lincoln County Leader* (Toledo, Oregon), March 8, 1894.

[277] "White Girls' Marriages With Indians," *The Evening Dispatch* (Provo, Utah), April 13, 1894.

[278] Lamont, *Westerns*, 91.

[279] Corabelle remarried in 1896, her new husband was George W. Tillman (1844-1926), a white man. They moved to Preston, Missouri for a short period. "Corabel Tilman," Twelfth U.S. Census, 1900, Preston, Jasper County, Missouri, Enumeration District: 0065, 11. Then the family finally settled in Wichita, Kansas. "Cora N Tillmon," Thirteenth U.S. Census, Sedgewick County, Kansas, Wichita Ward 2, Enumeration District: 0110, Roll: T624_456; Page: 7A.

George Tillman.[280] She chose to shake off her rebellious stage and conform to societal standards for an Anglo woman in this era.

There are also *very* different accounts of what happened to Chaska in the aftermath of the couple's split. The first account stated that Chaska was arrested on charges of stealing a harness. He was put in prison, concealed a knife, and then committed suicide in 1898.[281] The second account is the Indian Census where Samuel Campbell (Chaska) is listed through 1915.[282] Corablle and Chaska's children are listed with Samuel Campbell's name indicating tribal membership.

There is an interesting disconnect between Fellow's autobiography, newspaper accounts, and census records. Fellows manipulated and left out parts of the story in her autobiography. Additionally, the framing she selected is telling; beginning with her journey to Dakota Territory to become a teacher and ending her narrative with her father meeting Chaska in Washington, D.C. There is no mention of the contract with Kohl and Middleton, rather she mentioned two speaking tours through a Mr. Dewitt in Washington.[283] Perhaps she was ashamed of appearing in the dime museums and exhibiting herself for the amusement of an audience. Like other women involved with the WNIA, Corabelle Fellows appeared to have had duplicitous intentions. She began trying to assimilate Native people, but ultimately gave up on them and returned to Anglo

[280] The ages for the children of Corabelle and Chaska match year for year between the Indian Census Records and the Federal Census Records, thus proving the manipulation of reality. They continued to live separate lives for at least twenty years.

[281] "An Indian Suicide," *The Evening Times* (Washington, D.C.), May 10, 1898.

[282] Samuel Campbell is listed on the Indian Census records for the Santee or Cheyenne River Reservation for the following years: 1885, 1886, 1887, 1891-1898, 1900-1905, 1907, 1909-1915. He died on June 2, 1915. "Samuel Campbell," Indian Census Records, Santee Agency, Knox County, Nebraska.

[283] Duncan, *Blue Star*, 204-205.

society. Female missionaries and reformers sought to help Native Americans, but only if they complied with their set plan for their lives.

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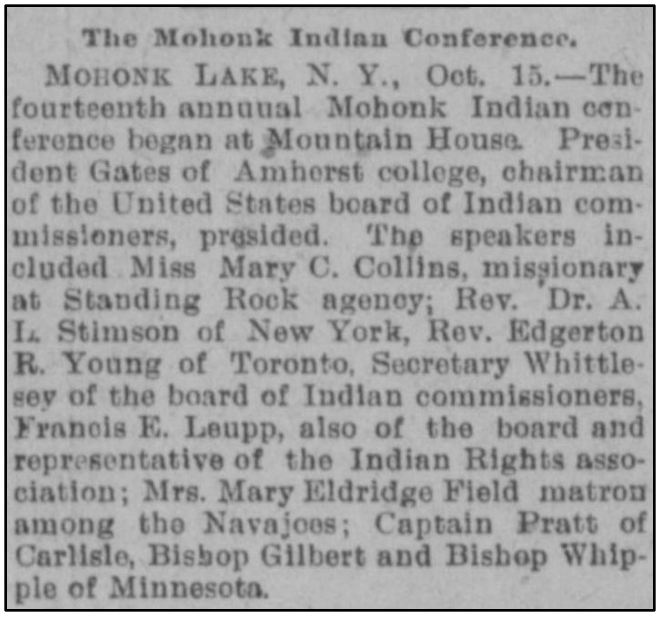
Missionaries also gave lectures before audiences on their work with Indigenous peoples. For example, Mary Collins would occasionally leave Standing Rock to go on speaking tours. Considered a respectable lecturer as a white, single, middle-class reformer, Collins spoke on behalf of Native American rights. There is no evidence of slander in relation to her name in the newspapers, unlike Caroline Weldon and Corabelle Fellows. Accepting some Sioux traditions allowed Collins to gain trust while never being fully engulfed in their culture - in this way she was similar to Weldon, while Fellows was considered a "freak."

Collins and Fellows both went on speaking tours in 1888 – Fellows as a "freak" and Collins as a respectable missionary woman. Both women had economic goals for these engagements – Fellows needed money to save her farm, while Collins was trying to fund raise for Native American rights organizations. In addition to raising money, speaking tours gave Native American rights organizations several opportunities to raise awareness for their cause. Actively attempting to battle broad social apathy, lecture tours gave organizations a chance to showcase their methods for assimilation hoping to bolster support for their cause.

For example, Collins gave a presentation at the Sixth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference discussing her pedagogy which employed the Dakota vernacular. Many teachers did not agree with her implementation of the vernacular in the classroom.[284]

[284] It should be noted that the government had forbade teaching Native children in their vernacular.

Arguing that communication with the Sioux was the first step to assimilation, Collins claimed, "I have felt that it was more important to gain the friendship and love of some family, than to teach A, B, C's to a child in a school. The school work is important, but others can do the school work; not so many can go into the homes and talk with the people."[285] Collins realized that she had a unique opportunity to communicate with the Sioux in their language. Claiming that the "civilizing" of Native people was taking place too quickly, Collins diverged from mainstream assimilation policy arguing, "You cannot treat them as one great nation. You must remember that we are dealing with men and women; and whenever the people of the East realize that fact, there will be no difficulty in civilizing the Indian."[286] Arguing that Lakota agency was important, Collins insisted assimilation would not be successful without an individualized approach. In concluding the Sixth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference the members decided that compulsory education would be the only way that



The Mohonk Indian Conference.

MOHONK LAKE, N. Y., Oct. 15.—The fourteenth annual Mohonk Indian conference began at Mountain House. President Gates of Amherst college, chairman of the United States board of Indian commissioners, presided. The speakers included Miss Mary C. Collins, missionary at Standing Rock agency; Rev. Dr. A. L. Stimson of New York, Rev. Edgerton R. Young of Toronto, Secretary Whittlesey of the board of Indian commissioners, Francis E. Leupp, also of the board and representative of the Indian Rights association; Mrs. Mary Eldridge Field matron among the Navajoes; Captain Pratt of Carlisle, Bishop Gilbert and Bishop Whipple of Minnesota.

Figure 6: "The Mohonk Indian Conference," *Evening Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware), October 15, 1896.

[285] Mary Collins presented on September 26, 1888 at the Lake Mohonk Conference. Mary Collins was involved in the American Missionary Association (AMA), an active participant of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian which took place annually in New York. *Proceeding of the Sixth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian*, ed. Isabel C. Barrows (New York: The Lake Mohonk Conference, 1888), 75.

[286] *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian*, ed. Isabel C. Barrows (New York: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1888), 20; and Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 283-288.

assimilation could take place on a large scale. As a majority, the Lake Mohonk Conference argued education of Native people should be uniform and systematic, not experimental.

Following the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 Collins appeared to engage in yearly speaking engagements across the United States. In 1891 she traveled to Keokuk, Iowa claiming the soldiers who committed the atrocities at Wounded Knee did so as a revenge for Custer and the Seventh Cavalry's death at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in June 1876.[287] On April 22, 1892 Collins traveled to Maine and described her experience as a missionary among the Sioux to church congregation.[288] Collins attended a teaching institute in St. Paul in July 1896 as a member of the Fort Yates delegation. The gathered teachers discussed further training for themselves and industrial training for Native Americans.[289] Then on October 15, 1896 Collins gave another presentation at the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian.

Believing assimilation was inevitable, in the nineteenth century many Native American rights organizations argued Indigenous people would have to comply with Anglo society if they wished to survive. Regardless of organizational affiliation, Caroline Weldon, Corabelle Fellows, and Mary Collins are three examples of women who implemented assimilationist policies on the reservations in Dakota Territory. Adhering to a maternal colonialist, middle-class reformer image, Weldon, Fellows, and Collins implemented strategies that covertly or overtly implied racial superiority over Native Americans.

[287] "Each Side Wished Revenge," *Pittsburg Dispatch* (Pittsburg, Pennsylvania), January 8, 1891.
[288] "Brief Jottings," *The Portland Daily Press* (Portland, Maine), April 23, 1892.
[289] "Like Sweet Music," *The Saint Paul Globe* (St. Paul, Minnesota), July 21, 1896.

As illustrated in this chapter, media and popular culture played a large influence in assimilation policy in the late nineteenth century. As shown in the lives of Caroline Weldon, Corabelle Fellows, and Mary Collins, newspapers effected their reputations by running advertisements and articles. The newspapers exploited Caroline Weldon and Corabelle Fellows' names to create gossip to sell more print copies. Media such as newspapers and dime museums did not hesitate to employ stereotypes of gender or race to bring in business. The newspaper advertisements for Corabelle and Chaska's two tours on the Kohl and Middleton Dime Museum circuit perfectly illustrate the power of imagery in the newspaper.

The women mentioned in this chapter, Caroline Weldon, Corabelle Fellows, and Mary Collins all appear in contemporary newspapers in some fashion. These three women challenged mainstream society's idea of the role of women and this caused discussion around their names. Weldon, Fellows, and Collins were important in nineteenth-century media. The next chapter will discuss the role of Caroline Weldon in modern media and the lack of appearances by her contemporaries. This is an interesting gap in the modern entertainment industry because Corabelle Fellows and Mary Collins played a crucial role in Dakota Territory policy just like Caroline Weldon.

CHAPTER VI

MODERN MEDIA & POPULAR CULTURE

A unique opportunity to shape one's identity existed in the nineteenth century American West and the entertainment industry capitalized on this. Continuing into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, modern media often shapes a person's historical legacy. This chapter will compare three modern depictions of Caroline Weldon in a chronological thirty year window from 1990-2020. First, there will be a comparison of two Derek Walcott works *The Ghost Dance* (1989) and *Omeros* (1990). Second, there will be a discussion of *Woman Walking Ahead* (2017) a film written by Steven Knight and directed by Susanna White. It is important to keep in mind the historical record from Chapters 2-4 when comparing and analyzing historic and modern accounts. While comparing these three depictions, there will be a discussion of what took place in modern society to influence the works. It will show how modern events can be superimposed on historical events, or perhaps show that some trends do not disappear, but merely morph

into something new. What follows is a summation of each modern work with an analysis of the piece in comparison with the historical record.

It is important to acknowledge that women in this era are often cast as secondary characters in Hollywood productions and literary works. To have a film and play based on the life of Caroline Weldon in the setting of allotment is significant. Often, women's stories are overlooked or relegated to roles emphasizing their gender and sexuality. Or more tragically, women's stories are left out completely, as is the case concerning the lives of Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows. Many women's stories are not told in modern media and as a result their stories are not widely known. Adding more women's stories in creative productions will allow for a more complex picture of the characters who lived, impacted, and changed the American West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Playwright Derek Walcott has portrayed Caroline Weldon in two of his works, *The Ghost Dance* (1989) and *Omeros* (1990). Author Eileen Pollack argues that Walcott based his depiction of Weldon on the work of Stanley Vestal. Upon closer inspection, it appears that Walcott actually based his works on the 1964 article by David Humphreys Miller, which contained more detail.[290] Walcott's characters often included little known people from history. Robert D. Hamner argued that *Omeros* was an "epic of the dispossessed," insisting that Walcott chose "individuals who are traditionally peripheral in standard classics." Caroline Weldon was a character he empathized with and he chose

[290] The article written by Miller is based on the chapter by Vestal, but Miller adds more speculative detail which had been included in media depictions. Pollack claims to feel "churlish" complaining that Walcott did not present the historical details correctly in his works containing Weldon's story. Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead*, location 2963-2986/7518.

her life story to explore larger trends in literature as will be seen in the following analysis. [291]

Walcott was born on the island of Saint Lucia in the Caribbean in 1930. He began writing poetry at a young age and published his first account in his twenties. He continued publishing poems for many decades, but found great success when *Omeros* won the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature. Both *The Ghost Dance* and *Omeros* take place in North Dakota following a slightly different timeline, but both show the importance of a character such as "Catherine" Weldon.[292]

Scholar Paula Burnett argued that Walcott understood the role of myth in society and its radical potential in literature.[293] She suggested that Walcott used the Brechtian method in constructing his narrative and then added his personal style using symbols "to deliver a metaphysical meaning."[294] Bertolt Brecht intended his audiences to remain objective when viewing productions. Believing that patrons would walk away from his shows able to make rational decisions based on what they had seen, Brecht employed a range of theatrical tools to present information. Walcott has taken a known historical event and made it into an 'epic theater' production - forcing spectators to think about the events taking place before them. Walcott has employed art as a means to demystify the events surrounding the Ghost Dance.[295] First performed in November 1989 by Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York, *The Ghost Dance* was a fictional play based on the life of

[291] Robert D. Hamner, *Epic of the Dispossessed: Derek Walcott's Omeros* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1997), 94 & 122.

[292] Interestingly, Walcott chose to portray Weldon as being from Boston, rather than Brooklyn showing how authors can easily change historical fact. Derek Walcott lived in Boston for a period traveling back and forth between the US and St. Lucia. Perhaps he wrote that Caroline Weldon was from Boston because that was the city he lived in.

[293] Burnett, *Derek Walcott*, 212.

[294] Ibid., 264.

[295] Ibid., 267.

Caroline Weldon.[296] Burnett argued that "the concept of the play is founded on a third term between polarized binaries: the Native American story is the antithesis to the white story, but those who represent the synthesis of cultures take center stage."[297]

Opening in the late fall at the Parkin Ranch with Weldon alone inside, she watches Kicking Bear outside and then he comes inside where they exchange a long conversation about the Ghost Dance.[298] Soon, the discussion shifts to Weldon's son who was away receiving treatment for an unspecified illness. Though Walcott does not explicitly state what the boy's illness was, it is assumed from the historical record that the complications were from tetanus. Walcott is the only author who has created a fictional piece that acknowledges Weldon's son, even though it is stylized.

Another important scene took place at the General Store where a steamy exchange took place between Weldon and Major James McLaughlin, the Indian Agent. Accusing her of tempting him every time she came to town to buy supplies, Weldon retorted that she has enjoyed him watching her.[299] The romantic relationship between Weldon and McLaughlin is completely fictionalized, in reality, they had a tense and decidedly non-romantic relationship. Weldon referred to their relationship as that of "enemies" in one of her letters.[300] Detracting from the historical reputation of both Weldon and McLaughlin, this fictionalized romance is only for entertainment.

Familiar with the history of racism, Derek Walcott believed it was crucial to write it blatantly into the storyline because he disagreed with many of the ideas concerning race

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[296] Derek Walcott, *Walker; and The Ghost Dance* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 118.

[297] Burnett, *Derek Walcott*, 269.

[298] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance,* 125-132.

[299] Ibid., 138.

[300] "Mrs. Weldon to Major McLaughlin, April 5, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 98.

in the United States. Beginning in late 1950s he divided his time between his home in Saint Lucia and the United States, teaching classes at Boston University and seeing firsthand the consequences of the racial tensions surrounding the Civil Rights Movement. In *The Ghost Dance,* Walcott portrayed McLaughlin having an internal battle over his marriage to his Mdwekanton Sioux wife, at one point asking "Why do we pale faces presume our superiority? Good God, Jeremy, I married an Indian."[301] By writing this passage, Walcott established that people are all the same.

Walcott was deeply influenced by the racial divide in the United States and he confronted ideas of race and miscegenation in his writing. Perhaps Walcott assigned his characters different roles in his works to illustrate larger issues in the nineteenth century and how they were not reconciled by the late twentieth century. In a 1988 interview with Bill Moyers, Walcott stated that "miscegenation is not an idea that we would have in the Caribbean. It wouldn't come up because anybody could marry anybody, you know. I'm not saying that there aren't prejudices in the Caribbean, but the idea of the word 'miscegenation' is not something that we think of."[302] Writing against the dominant trend in contemporary literature in the 1980s, Walcott's depiction of McLaughlin's internal struggle over race was huge. Walcott was ahead of his time in normalizing this approach.

Next, Walcott explored the concepts of Americanism and Protestantism in the nineteenth century. Many Americans, including Weldon and the members of NIDA, viewed religion as a key part of their identity. A scene in the play took place in a church with an Indian lay preacher, James Eagle.[303] Standing outside the church, McLaughlin

[301] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance,* 143.

[302] "Derek Walcott – A Conversation with the Caribbean-Born Author," Moyers & Company, Doctoroff Media Group, November 1, 1988, https://billmoyers.com/content/derek-walcott/.

[303] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance,* 147.

approached Weldon, complimenting her before launching into his intended purpose for the conversation.

> McLaughlin: Catherine. Catherine. I'll repeat it, Catherine.
> Your scent is like sweet grass drying in the sun.
> When will the Ghost Dancers assemble, Mrs. Weldon?
> I'll call you Mrs. Weldon when I'm working,
> And I'm working now. Even on the Sabbath. When?
> You can prevent their massacre, not ours. Theirs.
> Because… When?
>
> Catherine: When? I'll tell you.
> When roosters start laying eggs, Major McLaughlin.
> When you believe in Lucy and her father.
>
> McLaughlin: Then, as the phrase goes, Mrs. Catherine Weldon,
> When that happens, it'll be partly your fault.
> When the dancers turn into ghosts, remember that.[304]

Providing an example of the Americanization of the Sioux and the larger goals of Protestantism, this scene shows McLaughlin's intentions for the Ghost Dancers.

Abruptly shifting in presence, the next scene shows McLaughlin being questioned on the stand in a court room for his conduct toward the Sioux. Toward the end of the scene Weldon interrupts the questioning to invite him to dinner. McLaughlin graciously accepts, and later that evening in the parlor at the Parkin Ranch house McLaughlin and Weldon discuss her son who was away recovering from a wounded foot. Weldon shifted the conversation, questioning McLaughlin about his wife to which he haughtily bragged that he would call for her whenever he was ready for her, as she was not in Standing Rock at the time.[305] What followed was a sexually charged scene in the parlor where McLaughlin and Weldon pretended to ride around on a toy horse together. Some scholars

[304] Ibid., 151-162.
[305] Ibid., 164-165.

argue that this scene alludes to the role of the horse in conquering the Great Plains.[306] After this escapade Weldon seductively invited McLaughlin "to go to bed" with her.[307] The conversation went,

> Catherine: Would you like to go to bed before dinner?
> I always found that it sharpened by appetite.
>
> McLaughlin: That would depend on the dinner, Mrs. Weldon.
>
> Catherine: I admire that. But you know what dinner is, sir,
> Since you're the one who brought it, from the presumption
> That I was starving myself to death in sympathy
> For them. So, since you know what dinner is, even if
> You now don't know exactly what I am, let's go in.
>
> McLaughlin: Go in. Go into where? Bedroom? Kitchen?
> (Silence.)
> Do you know what you and I share, Mrs. Weldon?
> Do you know what quality we have in common?
>
> Catherine: Commonness?
>
> McLaughlin: Honesty. Forthrightness.
> A clarity of feelings. At least towards each other.[308]

The exchange became more heated and Weldon seductively lured McLaughlin to the bedroom telling him of her widowed status and her ring beside the bed. Weldon then told McLaughlin to take off his wedding ring because he was a married man. Considered outright, this scene is a blatant misrepresentation of Weldon and McLaughlin's relationship. When considering the historical record, this scene could be an allusion to Weldon's affair with Stevenson because he had to take his wedding ring off before he went to see Weldon. Outward appearance and mannerisms played a crucial role in historical identity.

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[306] Burnett, *Derek Walcott*, 273; and Woollard, "Derek Walcott and he Wild Frontier," 7.
[307] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance,* 167.
[308] Ibid., 167-168.

Next, an abrupt shift took place at the Parkin Ranch when a woman named Sarah visited Weldon to inform her of her son's death. Sarah brought the boy's things to Weldon. Sarah then asked Weldon to teach her how to dance as a way to express her grief. Scholar Penny Woollard has suggested that this scene is symbolic for the Ghost Dance which Native Americans used to cope with their ever changing world. This scene illustrates the grief and sorrow felt by a mother and an entire group of people.[309]

Soon, an anniversary celebration took place at Fort Brill. Lucy Running Deer, a Native American girl, gave Weldon the name "Bright Hair Who Loves Us."[310] When Lucy Running Deer gave Weldon this name she changed Weldon's identity. Lucy Running Deer had conflicting ideas about her own identity; she was not sure whether she wanted to be an assimilated Native American or ascribe to traditional beliefs. Act one concluded with a depiction of the Ghost Dance.[311]

Familiar with the history of Caroline Weldon and her given name "Woman Walks Ahead," Walcott chose to give Weldon a fictionalized name "Bright Hair Who Loves Us." The name given by Walcott alluded to the gifts of food and information that Weldon brought to the Sioux at Standing Rock. Again the modern media relies on historical record, manipulating facts for a "better" story.

Act Two contains more turmoil between Weldon, McLaughlin, and other fort personnel. After confronting some of the workers Weldon left, returning to the Parkin Ranch. McLaughlin went to speak with Weldon, at which point she told him that she regretted having sexual relations with him. Declaring his love for her, McLaughlin

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[309] Woollard, "Derek Walcott and the Wild Frontier," 8.

[310] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance,* 179.

[311] Scene twelve took place on the reservation in an open area with active Ghost Dancers. Lucy and Kicking Bear danced among the other Ghost Dance participants.

insisted that she loved him too, regardless of what she said. An excerpt from the dialogue followed:

> Catherine: Lucy. My husband. My young, buried boy!
> One body is not enough for you, you want thousands
> As well as mine, lying out there in the sheets
> Of a dead winter. My love is a ghost now, you hear?
> It died in those sheets. Well, that was my Ghost Dance,
> That thrashing about in the linen.
>
> McLaughlin: That is a lie. Look,
> Look at your face in this mirror, the cheeks; look,
> They're firelit without a fire. You still love me.
>
> Catherine: God punish me, Major McLaughlin.
> (Pause.)
> But yes I do.[312]

Weldon compared her sorrows with the Ghost Dance claiming her sexual relations with McLaughlin had been her Ghost Dance. This comparison is grossly overstated as Weldon had not suffered like Native Americans who used the Ghost Dance as an attempt to fight assimilation and their ever-changing world in the nineteenth century.[313]

Before leaving the Parkin Ranch McLaughlin gave Weldon the orders he had received concerning the Sioux. She planned to pass the written orders to Sitting Bull, warning him of the impending doom. Opening at the Parkin Ranch, the next scene shows Weldon asking Kicking Bear if he had given her letter to Sitting Bull. She had written of the Army's plan, intending to warn the Lakota. Kicking Bear was drunk and said that Sitting Bull planned to go ahead with the Ghost Dance. After leaving Weldon, Kicking Bear was taken to a cell at the fort to be interviewed. During this encounter fort personnel discovered the plans that Weldon had given him.[314]

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[312] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance*, 203.
[313] For more information on new interpretations of the Ghost Dance see Warren, *God's Red Son*.
[314] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance*, 209-214.

The next scene shows the doctor talking with McLaughlin, accusing him of having relations with Weldon. The doctor went as far as to call her "Sitting Bull's pet," angering McLaughlin.[315] He slapped the doctor for the comment, furious for what the doctor had implied. McLaughlin attacked the doctor in an attempt to protect his reputation, as well as Weldon's.

Soon, McLaughlin found himself in a courtroom charged with "dereliction of duty, of aiding the enemy, and of profiting in the sale of Army goods."[316] Called as a witness, Weldon was quizzed on numerous topics including the death of her son, her connection to Sitting Bull, and the portrait she painted. Weldon replied that she had helped Sitting Bull manage his accounts when he was traveling with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, claiming that Buffalo Bill cheated Sitting Bull when it came to finances.[317] She then defended the Sioux, claiming they had been Christianized. Weldon exclaimed:

> Catherine: But they are Christians, Sergeant Donnelly. We made them.
> ….
> You made the Ghost Dance.
> You forced Sitting Bull to this final hope.
> I don't suppose you'll record any of this
> As valuable testimony. You wanted more facts.
> You look after the facts. I worry about faith.
> Not only theirs, but my own now. I worry about madness.
> Not theirs, but yours. About this civilization
> That you have brought to the Indians. A plague.[318]

This excerpt from the defense by Weldon implied that she knew government officials and military men would shape the story to fit their agendas. Walcott's language in this passage employed ideas and characteristics of the real Caroline Weldon. After Weldon

[315] Ibid., 217.
[316] Ibid., 218.
[317] Ibid., 224.
[318] Ibid., 226.

was dismissed from the stand a few more witnesses were called and the final verdict found McLaughlin guilty – stripping him of title and rank as Indian agent.

Appearing to be completely fictionalized, perhaps Walcott included the court scene to put McLaughlin on trial for Sitting Bull's death, though this is not explicitly stated. McLaughlin was never held accountable for ordering the arrest which led to Sitting Bull's death. This could have been Walcott's attempt to re-write history and historical memory, while promoting a limited amount of justice.

McLaughlin is then shown in a cell at the fort sitting with his wife. Weldon entered, causing Mrs. McLaughlin to excuse herself and leave the cell. McLaughlin then told Weldon of his plan to save the Sioux stating he would convince the Indian Police to go to Sitting Bull's house. Pleased with what she had heard, Weldon and McLaughlin again declared their love for each other in a passionate exchange. The next scene depicts McLaughlin testifying on how the Indian Police rode into Sitting Bull's camp and tried to seize him. Shots were exchanged and several men were killed including the chief. Moved by McLaughlin and the Indian Police's actions, the General decided to reinstate McLaughlin to his rank and return his honors. After this, McLaughlin asked to be dismissed to see his wife and say goodbye to Weldon. Outside the fort Weldon and McLaughlin exchange goodbyes before she departed for the East.

The Ghost Dance does not accurately portray the stories of Caroline Weldon, James McLaughlin, or Kicking Bear. Supporting characters appear to be fictionalized renditions of people who could have lived in North Dakota in 1890. Factually incorrect for several reasons, the most egregious error is the relationship portrayed between Weldon and McLaughlin, as historically the two despised one another. The love story

thread is typical of a Western novel or film.[319] Next, McLaughlin was never stripped of his title as Indian Agent. He organized the arrest of Sitting Bull at his home. Portraying this as a way for McLaughlin to win back his title is a gross misrepresentation of history. Finally, the depiction of Kicking Bear is not accurate. Kicking Bear was a prominent leader of the Ghost Dance religion and Weldon did not like the message that he brought to the Lakota at Standing Rock, so their supposed friendship is false. Kicking Bear was not friendly with the fort personnel, and would not likely have consumed alcohol with them. Supplying Native Americans with alcohol was illegal at this time on the reservations. Portraying Kicking Bear as an alcoholic Native American falls into a stereotype of the nineteenth century and takes away from the role Kicking Bear had in the facilitation of the Ghost Dance religion.[320] Perhaps Walcott chose to employ an old stereotype of Native Americans to illustrate the collision of cultures in the process of assimilation.

Derek Walcott does get some very minute details correct sprinkled throughout the play as evidenced in the historical record. Weldon did stay at the Parkin Ranch for a time, though she never managed the ranch. Her son did step on a rusty nail, but he died aboard a steamship not on the Cannon Ball River. Walcott is the only author of a fictionalized account to acknowledge that Weldon had a young son. Intending to make the events of late 1890 on Standing Rock dramatic and thought provoking, *The Ghost Dance* was successful in its mission.

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[319] Scholar Paula Burnett has suggested that the romance between Weldon and McLaughlin was used to juxtapose the Ghost Dance with the Sun Dance. She argued that it was intended to be a positive aspect in the play. Burnett, *Derek Walcott*, 272.

[320] The stereotype of drunk Native Americans was common in literature and film. This depiction is problematic and appears to be created by the author. According to the historical record, Kicking Bear was an important man in spreading the Ghost Dance religion. Prucha, *American Indian Policy in Crisis*, 218.

Believing that Weldon's story was important, Walcott chose to include it in another of his masterpieces. His most famous work, the epic poem *Omeros* (1990) received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992 and is considered his best work. *Omeros* is split into seven sections, and he again chose to include the Sioux as his subject. Seven is an important number in Sioux culture as evidenced by the "Seven Council Fires," indicating that perhaps Walcott split the epic poem into seven sections because he was familiar with Native American history.[321]

This poem is often viewed as a version of the Trojan War set in the Caribbean.[322] Walcott includes Caroline Weldon briefly in Chapter 43. He again claimed that she was from Boston and resided on the Parkin Ranch.[323] Poetically describing the uselessness of the treaty promises by the United States Government, Walcott wrote:

> The snow blew in their wincing faces like papers
> From another treaty which a blind shaman tears
> To bits in the wind. The pines have lifted their spears.[324]

Walcott sympathized with the plight of Lakota Sioux, recognizing the broken promises made by the United States Government.

Alluding to the racial dynamics experienced in the nineteenth century, this chapter shows how many white citizens of the United States saw the Ghost Dance as an opportunity to emphasize the difference between themselves and Native Americans. The

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[321] Robert D. Hamner has suggested that seven is significant because of the seven seas. Hamner, *Epic of the Dispossessed*, 124. For more information on the Seven Council Fires of the Sioux see *Political Organizations: The Oceti Sakowin or Seven Council Fires (the Sioux)*, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre, South Dakota, Accessed February 23, 2020, https://history.sd.gov/Archives/Data/Archives/organizations.aspx; and "Oceti Sakowin – The Seven Council Fires," Minnesota Historical Society, Accessed April 14, 2020, http://www.mnhs.org/sevencouncilfires.

[322] "Derek Walcott," Poetry Foundation, Accessed April 16, 2020, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/derek-walcott

[323] Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1990), 213.

[324] Walcott, *Omeros*, 214.

militant factions of the Sioux were especially prone to this judgement. A witness to the racial consequences of the Ghost Dance, Weldon saw the death and destruction it wrought on the people she loved. This portrayal by Walcott appears to be correct, Weldon wrote in letters how much she disliked the Ghost Dance and the consequences she believed it had.

Walcott placed Weldon in North Dakota in the aftermath of the Wounded Knee Massacre in December 1890, which is not accurate as she left Standing Rock in November 1890. Walcott poetically described the moment he fictionally created through Weldon:

> … Where were the
> women and children? I walked on the piebald ground
> with its filthy snow, and stopped. I saw a warrior
> frozen in a drift and took him to be a Sioux
>
> and heard the torn war flags rattling on their poles,
> then the child's cry somewhere in the flour of snow,
> but never found her or the dog. I saw the soles
>
> of their moccasins around the tents, and a horse
> ribbed like a barrel with flies circling its teeth.
> I walked like a Helen among their dead warriors.[325]

Portraying Weldon as a weary victor gives credence to the idea of Weldon being a "white savior," a common mindset among missionaries, teachers, and activists in the nineteenth century. The attitude expressed by Weldon in this portion of the poem is very similar to a few of the letters she penned to Sitting Bull. The end of *Omeros* emphasized the impact that Anglo society had on the systematic oppression and annihilation of traditional Sioux culture.

[325] Ibid., 216.

Walcott's signature method in *The Ghost Dance* is to cause the audience to think about what they have just read or observed. In a Brechtian style he penned,

> Catherine: Why for that matter couldn't we become Indians?
> Why do they have to become us?[326]

Walcott has created an inner questioning, illustrating Weldon's personal examination of the ideas of assimilation. It could be argued that these statements were directly aimed at the conscience of the Anglo audience.[327]

Derek Walcott's *The Ghost Dance* and *Omeros* are useful in examining the creation and portrayal of identity in historical characters like Caroline Weldon, James McLaughlin, William F. Cody, and Sitting Bull in the twentieth century. Specifically looking at the roles of Caroline Weldon, James McLaughlin, William F. Cody, and Sitting Bull requires unpacking their historical legacy. Weldon is assigned two very different roles in each literary work, helper or victim, which is reasonably accurate though the details of the story are not all correct. Walcott does a good job illustrating the complexity of a woman like Caroline Weldon. Portrayed as a lovesick man who disregarded the rules pertaining to the Sioux, the depiction of James McLaughlin appears to take many liberties. Mentioned in passing, William F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill" is described as a crook and cheat. Finally, Sitting Bull is not cast in either of the works. He too, is only mentioned in passing. Scholar Penny Woollard argued that Sitting Bull's "presence is the guilty conscience of the white settlers."[328]

As shown by Derek Walcott's works *The Ghost Dance* and *Omeros*, modern depictions do take creative liberties. These liberties can affect historical memory and

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[326] Walcott, *The Ghost Dance,* 150.
[327] Ismond, "Women In Walcott's Theatre," 146.
[328] Woollard, "Derek Walcott and the Wild Frontier," 3.

influence later works. As illustrated by Walcott's works, historically based drama builds on the work of historians, creating pictures that cannot always be grasped in historical documents alone. Scholar Penny Woollard argued Walcott "suffused the received historical narrative with invented possibilities" by writing without judging the events "as simply white men's heroics in the face of unremitting hardships, nor as the history of the American Indians' genocide."[329]

Walcott does an excellent job of portraying the effects of assimilation, making several allusions to the idea of whiteness covering the plains. He illustrates this in the images of snow, flour, and treaties. *The Ghost Dance* began with snow and ends with Weldon retrospectively pondering the outcome of assimilation for Indigenous people.[330] *Omeros* also employs snow and allusions of whiteness to illustrate assimilation. Walcott depicted the profound reality that assimilation would not protect Native people from Anglo culture. Paula Burnett summarized this concept: "In the focus on those Indians who have the most direct contact with the white people and their culture, Walcott is able to show that assimilation is no protection, those who have adopted white ways remaining marginalized and threatened – psychologically made zombies."[331] Walcott aptly showed the effects of assimilation on Native Americans in the nineteenth century. Writing in Brechtian style, Walcott encourages all patrons of these works to remember the consequences of forced assimilation and the tragic consequences for Indigenous people.

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[329] Ibid., 10-11.

[330] Scholars Penny Woollard and Paula Burnett discuss the idea of whiteness throughout their analysis of Walcott's *The Ghost Dance* and *Omeros*. Paula Burnett, *Derek Walcott: Politics and Poetics* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000), 270.

[331] Burnett, *Derek Walcott*, 271.

Western movies as a genre have been popular since the late nineteenth century. Portrayals of Western characters in film is important for shaping historical identity and memory in popular culture. *Woman Walks Ahead* wrongly refers to Caroline Weldon as "Catherine Weldon."[332] Characterizing Weldon as an oppressed woman who related to the plight of the Sioux, the film depicts Weldon as on a personal journey. As screen time becomes more prevalent in the twenty-first century, this will be the depiction of Caroline Weldon that most people remember. This film also portrays the effects of assimilation and allotment on the Sioux. What follows is a summation of the movie with an analysis of key points, showing how the movie was and was only partially accurate.[333]

Jessica Chastain, the actress who embodied Caroline Weldon in the film, made her appear as a strong woman who overcame challenges. This is movie is full of paradoxes, which is true concerning Weldon's life. Portrayed as a widow from New York, the film opens with Weldon tossing her deceased husband's painted portrait into a river in 1890 in a symbolic act of throwing off the chains of her societal life. Her husband disapproved of her painting and forced her to stop when they were married. Unfortunately, the timeline of the film is not correct. The film opened with the date at the bottom reading, "New York 1890," as when Caroline Weldon left Brooklyn, New York implying this was her first trip to Dakota Territory. In reality, Weldon made her second trip to North Dakota in 1890.

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[332] It has also been suggested that historian Stanley Vestal aided in the creation of "Catherine Weldon." He published a biography on Sitting Bull and was the first to mention Weldon in the 1930s. Other historians who have referenced Weldon have followed Vestal's pattern and called her "Catherine."

[333] Staci Layne Wilson, "Woman Walks Ahead Review – Does it Paint an Accurate Picture of an Artist?," *Lisa Johnson Mandell's At Home in Hollywood*, June 27, 2018, https://athomeinhollywood.com/2018/06/27/woman-walks-ahead-review/.

Next, the film panned to her on a train traveling to the Dakotas. She met Colonel Silas Groves who accused her of NIDA involvement. She claimed to have no idea what NIDA was; that she was simply a painter who want to portray the Sioux. This accusation set the tone for how most people felt about NIDA in 1890.[334] *Woman Walks Ahead* does not acknowledge Weldon's involvement with NIDA. By eliminating this part of Weldon's story the film effectively took away her true purpose for going to Dakota Territory.

The film correctly portrays Weldon as a painter, claiming that Weldon once went to an exhibition of George Catlin paintings, which inspired her. Weldon realized that there was no portrait of Sitting Bull and she intended to rectify the situation. She wrote a letter to Sitting Bull telling him that she had painted many important people, congressmen and presidents, because she wanted him to agree to have his portrait made. Weldon told Colonel Groves that she intended to write the first accurate biography of Sitting Bull and paint his portrait.[335]

Next, the film presented Weldon arriving in Dakota Territory. She was spat on by a man helping unload the train after Colonel Groves told him that Weldon was there to paint Native Americans. They left her waiting on the platform and she eventually began dragging her luggage across the plains. Weldon made her way to Fort Yates where Indian Agent McLaughlin told her to leave on the train the following day. She did not listen and a member of the Indian Police took her to meet Sitting Bull. Weldon and Sitting Bull

[334] Colonel Groves had participated in the Indian wars and did not like that NIDA wanted to save Native culture.

[335] Susanna White gave Weldon freedom in showing her passion for painting, Weldon's storyline revolves around painting a portrait of Sitting Bull so that he would hang in art galleries among the other popularly known Native American chiefs. In reality, Weldon painted a few portraits of Sitting Bull, though unfortunately only two of them survive today.

conversed while he worked on his potatoes. She agreed to pay him $1000 to paint his portrait. Then Weldon moved into an extra house in the Hunkpapa camp.

Sitting Bull is portrayed by actor Michael Greyeyes who appeared in non-Indian clothes when introduced in the film, illustrating the assimilation process. Sitting Bull was a chief and medicine man of the Hunkpapa Lakota. *Woman Walks Ahead* implies that Weldon's influence slowly gave Sitting Bull confidence and his role grows throughout the film. By implying that Weldon gave Sitting Bull confidence a sense of Native agency is lost.

The film took some creative liberties, portraying Weldon and Sitting Bull to be middle-age adults, most likely in their thirties or forties. According to the historical record, Weldon and Sitting Bull were in their fifties or sixties during this time. Inaccurately portraying Weldon and Sitting Bull's age feeds into the common notion that Hollywood loves youthful appearances. With Weldon and Sitting Bull being younger, it was easier to hint at a romantic relationship between the pair, with several scenes showing longing glances.[336] In doing so, Hollywood has chosen to include gender, class, and race biases. The power dynamic between Sitting Bull and Weldon is apparent – she is an Anglo woman with money and he is a Sioux man who is relying on her assistance. This representation takes away the agency Sitting Bull possessed, he was an extremely intelligent and powerful man according to the historical record.

The movie portrayed Weldon as having a fear of horses and she refused to ride with Sitting Bull. The real Caroline Weldon loved to ride horses and Sitting Bull had to stop her from riding wild horses. Weldon wrote to Sitting Bull, "Did you let me ride my

[336] The film did not acknowledge that Sitting Bull had two wives.

wild horse when I wanted to? No. You forcibly detained me for my own good."[337] While this incident happened in reality, it could also be a metaphor for Weldon trying to restrain Sitting Bull from entering into another conflict with Anglo settlers. She was implying that Sitting Bull needed to be restrained for his own good. Later, she overcame this "fear" of horses and ordered one fetched and saddled so she could visit the fort. This example illustrates how the historical record and media portrayals affect historical identity.

Another scene showed Weldon traveling to Cannon Ball to purchase supplies for the Hunkpapa. This appeared to be true because there are newspaper records of Weldon giving "gifts" to Sitting Bull and his people. Weldon traveled to town to buy supplies for Sitting Bull's camp because the United States Government had slowly cut rations leaving many of the Sioux starving and destitute. A brutal physical assault by the men of the town appears to be fabricated as there is no historical evidence.[338]

After a scene depicting a physical assault Weldon chose to champion the rights of the Sioux. She and Sitting Bull devised a plan to thwart the goals of General George Crook's commission for the allotment act. The movie shows the Crook Commission arriving sometime after Weldon in 1890, though in reality, the Crook Commission visited the Sioux agencies in the summer of 1889. This film was correct in showing the disapproval of the Sioux Bill at Standing Rock, but it failed to show that the chiefs and adult males on the other reservations in Dakota Territory had passed the bill with enough signatures.[339] In the film Sitting Bull gave a profound speech causing the bill not to pass

[337] "Mrs. Weldon to Sitting Bull, December 1, 1890" in Vestal, *New Sources of Indian History*, 110.

[338] The historical record does not account for the physical assault on Weldon, but there is plenty of evidence for written and verbal assault in local and national newspapers.

[339] Many of the signatures were obtained through coercion.

at Standing Rock, which implied that a war between the Sioux and the US Army was imminent. In reality, Sitting Bull was not allowed to attend this meeting and was escorted away by the Indian Police.

In an abrupt shift, Colonel Silas Groves visited Sitting Bull's house later that night and told him about the planned arrest. He explained this to Sitting Bull in Lakota so that Weldon would not understand.[340] The movie implies Colonel Groves' warning to Sitting Bull was a way to deal with the demons of his past and his involvement in the Indian wars. Colonel Groves told Sitting Bull that if he cared about Weldon he would send her outside at a certain time. He did, and Colonel Groves kidnapped Weldon and took her from Sitting Bull's house, away from potential danger. Colonel Groves dropped her in the snow a good distance away from Grand River. Weldon began running back toward the home and he told her that she would never make it in time. The Indian Police went into Sitting Bull's home and brought him outside and a sniper fired the fatal bullet. Weldon heard the gun shot and dropped to her knees in the snow and began wailing. At the sound of a gun being fired, Sitting Bull's famed horse Rico began dancing. An eagle landed near Weldon and the movie portrayed this to be the spirt of Sitting Bull. This scene includes several Hollywood clichés.

This film does an excellent job of portraying the Lakota Sioux as human, not the stereotypical warrior of nineteenth-century press accounts. Many interpretations of the West dehumanize Native Americans as a group only speaking of violence. This does not follow the typical role of Native Americans in Hollywood which flipped between the

[340] Weldon had spent enough time among the Lakota that she knew the language. Fragments of paper were found in Sitting Bull's cabin with words translated.

ideas of "noble savage and fiendish redskin."[341] Director Susanna White hired Lakota Sioux advisors to ensure that certain Native elements of the film were treated sensitively, one of the advisors was Yvonne Russo. The attention paid to small details is impressive. White took historical pictures from the aftermath of Sitting Bull's assassination and re-created his cabin. There is a photograph of Kicking Bear, the Miniconjou who brought the Ghost Dance to Sitting Bull's camp and he is portrayed in the film and the make-up is accurate. The headdress that Sitting Bull wore in the film can also be viewed in historical pictures.[342]

As shown in the stories of Weldon, McLaughlin, Cody, and Sitting Bull, sometimes historical records can be stranger than the fictitious depictions that portray them. Modern films and plays can only present so much information in one sitting, forcing directors to cherry pick and stylize what they will portray. Other times, these depictions have an agenda and they choose to overlook many details.[343]

Author of the sole book on Caroline Weldon's life, Eileen Pollack, wrote this concerning the movie *Woman Walks Ahead*:

> Recently, a prominent Hollywood director made a movie about Weldon and Sitting Bull… I worry the film is yet another attempt to narrate Native American history through the lens of a white person's experience. And yet, I would be thrilled if my Caroline finally received her due. In an age in which women were allowed to do only what their fathers, stepfathers, husbands, and brothers permitted them to do, when most white people thought Native Americans should be eradicated or, at best, converted into

[341] Murdoch, *The American West*, 9.

[342] Director Susanna White claimed in several interviews that her production crew relied on the book *Eyewitnesses at Wounded Knee* (2011) by Richard Jensen for costume and appearances of the Sioux. Richard E. Jensen, R. Eli Paul, and John E. Carter. *Eyewitness at Wounded Knee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

[343] Some of the agendas include social or political goals which forces creators to choose who and what to include. Civil Rights, LGBTQ Rights, and Second Wave Feminism are examples of political agendas which can be shown in contemporary media. Inclusion of these movements in media raised awareness for their causes. Historical agendas shift with changes in historiography, in the 1970s social and women's history added minority voices back into the historical narrative.

> whites, when virtually no other single white women would live among the Indians, Caroline Weldon left a loveless marriage, survived her betrayal by a cad, stood up to the calumnies of a divorce and an out-of-wedlock pregnancy, left behind the life she knew, braved further scandal and went to live on a remote reservation, sharing the hardships of her friends, after which she survived the loss of her only child, maintained her independence, and continued to fight for Native American rights well into her lonely and poverty-stricken old age. Disgraced and heartsick, she attempted to erase herself from history. I am happy she failed.[344]

To have more women portrayed in film is important, especially women who challenged the dominant narrative of history. Weldon is not a standard Hollywood heroine. Pollack is correct in her assessment of Weldon's independent spirit, but she was not the only woman who challenged mainstream society's ideas in Dakota Territory. As illustrated in this chapter, media and popular culture play an influential role in historical memory. Caroline Weldon's story was important enough to be included in three modern depictions in the twenty and twenty-first centuries. Media plays a crucial role in telling the story of historical characters as many people will not go out and pick up a book (or thesis) on the life of Caroline Weldon. Derek Walcott's works and the partnership between Steven Knight and Susanna White make the story of Caroline Weldon accessible to a wider audience.

Modern media shows both sides of Caroline Weldon – white savior and victim of circumstance. Derek Walcott's works illustrate how Weldon manipulated the US Government and Indian Agent James McLaughlin. Walcott's Caroline Weldon acknowledges the assimilation process taking place and acts as a "white savior." *Woman Walks Ahead* portrays Weldon as both a victim and "white savior." She is the victim when she is left on the train platform and when she is physically assaulted in the town,

[344] Pollack, *Woman Walking Ahead,* location 6743/7518.

but she is portrayed as a "white savior" when she begins to help the Sioux in their fight against allotment.

Media and popular culture in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries illustrate the complexities of historical characters and the weight of choosing what to include in their artistic works. The historical legacy of Caroline Weldon has grown with each and every newspaper, book, play, and movie based on her life. Some suggest she was a victim, while others suggest that she embodied the "white savior" mindset. As historians have had access to modern technologies, new sources on Weldon have allowed her story to be re-told and re-interpreted. Newspapers were the mode of information in the nineteenth century and many people based their opinions of Caroline Weldon on what they read. W. Fletcher Johnson's nineteenth century account of Weldon appears to be one of the most accurate portrayals of Weldon because he correctly identifies her. At the turn of the twentieth century historian Stanley Vestal thought Caroline Weldon was important enough to mention in a chapter of his biography on Sitting Bull. A few decades later historian David Humphreys Miller wrote an entire article on Weldon's time in Dakota Territory building on the work of Stanley Vestal. At the end of the twentieth century, playwright Derek Walcott had discovered the story of Caroline Weldon and published a play and epic poem. Much of Walcott's work alludes to the article written by Miller. In 2002, creative writer Eileen Pollack published a full length book on the life of Caroline Weldon. Pollack, armed with modern technology, built on the work of Johnson, Vestal, Miller, and Walcott writing the most complete version of Caroline Weldon's story. Finally, combining all of the information gathered by many authors and journalists across three centuries the film *Woman Walks Ahead* will most likely be the legacy that Caroline

Weldon is most remembered by. This film will play the largest role in shaping Caroline Weldon's historical legacy.

Moving forward, media will continue playing a large role in historical memory. As screen time becomes more and more prevalent in the twenty-first century it is my sincere hope that historians and the modern entertainment industry can continue collaborating on projects to present the *factual* version of history and not the romanticized version.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows were in some shape or form agents of assimilation in Dakota Territory in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Employing different methods through various organizations, they intended to mold Native Americans into "citizens" of the United States. They attempted to eliminate Native culture, only preserving pieces for broader education and entertainment. This thesis has shown that women of middle-class status were involved in the assimilation process of Native Americans, not only prominent wealthy women. Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows contributed to assimilation of the Sioux at different levels through missionary and reform organizations.

Nineteenth-century media and modern productions allow for the amplification of women's voices in the American West. Middle-class women are often relegated to supporting roles in the history of Native American rights reform though they played an enormous role in shaping assimilation policy and the implementation of it. These women

truly believed that they were doing what was best for Native Americans without understanding the culture that they so desperately wanted to change. The reformers and missionaries desired to Anglicize Native people in order to "fix" them. Lacking a knowledge of Native culture, Anglo reformers sought to make Indigenous people look more like themselves. A majority of reformers did not care nor take the time to learn Native culture because it made them uncomfortable. The Anglo reformers believed that Native Americans needed to look and act like Anglo Americans. Women like Caroline Weldon, Lucy Arnold, Mary Collins, and Corabelle Fellows' stories add an interesting lens to study assimilation policy and tension in Dakota Territory.

Influenced by several factors, the historical legacy of Caroline Weldon began to take shape the moment she set foot on American soil in 1852 and continues to be shaped by twenty-first century media. Weldon's life was a series of highs and lows, she needed to re-create her identity to leave behind a scandalous past and in doing so invented more scandal in her life. Weldon's new identity and Native American rights reform involvement adds complexity to her story. Taking part in NIDA, Weldon was given an opportunity to work with chief Sitting Bull in an attempt to stop the US Government from taking more land from the Sioux. Weldon's time in Dakota Territory is crucial to understanding how women had the opportunity to influence change in the American West. Weldon was not the only woman in the West attempting to implement change and assimilation. Rather, she was one of the most documented women because her story carried so much scandal.

Lucy Arnold was also a member of NIDA, but she is only mentioned once in the newspapers. Arnold played an equally crucial role in trying to stop the allotment of

Native American lands. It does not appear that Arnold's story has been told. It is important to put these voices back into the historical narrative as they help add nuance to the story. Arnold's life illustrates how women used maternal colonialist tendencies to aid in the process of assimilation.

Mary Collins, the Congregationalist missionary on the Grand River played a role in shaping Sioux opinions of religion. Collins intended to Christianize the Sioux. Collins and Weldon worked for opposing organizations and did not interact with one another. The silence of each other's presence in their writings is telling. Collins studied the Sioux and tried to help mainstream society understand their culture, but at the same time she aided in the assimilation process.

Corabelle Fellows' life is important for illustrating the failures and successes of assimilation. Fellows married a Santee man, toured in a dime museum, and divorced him when she grew tired of being immersed in Native culture. Fellows returned to Anglo society and lived a somewhat quiet life, but would forever be labeled a "freak."

In summation, these four women show how different organizations implemented varying approaches of assimilation agendas in order to "civilize" Native Americans. A handful of Anglo women infiltrated Native American reservations in relation to such organizations – Weldon, Arnold, Collins, and Fellows went west to "help" Native people, but did not understand the culture they were supposedly going to assist causing tension, misunderstanding, and, sometimes, harm.

These women believed that they were helping Indigenous peoples, but they did not fully comprehend the consequences of their actions. By not understanding the ramifications of their work Weldon, Arnold, Collins, and Fellows sought to eradicate

pieces of Native culture and inadvertently force assimilation. Believing that assimilation was the only way to save Indigenous culture many of the women used education as a catalyst for assimilationist tactics. By "helping" Native people through education, Anglo women missionaries ensconced mainstream ideologies into their curriculum.

Weldon, Arnold, Collins, and Fellows' lives illustrate the tensions in nineteenth century social structures. Female missionaries and reformers accessed a form of power not available to all women, often actively seeking to embrace the idea of the "New Woman." A critical look at the legacies of the four women in this study illustrates that their lives are more complicated than a surface-level reading suggests. While the women appear to have implemented assimilationist practices with good intentions, what became evident was the blatant lack of understanding of Native culture. This lack of understanding and respecting Indigenous cultures is still prevalent today in the twenty-first century. For example, athletic franchises, oil companies, and many more businesses continue to exploit Native American culture and imagery.

While media plays the most significant role in shaping historical memory, popular culture is not far behind. Athletic franchises abuse the image of Native people as their mascots. For example, the Atlanta Braves and the Washington Redskins mis-represent Native people and make millions of dollars from the image associated with the brand. On July 3, 2020, the Washington "Redskins" began discussing the process of changing their name. Several retailers – Amazon, Nike, Walmart, and Dick's Sporting Goods have pulled merchandise from their shelves while the team discusses the renaming process.[345]

[345] "Amazon to pull Redskins merchandise while team mulls nickname change," *ESPN*, July 8, 2020, https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/29430296/amazon-pull-redskins-merchandise-team-reviews-nickname.

On July 13, 2020 the Washington "Redskins" announced that they would remove the offensive term "Redskin" from their franchise. The National Congress of American Indians announced this powerful statement in the aftermath of the decision:

> Today is a day for all Native people to celebrate. We thank the generations of tribal nations, leaders, and activists who worked for decades to make this day possible. We commend the Washington NFL team for eliminating a brand that disrespected, demeaned, and stereotyped all Native people, and we call on all other sports teams and corporate brands to retire all caricatures of Native Americans that they use as their mascots. We are not mascots – we are Native people, citizens of more than 500 tribal nations who have stood strong for millennia and overcome countless challenges to reach this pivotal moment in time when we can help transform America into just, equitable, and compassionate country our children deserve.[346]

This statement is a testament to the power of change and attempts to fix past wrongs. Native American people "are not mascots," they are citizens of the United States who possess agency and should not be treated as caricatures for entertainment purposes.[347] Native American people deserve to be treated with respect, their culture deserves respect. It is a testament of the failed mission of the reformers to eradicate traditional Native culture because we are still having this conversation in July 2020. Moving forward other companies need to remove Native American imagery for entertainment purposes and give them the respect they so truly deserve.

Exploitation takes shape in other forms as well in the modern United States. For example, the Keystone XL Pipeline has caused many issues for the United States and Canada since its commission in 2010 (the Keystone XL Pipeline is projected to be

[346] "NCAI Statement on the Washington Football Team's Retirement of Racist Mascot," *National Congress of American Indians,* July 13, 2020, Accessed July 13, 2020, http://www.ncai.org/news/articles/2020/07/13/ncai-statement-on-the-washington-football-team-s-retirement-of-racist-mascot.

[347] Ibid.

complete by 2023). The company who owns the pipeline, TC Energy, claims "have engaged continuously with nine Indigenous communities in Canada and 25 in the U.S. and have productive relationships with many of them."[348] The key word here is the careful used of "many" as a qualifier; far more Native American communities have vehemently protested this pipeline. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe and Fort Belknap Indian Community sued the Trump Administration in 2018 for violations of property in regard to the Keystone XL Pipeline.[349] The Keystone XL Pipeline illustrates the continuation of forced assimilation and dispossession of Native American property. An important ruling by the United States Supreme Court on July 6, 2020 has stalled the construction of the pipeline in the United States. Construction cannot begin until 2021 per this ruling because the Supreme Court justices would not grant Keystone XL the permit needed.[350] TC Energy has sent representatives into Native communities trying to win their approval. This is exactly what the US Government did with the Pratt Commission and Crook Commission in regard to allotment of Native American reservations in 1888 and 1889. Self-serving, duplicitous intentions have never disappeared, rather they have transferred into incorporations and other avenues.

The very lands that Weldon, Arnold, Collins, and Fellows entered to "civilize" Native people are still contested grounds today in the twenty-first century. At the time of this writing many steps are currently being taken to show the lasting effects of transgressions against Native Americans from the beginning of settler-colonization to

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[348] "Keystone XL," TC Energy, TransCanada Pipelines, Accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.tcenergy.com/operations/oil-and-liquids/keystone-xl/.

[349] "Keystone XL Pipeline," Native American Rights Fund, Accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.narf.org/cases/keystone/.

[350] Bloomberg, "Keystone XL pipeline remains blocked in Supreme Court order," *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 2020, https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2020-07-06/supreme-court-keystone-xl-oil-pipeline-project.

present-day. On July 3, 2020 several protesters gathered in front of Mount Rushmore in South Dakota ahead of a visit by United States President Donald Trump. Many of the protestors are members of Native American communities that were and are still affected by the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. This treaty allowed for the illegal seizure of the Black Hills by the United States. At the protest Nick Tilsen (Oglala Lakota) stated, "Mount Rushmore is a symbol of white supremacy. When you carve out four white men who conducted genocide against Native people in this sacred place, it is fundamentally wrong."[351] The Lakota have insisted that the Black Hills be returned for decades, but the United States will not agree. The Lakota refuse to accept money for the Black Hills and want them rightfully returned to their community. As seen in this example, the relationship between the United States Government and Native Americans is still a tense and complex relationship today.

Modern tensions in this case can be traced back to events of the nineteenth century. Anglo men and women played a prominent role in the policy passed in the nineteenth century that still causes pain for Native people today. Hopefully in the future some of these tensions can attempt to be repaired. The Supreme Court Case ruling in *McGirt* is a testament to the attempt to "repair" past wrongs. Justice Neil M. Gorsuch stated in majority opinion, "Today we are asked whether the land these treaties promised remains an Indian reservation for purposes of federal criminal law. Because Congress has

[351] Stephen Groves, "Native Americans to protest Trump trip to Mount Rushmore," *PBS News Hour*, June 26, 2020, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/native-americans-to-protest-trump-trip-to-mount-rushmore; and Mary Anette Pember, "Treaty defenders block road leading to Mount Rushmore," *Indian Country Today*, July 3, 2020, https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/treaty-defenders-block-road-leading-to-mount-rushmore-ctPNfZ1W0UiABOWreb-srA.

not said otherwise, we hold the government to its word."[352] This is a *huge* ruling in favor of Native American rights. Gorusch's statement is powerful in upholding past treaties, again, he plainly states, "we hold the government to its word."[353] This is significant because so many of the treaties between Native Americans and the United States Government have not been honored. This case declares much of Eastern Oklahoma to be a Native American reservation.

This is a stunning and profound moment – these women, and other reformers, wanted to quickly assimilate Native people, and take their land, and absorb them into the Anglo American society to eradicate Native culture; they were trying to *finish* something – it was a mission they thought they could *conclude* in their lifetimes, and when that was foiled by Native people refusing to abandon their culture so quickly, they got *frustrated*. The recent rulings – debates over mascots, pipeline rulings, Black Hills, *McGirt* decision – show that these conversations are *ongoing* in July 2020 because Native people refused to acquiesce to this mission of white missionaries that began in the nineteenth century.

[352] Jack Healy and Adam Liptak, "Landmark Supreme Court Ruling Affirms Native American Rights in Oklahoma," *The New York Times*, July 9, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/09/us/supreme-court-oklahoma-mcgirt-creek-nation.html.
[353] Healy, "Landmark Supreme Court Ruling."

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