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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

NEGOTIATING THE "NEW COUNTRY:" THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF  
EXCHANGE IN THE KIOWA, COMANCHE AND APACHE RESERVATION AND  
ALLOTMENT PERIODS, 1867-1910

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

JACKI THOMPSON RAND  
Norman, Oklahoma  
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NEGOTIATING THE "NEW COUNTRY:" THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF EXCHANGE  
IN THE KIOWA, COMANCHE AND APACHE RESERVATION AND ALLOTMENT  
PERIODS, 1867-1910

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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## Introduction

In the winter and spring of 1874-75, it was as if politics and the weather conspired against the off-reservation bands of Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches in the southern Plains. Summer drought followed by freezing winter conditions, diminished bison herds and enrollment of on-reservation tribal members deprived the bands of the resources and anonymity that had abetted their life outside the reservation following the 1867 treaty. The bands' surrender to the authorities at Fort Sill, Indian Territory was a significant turn in Indian-white relations. It marked the end of an old southern Plains system of raiding, hunting and trading, the Anglo-American defeat of a highly resistant group of Indians and the onset of the reservation community.

During the reservation and allotment periods, federal Indian policy makers hoped for a cultural revolution among tribal people that would bring them out of a state of barbarity, a point consistent with the civilization program. It called for tribes to abandon a perceived communalism and to embrace individualism as a valued characteristic of members of a free market economy. Policymakers and reformers hoped that in time American society would absorb Native people as assimilated citizens. For the Kiowas and Comanches, the principal focus of this dissertation, this American agenda begged the question of how to respond to

externally imposed material conditions while retaining the values associated with the old Indian system. The Kiowas and Comanches were able to do precisely this: they crossed into the 20th century with distinctive tribal identities that were consistent with both traditional communal values as well as innovation in response to changing circumstances.

This project examines both American and tribal agendas as equally significant agents in a series of interactions throughout the reservation and allotment periods. American Indian historians have traditionally understood the dynamic between the American government and society and tribal people as a relationship of power. The federal government undoubtedly sought to dominate the southern Plains tribes, and the Kiowa and Comanche tribes undoubtedly sought to avoid domination. In the end, however, the relationship between the Kiowa and Comanche tribes and the American government and society was more fluid and mutually influential than the discourse of cultural and economic hegemony would suggest.

Nicolas Thomas's Colonialism's Culture offers a perspective on colonialism that reconciles the conflicting and paradoxical developments associated with the Kiowa and Comanche reservation and allotment periods.<sup>1</sup> Thomas approaches the subject of colonialism as a cultural process

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Thomas, Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

in which events and symbols associated with it are "enframed by structures of meaning."<sup>2</sup> Colonial cultures are not simply masks or rationalizations for oppression, they are also "expressive and constitutive of colonial relationships in themselves."<sup>3</sup> People and events associated with colonizing projects, therefore, are participants in a dynamic interchange which informs and shapes the project rather than following it blindly or passively. Colonialism, for Thomas, is neither consistent nor unified because projects that arise from it tend to divide colonizers who inevitably disagree on strategy, such as assimilationists and segregationists. Consequently, once set into the context of specific localities, colonizing projects are put at risk because of internal incoherence and various manifestations of Native non-compliance.<sup>4</sup> The result is frequently unexpected and inconsistent with anticipated outcomes of colonialism.

Generalizations about colonialism have produced three distorting assumptions. First, that racism is homogeneous when indeed it has a range of qualities and intensity, and that colonialism is always destructive. Second, that colonialism is "fatally efficacious" to Native people in the face of evidence that colonial power is limited. And finally, that colonialism is a "social form of the past"

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

when "recognizable colonial representations and encounters both precede and succeed periods of actual possession and rule."<sup>5</sup> Following Thomas, this project will assume throughout that locating colonialism in specific contexts is a necessary step to begin the process of historicizing colonialism and to move beyond such generalizations.

An American program predicated on economic and cultural hegemony was evident in multiple domains. First, the official language and implementation of federal Indian policy promoted the assertion of economic and cultural control over Indian tribes. Second, Indians were becoming a highly valued source of entertainment in the popular domain where images of both wild and romantic savages were exploited to serve commercial purposes. Third, anthropology had undertaken a vigorous study of Native American languages, cultures and physical distinguishing characteristics which found popular venues in the more respectable exposition. Official, popular and scholarly languages interacted and contributed to a construction of an Indian identity that was fragile, malleable, essential and endangered. The language of the civilization project strongly conveyed western cultural superiority over Native people, condemnation of Indian systems and ambitions to manipulate Indian identity into an Anglicized image. That

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 2-4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-16.

image, as well as the goods associated with it, were commoditized through popularization of American Indian culture.

The language of power and conquest, however, is distorting. It overshadows the constancy of daily life and practice which was the heart of the Indian program and the Indian side of this story. Kiowas and Comanches continued to engage in exchange practices in a traditional, pre-reservation sense, following the creation of the reservation. The circulation of horses, cattle, mules and other goods continued to follow conventional pathways--from raiding and trading bands to headmen for distribution. As my dissertation shows, a weak reservation system, however, opened up a new trajectory for the Indians' goods which, while exploitative, worked to the Indians' advantage. In the later reservation period and following allotment, exchange came to encompass the arts--ledger drawings and Indian curios--as other sources of subsistence. The arts were also a medium for the expression and transmission of ideas. The production and movement of goods constituted object histories which were intertwined with those of people--Native and non-Native--involved in their production and circulation.

Those processes--production, exchange and circulation--and the interactions which accompanied them were more than

economic activities. They were an aspect of the cultural process of colonialism. Things, ideas and symbols put into motion for multiple reasons and purposes on the part of both Americans and Indians offer a window into that world. The juxtaposition of language and exchange reveals that the relationship was marked by inconsistency and ambiguity. The American intention to destroy Indian culture collided with the impulse to preserve and exploit it. That ambivalence created unexpected opportunities in which Native people asserted their own program and agenda for crossing the threshold into the 20th century.

Though seemingly unrelated, horses, ledger drawings and curios buttress the claim that inconsistencies were woven throughout the administration of federal Indian policy, assimilationism as a principal component of it, and a national discourse on Indian identity. They point to an American ambiguity that made possible the illicit trade of Indian ponies, the ethnological exhibition and a nascent tourism industry. Those activities involved Indian collaboration and were counterproductive to the civilization program. Most important they are shared Indian and Anglo-American economic occasions with unforeseen cultural consequences: strengthened tribal social organizations during the first decade of the reservation; increased Native arts production; and Indian participation in the negotiation



of a modern Native American identity. The lofty rhetoric of assimilationism was compromised in the context of daily reservation life where negotiation, not unilateral action, shaped lives. As a result, tribal communities maintained distinct identities and averted the predicted disappearance of the American Indian.

Initially, this project reflected the writer's desire to incorporate American Indian sources into the history of Native people, a history which has been written mainly by scholars who privilege official documents of the dominant culture. Overreliance on western sources led to narratives which generalized, distorted and sometimes ignored the Indian side of the story. A resulting Indian silence, explained as the necessary outcome of the lack of Indian sources, demoted Native people to passive roles. In the face of aggressive westward expansion, which by the late 19th century spawned a celebratory national history of progress, American Indians slipped to the margins of that history despite their centrality to it. One historian summarizes it this way: "As with so much of American Indian history since contact with Europeans and Americans, it can best be told from the framework of white history. Indian policy was formulated from the white perspective, rather than the reverse. And it was, and largely still is, whites who so influentially and dramatically affected the American

Indians, their lives, culture, and history."<sup>6</sup> Such pronouncements attest to a reliance on dominance to justify relegating American Indians to the periphery. An emphasis on the absence of Indian sources has been used to reinforce that position.

Scholarly trends that thematized Indian resistance were a step toward correcting the perception that Native people were merely passive actors in the history of American Indian-western relations. But resisters become in some ways like victim Indians because of their shared inevitable fate in the scholarship--the loss of land and resources, loss of autonomy, social anomie, helplessness, and so on. While acknowledging variance in the Indian response, such histories mainly offer thematic glosses which fail to convince readers that Indian agency existed.

My research was devoted to identifying Indian agency in Indian sources, in this case objects--Indian goods and arts--associated with Kiowa and Comanche tribes following the establishment of their reservation in 1867. Three vignettes cover the reservation and immediate post-allotment period, 1867 to 1910. The experiences of young southern Plains warriors carry the story from the early reservation (1867-1875), to Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida (1875-1878) and back to Indian Territory where allotment came to the

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<sup>6</sup> Philip Weeks, The American Indian Experience: A Profile, 1524 to the Present (Arlington Heights, Il: Forum Press, Inc., 1988),

Kiowa and Comanche reservation in 1901. Those histories reveal economic and social interactions between tribal people and non-Indians with cultural consequences which permit the following arguments: (1) that the reservation and the intellectual and institutional foundations of assimilation as artifices of government authority were presumed to be effective means of establishing a cultural revolution among Native people; (2) that the reservation and assimilation policy failed to impose a colonial will on Native people; (3) rather that relations between American Indians and Anglo-Americans consisted of mediated relationships in which neither party ever triumphed; (4) that the reservation period was constituted of a series of ongoing cultural negotiations between Anglo-Americans and American Indians which resulted in an interwoven community of diverse peoples and a modern American Indian identity.

Negotiated relationships, the central theme that runs through this dissertation, require mutual engagement by at least two parties, in this case reservation Indians and Americans representing various sectors of non-Indian society. Although the first level of negotiation centered on the exchange of objects for American money, credit and goods, ideas were being negotiated simultaneously. Assimilation, a central feature of federal Indian policy articulated in Grant's peace policy and the civilization

program, dominated American thought concerning Native people during this period. Extermination of Native people was impractical and too extreme. The next best alternative was the destruction of Native cultures through acculturation and absorption of Indians into American society. American Indian identity, therefore, was a key issue in the implementation of federal Indian policy.

Outsiders have constructed and reconstructed American Indian identity throughout their history of contact with non-Native people. Contradictory mythical images of American Indians have persisted through time even as the substance of those images has shifted. Indians have been conceptualized as romanticized noble people or demonized savages, as culturally pure traditionals or sanitized progressives, as conservatives or radicals with opposing agendas in modern cultural politics. Although the content of identity constructs has shifted, the basic oppositional structure has persisted up to the present.

When the Plains Indian wars concluded and control over Indians was established through the reservation system, the idea of radical discontinuity in tribal culture and history emerged and complemented dualistic Indian identities. The savage Indian, having no place in the intellectual and political landscape of the post-conquest period, was assigned to the past and was replaced with the "traditional"

Indian. The idea of the traditional Indian became synonymous with the pre-reservation past when Indian cultures were intact and uncompromised. In the reservation period, traditionals were associated with behaviors that clung to a disappearing past. Much as the savage represented an obstacle to westward expansion and a threat to society, the traditional Indian similarly appeared to impede progress toward a homogeneous Anglo-American society. Consequently, just as the savage had to be slain on the bloody battlefields of the Great Plains, the traditional Indian had to be eliminated as well, making room for the invented progressive Indian. The continuous placing of "authentic" Indian identity and all material and intellectual associations with it to the past was symbolic of reenacted conquest.

The traditional Indian type represented a benign savage who embodied all things authentically Indian in belief, values, knowledge and practice. Like the savage, the traditional Indian was no longer a viable identity in the modern present except as an aberrant expression of intractable resistance or evolutionary misfortune. The idea of the traditional Indian of the past was admirable because of its association with genuineness and because in its benign form it added a tragic dimension to the history of westward expansion. For these reasons, it persisted and

became commoditized in the last quarter of the 19th century. In contrast, its contemporaneous alter-identity of the progressive Indian was devalued as a compromised and diluted self. The traditional Indian would also be used to resurrect the threat of backsliding savagery permitting the reenactment of conquest. Violent conquest over savagery transformed into benevolent conquest over traditionalism justified the American regime as one dedicated to moral, economic and cultural uplift. This was the crux of the Anglo-American model of American Indian identity which was predicated on persistent ambivalence that hung between a desire for total conquest and an impulse to preserve and exploit that which the national history mandated be destroyed.

The reservation, along with churches and boarding schools, was a practical outcome of the search for solutions to the Indian problem short of extermination. It permitted the government to segregate Indians as a first step toward their eventual assimilation. As such, the reservation was more than the culmination of military defeat and lost Indian autonomy. It represented coerced submission to a regulated environment in which authorities might curtail unwanted activities and impose new behaviors and practices.

The appearance of government control and constructed order, however, belies the disorder and unpredictability

that accompanied the business of implementing government policies. Put into practice, hegemonic projects were immediately at risk because they are never unified to begin with, evidenced in the creation of reservations to serve a policy which would segregate and assimilate Native people. Such inconsistencies presented possibilities for negotiation and mediation with complex results. Over time, the ongoing series of negotiations between people with competing agendas, albeit seemingly unequal power, resembled an ebb and flow more than a unilaterally created and imposed system. The outcomes were destructive and productive, unforeseen and inconclusive, ambiguous and open-ended.

The image that emerges from the following vignettes is rich with the range of Indian responses to changing circumstances on the southern Plains. Native people shaped their lives and a shifting economic and political environment in ways that exhibited an awakening of the senses to the "new country," in the words of one Southern Plains Indian leader. The new country represented a material and intellectual frontier to southern Plains people who demonstrated a willingness, sometimes a desire, to experiment and innovate in order to make their place in it. They did so under imposed constraints engineered and carried out by federal authorities, and despite their forced confinement to an impoverished reservation. The reservation

boundary separated and confined, but also proved to be porous to the flow of ideas and goods.

The challenge has been to focus simultaneously on the intermingled life histories of objects and of the people who inhabited the reservation. Economic and cultural arenas were similarly intertwined and mutually contingent. As the Heisenberg uncertainty principle tells us, however, the mere act of taking measurement interferes with the energy of an object or activity, leaving us with an unknowable reality. This project can only approximate the reality of the reservation, the troubled boundaries that separated and conjoined people with antithetical cultural agendas, and the relationships between objective and perceived realities that impinged on those relations. The gray area of exchange, material and cultural, suggests that it was after all a human process, mutual and ambiguous, in which parties with unequal power came to it from positions of agency, if not equal apparent authority. Rather than a heroic history of Indian resistance or an emotionally satisfying history of Indian victimization, this project means to suggest that neither heroic nor victim history is as compelling as the complexities and outcomes of daily life. There the unforeseen existed side by side with the unassumed creating its own momentum and a valuable history.



## Chapter One

This chapter explores the first eight years of the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache reservation period, 1867-1875. The period represented an American challenge to the old southern Plains network of economic and social relations among Indian tribes and non-Native peoples. That system predated the reservation by one and one-half centuries. It and the social organizations and cultures of the southern Plains tribes were mutually reinforcing, a point not lost on the authorities. The authorities perceived that the reservation's success in transforming Native tribes required a weakening of the tribes' exchange activities.

Young southern Plains men were at the heart of the raiding, trading and hunting activities that generated goods that circulated throughout the regional exchange system. As young warriors, they fulfilled their obligations to their tribes through such activities. In the reservation period, however, they became identified, first by the American authorities and later by the tribal leaders, as "renegades" and "outlaws." The young men and the material exchange system were symbolic of the cultural contest of values between the tribes and American society and government in the reservation period. Demonized images of young Plains

warriors were consistent with stereotypes of Native people, but were inconsistent with the roles of young males in tribal societies prior to the reservation.

Federal Indian policy had taken a major turn as a consequence of mass migrations via overland routes to the Pacific in the 1840s. The Oregon Trail and the Santa Fe Trail carried white settlers to the northwest, California and the southwest in record numbers. By 1850, the newly formed Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs lined up firmly behind a new policy. The American West no longer appeared as an infinite landscape. Rather, the establishment of new territories and access to the West Coast gave it the appearance of a finite land and resource. The longstanding policy of moving Indians westward into unoccupied spaces was no longer adequate.

From 1850 onward, the federal government, and specifically the Interior Department, committed to a system of reservations to which Indians would confine themselves and pursue the arts of civilization. Thus, the reservation came into existence. The United States government negotiated numerous treaties with various tribes of American Indians by which they gave up land for annuities, protection from avaricious whites, rations and a parcel of land for their exclusive occupation. The reservation was also a vehicle for implementing civilizing measures. Indian

transformation to civilized persons rested on their acceptance of sedentary agricultural pursuits, education, adoption of Christianity and the internalization of American values. The first step was the breakdown of tribal identities and cultures.

Tribal identities proved more resilient than reformers and the authorities anticipated, as evidenced in the relations between young male band members and headmen. Young men were central to the vitality of band activities-- hunting, raiding and trading--and they continued to provide the material goods that reinforced southern Plains social organizations. Indian agents, military commanders and policy makers attacked the young men as renegades and outlaws, and pressured headmen to bring them under control.

In Kiowa and Comanche terms, however, the young men's behavior was consistent with the responsibilities the community expected them to fulfill. Their value as community members rested on their abilities to provide materially for relatives and others in need. Audacity reflected youthful impetuosity; it was not synonymous with criminal behavior. The authorities, however, continued to hold headmen accountable for the young men's activities, and they too began to label the young warriors as renegades and outlaws. In the transition to the reservation, young men

became violators of community standards of proper conduct because their behaviors put the community at risk.

Beneath the rhetoric that decried "Indian depredations" and the activities of "renegades," "outlaws" and generally troublesome young men, the old and new systems comingled and lent stability to pre-existing tribal social organizations during a transitional period. The reconstruction of young male identity carried consequences for the young men and their communities as the first near decade came to a close, a point that will be taken up later.

#### Background

The history of the southern Plains as a theater of contact between the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache tribes and Euro-Americans can best be understood as a process. The Comanches arrived in the region in approximately 1705. In the late 18th century, the Kiowas and Apaches assimilated into a Plains process clearly established by Comanches who had come to dominate it. The resulting interactions between tribes and Euro-Americans which led to a web of relations in which we can see a pattern of collaboration and competition between Indians and outsiders.

Historians and anthropologists have suggested two contributing factors in the Comanche migration to the southern Plains. Some argue that other tribes including the

Blackfeet and the Crow drove them on to the western edge of the plains.<sup>1</sup> Others have argued that the Comanches were drawn to the availability of horses and arms which enabled them to exploit the buffalo herds more effectively.<sup>2</sup> Their livelihood turned on hunting, exchange and subsistence, all of which persisted after their migration to the southern Plains. What they encountered upon their arrival to the area intensified those practices and established the Comanches as a central element in the southern Plains political economy for over a century.

By the early 19th century, the Comanches, and later, Kiowas and Apaches occupied an area that ran south of the Arkansas River, east of a line from its headwaters to Mexican settlements near Taos and Santa Fe, and west of the Cross Timbers. The Pecos River created a southwestern boundary, and clusters of white settlements near San Antonio, Fredericksburg, and Austin made a southeastern

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, The Comanches: Lords of the South Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 11. The scholarly debate over the Comanche migration to the southern Plains is not simply a matter of pinpointing the exact time and motivation. The debate also goes to the question of Comanche ethnogenesis. Wallace and Hoebel and others argue that the Comanche separation from the Shoshones, prompted by Comanche desire for European horses and goods, was the point at which they acquired a distinct Comanche identity. Others, such as Thomas W. Kavanagh and Morris Foster, favor the idea that bison attracted the Comanches to the Plains prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Thus, Comanche identity was not a creation of Indian-European contact. See Morris Foster, Being Comanche (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), p. 32-34

boundary.<sup>3</sup> The major features of the area include the Wichita Mountains, the Staked Plains, and a number of major streams. Although those streams, including the Arkansas, Cimarron, Canadian, Washita, Red, Pease, Brazos, Colorado, and Pecos are undrinkable, small running streams and springs are available in the canyons, escarpments and arroyos.<sup>4</sup> The tribes subsisted on wild plums and grapes, pecans, walnuts and persimmons. Fire wood and other woods for bow and arrow making, medicines, lodge poles and other necessities were plentiful. The tribes easily adjusted their subsistence practices to the new environment and their intimate knowledge of the area, its resources and hazards provided a strong defense against future newcomers.

The southern Plains exchange system, following the Comanche, and later Kiowa, arrival, evolved out of several developments. First, prior to the tribe coming into the region, the Spanish had exerted administrative control over the Pueblo trade fairs which attracted tribes and Euro-Americans from throughout the region. Second, the Pueblo fairs, which the Spanish controlled through the granting of trade permits, provided the incoming southern Plains tribes entre into an established exchange system through which they would acquire horses and manufactured goods. Third, the Comanches were valued as trade partners because they brought

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<sup>3</sup> Wallace and Hoebel, The Comanches, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

valuable buffalo hides into the exchange system; in time, their superiority as raiders of horse and cattle herds motivated the Spanish, agricultural Apaches and other tribes to value peace with the Comanches. Fourth, subsequent colonial competition for Comanche friendship and trading relationships enhanced the tribe's bargaining position in the southern Plains. Finally, Comanche band organization and mobility drew some traders, mainly *comancheros*, to their camps. The result was a dynamic system which fluctuated between peaceful periods and times of instability.<sup>5</sup>

Comanche raids attest to their possession of horses as early as 1705 although they probably had been introduced to them at an earlier date.<sup>6</sup> They quickly assimilated to conditions there and came to dominate the region through their exploitation of the horse.<sup>7</sup> The horse enhanced their raiding, trading and hunting life not only because it dramatically improved transportation, but because it had become a valuable exchange item and measure of wealth.<sup>8</sup> The Comanches completed the transition to an equestrian mode of

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<sup>5</sup>A number of sources deal with the history of the southern Plains, the Indian trade and tribal relations with various European groups and Americans. They include, Carl Coke Rister, The Southwestern Frontier-1865-1881 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1969); Alfred Barnaby Thomas, Teodoro de Crois and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968); and John Kessell, Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840 (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Wallace and Hoebel, The Comanches, p.35.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

transportation during the first half of the 18th century.<sup>9</sup> While initially the horse produced a more efficient bison hunt, horse herds grew in the 18th century and Comanche social organization reflected the demands of their great herds. Feeding and watering requirements reinforced the need for bands to live separately.<sup>10</sup> Horses also intensified Comanche trading activities and complicated their relations with the Spanish, French and British.

Initially drawn into the Spanish orbit through their activities in New Mexico and later Texas, the Comanches enjoyed trade privileges at the Pueblo markets.<sup>11</sup> They also traded horses to the French during the first half of the 18th century and more regularly after 1747.<sup>12</sup> In exchange for horses and hides, the Comanches obtained arms and ammunition. The Spanish responded to the potentially undermining Comanche-French relationship by granting the tribe greater access to the Pueblo markets. In return, band leaders agreed to curtail their band members' raiding activities in New Mexico.<sup>13</sup>

Spanish efforts to control relations with the troublesome Comanches constituted one aspect of a much more

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<sup>9</sup>Foster, Being Comanche, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 38-39.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 39. The Comanches began trading at the Pueblo markets in 1705. See Charles L. Kenner, A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), p. 28.

<sup>12</sup>Foster, Being Comanche, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 41.



complex situation. Spanish treaties with the Comanches attempted to establish peace in exchange for permission to trade at the Spanish-controlled Pueblo markets.<sup>14</sup> The Comanches, however, frequently violated that peace.

Isolated Plains Apache groups were especially vulnerable to Comanche aggression. Unfortified Apache villages, just like later Anglo-American farms and ranches, were perfect targets for Comanche raiding practices. The only way to combat the raiders was either to meet them on their own terms on the plains or to strike a defense through fortification as the Pueblos had learned.<sup>15</sup> Apache adoption of agriculture had resulted in villages which could not offer any protection against the Comanches' ability to strike in small bands and to withdraw to safety and anonymity.

Spanish-Comanche trade relations remained stable despite the Spanish unhappiness with the tribe's raiding activities.<sup>16</sup> Until the French trade intensified after 1740, the Comanches traded frequently at the Pueblo markets, with few individual traders assuming the increased risks involved in visiting the Comanche camps.<sup>17</sup> Comanches brought in buffalo hides, meat and captives which they exchanged for cornmeal, bread, ironware, beads, and

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<sup>14</sup>Kenner, A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

trinkets, and other useful items.<sup>18</sup> Although some Spanish officials disapproved of the exchange of horses for Comanche buffalo hides, others saw no reason to forbid the practice. Horses were available and in time Comanches had large enough herds that they were able to exchange horses for other desirable goods.<sup>19</sup>

By the mid 18th century, the Comanches were reported to have over one thousand horses to exchange at Taos. New Mexican traders took robes and captives directly to the Chihuahua fairs where they exchanged their Comanche goods for manufactured goods. Thus, the Comanches participated in a broad exchange network that linked the Indian Plains exchange system, the Spanish controlled Pueblo fairs and the Mexican fairs. Colonial powers, commercial traders and indigenous groups were interlocked in material exchanges which influenced tribal and colonial relations.

Competition between the French and Spanish for the Comanche trade intensified following the regular French presence at 1740. New Mexican trade goods and horses permitted the Comanches to obtain French guns, the exchange of which the Spanish prohibited.<sup>20</sup> Over the next forty years, Spanish governors used various means to maintain stability in their relations with the Comanches. Shows of force, mediation, regulation of the Pueblo fairs, and

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

treaties resulted in peaceful periods punctuated by outbursts of Comanche aggression. But the most important feature of the Spanish strategy that introduced stability into the New Mexican situation turned on a reformed trade policy and gifts.<sup>21</sup> Bernardo de Galvez, viceroy of New Spain, put forward a policy in 1786 that granted guns, ammunition and horses, all previously controversial exchange items, to Comanche traders. Guns used for the Comanche trade, however, were intended to be of poor construction, quality and reliability.<sup>22</sup> Through gifts and ceremonial recognition of Comanche "chiefs" the Spanish appealed to their presumed vanity in order to assert control over the tribe.<sup>23</sup> De Galvez's policy and Comanche leaders' enforcement of treaties among their people launched a period of stable relations that lasted until 1846.<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, the Comanches turned their attentions to Texas. They exchanged stolen Texas horses and captives for French and British arms and ammunition and goods from the Pueblo markets. So long as the French participated in the Comanche exchange network the play-off system worked to the

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>24</sup>See Elizabeth A.H. John, "Nurturing the Peace: Spanish and Comanche Cooperation in the Early Nineteenth Century," New Mexico Historical Review 59:4 1984, pp. 346-369, for a comprehensive account of the so-called Comanche peace. John argues that the persuasive powers of Comanche leaders among

Indians' advantage. The arrival of other Indian groups and Euro-American conflicts disrupted the French trade, however, and compromised the Comanches' bargaining power with the Spanish.<sup>25</sup> The results were a series of compromises between the Comanche leadership and the Spanish which led to greater Comanche access to trade goods and peace within the Spanish domain. Peaceful periods reduced raids into New Mexico, but did not curtail similar activities in Texas.<sup>26</sup>

The Spanish are also credited with facilitating relations between Comanches and the newcomers to the southern Plains, the Kiowas and Kiowa-Apaches in approximately 1790. As a result of Spanish mediation the tribes forged a combination which would dominate the southern Plains and tax the imaginations of American policymakers for three quarters of a century. The Kiowas and the smaller Apache tribe which had affiliated with them became integrated into the established regional exchange system. That system had already undergone significant changes, and was about to confront other developments, specifically the decline of the buffalo, which would further transform it.<sup>27</sup>

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their tribesmen was an important factor in stabilizing relations between the Spanish and Comanches for over a half century.

<sup>25</sup>Foster, Being Comanche, p. 42.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>27</sup>Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," The Journal of American History, September 1991, pp. 465-486.

Already the trade fairs which were so central to the regional economy were undergoing changes as a result of the new peace.<sup>28</sup> The Comanches, for reasons unknown to us, transferred all of their fairs to Pecos and ceased trading at Taos after 1786. The Indians continued to exchange at Pecos until into the 19th century.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile small villages sprang up east of Pecos, formerly the eastern outpost. The earlier outposts were populated by adults who as children were traded by the plains Indians at the Pueblo fairs. Indian by birth, they became essentially a people who had to forge a new identity, and therefore had no status, land or property.<sup>30</sup> These people became known as Genizaros, and they were able to utilize the relatively peaceful relations on the southern Plains to advance eastward and closer to Comanche domains.<sup>31</sup>

The first four decades of the 19th century were marked by fluctuations in the exchange system as a result of new external developments. The Louisiana Purchase brought the

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<sup>28</sup>Foster, Being Comanche, p. 63.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. The Pecos pueblo became a target of Indian attacks as a result of increased vulnerability due to decreased population. Following an Indian attack the survivors abandoned Pecos in 1828. Foster, Being Comanche, p. 75. The Pecos Pueblo was at one time gateway between the pueblos and the plains. As such it drew to itself trade, travelers, disease and the attentions of enemies, in this case Comanches before its decline. See John Kessell, Kiva, Cross and Crown, p. 359.

<sup>30</sup>Foster, Being Comanche, pp. 64-65.

<sup>31</sup>Fray Angelico Chavez, "Genizaros," in William C. Sturtevant and Alfonso Ortiz eds., Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 9 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), pp. 198-205. Kessell, Kiva, Cross and Crown, p.g 416-417.

Americans into range of the southwestern exchange system. The Americans attempts to assert themselves into the Comanche trade network as early as 1808 attracted Spanish attention. Meanwhile, the Napoleonic Wars caused a shortage of goods for exchange. The Comanches increased raids into Chihuahua and other Mexican outposts. By the 1820s and 1830s, however, ineptitude characterized official New Mexican Indian policy. Relations with all tribes deteriorated. Nevertheless, Comanche and Kiowa raiding into Mexico also declined, since several serious epidemics hit the tribes, starting in 1818.

Throughout the period of 1786 to 1860, the *comanchero* trade was an important feature of the exchange network which characterized the southern Plains political economy. While most regular American traders still kept out of the Indian camps, lower elements of the frontier villages and Pueblo Indians traveled throughout the plains to exchange with different tribes. They gained Spanish and later Mexican permission for such excursions as a result of the Spanish desire for knowledge of Comanche camps, routes and water sources.<sup>32</sup> Initially, the *comancheros* sought Comanche horses which garnered Spanish disapproval because it encouraged horse raids. But the trade increased after 1810 and continued to flourish throughout subsequent decades.

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<sup>32</sup>Foster, Being Comanche, p. 78.

The *comanchero* trade provided Indians with foodstuffs, including baked bread, flour, corn meal, sugar and produce. In return the Comanches traded horses, mules, buffalo hides and meat. In 1848, it was reported that Comanches were also trading guns to the *comancheros* which they obtained from other Indian tribes.<sup>33</sup> The territory covered by *comanchero* traders was impressive, including excursions as far east as the Wichita Mountains in Oklahoma and as far north as the South Platte River.<sup>34</sup>

The southern Plains system worked for the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache tribes and their established patterns of hunting, raiding, trading and subsistence. The two tribes on which this study focuses primarily, the Comanches and Kiowas, were organized in loose bands of families led by headmen. The bands lived separately for most of the year, hunting game, including the buffalo, and subsisting from the indigenous flora. They gathered during the summer for ceremonial and social dances and to exchange material goods.

The southern Plains process also complemented and reinforced the tribes' social organizations. Goods reinforced relationships or networks, many items being redistributed time and again.<sup>35</sup> Horses became crucial items

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid, pp. 84-85.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, p. 87.

<sup>35</sup>Thomas Kavanagh, Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 57. Kavanagh argues that goods helped create social and political institutions, while other scholars would suggest that

in the redistribution of material wealth among both the Comanche and Kiowa tribes. As noted above, the Comanches acquired significant horse herds and excelled as buffalo hunters. In addition to horses and buffalo, through military campaigns, other items came into the society. Some items, such as canes and swords, denoted considerable status to the owner. These goods often came as Euro-American political gifts, resources which again often ended up being redistributed.

The tribes' relations with outsiders were restricted to other tribes and Mexican traders until roughly 1803-04 when James Pursley spent a trading season with them. A decade later St. Louis traders ascended the Arkansas River to trade with the Kiowas and other tribes. Two decades passed before the first regular American trading expedition engaged with the tribes.<sup>36</sup> After 1837 a succession of traders established relations with the tribes and a permanent presence among them.<sup>37</sup>

American commercial interests relied on the Santa Fe Trail as a major route connecting the east to New Mexico.<sup>38</sup> It also brought increasing numbers of settlers into the area. The tribes were in a constant state of warfare

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in actuality, they only reinforced or complemented existing institutions.

<sup>36</sup> James Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), p. 171.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 172.



against the Mexicans and Texans, prompting measures to protect the Trail. Representatives of the United States government concluded a treaty with the Kiowas, Comanches and Apaches in July 27, 1853 by which the tribes agreed to peaceful relations with both the United States and Mexico. They also conceded to the federal governments' wishes to establish roads and military posts through the Indians territory.<sup>39</sup>

Several developments emerged in the decade preceding the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek in 1867 that put the southern Plains Indians into direct conflict with the U.S. Army. Comanche and Kiowa raids into Texas took on new significance and carried new consequences following the admission of Texas into the Union. The familiar pattern of Indian military policy emerged with the establishment of a chain of forts across the Texas frontier. And, finally, while the Civil War disrupted those efforts, several serious conflicts had occurred on the Plains between American soldiers or Texans and the Indians.

The acquisition of Texas in 1846 brought Texas under the umbrella of federal Indian policy and further complicated the southern Plains exchange system. Throughout the Spanish period, southern Plains tribes had targeted Texas in their raiding activities. Texas' admission to the

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<sup>38</sup> A. Cumming to CIA Manypenny, Report of the Central Superintendency, 1856, p. 72.

Union in 1845 did little to diminish the tribes' hatred for Texas settlers or their raids. Between 1849 and 1856 the military established a number of forts as a buffer against the tribes' war trail. The posts were insufficiently manned, however, and failed to keep the Indians out.<sup>40</sup>

The military had similar goals in Texas and in New Mexico, specifically to curtail Indian raiding and trading activities. The tribes were coming into increased contact with Anglo settlers who threatened to encroach on their territory. In March 1858 the Comanches let loose their aggressions on a newly established ranch on the Canadian River.<sup>41</sup> Subsequently, the tribes confronted a party surveying the Canadian Valley.<sup>42</sup> In the case of Comanche and Kiowa aggressions against settlers in New Mexico and Texas, the new Anglo response was to demand military protections against the Indians rather than accept the raids as a customary pattern of living in their proximity.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile the Civil War gave the New Mexican government cause to cultivate the Indians' friendship when Confederate Texas troops marched against Union troops in New Mexico. Although the Texans abandoned the assault when their supply lines were cut, New Mexico was compelled to guard against

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<sup>39</sup> Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians, p. 173.

<sup>40</sup> Robert M. Utley, The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), p. 55-57.

<sup>41</sup> Kenner, New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations, p. 124.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

future attacks throughout the remainder of the war. They turned to the Indians and to the *comancheros* for cooperation and intelligence gathering. But the Comanche and Kiowa assaults on Anglo travelers and settlers persisted forcing a military response. Kit Carson led an intertribal contingent against the hostile tribes, driving the Comanches and Kiowas into the camp of the Confederate Texans. By the time they concluded a treaty of friendship and cooperation, however, the Confederacy had lost the war. Peaceful relations between the southern Plains tribes and New Mexico resumed.

This early pattern of conflict and cooperation remained at the center of the first ten years of the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache reservation life that began in about 1867. The federal government intended to destroy the autonomy of the southern Plains Indians. A weak reservation system confronted an established tribal exchange system which had been a prominent feature of the southern Plains for centuries. While a handful of Indians settled on the reservation, a number of bands of Kiowas and Comanches remained off the reservation during the first decade and could not be coerced into compliance with the treaty which called for them to surrender the old life. Their insistence in remaining off the reservation and in engaging on the old exchange system denied the government complete control over

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

the tribes. Even more significant, as a consequence of their activities and the inadequacies of reservation life, a series of relationships emerged between off reservation bands, reservation headmen and the authorities. Those relationships exhibited strains of conflict, but collaboration and cooperation were evident as well. Together they shaped a decade of Indian-white relations in which two competing systems, based on opposing cultural agendas, were forced to co-exist and, at times, to co-mingle.

Indian autonomy centered on the old exchange system, and bands that refused to give it up quickly became identified as the major source of conflict. Southern Plains headmen and government negotiators agreed to the establishment of a reservation in western Indian Territory following treaty talks at Medicine Lodge Creek in 1867. It quickly became apparent that some bands of Kiowas, Comanches and Apaches were not amenable to the idea of permanently locating within the fixed boundaries of the reservation. They elected to follow old patterns of the southern Plains exchange system. Off reservation bands became known as renegade or outlaw Indians because of their frequent raids against Americans, particularly isolated Texas farmers and stock-raisers. Authorities viewed the Indian trade as a source of conflict because it reinforced Indian activities

and autonomy, encouraged violence and led to loss of American property.

The conflict created numerous problems for reservation headmen, the local Indian agent, and Anglo-American populations in Texas and Indian Territory. Complaints lodged by a succession of Indian agents, military officials and government bureaucrats decried the off-reservation bands as renegades and outlaws. Bands who had complied with the treaty and gone on the reservation were labeled progressive or cooperative. Those identities were validated in seemingly objective realities of the southern Plains conflict in which the forces of civilization were pitted against aggressive militancy. Oppositional Anglo categories of Indian identity were not consistent, however, with the cooperation that arose through exchange activities. Rather Indian and Anglo-American systems and interests converged.

Consequently, despite the emphasis on conflict and policies intended to end it through the elimination of the Indian trade and accompanying raiding practices, the lives of Native people and the newcomers were entangled in a variety of economic and cultural negotiations. Those entanglements challenged the stark categories in which authorities and others placed various elements of the southern Plains tribes. Inconsistencies between

official policies and local realities opened up channels in the boundaries between opposed groups. Indian exploitation of those inconsistencies produced social stability and material benefits throughout a period in which the stated policy goal was to supplant Indian systems.

At another level persistent Indian aggression against settlers and military forces prompted federal policy makers to innovate to bring peace to the region and to protect commercial paths that crisscrossed through it. Implementation of peace was challenging, however, because of the tribes' social organizations that were composed of highly mobile bands. Both Kiowa and Comanche bands were led by headmen none of whom could claim leadership over the tribe with which they were affiliated.<sup>44</sup> Bands usually followed either a raiding and trading pattern or had a tendency to be more stationary. The authorities viewed warring bands as aggressors and sought to curtail their activities through military action or manipulation. They perceived the peaceful element as a useful tool in neutralizing the warring bands' potential influence over wavering bands. While those terms have stuck in our understanding of the period, the relations among bands were

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<sup>44</sup> Kiowa social organization is included in James Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians and Bernard Mishkin, Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians, with an Introduction by Morris Foster (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

far more dynamic with significant consequences than such labels would suggest.<sup>45</sup>

Labels of peaceful and warring factions suggested an oppositionalism that obscured the general fluidity of relations among Indians. The continued exchange of goods between raiding and trading bands and off-reservation and on-reservation bands maintained stability within the tribes' social organization while permitting them to negotiate the shifts in their relations with the federal authorities. While the language of official government documents suggests a reading of the situation as Indian resistance overcome by policy, formal negotiations and manipulations, the view from the tribes' pre-existing conventions and practices reveals a

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<sup>45</sup> The Kiowa band leader, Kicking Bird, is a strong example of this. The authorities identified him early on as a peaceful chief in opposition to Lone Wolf, the war chief. Mooney summarizes, "Recognizing early the inevitable changes consequent upon the advent of the white man, he deliberately abandoned the warpath and addressed himself to the task of preparing his people to meet the new conditions. From that time forward his voice and example were always on the side of peace and civilization. By this course he drew to himself the hatred of the conservatives and the war party, who denounced him as a coward and a traitor, charges which he met and refuted in characteristic fashion." Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians, p. 217. The government rewarded Kicking Bird for his cooperation in several ways. The authorities recognized him as the principal chief of the Kiowa tribe (G.W. Schofield to Department of Missouri; August 12, 1871 NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency) awarded him a peace medal, (Alfred H. Love, Philadelphia to H.T. Clum Acting CIA, April 18, 1873 NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency) and gave him a Christian burial (Mooney, p. 217, James M. Haworth to Enoch Hoag, May 4, 1875. NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency).

far more dynamic give and take that shaped the transitional first decade of the reservation period.<sup>46</sup>

Exchange was a prominent feature of life on the southern Plains prior to the arrival of the Euro-Americans and it continued to be the case in the post-contact and reservation periods.<sup>47</sup> After the reservation was created the exchange of Indian goods and horses intertwined with social, political and cultural negotiations between the Kiowas, Comanches, federal authorities and traders.<sup>48</sup> This exchange

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<sup>46</sup> William T. Hagan's work on the Comanche reservation period is an exemplar of Indian history written through the lens of federal Indian policy. His sympathetic account of the Comanche "ordeal" narrates inconsistencies between Washington-formulated policy and local implementation by federal Indian agents. See William T. Hagan, United States-Comanche Relations: The Reservation Years (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990). Francis Paul Prucha's The Great Father lays out the broad sweep of relations between the United States government and Indian tribes throughout the country. Prucha's study includes a treatment of the postwar Grant Peace Policy whose purpose was "to take the business of negotiating with the Indians out of the hands of the executive and give it instead to a special group of civilian and military leaders with interest and competence in Indian affairs." The work was carried out by a commission charged to convene tribal leaders, identify sources of hostility and negotiate treaties which would eliminate causes of Indian aggression and obtain agreements which would include mechanisms for implementing the civilization program. Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians, abridged edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984.), P. 155.

<sup>47</sup> The term "exchange" is used rather than "trade" because it denotes reciprocity rather than value.

<sup>48</sup> Maurice Godelier, an anthropologist of the French neo-Marxist structuralist school, would argue that "the primary aim of production [in a precapitalist society] is not the accumulation of wealth but the preservation of the status of individuals or groups within the community, the preservation of their relations with the rest of the community and hence the reproduction of the community itself"; see Godelier, The Mental and the Material: Thought Economy and Society (London: Verso, 1984), p. 141. While the acquisition and distribution of horses contributed to the stability of Kiowa social organization, those activities



of Indian goods, government rations and annuities shows that even though Indian goods followed new pathways of circulation by way of the reservation system, the consequence for the Kiowas and Comanches was maintenance of their social organization. This is counterintuitive to the common image of the reservation as a harbinger of rupture and destabilization. To the contrary, Kiowa and Comanche social organizations appear to have retained conventions associated with exchange that resulted in internal social and political stability.<sup>49</sup>

Young Kiowa and Comanche men and band leaders, or headmen, were the principal agents of exchange of horses and goods, which were often stolen through raids, among the tribes, government authorities and licensed Indian traders. The process functioned in two domains--the internal system by which young male band members led by a headman acquired and presented goods to band leaders, and the exchange of those goods between headmen and external recipients such as

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were not the sole determinants of status within Kiowa society as Bernard Mishkin has demonstrated. Symbolic heroism achieved in warfare, such as counting coup, was a measure of a warrior's prestige, status and worthiness as a member of *ondop*, or the highest Kiowa social rank. Indeed, military heroism, not horse wealth, was the only class of activity that separated warriors of the highest rank from the second highest rank. Godelier's structuralist model is applicable to Kiowa society in his argument that the accumulation of wealth was not an end in itself. However, the source of Kiowa social stability and reproduction was a combination of material and symbolic capital, both of which were outcomes of warfare and raiding. See Bernard Mishkin, Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians, p. 61.

Mexican traders, Indian agents and licensed Indian traders. Transactions internal to the bands and external to the tribe carried different, sometimes antithetical, values, consequences and meanings. From Kiowa and Comanche perspectives, the process was conventional and integrated with their social organizations while government authorities perceived it as deviant and subject to censure.<sup>50</sup>

Stolen goods acquired through raids had different meanings for Kiowas and Comanches than for the authorities. Young men, while demonized by the Americans, fulfilled obligations to provide for community members. Band leaders' redistribution of goods among relatives cemented relationships and reinforced their standing within the community. Bernard Mishkin, an anthropologist who collected field data in the Kiowa community in the 1920s, outlined the "economic bases" for Plains Indian warfare and rank.

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<sup>49</sup> The most authoritative work on Kiowa exchange practices and social organization is Bernard Mishkin's Rank and Warfare Among Plains Indians.

<sup>50</sup> This general concept of social control of economy comes from structuralist anthropology. See Claude Meillassoux, "From Reproduction to Production: A Marxist Approach to Economic Anthropology," and George Dupre and Pierre-Philippe Rey, "Reflections on the Pertinence of a Theory of the History of Exchange," in H. Wolpe, Ed., The Articulation of Modes of Production (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1988), pp.189-201 and 128-160 respectively; George Dupre and Pierre Philippe Rey, "Reflections on the Revelance of a Theory of the History of Exchange," and Claude Meillassoux, "Kinship Relations and Relations of Production" in David Seddon, ed., Relations of Production (London: Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., 1978), pp. 171-208 and 288-330 respectively; Emmanuel Terray, Marxism and 'Primitive Societies' (London: Monthly Review Press, 1972); M. Godelier, "Modes of Production, Kinship and Demographic

Miskhin's argument linked the individual pursuit of social status through warfare to the economics of Plains life. He saw the horse as a transformer of native social organizations and cultural values. The horse permitted hunting peoples to expand the range of their activities, thereby increasing contact among tribes and with Euro-Americans. The consequences of the horse were an intensification of warfare and trade, with individual achievement of social status an important by-product. The comingling of status and warfare centered on the horse which was both the means to carrying out warfare and the end in the accumulation of horses as a sign of status.<sup>51</sup>

The Kiowa and Comanche tribes were not egalitarian societies, but surplus horses potentially threatened a stable social organization based on bands of extended kin. The tension between individualistic military behaviors and communal ties which held bands together produced a paradoxical mechanism for redistributing, not to be confused with leveling, horse wealth. According to Mishkin, "The fundamental [Kiowa] social grouping was the band, or *topotoga*, [consisting] of an extended family group to which were attached a few families of friends and hangers-on." The *topotoga* was led by a headman whose authority was based in his membership in the strongest family. Neither

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Structure, in M. Bloch, ed., Marxist Analyses and Social

individuals nor families could be compelled to maintain membership with any particular band. Fluidity in the membership was high as a result of frequent changes in family affiliations. Bands were strengthened through marriage. "This could be achieved by members of [the headman's] family marrying into families of unrelated members of his own topotoga thereby reinforcing their allegiance." "The band was a self-contained unit economically, socially, politically and even religiously."<sup>52</sup> The headmen's status and authority also derived from leadership in organizing hunting excursions, camp locations, and in the distribution of food and goods among band members.

Kiowa society was organized into four ranks whose membership was determined by personal attributes, kin relations, military prowess and economic success. The hierarchy was fluid and shaded in demarcation. *Ongop* rank was synonymous with "fine, distinguished, perfect, best" persons. Members exhibited fine bearing, generosity, martial achievements, and enough property to distribute among others. The main requirement was a distinguished war record. The second grade was *ondeigupa* with similar requisites absent only the war deeds. Usually non-military specialists such as herders, artists and hunters fell into

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Anthropology, pp. 3-28.

this category. Koon lacked military achievements and economic independence, but were seen as humans. Occasionally, the phrase, "They will always be here," marked their position in the band. Finally *dapom*, the lowest class, lacked honesty, industry and its members were virtual outcasts. Men of the lower grades could move up the ranks through military and raiding activities that increased their horse herds and enhanced their reputations. *Ongop* tended toward exclusivity, however, with its membership restricted to relatives. Family membership did not automatically admit a warrior into *ongop*, however. The exclusion of warriors of lesser ranks tended to be the result of their concentration of energies on acquiring horses rather than accruing military achievements. Thus, they might acquire reputations for economic success, but continue to lack the required martial honors.<sup>53</sup>

Early anthropologists described Comanches as a people with a "minimal, individualistic form of social and ceremonial organization."<sup>54</sup> This model was marked against that of the Cheyenne, which had a "centralized, institutionalized form" and led anthropologists to conclude that Comanche political, social and religious systems were

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<sup>51</sup> Mishkin, Rank and Warfare, pp. vii - viii.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-27.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp.35-39.

<sup>54</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 53.

less developed.<sup>55</sup> Recent revisions make claims either for Comanche reproducing social and cultural structures or for organization of social units through cultural practices.<sup>56</sup>

Comanches organized into five or six social units, depending on the source. Kavanagh describes them as the elementary family, the extended family, the household, the band, the society and the tribe.<sup>57</sup> Foster identifies them as the family, residence band, division, focus activity group and Comanche community.<sup>58</sup> Social face, maintained or lost through individual actions in public gathering, was the personal power that held groups together.<sup>59</sup> Comanche political culture emphasized status, acquired through medicine powers and martial achievements, which resulted in ranking among individuals, not in ranked groups as in the Kiowa case. Leaders derived authority from culturally

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Morris Foster summarizes the shift from early anthropological views of the category Comanche as an "exception" to the Plains model to the revisionist view of Comanche as consistent with that model of "centralized, institutional form." Thomas Kavanagh's work in particular relies upon the dynamics of European and American-Comanche relations to unveil the structure of Comanche political and social structure. Thus, Foster critiques, he ignores the internal organizing principles of being Comanche. Foster argues that "To assert that the Comanches were immune to the evolving Euro-American-dominated political economy of the Plains is simply to ignore history. . . . At the same time, however, one would be equally mistaken to assert that Euro-American contacts so dominated the social lives of Plains people as to cause each community to organize the interactions of its members according to the same general model." Foster, Being Comanche, p. 58. He sees Comanche social organization as distinctive and based on a common identity, not a commonly shared structured organization.

<sup>57</sup> Kavanagh, Comanche Political History, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 59.

defined sources such as personal character, which endowed them with powers of persuasion and, in certain cases, powers to coerce.<sup>60</sup>

The Kiowa and Comanche tribes followed their usual practices of wintering below the Arkansas River and moving north in the spring to hunt buffalo. The treaty introduced government-issued rations into the tribes' subsistence patterns. The Indians accepted them as compensation for granting unmolested access to the Santa Fe Trail. The tribes gathered on the banks of the Arkansas River for the annual distribution of annuities by the government Indian agent.<sup>61</sup> But despite the agreement of 1853, the decade was fraught with confrontation between the tribes and incoming Anglo American settlers, particularly in Texas.<sup>62</sup> Kiowa and Comanche insolence and audacity reflected a disregard for federal authority on the southern Plains and led policy enforcers to call upon the government to implement "some adequate mode of enforcing respect and repressing their hostile spirits." Officials from the Central Superintendency urged "the establishment of one or more

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> A. Cummings to CIA Manypenny, Report of the Central Superintendency, 1856, p.72.

<sup>62</sup> Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1856, p. 11.

military posts along [the Santa Fe Trail]" as "indispensably necessary."<sup>63</sup>

It is commonly assumed that Indian tribes quickly developed a dependency on processed foods and manufactured goods that they obtained, in this case, through trade with the Mexicans and annual government distributions. Official reports for the pre-reservation period characterized the recipients of rations and goods as intractable, insolent and disrespectful of Indian agents in particular and federal authority generally. Moreover, the bands perceived the rations and goods that the government distributed among them as their due for leaving the Santa Fe Trail undisturbed. On one occasion, the Kiowas exhibited willingness to use force to ensure the distribution of goods. After presenting themselves for the annual distribution and being turned away because of the absence of a number of chiefs, "the Kiowas left the council very much exasperated . . . returning in the evening with a large body of young men, who surrounded the [supply] wagons with their bows strung, demanding their goods immediately, and threatening to help themselves if their demands were not complied with."<sup>64</sup> Thereafter, the agents' reports complained periodically about the persistent behavior of "young men" who continued to carry out

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<sup>63</sup> A. Cummings to CIA Manypenny, Report of the Central Superintendency, 1856, p. 72.

<sup>64</sup> Robert C. Miller to John Averty, Report of the Central Superintendency, 1857, p. 142.



"depredations" in Texas and along the Trail and reported the headmen's inability to exert control over them.<sup>65</sup>

Texas was the hostile bands' principal target, but by the end of the decade Anglo pressures on Indian resources incurred the wrath of the Kiowa headman Dohausen. In 1858 Agent Miller met with the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Comanche, and Kiowa chiefs to discuss a new treaty which would establish a permanent "home" for the Indians where they could live in peace. The agent chastised the Indians for the continuing depredations and conveyed the government's threat to withhold their rations and to dispatch troops against their camps. The Kiowa headman Dohausen would have none of the agent's admonitions and retorted:

The white chief is a fool; he is a coward; his heart is small--not larger than a pebble stone; his men are not strong--too few to contend against my warriors; they are women. There are Spanish and myself are men; we do bad towards each other sometimes stealing horses and taking scalps, but we do not get mad and act the fool. The white chief is a child, and like a child get mad quick. When my young men, to keep their women and children from starving, take away from the white man passing through our country, killing and driving away our buffalo, a cup of sugar or coffee, the 'white chief' is angry and threatens to send his soldiers. I have looked for them a long time, but they have not come; he is a coward; his heart is a woman's.<sup>66</sup>

The chief's tirade confirms the government's unwillingness to commit to an all out military offensive against the Kiowas and Comanches, and the Indians'

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>66</sup> Robert C. Miller to A.M. Robinson, Report of the Central Superintendency, 1858, pp. 98-99.

recognition of the vulnerability of the tribes' resources. Large herd animals require great open spaces, but the southern Plains was being "bisected . . . by a constantly marching line of emigrants" and drawn into smaller areas, circumscribing the tribes' movements and intensifying pressure on the bison.<sup>67</sup> The American presence only intensified the decline of buffalo herds which was evident as early as 1847.<sup>68</sup> The Americans became increasingly aware that the buffalo was a soft spot in the Indians' defenses.

Throughout the 1850s the line was drawn between "friendly" and "hostile" Indian groups, or those who cooperated with the government's efforts to control the tribes and those who exploited the authorities' limited ability to enforce the peace. A pattern of relations emerged between the authorities and the Indians in which those who continued to engage in prohibited activities were periodically induced to quit them and subsequently were rewarded for cessation of hostilities. Meanwhile, cooperative Indians received only their annually distributed rations and supplies and consequently less than the Indians who persisted in their aggressions against settlers, travelers along the Santa Fe route, and other Indian tribes.

Federal Indian policy articulated government reactions to the tribes' persistent aggressions against Texans and

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<sup>67</sup> W.W. Bent to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1859, p. 139.

<sup>68</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 47.

other Americans in the region. The tribes finally agreed to a reservation in 1867 when representatives of the United States government met with the tribes at Medicine Lodge Creek. The treaty that followed identified lands in Indian Territory where the tribes were to confine their activities and to establish their permanent residence. The treaty also outlined a civilization program which would prepare the southern Plains people for their eventual integration into Anglo-American society. It was the first time such language had been used in treaties with the three tribes and was consistent with the tenor of the broader national discourse of assimilationism.<sup>69</sup> A number of bands went on the reservation soon after trusting that promises of rations, annuity payments and resources for starting farms and stock raising ventures would be fulfilled. The families that conformed with the terms of the treaty were thereafter identified as "friendly" Indians for their cooperation and shared expectations of reciprocity.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Charles J. Kappler, ed., Indian Treaties 1778-1883 (Mattituck, New York: Amereon House, 1972), pp. 977-984.

<sup>70</sup> Agent Haworth reported a meeting of the Kiowa, Comanche and Cheyennes to plan an assault on the "buffalo hunters" at Adobe Walls. When some of the Indians refused to participate and prepared to withdraw, leaders of the planned attack took steps to force their involvement. The agent reported, "The adobe-walls fight, massacre of teamsters, and burning of train on Cow-trail, with a number of other depredations, causing the military to be called out to punish the marauders, and the consequent drawing of lines of distinction between friendly and hostile, with camping places allotted for the friendly and time for enrollment specified, doubtless left many who were drawn into the present troubles by the circumstances above referred to, and who really desired to remain peaceable, on the side of the

Negotiations leading to the creation of a reservation were a feasible and practical alternative to war with the southern Plains Indians. The U.S. Army faced enormous obstacles in that regard, including an unfamiliar and unmapped environment, the Indians' ability to elude or outwait troops dependent on a finite supply of rations, and the difficulty of identifying an enemy organized into small, mobile bands. Estimates for waging war against the Indians varied, but one impressive figure proposed by a senator settled at \$1 million per Indian. The cost of feeding and arming troops in addition to providing the necessary transportation added up to \$125,000 to \$250,000 per day. The establishment of a reservation would enable the government to concentrate the Indians in one location, control their movements and direct their energies toward self improvements through education, work, and moral training, all arts of civilization.<sup>71</sup>

Following the treaty negotiations and the relocation of bands onto the reservation, the civilization program was left in the hands of the appointed federal Indian agent. The nearby presence of the U.S. Army at Fort Sill and a federal Indian agent, Jesse Leavenworth, represented the authority of the United States government. Leavenworth had commanded the Santa Fe Trail from 1862 to 1864 and

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hostile against their own wishes." J.M. Haworth to CIA, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1874, p.220.

considered himself well suited for the position of agent because of his "long and intimate acquaintance" with the southern Plains people.<sup>72</sup> He had a highly critical view of the military, particularly evident in his reactions to the activities of Colonel Chivington who if "not stopped in his course towards the Indians . . . would get us in a war with them; and in all probability with the southern Indians."<sup>73</sup> The military was incapable of winning a victory over the Indians in his opinion, a view that was shared by others, including Washington policymakers, who considered the cost of such a war to be exorbitant.

Leavenworth was appointed agent to the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache tribes in July 1864 and arrived to assume his position in October. Despite the military's aggressive efforts to curtail the Indians' activities, Leavenworth found the tribes emboldened by conflicts, which could carry severe consequences for travel over the Santa Fe Trail. The new agent reported on the tribes' populations as near as he could guess, but noted that it was not their number that presented a problem.<sup>74</sup> Rather it was their activities and

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<sup>71</sup> Hagan, United States and Comanche Relations, p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Leavenworth to D.X. Colley, February 7, 1866, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Population figures vary. According to Mooney the population of Kiowa and Apache tribes combined "was never much more than 1,600 or 1,800 at the greatest, of whom the Apache numbered nearly one-fourth." He noted that "their numbers, which had been reported at 2,774 and 2,302 in the preceding two years, at once fell to 1,414, [following the 1875 enrollment] and remained

their potential abilities to incite other tribes to similar acts of aggression against Anglo-Americans.<sup>75</sup>

Agent Leavenworth identified the old raiding and trading activities as the most vexing obstacle to peace on the southern Plains. In fact, all Plains tribes were involved in a quest for horses as a valuable trade item. Indian tribes traded among themselves and with Euro-American groups with all activities producing a matrix of fluid economic relations. Indians and outsiders profited from the trade system which was "interpenetrating, interacting, and interdependent . . . in which people of different cultures and different historical backgrounds were reacting to similar economic forces."<sup>76</sup> Leavenworth understood that the system could only produce more conflict between Indians and Americans on the Santa Fe Trail and that Texas settlers would also find themselves under attack.

Leavenworth's official statements suggest that those same trade relations presented another source of trouble for Anglo-Indian relations on the southern Plains. The so-called *comanchero* trade involved a long-standing network of

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nearly stationary at that figure until the epidemic of 1892." Mooney, The Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians, p. 235. In 1869, Lawrie Tatum reported 1,927 Kiowas of whom "There are more women than [sic] men, but how many of them are men, women, and children, is impossible to tell." Tatum to Commissioner of Indian Affairs E.S. Parker, November 7, 1869, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>75</sup> Leavenworth to D.W. Colley, Feb. 7, 1866; Leavenworth to T.L. Bowers, Feb. 22, 1886, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

relations between southern Plains tribes, Mexicans, and other tribes in the region. Mexican traders were the Indians' source of manufactured goods, ammunition and guns in return for horses and mules stolen from Texas farmers and ranchers. The Mexicans had permission from the governor of New Mexico to travel into Indian camps on the Salt Plains under valid permit and passports. There they carried out the "illicit" trade which further induced the Indians to persist in old raiding habits carried out against isolated Texas outposts.<sup>77</sup> Two steps were taken in 1866 and 1867 to break up the *comanchero* trade. The first was the introduction of "regular," that is licensed, traders into the trade networks. Officials also banned the sale of arms and ammunition to Indians. Unfortunately the arms and ammunition embargo was felt only by the licensed traders while the Indians continued to obtain the banned goods from their old sources. As long as the Mexican traders remained willing to sell guns and ammunition to Kiowas and Comanches,

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<sup>76</sup> Joseph Jablow, The Cheyennes in Plains Indian Trade Relations, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994) p. 88

<sup>77</sup> The best account of the *comanchero* trade is in Jacqueline Meketa, ed. Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacan, A Nineteenth Century New Mexican, (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1986). See also, Kenner, A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations; Jacob Fowler, The Journal of Jacob Fowler, (New York: F.P. Harper, 1898); and Ernest Wallace and E. Adamson Hoebel, Lords of the South Plains.

the Indians were able to circumvent the government prohibition on arms sales.<sup>78</sup>

Arms and ammunition were increasingly important to the tribes. The Indians had a long history of excelling at buffalo hunting and confronting other tribal enemies armed with bows and arrows. But firearms and ammunition were increasingly necessary weapons of war against an unwanted Anglo-American presence. The Indians' knowledge of the southern Plains, commanding presence in the regional trade network and unique brand of guerilla tactics combined with access to modern weapons made for a challenging obstacle to westward migration. So long as the Indians had access to the Mexican traders, the arms and ammunition embargo was an empty gesture at bringing them under control. Like other Indian policies as applied to southern Plains people, the embargo was one aspect of an artifice of severely limited government authority.

Young Indian men were especially intractable during the early reservation period. Not only did they resist confinement on the reservation, but they continued to excel at raiding isolated settlements, carrying off large herds of horses and cattle while avoiding capture by the military. The increasingly dangerous nature of their activities enhanced their prestige within a culture that rewarded

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<sup>78</sup>Leavenworth to Cooley, June 5, 1866; Leavenworth to G.W. Todd, December 24, 1866, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.



successful young warriors. They are, for the most part, nameless. The *d'ogudl*, young Kiowa men between ages of 18 and 20, were highly valued among parents, friends, relatives, and specifically, older women who were without husbands. Their hunting and raiding activities put them at great physical risk which communities acknowledged and rewarded.<sup>79</sup>

Families invested in the training and grooming of young men who exhibited ambition to excel and move up the ranks of Kiowa society. According to Mishkin, "The young who aimed at *ongop* [the highest rank] had to climb the ladder slowly. He had first to be known as a *kataiki*, a brave who had seen action and come away with distinction." This took place between the ages of 15 and 20. A young man was encouraged in exhibitionistic behavior in battle. Following his acceptance into one of the higher-ranking groups, a young man's war activity intensified resulting in greater

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<sup>79</sup> Alice L. Marriott Papers, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma. Age and status terms were quite specific. *D'ogudl* signified a young man between the ages of 18 and 30; *d'ogudledl* referred to an "old young man" between the ages of 30 and 40, Box 9, Folder 25. Marriott's informant stated that young men in earlier times "must be kind-hearted, thoughtful, willing, helpful, dependable to be respected." Family values have changed since then. "Since the whites came the Kiowas have become 'awful stingy' and each man regards what he has as his own.." "She [Marriott's informant] thought the introduction of money has spoiled this custom [sharing of food]. It is hard nowadays, when a young man earns a large sum by selling a piece of land, he probably would not share it with his sister or female cousin. If a young man gives an older person money or food now it is a matter for surprise. It was

recognition. It was possible to attain the status of war party leader by the time of the warrior's early 30s.<sup>80</sup> In the early stages of his career, a young man was highly dependent on his family to build his reputation within the band and the tribe.

Fathers sponsored community activities in which the accomplishments of the sons were made widely known. A young man's reputation was built up through his father's distributions of gifts and hosting of feasts in his son's honor. Offspring from the highest rank had the best of all worlds. A young man from a family of means was freed from the drudgery of herding and hunting that was unavoidable for young men from lower ranks. He could devote time and energy exclusively to the development of a reputation for military achievements.<sup>81</sup> Thus, a premium was placed on warfare while hunting and herding were seen as counterproductive for an ambitious young man whose father already possessed horse wealth. Young men earned respect as a consequence of their bravery, generosity and ability to provide for those who were without resources.

Young Comanche men followed a similar pattern of engaging in raiding, trading and hunting activities which was the basis of their value within the community and the

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particularly honourable to share with a mother-in-law or daughter-in-law," Box 9, Folder 10.

<sup>80</sup> Mishkin, Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians, p. 38.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-46.

community's respect for them. While large war parties were organized by older men, small parties of young men also formed into war and raiding parties.<sup>82</sup> The purpose of such focus group activities was to enhance personal reputations as well as to provide materially for the group.<sup>83</sup> Public activities affirmed a young man's reputation for the skills and characteristics worthy of a Comanche warrior.

Conditions of the early reservation reinforced rather than undermined the Indians' old exchange system and political and social relationships among the warriors. Historically, material conditions of the Indians' existence were intertwined with a ranked Kiowa social structure. Raiding and hunting activities were ways in which men accumulated economic and symbolic wealth through the acquisition of goods, preferably horses, and through ritualistic acts of bravery, such as counting coup on an enemy. Social standing, however, rested on more than acquisition of economic and symbolic capital. Headmen redistributed goods among relatives in a paradoxical behavior of increasing stature while redistributing wealth.

Agency correspondence and military reports attest to the young men's activities, including persistent raiding and trading throughout the period.<sup>84</sup> They were seen as a

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<sup>82</sup> Kavanagh, Comanche Political History, p. 51.

<sup>83</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 63.

<sup>84</sup> J.R. Mead (Butler Co.) to Thomas Murphy, September 7, 1866; Phillip McCusker to Leavenworth, April 6, 1868; R.H.Grierson to

menace to Anglo settlements and as a serious obstruction to the authorities' efforts to secure Indian compliance with reservation confinement. Federal authorities had named individual Indians and bands of Indians as "friendly" or "hostile" prior to the establishment of the reservation. The creation of the reservation reinforced those identities as some bands complied with the treaty and others ignored it. Following the treaty, bands which had gone on the reservation became known as "friendly Indians" and those who continued to trade, hunt and raid outside of the reservation took on a more threatening identity.

Young men who remained out came in for the strongest censure as the identities assigned to them indicates. They became known as "outlaws" or "renegades" indicating that the reservation system was now the legitimate new order and that the young men's refusal to conform to it violated that order. Their activities were characterized as aberrant and even criminal, which justified the distinction imposed on them as "wild Indians." They were the new savage with those pejorative meanings--dark, dangerous, unpredictable and

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Asst. Adjutant General, July 14, 1870; Statement of Horse Back, Comanche Chief, July 22, 1879; Phillip McCusker to Major General Hazen, December 21, 1868; Laurie Tatum to CIA E. Parker, May 7, 1870; Laurie Tatum to E. Hoag, April 14, 1871; E. Hoag to Laurie Tatum, June 26, 1871; Cyrus Beede to Enoch Hoag, April 4, 1873; Agent Haworth to Cyrus Beede, May 8, 1873; Thomas Battey to Agent Haworth, July 31, 1873; Agent Haworth to Enoch Hoag; August 18, 1873; Agent Haworth to Hon. C. Delano, December 15, 1873; Agent Haworth to Enoch Hoag, August 21, 1873; J.W.

outside the new conventions of "good Indian" identity. They were marked against all that the reservation was coming to represent--order, control, confinement, and conformity to government policies. The promises of the chiefs to try to quiet the young men suggest that the young men also threatened the tribes' internal sense of order and at least appeared to conform to the government's wishes.<sup>85</sup>

Letters among federal authorities and the military reflect a preoccupation with captive taking and murder as the most menacing aspect of raids. Frequently, the bands traded in women and children captives for financial rewards. The activities of the young men, however, were more complex and significant than those of a troubling criminal element. An exchange between Stumbling Bear and other Kiowa headmen and Agent Jesse Leavenworth describes an emerging web of relationships among reservation headmen, young raiders, the agent and the reservation system. Leavenworth, the chiefs charged, forced the reservation band leaders to trade goods for rations which had been guaranteed during the treaty talks. Government rations were to be distributed among the "friendly" reservation Indians in exchange for their compliance with the treaty.<sup>86</sup>

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Davidson to Assistant Adjutant General, October 8, 1873, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>85</sup> Cyrus Beede to Enoch Hoag, April 4, 1873, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>86</sup> Edwin Stanton to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 8, 1867, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

But according to Stumbling Bear, who spoke on behalf of the others, "Indian goods and trade goods" were different. "The only way we can get our goods is to give him our ponies, our robes, and our furs. He kept them [Indian goods] from us. The great Father sent them to us. He thinks his time will be short and he wants to make a good bargain." Then Stumbling Bear became more revealing: "But it is a better way [for us] to trade for our own goods, then [sic] take them by force. The braves [connoting young men] that bring him most horses get most goods, more than one third of our tribe gets none at all for they have not any to give."<sup>87</sup>

Stumbling Bear's description provides an informative sketch of the early reservation and the role of Kiowa and Comanche young men. The diversion of Indian goods into the hands of the agent was a creative response to a potentially disastrous situation for the reservation bands.<sup>88</sup> And while the opportunity arose out of exploitative circumstances the diversion of goods was possible because of the traditional relationships between young and mature men. Young men

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<sup>87</sup> Edwin Stanton to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 8, 1867, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency. Stanton transmitted a deposition taken from a young interpreter Frederick Jones who was employed by Leavenworth and was alleged to have witnessed the agent's "irregular" trade activities with the tribal headmen. Also, see Lt. William E. Doyle to General Hazen, March 1, 1869 regarding Leavenworth's "irregular" practices.

<sup>88</sup> Arjun Appadurai, The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 26.

transferred stolen and traded horses, mules and cattle to headmen who distributed them to the agent. They then took the rations and distributed them among the various band members. The young men's activities demonstrated that their value continued to depend in part on successful raiding and trading activities. It is highly likely that their willingness to divert goods to reservation headmen gave the off-reservation bands access to rations without surrendering their freedom.

Leavenworth profited from the criminal activities of the young outlaws who diverted some of their stolen goods to the reservation chiefs. As early as 1867 Leavenworth reportedly took Indian horses and mules to Leavenworth City, Kansas where he sold them for \$8.50 each after forcing the Indians to trade for their rations. He is further reported to have purchased Indian goods with government funds from his partner, trader William Mathewson, in addition to trading those which he received directly from government stock. Leavenworth also held back goods until the Indians were able to trade, and when accused by the Indians of holding their goods, he denied it, telling them that the goods in question belonged to another tribe. Former agency employees described Leavenworth's activities in depositions taken by the military. Leavenworth continued to hold his

position despite continued complaints against him for using the agency to dispose of stolen property.<sup>89</sup>

The chiefs were caught in a double bind. They needed the off-reservation bands' stolen property to obtain the withheld rations for the bands of "friendlies." At the same time, they were coming under increasing pressure to curtail the criminal activities of the young men. The headmen had few arguments to persuade the outside bands to come on the reservation. Some Indians received only corn meal from Leavenworth, a commodity the Indians viewed as a poor staple.<sup>90</sup> Others had been promised houses, but did not receive them. The young men ridiculed on-reservation people for their poverty, lack of resources, and cooperation with the authorities when promises made under the treaty were broken. The system had failed at least some of the friendlies, which reinforced the collaboration between the young outlaws and the reservation headmen.<sup>91</sup>

The young men's activities and the ways in which they were censored and stigmatized are an interesting contrast to

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<sup>89</sup> Philip McCusker to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 5, 1868, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency. William T. Hagan argues, "there is no evidence he [Leavenworth] personally profited." Hagan, United States-Comanche Relations, p. 48.

<sup>90</sup> Tosh-o-na (Comanche Chief) provided a statement of broken U.S. promises to Col. W.B. Hazen, March 6, 1868 NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency. <sup>90</sup> Agent Tatum to W.B. Hazen, April 4, 1870, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>90</sup> Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868, p. 463.



the sentiments expressed in an 1868 report prepared by the commissioners who negotiated the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek. "'If we attempt to force the older Indians from the chase it will involve us in war.' But if peace could be maintained a few years, the buffalo would have disappeared. 'In the meantime, we will have formed a nucleus of civilization among the young that will restrain the old and furnish them a home and subsistence when the game is gone.'"<sup>92</sup> On one hand, this statement demonstrates that government authorities failed to appreciate the significance of the young band members' activities beyond seeing them as transgressions of the new order. The young were important agents in the perpetuation of the old social organization and thereby thwarted authorities' hopes for a peaceful transition. On the other, the statement shows an awareness of the obligations between young and older community members and a desire to put that relationship in the service of the civilization program.

The early reservation offered an environment that was well suited to the old system and indeed was for all intents and purposes absorbed into the old system. Headmen continued to retain their roles as distributors of material resources among their kinsmen because of the young men's

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<sup>91</sup> Agent Tatum to W.B. Hazen, April 4, 1870, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>92</sup> Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868, p. 463.

activities. Both were able to accumulate symbolic stature as a result of raiding and trading activities. The reservation offered no alternatives to the acquisition of material wealth and stature through pre-existing conventions, but paradoxically the corruption of the agent and the inefficiencies and deficiencies of the system reinforced those practices. Nevertheless, the young men who were pivotal to the success of a system by which many profited, were at the same time labeled as wild renegades who flaunted their resistance to the reservation, federal Indian policies, and the hegemonic prerogative of a civilized society. At the same time, they stabilized tribal social organization when external forces were targeting it for destruction.

In 1870 the pressures of a changing southern Plains environment required new adjustments on the part of the headmen. It was noted that for the first time chiefs began turning in stolen horses without expectation of payment and as a sign of "good faith."<sup>93</sup> More chiefs began to come on the reservation as a consequence of a poor buffalo hunt. In return for coming in and other signs of good faith, Black Eagle petitioned the agent to lift the embargo on guns and ammunition, but his appeal was turned down.<sup>94</sup> The young

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<sup>93</sup> Grierson to Department of Missouri, August 7, 1870, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>94</sup> Agent's account of a meeting with Black Eagle and other chiefs, July 14, 1870, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

men, however, still would not be controlled and retained some power to humiliate the reservation Indians with some results. They targeted Kicking Bird particularly, telling him that he had become like a woman because he had given up the raiding and trading life. Kicking Bird responded by joining a raiding party in 1870 which resulted in several white deaths and the appropriation of a number of stolen horses.<sup>95</sup> Subsequently, the reservation chief reformed and was rewarded for his good behavior, especially for his return of stolen stock. The agent granted him recognition as principal chief of the Kiowas. Meanwhile other chiefs were marked as recalcitrant and unable or unwilling to control their young men and even condoning and participating in their illegal activities.

A story involving the Comanche Little Ponies, a men's sodality that sometimes performed police functions, demonstrates that young Comanche men could also impose discipline upon older warriors.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Mooney, Calendar History of the Kiowas, p. 217. Kicking Bird was known as leader of the peaceful element who drew much criticism from "conservatives and the war party." According to the account of Thomas Battey, first teacher among the Kiowas, "His long-continued attachment to whites at one time so far brought him into disrepute with his tribe that they charged his friendship to cowardice....Finding his influence in the tribe nearly gone, he raised a force, conducted a raid into Texas, and had a severe engagement with the white soldiers...On his return home he again advocated peace with the whites, and has steadily continued to do so from that time to the present. The tribe, thoroughly convinced of his bravery, no longer attribute his desire for peace to cowardice..."

<sup>96</sup> Kavanagh, Comanche Political History, p. 50.

The Little Horse society were seeing that no warriors reneged on their obligation [to go on the expedition]. Those warriors prodded the stragglers, dealing harshly with any shirkers.

[Mahseet (masiito 'fingernail') a Penateka, started to go home.] Attocknie saw the Little Horses strike down Mahseet's tipi; they also confiscated his entire horse herd. Mahseet recognized Attocknie and called to him, "I am too old for any more war, I have too many children, but still I am being subjected to this authority." Attocknie, being not only a member of another band [the Yamparika] but also another society, the Tuwinuu, was in no position to help Mahseet.

Word of Mahseet's treatment at the hands of the Little Horse warriors reached the ears of Asehabit, [a] chief of the Panetekas. This chief immediately followed the expedition, overtaking it, and demanded Mahseet's horses. The little Horses rejected his demand, and when he grew belligerent one of their members, a young warrior named Pahvotaivo (pabotaiboo 'white/clear man') subjected the Penateka chief to a severe horse whipping with his riding quirt.

Yellowfish [Attocknie's future son-in-law], a member of the Little Horse [Little Pony] society, was in a position to see the raising and falling of Pahvotaivo's arm as he lashed Asehabit. Tears of rage rushed to [Asehabit's] eyes at this humiliation but he was helplessly outnumbered and surrounded by the warlike Little Horses. Quanah, the war party leader, and who was a member of the Little Horses, hurried and intervened. He said that the horses should be given to Asehabit and so he was allowed to drive them away. [Attocknie 1965].

In 1873 Capt. Henry Alvord, who had served in a supervisory capacity in the Leased District, wrote a letter reiterating an earlier proposal that addressed the persistent Indian problem. The document was a summary of assimilationist ideas that he reduced to a two-pronged strategy of "localization" and "individualization." He argued that the tribes could never be coerced into surrendering their arms and horses or to any form of

abridgement of their personal liberties. But, by confining their mobility and breaking down tribal culture the government could keep them under the surveillance of a "daily muster" and hold them to personal responsibility for their actions. The principal problem of Indian raids could be addressed by controlling the issues of food.

Distributions made to individuals or heads of households would reduce the power of headmen and tighten controls over individual Indians.<sup>97</sup>

In 1873 the military and the government began to prepare for the enrollment of individual tribal members. They met with much resistance from reservation headmen and those who remained outside the reservation alike. For the reservation people, enrollment represented a humiliating submission to the federal authorities and a betrayal given that they had cooperated as best they could under difficult circumstances. Heads of raiding bands, like the reservation chiefs, scorned the idea of being numbered, protesting that it was a cultural taboo in addition to being degrading to Kiowa and Comanche manhood.

In their zeal to control the young men and to protect themselves from new methods of government control and coercion, the headmen began denouncing the young men in increasingly stronger terms. Lone Wolf and his wife told

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<sup>97</sup>Henry Alvord to E.P.Smith, Sept. 20, 1873, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

the Agent that if they knew that young men were going out on a raid they would follow them, kill their ponies and make them walk home. Kicking Bird said that if the military killed every young man who went over the Texas border that "we would cry for them but it would be right." Lone Wolf reiterated the sentiment when he asserted that young men who kill Texans are "dead," in effect symbolically banishing the young men whom they could not control.

The young men's murderous activities had clearly violated the headmen's sense of proper conduct.<sup>98</sup> Kicking Bird feared a protracted Plains war and was willing to sacrifice the off reservation bands, and particularly the young men, to avert it. Although the fault rested with "Mone kome haint the Kiowa name for the Commissioner [who] made a road the Indians could not travel," Kickingbird feared "blood must flow. . .The white man is strong but he cannot destroy us all in one year. It will take him two or three, may be [sic] four years and then the world will turn to water or burn up. It can't live when the Indians are all dead."<sup>99</sup> The authorities had begun to pressure the headmen to cooperate in enrolling individual tribal members and

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<sup>98</sup>Lone Wolf emphatically stated to Agent Haworth, "I do not want to see any more war. If young men of the Comanches, Cheyennes, Apaches, Kiowas or Arapahoes go over into Texas and get killed I think that is all right." He went on, "If those foolish young men have killed any of the people of Texas, they are dead..." Haworth to C. Delano, December 15, 1873, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

threatened to withhold rations. Coercive threats left the tribal leaders little room to maneuver around the authorities. The young men's activities could hurt the community if not checked by the older men.

In August 1874, the authorities finally secured the chiefs' agreement to enrollment by threatening to withhold rations, just as Leavenworth had done earlier. Enrollment was key to achieving some measure of control over the off reservation bands' raiding activities. The men who comprised those bands exploited the authorities' inability to identify them individually. Enrollment would make them targets of retribution. Through enrollment the military could deny the off reservation bands rations as a supplement to which they had previously had access. In August, the headmen capitulated to enrollment resentfully, but had lost bargaining power because of their ineffectiveness in curtailing raiding and trading in stolen goods.<sup>100</sup>

Between the summer of 1874 and the spring of 1875 the system of the previous decade unraveled. The success of the transitional economy rested upon the availability of resources, outlets for goods generated by raiding and hunting parties, and the effective conversion of economic capital into symbolic capital for the reservation headmen.

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<sup>100</sup> Edward P. Smith to E.G. Davis, Governor of Texas, Oct. 7, 1873; Aug. 14, 1874; Cyrus Beede to Enoch Hoag, Apr. 4, 1873; Agent Haworth to Cyrus Beede, May 8, 1873; Agent Haworth to the Hon. C. Delano, Dec., 15, 1873, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

The accelerating disappearance of the buffalo, diminishing demand for horses, and pressures on the *comanchero* trade weakened a system that no longer balanced the interests of Indians and Anglos. Furthermore, unlike Agent Leavenworth, Indian agents hired under Ulysses S. Grant's Peace Policy tended to resist the temptation to exploit the situation for personal profit. Most of the agents were Quakers who practiced considerably more self-discipline than Leavenworth had. The Quakers' virtuous behavior was inconsistent with the earlier frame of Indian-Anglo relations and contributed to the destabilization of the system.<sup>101</sup>

Rations were in short supply, a result, the Indians believed, of the authorities withholding them as punishment.<sup>102</sup> Despite the ration situation, Indians traded most of their buffalo robes for arms and ammunition.<sup>103</sup> The

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<sup>101</sup> Grant's peace policy distributed Indian agencies among church groups to eliminate corruption in the Indian Service and to promote the spread of Christianity. The Orthodox Friends were affiliated with the Central Superintendency which gave them responsibility for Indians in Kansas and the Kiowas, Comanches, and other tribes in Indian Territory. See Francis Paul Prucha, The Great Father, p. 160-61.

<sup>102</sup> Agent Haworth reported to the Central Superintendency that "Some of the Indians tell me...they feel that their rations are being kept back from them, which is aggravated by a great many false reports." Agent Haworth to Enoch Hoag, May 6, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>103</sup> Agent Haworth described the lengths to which Kiowa and Comanche bands would go to obtain arms and ammunition. The licensed traders of his agency were prohibited from selling arms and ammunition to Indians, but the traders of the Cheyenne agency had permission to do so. Kiowas and Comanches, consequently, would travel to the Cheyenne agency to obtain what they could not get at Kicking Bird's camp where licensed traders set up business. Agent Haworth to Enoch Hoag, April 28, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency. The Indians were successful



ceaseless buffalo slaughter had caused many of the outside chiefs to take up arms against the Anglo hunters while the reservation headmen protested to the authorities. The buffalo was in the words of the chiefs to provide "meat to eat" and was the same as money for things to wear.<sup>104</sup> As a consequence of the Indians' anger about the buffalo slaughter by American hunting parties, war was rumored to be in the offing.<sup>105</sup> In June bands of Kiowas, Comanches and Cheyennes rode to Adobe Walls in the Texas Panhandle where a number of buffalo hunters had set up a home base during their hunt. The Indians intended to catch the hunters unaware, but as luck would have it, found them awake. After

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apparently. Haworth reported that, while he could not get first hand witnesses to such transactions, "some body has been doing it very extensively as a great many of my Indians are armed with the latest improved pistols and guns with large amounts of ammunition to suit them." Haworth complained that his traders "were not able to get only a small part of the Robes sold by the Indians of the Agency although offering to pay as much as the other Traders giving as a reason that the Indians claimed they could trader for arms and ammunition with the traders of the other Agencies. My traders only got about five thousands robes while the Wichita trader got almost double that amount, the Cheyenne traders getting over thirty thousand at least such is my information." Haworth to Enoch Hoag, April 28, 1874, Haworth to CIA E.P. Smith, May 15, 1874, J.S. Evans and Co. to Haworth, April 24, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>104</sup> Haworth to Enoch Hoag, June 6, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>105</sup> Agent Haworth, however, hoped for peace despite the "Great complaint...made by the Indians of the terrible destruction of the buffalo by hunting parties, who are reported to be killing them by the thousands taking the hides, and leaving the bodies to rot on the Plains." Haworth to Enoch Hoag, June 27, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

a day of fighting the well-protected hunters, the Indians lost interest and abandoned the attack.<sup>106</sup>

Added to the misery of Indians and Americans alike was the punishing weather from which there was no escape in the summer and winter of 1874. The summer drought, accompanied at one point by a grasshopper plague, combined with temperatures exceeding 110 degrees.<sup>107</sup> September rains flooded previously dried creeks, rivers and roads making them impassable and obstructing incoming supply wagons. Later, early winter conditions turned the rain to wind-driven sleet and snow.<sup>108</sup> Camps of "friendly Indians" became "cities of refuge" for outlaw Indians driven in by inclement weather, poor buffalo hunting, and lack of access to rations.<sup>109</sup> In the face of punishing conditions and lack of food, the Indians found it impossible to stave off the final blow that would prevent any further resistance to the reservation. As the summer temperatures climbed, sometimes as high at 112, the drought dried up creeks and turned "vegetation as dry as the frosts of Fall," the outside bands faced their last battle. This time, however, neither arms nor ambush could slay this enemy. For the government of the

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<sup>106</sup> Hagan, United States-Comanche Relations, pp. 107-108.

<sup>107</sup> Haworth to Smith, Aug. 17, 1874, September 5, 1874, September 10, 1874, September 24, 1874, June 27, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>108</sup> Haworth to Smith, Nov., 19, Dec. 21, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>109</sup> J.W. Davidson to Asst. Adj. Gen., Dept. of Texas, August 14, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

United States had formulated one last policy to bring the Indians under control, and that policy was the decision to hold the Indians' rations ransom until the bands agreed to the enrollment of each individual Indian over age 15. Bureaucracy would succeed where arms and threats had not. With the coming of enrollment, individuals who comprised the off-reservation bands lost anonymity. The loss of anonymity separated them from a secondary resource, government rations that were required to cope with the difficult conditions on the Plains. Throughout the fall, winter and spring of 1874-75, the bands surrendered to the Army officials at Fort Sill, not as a result of military defeat, but because they had run out of resources.

Both reservation and renegade headmen denounced the policy of enrollment and resisted to varying degrees. Some chiefs tried to shame cooperative leaders out of compliance with the enrollment order. Womans Heart berated the Apaches, saying "that the white man was only humiliating them, trying to humble them and grind them into the dust."<sup>110</sup> At the center of the effort was Kicking Bird whose mediation brought in the Kiowa bands after initial delays. The young men refused to give their names directly to the authorities. Rather they insisted on enrolling through Kicking Bird. In August the military carried out the enrollment and declared

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<sup>110</sup> George Sanderson to Post Adjutant, August 5, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

it finished. Thereafter, Indians who had refused to be included in the enrollment were added only under condition of the Indian agent's assurance of the enrollee's innocence of raiding activities. Even at that the applicant was labeled a prisoner of war and treated accordingly. Hostiles, or the unenrolled, were kept from collecting rations under the new distribution, which required each recipient to be present at the scheduled roll call.<sup>111</sup>

The enrollment tightened the boundaries of the reservation, separating the outlaw bands from the reservation Indians without completely succeeding in severing the ties between them. One military officer complained that "What proportion of these Kiowas are friendly or not is beyond the wisdom of Solomon to determine, though I believe a practical solution of the question will be given by the requirement that everyone shall present himself in person to receive his certificate, many of them would not have given their names except through the Chief and will not come in for the certificate and further than this they will go on the warpath of their own accord the moment a movement begins against the outlaw Indians."<sup>112</sup> The reservation people did not have to concern

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<sup>111</sup> James M. Haworth to E.P. Smith, July 25, 1874, August 8, 1874, August 3, 1874, August 11, 1874, August 14, 1874; J.W. Davidson to Asst. Adjt. Gen., Department of Texas, August 14, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>112</sup> George R. Sanderson to Post Adjutant, August-----, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency..

themselves with protecting the outlaws' identities. What the military was unable to accomplish through enrollment, the weather cooperated in finishing the job.

Eventually the outlaws came in throughout the winter of 1874-75 and surrendered themselves to the U.S. Army at Fort Sill and other posts in the area. Winter conditions and diminished buffalo herds drove in the most intractable bands. Once at the Fort, their suffering continued for want of robes for clothing and protective tipis.<sup>113</sup> December brought more rain, sleet and snow and much suffering from the cold and sickness to the children. Bare necessities were in short supply leaving the Indians without substitutes for the absence of buffalo meat. Prisoners of war died in their quarters.<sup>114</sup> The reservation system that the authorities held up as the Indians' salvation was in reality a grim and punishing disappointment for all.

Quaker optimism could not be tempered by the difficulties of the previous year. Agent Haworth cheerfully opined that "I am fully satisfied that...the lesson of the present year will have a very lasting impression upon them; many of them are left very poor, losing everything they possessed, and are now very depending and will require much help from the Government to keep them from suffering. I

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<sup>113</sup> Haworth to E.P. Smith, November 19, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>114</sup> Haworth to E.P. Smith, December 2, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

believe they are now in a situation to receive and appreciate more than ever before the kindly offices of those who seek to help them and better their condition." As for the young men, Haworth prescribed the imprisonment of five to ten from each tribe that participated in the violence of the previous year. After a period of punishment, the young men "would be prepared to benefit their people."<sup>115</sup>

Upon the "renegade" bands' surrender to the United States government at Fort Sill, Indian Territory, the U.S. Army selected 72 men to be removed to Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida for an indefinite period. In doing so the authorities meted out the worst possible punishment for the warriors, in effect banishing them from their tribes. Lt. Richard Pratt volunteered to deliver the prisoners to the fort in May 1875 and to supervise their incarceration.<sup>116</sup> Pratt was a believer in assimilationism and held the view that his military experience on the plains suited him for undertaking the transformation of the southern Plains prisoners. He approached his project with optimism and enthusiasm which he channeled into creating an environment modeled after the idea that Indian identity was malleable

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<sup>115</sup> Haworth to E.P. Smith, December 3, 1874, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>116</sup> Pratt's assignment was made through the War Department by the order of E.D. Townsend, Adjutant General, May 11, 1875, Special Order No. 88, LR, Office of the Adjutant General.

and that the Indians could learn to desire their own absorption into the dominant society.<sup>117</sup>

The Kiowa, Comanche and Apache reservation period has been described by one historian as an "ordeal" during which "Their cherished values and life-style [were] under constant attack." Furthermore, the Indians were "unable to subsist themselves." Following allotment in severalty which led to Indian land alienation, "What actually occurred between 1867 and 1906 was to transform the Comanches from a proud and fiercely independent people into apathetic wards of the United States."<sup>118</sup> In addition to experiencing victimization, Comanche, Kiowa and Apache people also participated in the shaping of their lives, reconceptualized their place in the world and their relationship to an unknown future, innovated within an artificial economy to improve their daily lives, and constructed a range of

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<sup>117</sup> Pratt's memoirs and letters from Fort Marion are consistent on the issue of removal of Indian children from the reservation to boarding schools to break the community hold on them. He also pinned his greatest hopes on the young who exhibited potential to "be carried forward to industrious civilization." The older men from Fort Marion, he thought, were best suited for the reservation as an "element of great good." Pratt to Adjutant General, February 20, 1877, LR, Office of the Adjutant General. His memoir exhibits a jaundiced view of the Indian Service and government anthropologists whose interests, he believed, were served by obstructing the Indian advancement toward education and the arts of civilization. Pratt also loathed the principle of segregation and therefore opposed the reservation system as an obstacle to their "Americanization." He believed in segregating children from their families and exposing them to American society that they would naturally be inclined to embrace. Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), pp. 268-73.

relationships with non-Indians which they used to negotiate their impoverished present.

This is evident in the continued circulation of stolen and traded goods to the benefit of the larger community to include off and on-reservation bands. The traditional role of the goods held throughout the first near decade of the reservation, reflecting the persistence of tribal values and social organizations. The young men retained their value as providers of goods that circulated within the pre-existing system and thus their identities as raiders and hunters, until such time when their activities became a threat to the communities' well-being. Though their identities would shift from raiders and hunters to prisoners-of-war, the value system and social organization would persist as we will see in the production and circulation of ledger drawings from Fort Marion.

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<sup>118</sup> Hagan, United States-Comanche Relations, p. xiii-xiv.





## Chapter Two

The renegades who surrendered at Fort Sill as prisoners of war faced an unknown fate. During the spring of 1875, Kicking Bird, the recognized "chief" of the Kiowas, assisted in identifying outlaws for punishment. Seventy-two men were quickly rounded up and put on board wagons for a long trip east. Later traveling by train and boat they finally reached their destination, St. Augustine, Florida in May 1875. The young men who were included in the banishment presented the strongest challenge to the civilization program. Ironically, they came to be viewed as the likeliest agents for their tribes' cultural transformation. Fortunately, they left a body of work that permits further exploration of the problematic boundaries through which Indians and Anglo-Americans negotiated cultural relations.

During their three-year incarceration some two dozen young men produced a corpus of pencil and paper drawings work now known as ledger art. The content of the drawings provides a window into a peculiar temporal conjunction in which the young men found themselves, that is, the meeting of their immediate past threatened with eradication and a future marked for cultural revolution. The young men, and all of Native America, were presumed to be on a cusp constructed and imposed out of an ambitious social

experiment based in assimilationist ideas. The drawings the young men produced during their incarceration, therefore, represent a significant body of evidence as to the men's interaction with a closely controlled environment designed to reconstruct their identity.

The content of the drawings in combination with the circulation of ledger art to American visitors and local habitants of St. Augustine produce an image of Indian-white relations. Between 1875 and 1878 the prisoners produced and sold or gave away over 800 drawings. The demand for drawings and other curios demonstrate a strong curiosity about the men and their art. More important, the movement of drawings locates new intersections and points of negotiation between American Indians and Anglo-Americans on a conceptual plane. Within those negotiations, those former wild outlaw Indians assumed a new identity as the tribes' best hope for achieving civilization through separation from home and an intensive education. The young men, without completely rejecting the idea that education was the best route to a positive outcome, exhibited in their drawings a strong and persistent identification with their tribes' histories and cultures. Their drawings chronicled those histories, details of pre-reservation life, and their Fort Marion experience. Viewed as a body of work, the drawings contain a large number of images in which dominance is not

present at all, fewer scenes in which symbols of dominance are prominent, some which suggest a critique of the new order, and others which are so experimental that they defy categorization.

St. Augustine had been a Spanish city originally being founded by Menendez in 1565. The city was associated with various colonial military operations, Franciscan missions and the European contest for control over the New World. It was sacked by Francis Drake in 1580 and attacked by other colonial powers before coming under British possession in 1763. After yet another brief period of Spanish control, the United States took possession of the city in 1781.<sup>1</sup>

Fort Marion came into existence in 1756 during the Spanish period. It sat at the north end of the city where it occupied a commanding position over the harbor. The fort was unique in its medieval architecture and was, according to the author of one tourist publication, "a magnificent specimen of the art of military engineering as developed at the time of its construction." It occupied an acre of land and was "a massive structure of coquina stone, with curtains, bastions, moat and outworks." The dungeons of Fort Marion became home for the famous Seminole leaders Osceola and Coacoochee.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E.H.Reynolds, The Standard Guide to St. Augustine and Fort Marion (St. Augustine: E.H. Reynolds, 1885), p. 85-88.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-32, 40, 85-88.

After arriving at Fort Marion, Richard Pratt set out to maximize the Indians' exposure to activities intended to break down tribal affinities. Pratt, as did other reformers, believed that even the most "savage" of Indians could be reformed if separated from the tribal community, placed in the proper conditions and exposed to Anglo American ideas and values.<sup>3</sup> The transformation began with a modified appearance including hair cuts and army issue uniforms. Pratt's program included morning exercise drills, English language classes and paying day labor jobs around the Fort and St. Augustine. The men attended church services on Sundays where they were taught to pray and sing Christian hymns. Pratt's program was assimilationism in the extreme, tightly controlled, monitored, and persistently grounded in the ambition of transforming former "outlaw" Indians into civilized citizens. He was ardent in his support of the civilization project as a solution to the

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<sup>3</sup> A prominent theme in the history of Indian-white relations concerns efforts taken by the federal government and the Christian reformist establishment to civilize American Indians in preparation for their eventual absorption into American society. First attempts to acculturate Indians can be traced back to early missionaries. Assimilationist ideas gathered momentum in the last half of the 19th century and were promoted by organized reform groups such as the Indian Rights Association, founded in 1882, and the Lake Mohonk Conference which was associated with the Board of Indian Commissioners. Frederick Hoxie's work, The Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) is perhaps the best source on the intellectual history of assimilationism. The best source on assimilationism in the early national period and beyond is Francis Paul Prucha's The Great Father (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

Indian problem, a problem that had not abated with the confinement of Plains Indians to reservations.

Pratt reported to Washington on the prisoners' conditions and progress, frequently calling attention to their poor health and despondency. Being aware of the Plains tradition of drawing on processed buffalo hides, he provided them new materials such as paper, pens, pencils and watercolors. They were presented to the prisoners to help them pass the time with familiar activities. Ledger books, pens and pencils, made available through trade relations between Indians and whites, had begun to replace the use of buffalo hides and traditional dyes and implements in the early 19th century. While buffalo hides remained plentiful and utilized for pictographic records, modern materials were more easily transportable. Ledger books could be produced more quickly and carried away. Capt. Pratt's prisoners were probably already familiar with modern materials, but the content of ledger drawings reflected the passing of a way of life which had been the traditional source for hide pictography.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to the reservation, experienced warriors who distinguished themselves by some extraordinarily daring achievement such as counting coup recorded their feats on

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<sup>4</sup> Pratt wrote about his experiences in Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, Robert M. Utley, ed. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964). See also,

hides, thereby elevating and reinforcing their status within their bands and the larger tribal community. An older man might invite young men known for their artistic abilities to paint a hide under his direction. As the experienced warrior narrated the story, the young painters would record the details of a dramatic moment onto the hide. In this way the less experienced warrior improved his artistic technique and relived the narrator's heroic activities, thus preparing him for a warrior's life.

Self-glorification exalted accomplished warriors whose example inspired young men to excel in the competitive and dangerous activities that bands pursued through hunting, raiding and warfare. Though traditional pictographs were most prominently linked with warrior accounts, they also appeared in other forms. Geometric designs adorned women's and men's robes as well as tipi coverings. Messages carved into trees and stones and imprinted on small hides communicated to others a band's movement, destination, or those of an enemy. Pictography was not restricted to the warriors' domain, but was also used to adorn, record, describe and communicate with others.<sup>5</sup>

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Karen Daniels Petersen, Plains Indian Art from Fort Marion (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), pp. 21-23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 17-18. Plains pictographic arts have the subject of numerous museum exhibitions and companion catalogues in addition to anthropological studies of the people who occupied the Great Plains. John Ewers was a leading authority on the subject which he discussed in Plains Indian Painting (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1939) and various articles such as "Plains

Pratt's gesture must have been a welcome one because over the course of the next three years, the artists produced representational drawings of traditional Plains life and chronicled their experiences as prisoners of the federal government. The drawings descended from a pictographic hide tradition, but broke from pre-existing drawing conventions in three general areas: the use of non-traditional media; the emergence of unified composition, perhaps forced by the boundaries of the paper surface; and the radical departure from traditional pictographic content. Of the 847 extant works, over a third contained images of hunting activities and camp life, while less than ten percent were devoted to battle scenes and horse raids.<sup>6</sup>

Ledger drawings incorporated landscape, camp life, humor, romance, ceremonial life and a wealth of detail in regalia and clothing. The prisoners documented their journey to St. Augustine by wagon, train and boat, the prison's architecture, Florida fauna and the tourists and visitors who attended the mock powwows that Pratt staged for a curious public. The artists included the presence of Anglo-Americans. Their trade goods and those coming from

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Indian Artists and Anthropologists: A Fruitful Collaboration" American Indian Art, 9(1): 36-49. It has also been a subject of discussion by art historians, usually as the antecedent to ledger drawings. Joyce Szabo's work on Howling Wolf's ledger drawings discusses this in Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 3-13, as does Petersen, cited above.

<sup>6</sup> Peterson, pp. 24-27.



Mexicans--rifles and pistols, kettles, American flags, army uniforms, cloth, blankets, and hats--are present throughout the corpus of Fort Marion drawings.

The prisoners' art exhibited an eagerness to experiment with broader themes of everyday Plains life, which we can assume followed from their willingness to set aside the strict conventions of hide pictography. The consequence was an unforeseen productive impulse that flourished in an environment which was designed to punish through deprivation and to transform through separation from their sources of identity. Ledger drawings, however, were perhaps the outward expression of the limits of social engineering. They captured on paper the warriors' preoccupations with practices and environments with which they identified as tribal people.

Art historians and anthropologists have approached the Fort Marion works with a view toward their worthiness as objects of art or their enrichment of the ethnographic literature.<sup>7</sup> Those disciplines bring valuable insights to

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<sup>7</sup> Karen Daniels Petersen's work on Fort Marion ledger drawings exhibited an interest in the drawings as works of art and as a source of ethnographic information. While Petersen was a self-trained student of ledger drawings, her exhaustive documentation of the Fort Marion drawings spawned interest among art historians, the most prominent of which is Joyce Szabo's Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992). Anthropologist Candace Greene explored Plains pictography from a structuralist theoretical perspective in her doctoral dissertation, "Women, Bison and Coup: A Structuralist Analysis of Cheyenne Pictographic Art" (University of Oklahoma, 1985). She has extended her work to ledger

bear on this body of texts because they identify useful correlations between people and the artistic and cultural expressions "typical" of them, in this case a known group of Plains people, for purposes specific to the disciplines. The art historian calls upon cultural content to understand the art while the anthropologist uses the material to understand the culture. Descriptive analyses are less popular currently but are readily available in earlier literature. They help to answer questions about the way in which the drawings were produced, the techniques that were applied, and how elements dissimilar from cultural convention might represent stylistic progress.

We benefit from the valuable evidence of change in the traditional form and how it is being achieved technically and stylistically, but the ledger drawings and their production are treated as autonomous phenomena divorced from specific contexts that concern historians. Consequently, these analyses do not get at the significance of the body of

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drawings, particularly those of Silverhorn. See "Silverhorn," in Visions of the People: A Pictorial History of Plains Indian Life, Evan Maurer, ed., (Minneapolis and Seattle: Minneapolis Institute of Arts and University of Washington Press, 1992). Janet Catherine Berlo has offered the most comprehensive collection of essays by scholars interested in ledger drawings in Plains Indian Drawings, 1856-1935: Pages from a Visual History (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996) which was a companion book to a traveling exhibition by the same name. Ledger drawings have been the subject of several exhibitions, most of which have presented them as art works in a gallery setting. Another important exhibition which made available works from a large private collection was "Beyond the Prison Gates: The Ledger Drawings of Fort Marion," curated by Edwin Wade.

work as it relates to social, economic and cultural conditions. Historical analysis incorporates evidence yielded by other disciplines into more broadly defined questions, and results in interpretations that deepen understanding about the meaning of the ledger drawings as an expression of the artists' experience, and that of the society which they represent. The ledger drawings are thus approached as texts and objects whose histories were intertwined with the communities with which they were identified. That perspective permits us to explore the dynamics of Anglo-Indian relations during the reservation period.

The exchange of ledger drawings has drawn increased scholarly interest since the early 1970s and the appearance of Karen Daniels Petersen's work on the Fort Marion artists. Drawings sold to tourists and given to visitors made their way into various private and institutional collections over time which is where the academic literature has picked up the story of ledger art. We have glossed over the significance of the exchange of drawings between prisoners and a curious public and contented ourselves with the explanation that the impulse that drove those exchanges was the tourists' desire for mementos. But that overlooks the context in which drawings were exchanged, one that was complex and filled with ambiguity.

In 1875, the same year that the southern Plains prisoners were sent to Fort Marion, the federal government had established an executive board to oversee the planning of the Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia. The program included an ethnological exhibition developed in collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum and the Department of Interior's Indian Bureau. The previously mentioned January 1875 circular was distributed to all Indian agents calling for materials "illustrating the habits, customs, peculiarities, and general condition of the various Indian tribes of the United States and also of such relics of their predecessors as may be procurable." The department wanted "everything tending to illustrate the present and past condition of the American Indian"<sup>8</sup> A subsequent circular noted that it was the "intention of the Government to have everything peculiarly American represented, as far as practicable. A marked deficiency would exist were the characteristic features in the life, habits and history of the North American Indian omitted."<sup>9</sup>

The desire "to have everything peculiarly American represented" suggested that the exhibition was a statement of national identity and history. While American Indians were included in that history the national memory proved to

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<sup>8</sup>C. Delano, Secretary of the Interior, Circular, January 15, 1875, Kiowa File, Roll KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

be selective in exhibiting American Indian "life, habits and history." The planners' emphasis on "traditional" Indian life suggests their intention to ignore a four-hundred-year history of contact between American Indian tribes and Europeans. No attention was given to the government's current attempts to impose a cultural transformation.<sup>10</sup>

Founding Smithsonian Secretary Joseph Henry named Spencer F. Baird, Assistant Secretary in Charge of the United States National Museum, as Smithsonian representative to the President's appointed Board.<sup>11</sup> The Smithsonian and the Indian Office merged their programs on American Indian ethnography. The Indian program was designed to celebrate the rise of ethnology as a scientific field of study, to exhibit the documentation of cultural materials of peoples passing out of existence, and to present evidence of the persistence of savagery through the exhibition of Indian objects and ways of life in diorama forms.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> E.P. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 1, 1875, Indian Office Circular, Number 3, Kiowa File, Roll KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>10</sup> The Centennial Exhibition was, according to Robert Rydell, an escape and response to post-war economic and political uncertainties. The "colossal edifices" of the major buildings, the exuberant celebration of technological progress, and self-conscious assertions of American artistic achievements encouraged renewed confidence in the nation recently torn apart by the bloody Civil War. See Robert W. Rydell, All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 11-13.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Otis T. Mason, Ethnological Directions Relative to the Indian Tribes of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875). This document was "Prepared under

The Indian exhibition followed a three-part scheme that reflected the state of anthropological methodologies. A broad category of "man" permitted the Smithsonian scientists to present findings on the physical attributes of Indian people, their peculiar pathologies and the phenomenon of tribal organization. Mortuary evidence, cranial and bone measurements, and preserved tissue, hair, and teeth affirmed anthropology as a science given to precision in the study of humankind. "Surroundings" explored the physical environment in which Native people lived and correlated various tribes and their habits with those environments. "Culture" was by far the most exhaustive category focussing on "food," "habitations," utilitarian goods," implements of general use, of war and the chase," "means of locomotion and transportation," "measuring and valuing," "language and literature," social life, government and religion.<sup>13</sup>

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direction of Indian Bureau," but as Smithsonian Secretary Joseph Henry noted in his introduction, "the display in question will be exhibited under the joint auspices of the Smithsonian Institution and of the Indian Bureau of the Interior Department, both departments joined in making collections for a common object." Otis Mason was a professor of anthropology at Columbia University whom the Smithsonian and Indian Bureau had identified "to draw up a systematic schedule of the various articles of clothing, ornaments, household utensils, implements of agriculture, weapons of war and the chase, tools of trade, the apparatus used for the pursuit and capture of game,&c., and a pamphlet was accordingly prepared by this gentleman, and printed by the Indian Bureau, embracing over six hundred subjects," in House Executive Document 148, 44th Cong., 1st Sess., "Additional Appropriation for the Executive Departments of the United States at the Centennial Exhibition, " p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-32.

Baird hoped that the Congress would fund an "exhibition of living representations of the principal Indian tribes." He stated: "There is reason. . .to believe that no feature on that occasion would be more interesting to our people and to foreign visitors than" a display of living Indians going about daily life, one that was presumably becoming extinct. The Indian exhibition created the experience of witnessing the passage of Indians out of existence thereby enhancing the value of the objects being shown and the exhibition as presentation of the past. Baird wrote: ". . .it is quite reasonable to infer that, by the expiration of a second hundred-year period of the life of the American Republic, the Indians will have entirely ceased to present any distinctive characters, and will be merged into the general population."<sup>14</sup>

The ethnological collection "will be the only exposition of the past; and, with each passing year, these specimens will become more valuable and more highly appreciated."<sup>15</sup> The southern Plains tribes were not included as one of the featured "principal tribes," because they had not yet been targeted as a subject for field work and study among American anthropologists. James Mooney's work among the Kiowas would not begin for another two

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<sup>14</sup> Baird's report was attached to House Executive Document 148, 44th Cong., 1st Sess., which contained the request for "additional appropriation for the executive departments of the United States at the Centennial Exhibition," p. 35.

decades, because the Kiowas and other tribes were not subdued by the U.S. Army until the surrender in 1875.

Nevertheless, popular interest in American Indian cultures coincided with the rise of anthropology dedicated to amassing knowledge and materials related to the study of aboriginal peoples. The rise of anthropology paralleled a growing bureaucracy dedicated to the control and eventual elimination of American Indian people through the destruction of their cultures. Military might, the civilization program, and reformist zeal for a humane solution to the "Indian problem" left little doubt as to the inevitable outcome. The Indian exhibition combined with a visually powerful statement of the nation's expansion, its conquest over land and people, and post Civil War technological advances that created and satisfied an American appetite for celebration of progress. This was the context in which drawings produced by Native warriors-turned-prisoners were acquired.

Assimilation mandated the absorption of Native people through a process of acculturation. The policy held both threats and promises. Failure to conform to the civilization program would result in punishment such as the withdrawal of rations. Compliant Indians were offered the promise of absorption into American society where work would be rewarded with prosperity, education with enlightenment,

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



and Christianity with salvation. The stated promises and goals of the American assimilation program mirrored the American view of its own history as a nation struggling against the forces of wilderness and emerging on the other side redeemed and victorious with a rightful claim to that which it had conquered.<sup>16</sup>

But the language circulating among various sectors of American society and government contradicted itself on the subject of the Indians. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of the Fort Marion prisoners. Having arrived as vilified savages, the warriors took on a more benign identity of accessible curiosities in the public eye. While Pratt's assignment to supervise their imprisonment was justified on the basis of his commitment to assimilation, he acted informally as an agent. He encouraged them to reenact their dances, to sell their drawings, and to perform for visitors and tourists in various ways. Pratt embodied the ambivalence that prevailed throughout the nation's government and society which called for Indian conformity to American ideals and values, while seeking performance on demand.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Roy Harvey Pearce, Savagism and Civilization: The Study of the Indian and the American Mind (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), pp. 157-58.

<sup>17</sup> Pratt's words and actions contradicted each other no less than those of the objects of his criticisms--the Indian Bureau and the government anthropologists. He wrote in his memoirs that "the Indian, no less than foreigners, must be unified with and adopted into the nation." Indians also desired this

The prisoners were no less inconsistent because, in part, their position was largely one of reaction to their circumstances. Their immediate concerns were the fate that awaited them at Fort Marion and to be reunited with their families. The southern Plains warriors made the journey to St. Augustine with great anxiety. The uncertainty of their fate hung over the prisoners who lost two members of the group before reaching St. Augustine. Bear's Heart, a Cheyenne warrior, described his fear after his release from Fort Marion. After the Indian prisoners learned that Capt. Pratt had been assigned to supervise their journey to Florida, Bear's Heart said of the trip, "When I ride to Florida all the time I think by and by he kill me." Upon their arrival, the young man was further confounded by the "womans and mans [who] come to see me and shake hand." At that point Bear's Heart concluded that the soldiers would not take their lives and he set out to conform to Pratt's regimen.<sup>18</sup>

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transformation, Pratt argued, as evidenced in his personal communications with Native people who expressed the desire to follow "the white man's road." Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, p. 269. However, during his tenure as supervisor of the Fort Marion prisoners, Pratt himself could not resist exhibiting Indians for the local St. Augustine community and visitors. He ceased permitting Indian dances because they "were not calculated to promote any advantage to the interracial respect." He added, "I had the consciousness, however, forever after that, that had I been so minded I could have handled the Indians more wisely and out "Buffalo Billed" Mr. Cody in his line." Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>18</sup> Southern Workman, July 1880. From the student file of James Bear's Heart, Hampton University Archives.

The fear of death persisted, however, because of the constant threat of sickness and anxiety from being separated from their families. Pratt reported to Lt. Col. William Sheridan the death of Heap of Birds, a prominent Cheyenne headman and the depression that it brought to the other prisoners.<sup>19</sup> In the same letter he described a talk that another Cheyenne chief Minimic had made to him.

Minimic, the only prominent Cheyenne Chief remaining of the four I started with has just been making me a long talk about their past and future, and makes tearful appeals for restoration to his family, realizing fully the situation his people are in, their necessities for the future and argues that he can and will do much good in helping his own relations and such others as will accept a working road. He reminds me of the death of Grey Beard, Lean Bear, and Heap of Birds, and says that he now stands alone, and his heart cries to be with his wife and children.<sup>20</sup>

Pratt's letters to Washington attested to the prisoners' persistent despondency. Yellow fever had threatened the prisoner population throughout the season as well as diseases unknown to them before living among the Anglo population. As Pratt stated in one letter, "Spotted Elk, a Cheyenne died in January, of consumption, and Ah-ke-ah - the Kiowa who have the information last spring of the intention of the Kiowas to escape will probably die of the same disease before many weeks if left here." Pratt felt that a number of others showed signs of consumption. He thought

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<sup>19</sup> R.H. Pratt to Lt. Col. William Sheridan, October 16, 1877. NARG 75, LR, Office of the Adjutant General.

that the two men who died "were among the most able bodied when brought here."<sup>21</sup>

Pratt's regimen created an environment that called for a radical transformation in every respect from physical appearance to frames of knowledge. The work of following the "white road" was arduous for the warriors. Paul Tsaitkopeta, a Kiowa prisoner, reflected on his intellectual journey in a lengthy letter to Pratt. Tsaitkopeta reminisced about his early days with Pratt at Fort Marion where he struggled to learn to "speak good." He wrote, "White man's talk is very hard. . . .Long time ago when you first began to teach us you showed us a card and asked us what that was. It was A. B. C. but I did not know anything about it. I only laughed in my heart. . . .By and by I think yes! he wants to show us the road (poore mouth)." But looking back Tsaitkopeta saw that, "In one year I heard a little, and something I began to know of what you said. Again in one more year I understood a heap. Again in one more year I knew almost all your talk."

Tsaitkopeta also had much to say about Pratt and assimilation. "I took it [Pratt's "talk] and put it away in my head to remember. . . .It is very hard to remember what we learn. Every day I study and learn something and think I

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Pratt to Lt. Col. Dent, April 7, 1877 and Pratt to Lt. Col. Forsyth, April 8, 1877, NARG 75, LR, Office of the Adjutant General.

know it. At night I go to sleep and when I wake in the morning it is all gone." But he did not give up. "By and by I study again and pack it away in my head. I learn. . .I try, try, and then in a little while I know. I think a great deal--I think all the time I work. Whatever I do I think think [sic] so I may know and keep what I learn."<sup>22</sup>

Tsaipoketa's and Bear Heart's memories of their experiences were captured in the words of the new language they acquired at Fort Marion and from a perspective of gratitude for having had their lives spared.

Dealing with a curious public was no less challenging for the Indians. Although their letters do not address this directly, it is a matter of record that they experienced distress in their encounters with curiosity-seekers that exhibited the grasping tendencies typical of tourists. The Southern Workman noted, "The Indians have quite a remarkable natural talent for drawing and painting, in their own peculiar style, which reminds one of Egyptian art, and they are allowed here [Hampton], as they were in St. Augustine, to paint pictures and fans for sale, the money going to themselves and used for clothing." Yet when it came to depicting war, a common interest of tourists, the prisoners responded differently. "But though fond of painting wild hunts, and war dances, and grand battles, they are not fond

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<sup>22</sup> Tsait-kope-ta to Richard Pratt, April 1878. R.H. Pratt Box, Hampton University Archives.

of recounting their own savage deeds, and confided to Captain Pratt that they do not like to be asked by visitors if they have scalped and killed people."<sup>23</sup>

The Indians' reluctance to bare all for the visitors suggests that they drew boundaries between themselves and the Americans. While they complied with Pratt's urgings to stage mock powwows, to draw pictures for tourists, and to exhibit their newly acquired knowledge on demand, they had defined limits to the exploitation. They appeased their audiences with what they imagined to be a harmless level of spectacle, but there was a line that they would not cross. This is also evident in the content of the drawings. Despite an obvious market for battle scenes, such drawings constitute less than ten percent of the totality. Some Indian artists produced drawings to satisfy this demand which constituted work set aside strictly for public consumption.

What the prisoners thought of the drawings we cannot know precisely, but their content suggests that they were the result of creative processes which brought forth numerous symbolically loaded images. Wohaw's drawing of a group of identical uniformed prisoners taking their daily class is unextraordinary but for the presence of a spectral plainly clothed warrior. He stands apart from the men at their desks as if he were watching over them as they worked

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<sup>23</sup> Southern Workman, Vol. 7, No. 6, June 1878, p.g 46.

to absorb the teacher's lesson. The prisoners appear to be unaware of the ghostly figure that the artist has placed in their presence as if to emphasize the contrast between their new circumstances and a recently abandoned life on the Plains. Wohaw's drawing interjects the authority of the warrior-mentor into Pratt's regimen suggesting a continued presence among them as a challenge to the authorities who presently controlled their lives.<sup>24</sup>

The prisoners' behavior and drawings indicate that they frequently looked to sources outside of their immediate circumstances for solace and perhaps inspiration. One account exists where Woman's Heart asked for permission to walk to the beach for a bath. Pratt granted his request and stood watch over the moonlit beach from the window of his quarters. The prisoner completed his bath and emerged from the water on the beach where he paused. There, Woman's Heart fell to his knees and lifted his arms to the sky in a gesture of appeal.<sup>25</sup> Again, Wohaw captured the impulse to transcend his captivity in a fantasy filled drawing. Colorful birds occupy a small bush from which a male projects with arms extended downward merging with his body. An Indian woman stands to the right and possibly an Anglo woman to the left. Many interpretations of Wohaw's drawing

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<sup>24</sup> The image is available in several secondary sources. See Moira Harris, Between Two Cultures: Kiowa Art at Fort Marion (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1989), pp. 116-117.

<sup>25</sup> Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, p. 158.

could be offered, but they could only be speculative. Its significance is that it left behind additional evidence of a creative impulse to experiment outside of previous artistic conventions and reflects a conceptual orientation that contrasts with the rationality of the assimilationist program.<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of death and disease, the prisoners exhibited an acute awareness of their mortality, but Minimic demonstrated that even under extreme duress they maintained a sense of the need to negotiate an unknown future. That future, however, must be embraced as one community and Minimic was willing to draw from his experiences at Fort Marion to encourage his "relations and such others as will accept a working road." His desperation was not in facing an unknown future, it was a reaction to his present circumstances in which "he now [stood] alone," separated from his relatives and tribe. Minimic also spoke through Pratt in a petition forwarded to Washington in which he stated that he spoke for the "old men," while Making

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<sup>26</sup> For Woman, Birds and Indians, see Moira Harris, Between Two Cultures, pp. 118-119. Wohaw was given to flights of fantasy and seemed fascinated with his encounters with the novelties of American society as well. In that respect, he exhibited an interest in things new, exotic and outside the realm of his experience as a Plains warrior, similar to tourists' fascination with American Indians. Pratt donated a drawing by Wohaw of a circus tightrope walker to the Smithsonian. Given the level of local promotion of St. Augustine as a tourist city, it is conceivable that a circus passed through town and that Pratt would have encouraged the prisoners to attend as a diversion from their monotonous days. Drawings (Kiowa), No. 30,750,



Medicine spoke for the "young men." Minimic contrasted the life of the warriors before and after imprisonment, protesting that all the bad behavior of their previous life had been thrown away. In its place they sought land where they could live in peace and by their labor. Washington, Minimic pleaded, must "give us some land. He has a great deal of it and might give us some to raise things on. . .let us go back. . .send us to this new country where we can learn to work and support ourselves."<sup>27</sup>

We can infer from Minimic's appeal to to "let us go back" that the "new country" was the reservation carved out from lands that were previously under the control of the warriors who were beginning to reconceptualize it as an unknown frontier in their traditional homeland. Minimic received a letter from his son, White Buffalo Head and family members, on June 30, 1877. The pictograph included 34 images of the "new country." In addition to representing each individual family member, the images told a story of their attempts to grow corn on a plot of land they worked cooperatively with one hoe. They had acquired a wagon and a plow. Others in the community also grew corn on plots of land. But despite their labor they were not as prosperous as before indicated by the single lodge in which they all

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Anthropological Archives, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

<sup>27</sup> Pratt to Adjutant General, February 20, 1877, NARG 75, LR, Office of the Adjutant General.

lived, "not in several lodges as they did when he [Minimic] left home." White Buffalo Head also indicated that the letter was to be shared with Minimic's fellow prisoner, Cohoe. The letter with Pratt's interpretive notes, survives in the Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution where, Pratt hoped, it would "aid science in the study of [Minimic's] people." The amateur field worker hastened to add that he had explained Washington's desire to collect and preserve the letter to Minimic, all of which was understood by him.<sup>28</sup>

Minimic's elocution--his references to the importance of negotiating the future as a reunited community and the shift in perception of his homeland as a new land--contradict the common assumption that Native people passively abandoned their past and their identity. He and presumably others were being kept informed about reservation activities and understood that the new regime's occupation of their old lands had ushered in many changes. The letters they received served as a form of intelligence gathering and gave them an informed perspective for planning their

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<sup>28</sup> Drawings (Cheyenne), No. 30,740, Anthropological Archives, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. The index describes the object as a "pictographic letter from White Buffalo Head and family to his father, Minimic. Cheyenne Agency, I.T. n.d. [1877] Pencil and crayon drawing (ink markings correspond to accompanying explanation by R.H. Pratt); on paper from Cheyenne and Arapaho Manual Labor and Boarding School. The letter was collected and signed by R.H. Pratt, 1st Lt., 10th Cavalry, Ft. Marion, June 30, 1877." Received from Lt. R.H. Pratt.

futures. Rather than being passive, the warriors' words and drawings indicate a heightened acuity of the senses necessary to the challenge of negotiating that new physical and conceptual landscape.

Minimic expressed concern about the past, present and future in his petitions to Washington, while the warriors who drew in ledger books also demonstrated the awareness of occupying a cusp. The prisoners' awareness of the past and future meeting in the present is captured beautifully in Wohaw's famous image "Between Two Worlds" in which a plains warriors stands astride two idealized images, one of the Indians' conventional lodge on the open plains and one of the Anglo-American farm. The male Indian straddles the boundary that separates them emphasizing the confrontation with the impossible choice that the assimilationists have imposed on him. The drawing starkly reduces the assimilationist mandate to a self-conscious, purposeful and complete abandonment of one system for another, implying that both systems are mutually exclusive and irreconcilable. Some art historians have appropriated the perspective of Indians tragically succumbing to being caught "between two worlds," or they have emphasized the significance of the warriors' face turned to the farm as a sign of the inevitability of Anglo cultural conquest. But, this analysis simply mirrors 19th century constructs of Indian

identity and follows interpretations of ledger drawings as romantic or nostalgic.

Whether Wohaw intended to present himself as being caught between two worlds is unknown to us, but he nevertheless presented a confrontation with coerced social experimentation on the one hand, and even more brilliantly the confluence of past, present and future in his own life and the lives of all Native people in the 19th century on the other. We, therefore, have in words and in drawings compelling evidence of the Indians' awareness of the uniqueness of their times and their active confrontation with an unfolding transition. Additional evidence suggests that we should be wary about interpretations that present Indians as passively falling into the cracks between two cultures resulting in a tragic loss of identity. Their experiences, words and art indicate otherwise.

The experiences of Howling Wolf offered a dramatic lesson in the ambiguities that compromised the civilization program and engendered doubt among the Indians about the implied promises of assimilation. Howling Wolf, one of the ledger artists, was 23 years old when his people surrendered to the U.S. Army at Fort Sill. The son of a chief of the Dog Soldiers, the young man was strikingly handsome in addition to being well-born. During his captivity he became afflicted with an eye disorder requiring him to travel

escorted to Boston for treatment in July 1877. Pratt's recollection of Howling Wolf's unexpected return is instructive as to the persistence of oppositional constructed identities imposed by Anglo-Americans on American Indians.

We saw [from Pratt's house, located on the bay] a dapper gentleman with hand satchel, derby hat and cane pass up the sea wall into the fort with quick step, and I went to the fort to see who it was, and found that Howling Wolf had returned unannounced, his eyes greatly benefited, and, in addition, in his dress, manner and conduct, he had imbibed a large stock of Boston qualities; in fact, I was not long in finding out that, in some respects, he had taken on altogether too much Boston for his own resources and future good. He became insubordinate and insurrectionary and I was forced to discipline him.<sup>29</sup>

There was at all times, an inconsistency at work among the assimilationists and their program.<sup>30</sup> The experience of Howling Wolf reflects the paradoxes of the Indians' situation and the essential ambivalence of the civilization program. It called for the Indians to shed their Native identity and take onto themselves the trappings of an Anglicized transformation, but the civilizers were unwilling to have the Indians abandon the willing tractability that signified their inferior status. The independence that was

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<sup>29</sup> Peterson (Norman, 1971), pp. 22-23.

<sup>30</sup> This recorded incident and Pratt's reactions to Howling Wolf's transformation contrast with the stated views of Pratt and fellow reformers who fully believed in the Indian's ability to successfully adopt civilization, but lamented Anglo-America's refusal to accept them if they did. Clyde Ellis, To Change Them Forever: Indian Education at the Rainy Mountain Boarding School, 1893-1920 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 9-10.

a central virtue of modern American identity was not a real option for this and later generations of captive and reservation Indians. Pratt's pervasive self-contradiction manifested itself in his encouragement of the Indians to entertain the local St. Augustine community with mock powwows. The prisoners' vain attempt to recreate their tribal dances resulted in empty spectacle that was captured in an uninspired drawing by Cohoe. Framed on three sides by refined St. Augustine ladies and their suited escorts, identically drawn dancers mimed the dances of the old days. The image of the identical dancers contradicted the individuality of traditional plains dancers and their distinctive appearances. The prisoners as dancers are generalized suggesting that they and their dances were meaningless but presumably welcome to the St. Augustine audience.<sup>31</sup>

Neither Pratt nor the men could have predicted the enormous public interest that the drawings attracted. Visitors and tourists purchased the drawings as mementos of their encounters with the Fort Marion prisoners, at least one of whom, Zotom, had standing orders.<sup>32</sup> Pratt was

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<sup>31</sup> Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, pp.120-121.

<sup>32</sup> Edwin L. Wade and Jacki Thompson Rand, "The Subtle Art of Resistance: Encounter and Accommodation in the Art of Fort Marion" in Janet Catherine Berlo, ed., Plains Indian Drawings, 1865-1935: Pages from a Visual History (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1996), pp. 45-49. See also, Southern Workman, Vol. 7, No. 6, June 1878, p. 46 which notes the

pleased to record that the men frequently sent their earnings from the drawings and other odd jobs to their families back home on the reservation. As a consequence of the immediate sales of the ledger books they have circulated widely eventually finding their way into private and museum collections throughout the United States. Since drawing the attention of art historians following the groundbreaking work of Karen Daniels Petersen in the 1970s, ledger drawings have been subsumed into the category of "art." They have been the subject of numerous traveling exhibitions and command impressive sums in the present collecting market. But, in the late 19th century, they were thought of as quaint curios with the added cache of having been produced by primitives whose way of life was vanishing with the passing of the frontier.

We cannot ignore the recorded experiences of the warriors by which they must have calculated the limits of assimilation. Wohaw was not torn between two cultures. Rather it is far more likely that he understood that the abandonment of one way of life for another was neither achievable nor even available. The prisoners were caught between a past that was forever changed, and a constructed mythic future. The Americans had demonstrated their unwillingness or impotence to create the promised

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Indians' sales of pictures and fans which "many...visitors took away [as] mementos of their visit."

transformation. The only option left for the Indians was to draw upon all of their senses to negotiate a new present. The threat of death, the uncertainties of Minimic's new land, and the desire to reunite their communities amounted to a kind of suffering through fear and deprivation that intensifies mental acuity and creative processes. It was as Nietzsche said, "Then, in this supreme jeopardy of the will, art, that sorceress expert in healing, approaches him; only she can turn his fits of nausea into imaginations with which it is possible to live. These are on the one hand the spirit of the sublime, which subjugates terror by means of art; on the other hand the comic spirit, which releases us, through art, from the tedium of absurdity."<sup>33</sup>

Through art, that sorceress, the Fort Marion prisoners embraced their environs and Pratt's experiment and made it their own. Their drawings and experiences as recorded by others and themselves confirm what the Italian Primo Levi teaches us about the Nazi death camps. That even under extreme duress and lunacy, human beings will organize their lives out of chaos, anomie, and senselessness. The extremes of lived experience can be productive as well as destructive. And seemingly insignificant activities that

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<sup>33</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals translated by Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 52.



constitute daily life can subvert hegemonic projects.<sup>34</sup> My emphasis on productivity and agency rests on an assumption that even those systems designed for the most evil purposes are imperfect and inconsistent. But it is not just an issue of vulnerability arising out of incompetence or disfunctionalism that explains subversion. Rather, it is processes of negotiation that arise in such circumstances leading to some productive result even in the midst of varying degrees of victimization and destruction.

This is a quite different approach to Sally Price's exposition on the "plight of objects from around the world that...have been discovered, seized, commoditized, stripped of their social ties, redefined in new settings, and reconceptualized to fit into the economic, cultural, political, and ideological needs of people from distant

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<sup>34</sup> He wrote of the prisoner's introduction to a "block," "They find themselves inserted in an unknown environment, among hostile companions never seen before, with leaders whose characters they do not know and against whom it is consequently difficult to guard themselves.

Man's capacity to dig himself in, to secrete a shell, to build around himself a tenuous barrier of defense, even in apparently desperate circumstances, is astonishing and merits a serious study. It is based on an invaluable activity of adaptation, partly passive and unconscious, partly active: of hammering in a nail above his bunk from which to hang his shoes; of concluding tacit pacts of non-aggression with neighbours; of understanding and accepting the customs and laws of a single Kommando, a single Block. By virtue of this work, one manages to gain a certain equilibrium after a few weeks, a certain degree of security in the face of the unforeseen; one has made oneself a nest, the trauma of the transplantation is over." Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity (New York: Touchstone, 1996), p. 56.

societies."<sup>35</sup> While this is certainly true of the category of ethnographic materials, the same argument could be made that the production and circulation of curiosities such as ledger drawings was an aspect of "cultural imperialism" that "diminishes the communities that are its suppliers."<sup>36</sup>

Ledger art has been described as romanticized and nostalgic, more recently as historical documents and primary sources of the elusive "Native voice," and as objects of art that merit a place among the great western art. In each instance, constructed object categories "fit into...the needs of people from distant societies," as projections of guilt and regret over the "plight of the American Indian" or as an expression of enlightened "act[s] of tolerance, kindness, and charity." In the case of ledger art as primary source or art object, "the 'equality' accorded to non-Westerners (and their arts), the implication goes, is not a natural reflection of human equivalence, but rather the result of Western benevolence."<sup>37</sup>

The sale of ledger drawings relates directly to the issues of American Indian identity as constructed by Anglo-America, the negotiations that took place as a result of the opportunities created by that ambiguous paradigm, and limits and unforeseen productive aspects of colonialism. The

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<sup>35</sup> Sally Price, Primitive Art in Civilized Places (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

production of ledger art at Fort Marion began as an activity intended to distract the prisoners from their captivity and as a remedy for a pervasive feeling of despondency that the prisoners shared. Common available materials resulted in simple drawings. Put down on numbered blank pages of government ledger books around and over red and blue lines, the warriors' drawings could hardly have been expected to be received as anything other than trinkets or mementos of a visit to Fort Marion. The public's enthusiasm for the ledger drawings was unforeseen and welcome to both the Indians and Pratt. While Pratt could see the object lesson in earning money, the Indians received what they had never known in their personal experiences--public curiosity and affirmation of their creative processes and their results. Ordinary available materials, placed in the hands of bored and depressed warriors, were transformed into extraordinary objects whose histories were inextricably intertwined with a national dialogue about the Indian problem.

The value of ledger drawings was not intrinsic to the objects themselves. This was, after all, a culture--Indian culture--without intrinsic value. Rather, as Appadurai suggests in his discussion on commoditization, their value derived from exchange and the social potential that arose from that activity. Appadurai writes of the demand of

things that resist acquisition.<sup>38</sup> While Anglo America wanted to take possession of the Indian soul, to manipulate Indian identities, and to recreate the image of the Indian, many believed in a kind of essentialist Indian nature, one that was enigmatic, mysterious and elusive. Walt Whitman, while working at the Indian Bureau in 1865, came into contact with American Indians perhaps for the first time. His experience enabled him to see Indians as human and to recognize the similarities between them and him.

At the same time Whitman focussed on the differences between himself and the Indians he may, a difference that he admired.

There is something about these aboriginal Americans, in their highest characteristic representations, essential traits, and the ensemble of their physique and physiognomy--something very remote, very lofty, arousing comparisons with our own civilized ideals--something that our literature, portrait painting, etc., have never caught, and that will almost certainly never be transmitted to the future, even as a reminiscence. No biographer, no historian, no artist, has grasp'd it--perhaps could not grasp it. It is so different, so far outside our standards of eminent humanity.<sup>39</sup>

Whitman perhaps provides an explanation for the enthusiasm with which the ledger drawings were received. They perhaps bridged a gulf that could not be overcome by social intercourse, a futile exercise, according to Whitman,

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<sup>38</sup> Arjun Appadurai, The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ed Folsom, Walt Whitman's Native Representations (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 91.

who tried on numerous occasions to engage the Indians with whom he had contact. He wrote, "They will not readily talk and tell all about themselves, and where they came from, and where they are going to, to a stranger. All my attempts to 'draw them out' in this way have been met with a cool indifference."<sup>40</sup> Unable to draw out the Indians, awed by their presence and struck by the limitations of various media to capture them, American tourists and visitors perhaps found in their drawings what was otherwise unavailable to them. The public's gentle exoticism coincided with a shift in its perception of the former outlaw warriors from savages to "noble savages." Their fragile new identity reinforced Anglo paternalism which was accompanied by constant fear of Indian backsliding.<sup>41</sup>

While fearful of possible regression on the Indians' part, the public sought to experience the warriors' past vicariously through the Indians' public performances and first hand accounts of savagery. The prisoners complied with Pratt's desire to stage entertainment for St. Augustinians and out of town visitors. They also willingly complied with requests to draw subject matter on request. Nevertheless, "though fond of painting wild hunts, and war dances, and grand battles, they are not fond of recounting their own savage deeds, and confided to Captain Pratt that

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

they do not like to be asked by visitors if they have scalped and killed people."<sup>42</sup> The prisoners came to understand their audience better than the audience understood itself. They fathomed the American obsession with Indian "savagery" and used their drawings and new English voices to offer an alternative view. Tsaitkopeta spoke to the Young Men's Christian Association in January 1879 and addressed this point, "Indians got souls--some people don't think so, but it sure. They feel like other men, only don't want deceived him, don't cheat him, don't break promises, and very soon no more enemy and trust him. Some Indians got good hearts," he continued, "just the same as men everywhere, some good, some bad, some kind, some unkind."<sup>43</sup>

The Fort Marion prisoners returned to the reservation in 1878 just before the sun dance. During their incarceration at St. Augustine several of the prisoners had died as had Kicking Bird whose cooperation with the U.S. Army led to their deportation in 1875. During their absence an outbreak of measles had taken a number of relatives despite the Indians' efforts to escape the disease through successive camp relocations. Children continued to die at

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<sup>41</sup> "Will Indians Stay Civilized?" Southern Workman, Vol. 7, No. 7, July 1878, p. 54.

<sup>42</sup> "Anniversary Day at Hampton," Southern Workman, Vol. 7, No. 6, June 1878, p. 46.

<sup>43</sup> Tsaitkopeta to Young Men's Christian Association, January 24, 1879, Southern Workman, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1879, p. 31.

each encampment until they finally reached the end of the mountain. The winter hunt of 1878 had yielded little and Indians and Agent alike pronounced the buffalo hunt a thing of the past.

Returning prisoners quickly recognized the inconsistencies between reformist rhetoric and reservation realities. Eleven days after departing Fort Marion, Awlih was delivered to Fort Sill and shortly after wrote to Etahleah who went with Pratt to Hampton. Of the reservation he wrote, "I am tired of this place here, and wish I were back with you at school." In the meantime, Awlih would "stick to my clothes and what I know about the white man's way, but when my pantaloons and coat wear out I don't know where I shall get any more." His only means of supporting himself was working a small corn field, but otherwise he had nothing to do. He ended, "Give my love to all the Kiowas."<sup>44</sup>

That summer the Kiowas and Comanches organized an intertribal horse race to cheer up the despondent returned prisoners. "I went to that place," said one of Alice Marriott's consultants in 1936.

There were lots of people. The Comanches had a grey horse and the Kiowas a spotted one. They had a race course about 150 yards long. They started to bet against each other. They put up about 5 horses each side and everything else they had. They piled them up

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<sup>44</sup> Aw-Lih to Etahleah, May 26, 1878, Southern Workman, Vol. 7, No. 7, July 1878, p. 50.

in one place. They led the horses up to run to where the crowd was. Everybody was excited. The horses started to run and ran together about half way, then the Kiowa horse left the Comanche horse and the Kiowas won the bets. After the first race was over they wanted another. This time each side picked a grey horse. They had a longer race. The Comanche horse won.

Despite their efforts and the excitement of the horse races, the Kiowas and Comanches could not ease the despair that prevailed among the returned warriors. Their despondency is evident in their letters to other released prisoners who accompanied Capt. Pratt to Hampton Institute in Virginia. Tsaitkopeta wrote to Pratt less than a year after Awlih's letter to Etahleah. Having taken the name Paul Carruthers after the family who sponsored his education at Tarrytown, New York, the reformed Kiowa expressed concern about his friends who had returned to the reservation. He reminded Pratt of his earlier caution not to rely on the Indians to keep to the new road, and that he could not expect such things from the older men. As for Awlih, Tsaitkopeta had grown anxious because he had not heard back from his friend despite having sent several letters.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Paul Caruthers to Richard Pratt, January 5, 1879, Southern Workman, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 1879, p. 19. Perhaps Awlih's silence indicated his disappointment in the agent's failure to secure a position for him on the agency police force. A letter to Pratt from an unnamed person, which we can assume was the agent, stated, "I talked for the Captaincy for Awlih, and had the promise of it; but some Comanche influence was brought to bear, and a Comanche was chosen Captain. Ibid.



The warriors consistently portrayed reservation conditions as impoverished with inadequate resources and few opportunities for work. Even the well-born Howling Wolf could not escape hard times. He wrote from Darlington Agency to a couple to whom he had grown close during his incarceration at St. Augustine. He assured them that "not one word [of all the instruction he had received at Fort Marion had] been lost" and that he had continued to travel the "good road" upon his return to the reservation. However, he said, "My lodge is poor, and I do not feel good to be still living in one of the old kind of houses. When the agent gives me help to build a wooden house I shall feel glad. I am very poor. All my friends Arapahoes and Cheyennes are friendly and want to learn to be like white men, but often say my white friends East have forgotten all about me."<sup>46</sup>

Howling Wolf's letter is representative of the returned prisoners' testimony to the reservation's poor conditions and their difficulties in establishing themselves in more independent ventures such as farming and stockraising. But there is also evidence of persistence in reconciling themselves to a new way of life as Minimic's letter to Pratt indicates. The old chief wrote, "All that you have told me I am holding close to my heart. I give none of it away.

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<sup>46</sup> Howling Wolf to L.E.L. Zalinski, Fort Marion, Dec. 21, 1878 in Southern Workman, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 1879.

Since I returned some of my people have gone after buffalo, but I did not go. Those who went are now returning poor; found nothing but small game."<sup>47</sup> In the absence of buffalo Minimic channeled the energies of young men into chopping wood for sale at \$1.25 per cord.<sup>48</sup> But as of May 1879 their difficulties persisted as was evident in a letter from Chief Killer who lived at the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Agency. While he intended to remember all that Pratt had taught him and the others at Fort Marion, he as yet had "nothing, no horses and no money." Indeed, he went on, "I think the people do not know how poor we are." Nevertheless, " . . . the buffalo are gone. I am going to work soon to plow for corn, and push hard to make a crop," and by the time of Pratt's visit, Chief Killer hoped to have four horses and "show you how I can make a crop."<sup>49</sup>

Pratt published the letters in the Hampton paper, Southern Workman, as the basis of an appeal to the institution's supporters for material donations for the reservation Indians. Despite his professed reluctance to present the Indians as begging, he published "Pathetic Letters from Indians" who experienced "little or no chance of earning money, no tools to farm with, no work to get."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Minimic to Richard Pratt, January 24, 1879, Southern Workman, Vol. 8, No. 3, March 1879, p. 31.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Chief Killer to Richard Pratt, February 4, 1879, Southern Workman, Vol. 8, No. 5, May 1879, p. 55-56.

<sup>50</sup> Southern Workman, Vol. 8, No. 6, June 1879, p. 68.

The Indians had other worries on their minds as well. Quoyuouah's letter to Capt. Pratt was filled with anxiety that other returned warriors shared. He wrote of himself, "I am again a Comanche," and despite his desire to adhere to the "white man's road," he had no horse of his own and was "very poor. When you [Pratt] come to see us I shall have nothing to show you--no corn--no house-- nothing at all. This is a poor country and a poor ground. I don't sleep well, I am afraid."<sup>51</sup>

Quoyouah and others confronted a reservation that symbolized the rejection of the past in the national discourse, but in reality offered nothing in its place. It was a corrupt system that worked against the promises of assimilation. Warriors who had once been held up as contemptible renegades, then as idealized and objectified symbols of an increasingly romanticized past, and finally as discarded people had no recourse but to embrace the reservation. They confronted reservation conditions with the experiences of Fort Marion which were composed of empty promises of assimilation. Many returned expressing commitment to the white man's road, but in time "reverted" as they rejoined traditional men's societies or gained reputations as trouble makers. Even Howling Wolf fell by the wayside. He was accused of raping an American girl and hid out for several years to escape punishment. He

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

ultimately left Oklahoma for Texas where he performed in old west performance theater.<sup>52</sup> The acculturation model failed them as reservation Indians and the challenge they took up was their reintegration into their communities. Howling Wolf and others returned as "progressives" only to be recast as "traditionals" when they rejected the identity which had been imposed on them in prison.

Meanwhile, the men who had accompanied Pratt to Hampton Institute experienced a powerful conceptual shift that they put to use in negotiating their way far from home. They clearly recognized and purposefully adjusted to the idea that Plains Indian manhood was no longer the result of disciplined martial achievements. They channeled the discipline once reserved for developing skills on which they depended for physical survival into the idea that other sources of Indian male identity existed and could be exploited. Western knowledge would not necessarily bring them material wealth, privilege or status in the Anglo-American world because existing contradictions about American Indians would prevent it. Western knowledge was not even necessarily desirable or an end in itself. Rather, it held out a means for reconstruction of their manhood under the new order.

Hampton offered the opportunity to study, work, worship and pursue artistic interests within a community of young

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<sup>52</sup> Petersen, (Palo Alto, 1968), pp. 24-30.

Indian people. Being at Hampton opened up new channels and opportunities resulting in the transfer of some students to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. Others went out into the world as converted Christians and ministers or artists; still others returned home. The question of how to affect a passage to manhood was open at this time when traditional routes were closed. The power and significance of the extra-reservation experience is summed up in the warriors' alleged response when asked why they liked to learn. Individuals were reported to have answered, "Because it makes me a man."<sup>53</sup>

Men capable of an enormous mental and attitudinal shift had in their possession the perception of self-determination to be used in negotiating a place for themselves and their communities. It was a barely visible aspect of the transition to a modern American Indian identity which engaged the Anglo American world and the new order through diverse occasions of negotiation and mediation. Whether confronting foreign experiences as challenges to be embraced, interpreting tribal history and present experience through the production of drawings or renegotiating their place in a reservation system created in their absence, Native plains men permitted the encounter, not Anglo American culture, to absorb them. They resisted through

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<sup>53</sup> Southern Workman, Vol. 7, No. 7, July 1978, p. 50.

non-resistance to experience. This was their strength and their contribution to their communities.

### Chapter Three

Between 1867 and the 1880s the reservation economy turned on rations, annuities and various sources of income that permitted the tribes to remain on the reservation if not to alter substantially the material deprivation that dominated the period. The last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a shift from the Indians' persistent failure at stockraising and farming to increasing evidence of progress in those areas.<sup>1</sup> The federal government's division of reservation lands into individual allotments and the sale of the remaining surplus lands at the turn of the century subverted that momentum reinforcing the reservation inhabitants' reliance on small-scale subsistence strategies.

Reservation men felt the economic impact of allotment and the sale of surplus lands more acutely than did reservation women. Women continued to grow gardens, tan hides, bear and raise children, manage the home and produce utilitarian goods for the home and ceremonial life. Men, once again, had been deprived of their main economic activities leaving them to channel their energies elsewhere. It is in this period that Kiowa Ghost Dance appeared and the

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<sup>1</sup> Morris Foster, Being Comanche (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), p. 80-81.

practice of peyotism spread among southern Plains people.<sup>2</sup> The importance of small-scale subsistence activities in this period, particularly in the early reservation years and following the allotment of Kiowa, Comanche and Apache lands cannot be overemphasized. Both men and women engaged in income-generating activities that permitted tribal communities to remain together on the reservation and that preserved old patterns. Daily life, while commonly a mean existence, reinforced rather than undermined a common sense of tribal identity.

Life on the reservation, while isolating, included interactions with the Anglo-American society that existed beyond its boundaries. The apparent contradictions that would offer material opportunities to reservation women were observable in the following way. While American reformers and government authorities promulgated the policy of Indian acculturation and assimilation, popular and scholarly discourses suggested a growing appetite for American Indian "culture." The contradiction is stark. Official language of the authorities demanded the Indians' conformity to assimilation policies while the constructed image of the "traditional" pre-transformation Indian acquired value. An economically deterministic assimilation program compromised by the gritty limitations of reservation resources and

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<sup>2</sup> Benjamin R. Kracht, "The Kiowa Ghost Dance, 1894-1916: An Unheralded Revitalization Movement," Ethnohistory 39:4 (Fall,



Native non-compliance opened a door for reservation Indians to capitalize on that image as well. Men and women alike participated in activities that exploited an American constructed Indian "traditionalism" as yet another subsistence opportunity.

The widespread commitment to the image of the "traditional" Indian was evident in the American exposition, the commercial wild west show, an emerging tourism industry and anthropology. Through public education, popular entertainment and the scholarly project, American society and government affirmed traditionalism, or at least externally constructed versions of it. Acculturated Indians were of no use to scholars or in entertainment venues because they possessed less value as subjects of study or as sources of commercial entertainment. Exploited images of Indians as wild savages and primitives showed that the Indian was more valuable as a symbol of the past than an assimilated citizen. Even the government found such symbols useful.

Indian exploitation of the Anglo-constructed pre-transformed Native American took various forms—performance in wild west shows, participation in human zoos that were part of exposition exhibition programs, and the production of material culture that circulated along commercial and scholarly trajectories. It is tempting to see such public

activities as exploitation of American Indian "culture" that potentially compromises identity.

If, however, one locates culture and identity within the various domains of daily life and acknowledges the separation between that life and the artificial world of image, such conclusions are false. The Anglo-American construction of generic American Indian and tribal identities is quite separate from community maintained tribal identities. Although they are distinct and seemingly incompatible, they can co-exist. To compound the irony, the existence of the artificial traditional image helped to subvert the assimilation program, provided yet another means by which reservation people could improve their material existence and reinforced community-defined traditionalism through the production of goods.

During the lean years, Kiowas and Comanches engaged in multiple income-producing activities focussing on resources within the reservation. Initially, the tribes were able to supplement rations with bison meat and with cash or credit obtained from the robes. The Comanches and Kiowas undertook some agricultural activities and cattle raising. But the results were meager.

After a decade of encouraging Indians to cultivate corn, Haworth summarized his observation of the Indian policy to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs at Lawrence,

Kansas. "Five year's experience and observation," Haworth wrote, "satisfy me that this is not a good agricultural district, and cannot be relied upon for farming purposes."<sup>3</sup> He went on to suggest that "If the government would issue to them yearly \$12,000 worth of cattle - heifers two years old preferable - for four years, the increase by the fifth year would be almost sufficient to supply the necessary beef ration..."<sup>4</sup>

Despite Haworth's pronouncement, Indians were still planting corn under difficult conditions when the Fort Marion prisoners returned to the reservation in 1878. Malnourished ponies were harnessed to plow unbreakable ground. The fields had been left unfenced throughout the winter permitting the animals to graze amidst stalks from the previous crop. The new agent, P.B. Hunt, reported success at one field where three Indians managed to plow and plant.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, agents consistently reported insufficient rations and farming equipment as well as low numbers of cattle. In 1881, Hunt pronounced the region uncultivable. He reported, "I come now to write the darkest page of the record of our year's work," he reported, "The stand had been perfect, and rains had fallen at the proper intervals. . . But their hopes were blasted, for no more

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<sup>3</sup> Haworth to Nicholson, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1877, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

rains fell on their crops, and stalks and blades were soon dried up with not an ear upon them."<sup>6</sup> Within three years following his arrival at the Agency, Hunt too became convinced of the futility of forcing the Indians to grow corn. "Nothing," he wrote, "is more certain than that this country is badly adapted to agriculture, the scarcity of rainfall cutting short the crops one and sometimes two out of three years. Indeed, I am informed there has been known to be a drought three years in succession."<sup>7</sup> As for the Indians, Hunt said, "There is at times absolute suffering . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Other activities supplemented the Indians' income and diet. Men continued to hunt and exchange hides with local traders for manufactured goods and to reduce debts, but the robe and fur trade had collapsed falling from \$70,400 in 1876 to \$5,068 in 1879. In the waning years of the buffalo business, Indians benefited less and less while American hunters and merchants wrung the last of the profits out of the robe trade. One robe trader in Texas dealt "largely with the hunters on this frontier and [purchased] hides

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<sup>5</sup> Hunt to CIA, August 15, 1878, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1878, p. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Hunt to CIA, September 1, 1881, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1881, p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

direct from them."<sup>9</sup> In the previous season alone he received seventy thousand hides out of which he sold "some six thousand robe hides that were really select, as leather hides, not being able to place the robe hides."<sup>10</sup> He expected many more hides in the coming season and hoped to hire Indians from the Kiowa and Comanche reservation to process them either for a piece rate, or in exchange for some of the hides.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Agent Haworth reported in January 1878 that "my Indians have not had very good success as far as I have heard, not half as many as last year. My impression is that this year will almost end the Buffalo business."<sup>12</sup>

Early attempts to put Indians into stock raising were mainly unsuccessful as they either ate or sold the cattle that were issued them. Indeed, in 1875 there were merely two head of cattle for every Indian.<sup>13</sup> Cattle hides replaced bison and game hides as trade items. The cattle hide trade appears to have been an important source of income, but was fraught with conflict among the licensed

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<sup>9</sup> F. Conrad to General R. L. Mackenzie, Commander, Fort Sill, September 8, 1877, Kiowa File, Roll 80, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Other requests came into the agency to hire Indians for preparing hides. Arnold to "Indian Agent," July 18, 1882, Kiowa File, Roll 80, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>11</sup> F. Conrad to General R.L. Mackenzie, Commander, Fort Sill, September 8, 1877, Kiowa File, Roll 80, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup> Haworth to Williams, January 11, 1878, Kiowa File, Roll 80, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>13</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 80.

traders and the Indians, producing its own type of exploitation. The Indian Bureau and the local agent attempted to impose order on the contentious situation by fixing the price of hides according to grade. Haworth's goal was to set a fair price for both Indians and traders based on the assumption that cash paid out to the Indian would return to the merchant when the Indian returned to trade. Haworth questioned whether the trader should profit twice, once from the purchase and sale of robes, then from the sale of Indian goods.<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime, Indians and ambitious traders collaborated in circumventing the Agent's attempts at regulation. A.J. Reynolds, a licensed Indian trader at Anadarko, complained bitterly about his competitors' practices. By giving Indians a higher price on hides than that fixed by the agent, some traders built up their hide business at the expense of merchants who complied with the regulations.<sup>15</sup> Reynolds was losing the highly valued Indian trade, but was careful to say that he did not favor a raise in the agent's fixed price. Some Indians set themselves up as middle men in the hide business. Otter Belt, a Comanche, for example, purchased hides directly from other Indians, usually, according to Reynolds, "at the places of gambling

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> A.J. Reynolds to P.B. Hunt, August 10, 1882, Kiowa File, Roll 80, Oklahoma Historical Society.

on the evenings before issue day, and then, on issue day collecting the same taking them to Mr. Fred's Store."<sup>16</sup>

Fred also secured a generous percentage of the hide trade by extending loans to the Indians against future exchanges. Again, Reynolds wrote to Agent Hunt to complain in this regard about SunBoy who threatened a young man attempting to trade a hide to Reynolds when, according to the Indian's story, Reynolds reported, "this young man had received \$3.25 in advance from Mr. Fred and. . .had promised to give Mr. Fred a beef hide for the loan." Unfortunately, Reynolds had also advanced a cash payment to the same young man for the hide. Reynolds defended his violation of the prohibition against advance payments to Indians for hides because Mr. Fred had broken the rule first.<sup>17</sup>

Indians much preferred exchanging robes, furs, and cattle hides for goods and credit to receiving cash. Traders were happy to exchange robes and hides with the Indians because the Indians would take less goods for hides than they were able to purchase with cash. Agent Haworth reported discrepancies between the amount of goods Indians received from exchange and those they obtained through cash purchases. Remedying the situation was difficult because what the Indian customer "has to pay is secondary consideration with him, the important one being the price

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

allowed him for his robe or whatever he has to sell."<sup>18</sup>

According to the agent, the problem rested somewhere between trader non-compliance with the regulations concerning fixed hide prices and the need for Indians to be "educated to a proper valuation."<sup>19</sup> In the meantime, only "some of the Indians are learning the fact that ten or twelve dollars in money buys more goods than a Robe valued at either of those sums."<sup>20</sup>

Indian men turned to other sources of income in between crops and the trade of hides on issue day. They carried freight for 75 cents a pound. Freighting was the primary source of income outside hide exchanges, but traveling by wagon between the railroad and the reservation presented many challenges. Frequently, Indian ponies failed to recover from periodic drought and remained in poor condition. During sudden rains small stream and creeks became impassible. Despite such obstacles the Indians hauled over one million pounds in 1880, for which they received \$14,278.<sup>21</sup> Things improved in 1882, however, when

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<sup>18</sup> Haworth to CIA Smith, March 16, 1875, NARG 75, LR, Kiowa Agency.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> P. B. Hunt to CIA, September 1, 1880, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, p. 75. The government supplied 60 wagons and the Indians about 20 more. All animals were supplied by the Indians. Ibid. In 1881, the freighting money dropped to \$11,445 for 935,160. P.B. Hunt to CIA, September 1, 1881, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1881, p. 79. It should be noted that Indians competed with American freighters.



the Fort Worth and Denver Railway was completed to Henrietta, Texas, reducing the trip between the agency and the railroad depot to 100 miles.<sup>22</sup> In addition to working small cornfields, trading cattle hides, and freighting, men hired themselves out to the agency and worked various odd jobs such as cutting timber.

With few if any constant sources of cash, the reservation economy turned on individual credit with local traders. Traders willingly extended credit because they had some assurance of recovering the debt when annuity payments were distributed by the agency. Although traders often found it difficult to collect on Indian accounts, they were protected by agents, regulations that were created to safeguard against abuses to traders and Indians, and later the red card system, grass lease payments, and the allotment of Indian lands which served as collateral.

The early reservation economy failed to uplift Native people through work, education and Christianity, the mandate of federal Indian policy. Indicators such as sources of income, standard of living, crop yields, employment figures and other measures of a society's material well-being showed that the civilization program had fallen short of its goals. In western Indian Territory, the environment thwarted the government's program as did self-interested persons and

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<sup>22</sup> P. B. Hunt to CIA, September 1, 1882, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1882, p. 65.

human limitation. Indians struggled with crop failures, inadequate resources, insufficient rations and a host of obstacles to every venture they attempted. The result was deprivation and in the agent's words "absolute suffering".

While many blamed the federal government, and especially Indian agents, the Indians carried the stigma for their failure. A succession of Indian agents reported slow progress among the Indians in achieving the desired transformation. The reservation economy simply failed to make Indians self-supporting persons. It appeared that the Indians who occupied the reservation, having exhausted all potential opportunities for improvement in their conditions and coming up short, had reached a nadir in their history. This image is consistent with arguments regarding colonialism as political or economic relationships that are often legitimized through perceptions or ideologies of racism or progress.<sup>23</sup> The consequences were destructive to Native people, their cultures and economies.

In 1885 Comanches began leasing reservation pastures to Texas cattlemen, an arrangement which would continue until 1906.<sup>24</sup> The lease payments put cash into the reservation economy and contributed significantly to Comanche subsistence for the remainder of the century.<sup>25</sup> Cattle

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas, Colonialism's Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 81.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

herds also increased. In 1885, individual herds ranged from one to two hundred head. That figure would continue to rise to five head for each Indian or 25,000 head by 1892<sup>26</sup>

Sources are scant on the subject of reservation women's improvisations in supplementing rations and annuities. That they must have experienced the pressure of poverty is unquestionable. In 1880, Agent Hunt reported his impression of "a frightful mortality. . .of infants and children under four years old."<sup>27</sup> He blamed high infant mortality on the presence of venereal disease and the "habits of the young women" which doomed "the prospect of a better future for these people."<sup>28</sup> Undernourishment, which was present and presumably a contributor to children's health problems, advances the likelihood that women felt compelled to supplement family incomes in a variety of ways.

In an earlier time, women played a central role in the preparation of buffalo hides for trade and community use. Outside of food preparation, the production of clothing and lodges, and other responsibilities that contributed to family comfort and well-being, women's participation in hide processing was the most economically visible activity. Income losses that accompanied the decline of the buffalo were never fully replaced in the reservation period. Women,

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>27</sup> P.B. Hunt to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 1, 1880, Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, p. 72.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

like men, generated alternative sources of income to help carry their families through crop failures, unemployment, inferior and insufficient rations, and a modest cattle hide trade.

One innovation that is less visible in the record than the activities of men is the production and circulation of handmade objects involving leather and beadwork. The volume of women's work is suggested in trader purchase invoices and receipts. Licensed trader A.J. Reynolds of Anadarko purchased impressive quantities of Indian merchandise from his supplier, S.A. Frost in New York City. While the record is filled with gaps, it suggests a significant volume of manufactured supplies for trinket production coming into the reservation. In 1879, for example, Reynolds ordered 1,073 bunches of beads in seven different colors.<sup>29</sup> Between May and July of 1881, Reynolds purchased 2200 pairs of silver ear bobs, and one order called for 300 bunches of turquoise seed beads.<sup>30</sup> In 1881, his incomplete records documented the purchase of 1,775 bunches of beads between February and September.<sup>31</sup> During that same year Reynolds ordered 3,000 pairs of silver ear bobs in July 1,000 pairs in September,

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<sup>29</sup> S. A. Frost invoice to A. J. Reynolds, October 28, 1879, Kiowa Agency Traders, Roll KA 79, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>30</sup> S.A. Frost to A.J. Reynolds, May 25, May 28, June 10, June 24, July 15, July 31, 1880, Kiowa Agency Traders, KA 79, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>31</sup> S.A. Frost to A.J. Reynolds, February 15, May 9, September 29, 1881, Kiowa Agency Traders, KA 79, Oklahoma Historical Society.

3800 pairs in October for a total of 7800 pairs of ear bobs in a three-month period.<sup>32</sup>

Reynolds continued to order large amounts of beads. In August 1882, for example, he ordered 1800 pairs of beads from Frost.<sup>33</sup> In addition to beads and ear bobs, traders stocked cloth, ribbon, "Indian sashes," german silver buttons, silver and gold plated rings, bells, and brass, silver and nickel studs. Such items had been introduced to the Indians long before the reservation period. The practice of distributing manufactured goods like beads and notions was adopted by the federal government whose representatives commonly presented such items as gifts in fulfillment of exchange terms. For example, one shipment of goods intended for distribution by the government included 600 pounds of beads in varying colors.<sup>34</sup>

The influx of large quantities of beads and other manufactured goods is indisputable. The presence of traders was well established and Reynolds' buying practices suggests a strong local demand for materials used in making Indian goods. Modern museum collections attest to the ongoing production of clothing, ceremonial and other utilitarian objects during the reservation period, and their condition

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<sup>32</sup> S. A. Frost to A.J. Reynolds, July 11, July 15, September 24, October 13, October 27, 1881, Kiowa Agency Traders, KA 79, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>33</sup> S.A. Frost to A.J. Reynolds, August 3, 1882, Kiowa Agency Traders, KA 79, Oklahoma Historical Society.

suggests prior use within communities of origin prior to their acquisition. Museum records which document the acquisition of objects, provenience and condition, however, are frequently inconsistent and incomplete. Consequently, it is difficult to reconstruct the history of an object even when institutional records are available. Nevertheless, the presence of so many objects in collections of various museums confirms that Native women, the primary producers of beadwork, continued to manufacture handmade objects

The commercialization of Indian culture through Wild West Shows pulled beadwork into other trajectories. Beadwork followed commercial pathways as "trinkets." Trinkets, as handmade goods were called, was a category which incorporated a range of objects depending on the circumstances. It generally referred to objects where beads, leather, silver and other materials were involved in the production. Usually it referred to women's work, but not always.

The history of the trinket stretches back to the first encounters between North American Indians and European peoples. Gifts of trinkets demonstrated good will or reinforced talks, and were an exchange medium to obtain European goods. Every Native tribe had its version of a "trinket" using available indigenous materials and objects obtained through trade with outsiders. They were adaptable

and reflective of new encounters as well as old habits and practices. Trinkets have been a mainstay of domestic, usually women's, production through the entire period of contact up to the present. In the modern period, outsiders have appropriated the manufacture of trinkets for an audience that has neither the knowledge nor desire to know the difference between non-Native and Native made objects.<sup>35</sup>

Even if we were to assume a steady flow of trinkets between local producers, traders, and consumers, this hardly accounts for the tremendous quantities of Indian goods--beads, German silver, ear bobs, and the like--that traders purchased from New York merchants such as S.A. Frost and Marshall Fields of Chicago. The explanation for such quantities of goods exists beyond the local economy. But, there is enough evidence of the presence of trinkets, their production and circulation to make the argument that they were a feature of reservation household economies.

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<sup>35</sup> The literature on women's work and specifically on the production of handmade things is limited to a few scholars, mostly women. Mary Jane Schneider has examined the social significance of women's production in "Women's Work: An Examination of Women's Roles in Plains Indian Arts and Crafts," in The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women, Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine eds. (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983), pp. 101-121. Ruth B. Phillips has also examined the handmade object as tourist art. See "Glimpses of Eden: Iconographic Themes in Huron Pictorial Tourist Art," European Review of Native American Studies 5 (2): pp. 19-28; "Why Not Tourist Art? Significant Silences in Native American Museum Representation," in Guan Prakash ed., After Colonialism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) pp. 98-123; and "A Casket of Savage Curiosities"" Eighteenth-century objects from North-eastern North America in the Farquharson Collection," Journal of the History of Collections 6 (1): pp. 21-33.

Furthermore, and ironically, the trinket trade was made possible by the American obsession with its history and the desire for mementos of that history. Expositions, performance theater and the curiosities business opened gateways to an American market for women's handmade things. Depending on perspective, trinkets were labor intensive handcrafts, cheap tourist objects, valued treasures, oddities, collectibles, or cultural relics.

The Philadelphia Centennial was the first in a succession of such celebrations and commemorations several of which included major exhibitions of American Indian culture developed jointly by the Smithsonian and the Indian Bureau.<sup>36</sup> The exhibition was also a vehicle to showcase

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<sup>36</sup> The successful London Crystal Palace Exposition of 1851 opened an era of expositions in the United States and Europe. The Philadelphia Centennial Exposition was the first to involve the federal government and spawned the creation of the Government Executive Board which was composed of representatives from various executive departments, the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Fish Commission. The list of expositions overseen by the Board following the Centennial demonstrates the nation's focus on its history, achievements, and international image. They include the following: International Fishery Exhibition (Berlin, 1880); Great Industrial Exposition (1884); World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition (New Orleans, 1884-85); Southern Exposition (Louisville, 1886); Centennial Exposition of the Ohio Valley and Central States (Cincinnati, 1888); Columbian Historical Exposition (Madrid, 1892-93); World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893); Cotton States and International Exposition (Atlanta, 1895); Tennessee Centennial Exposition (Nashville, 1897); Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition (Omaha, 1898); Pan-American Exposition (Buffalo, 1901); Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis, 1904); Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition (Portland, 1905); Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition (Hampton Roads, 1907); and six others focussing on international themes. Joan Brownell and James A. Steed, Guides to Collections of the Smithsonian Archives, Guide to the Exposition Records of the Smithsonian



emerging anthropology and recent advancements made in the study of Native people. The Indian exhibition followed Otis Mason's systematic outline of components of Indian culture.<sup>37</sup> Mason proposed the exhibition be divided into three major topics: First, man and his physical nature; second, physical and social environments; and third, culture, which was broken down into seventeen object-based categories.<sup>38</sup> The categories show that objects considered to be of scientific value received the most prominence. Items such as weapons of war, hunting tools and implements, symbol-laden religious objects, and utilitarian objects were emphasized over objects of art or more common domestic items.

The Centennial exposed a broad American audience to American Indian material culture on an unprecedented scale. Materials and objects collected for other exhibitions would ultimately find their way into the collections of the National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution for study. The collection and exhibition of Native material culture sent several signals to the popular audience. Objects related to "traditional" Native customs, or ethnographic

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Institution and the United States National Museum, 1867-1939 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), pp. 2, 5, 10, 12, 18, 19, 20, 27, 28, 33, 35, 46, 52, 56, 58, 67, 70, 87, 91, 94, 97, 99, 104, 107, 110.

<sup>37</sup> Otis T. Mason, Ethnological Directions Relative to the Indian Tribes of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875), pp. 5-31

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

materials, were valuable subjects of interest and study. It was in the government's interest to collect and house them because they were tied to the nation's history and identity. An entire scholarly field had emerged that focussed on the study of Native cultures and materials associated with it. The collection of Native material culture served a professional community whose academic qualifications set them apart as experts. Unless one had the means to collect as a private individual, Native material culture was becoming less available to common persons. Consequently, for all these reasons, they were becoming valuable items because they captured a part of the nation's history that was rapidly disappearing.

Beadwork offered one of the more obscure categories of Indian manufacture. Columbia University anthropologist Otis Mason's systematic outline of Indian culture located beadwork by name in two categories: "other personal ornaments" and "beadwork for art purposes."<sup>39</sup> Beadwork would have appeared in other categories of Mason's exhibition outline, including: clothing; adornment; games and pastimes; art; religion; furniture and utensils; head ornaments; breast and body ornaments; ornaments of the limbs; badges of distinction; and instruments for beating.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Otis Mason, Ethnological Directions Relative to the Indian Tribes of the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875), pp. 12, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Mason, pp. 5-31.

Beadwork found in ethnological exhibitions became subsumed under one or more anthropological categories of other objects. Although it was included in the art category, art tended to be identified with representational paintings, carvings and drawings. Beadwork often lacked a separate category, but was instead a feature of some cultural object. These distinctions provide insights into the value attached to different kinds of objects. In the case of beadwork, it appears that it did not receive the recognition that would be granted later. Organizers, mostly male, failed to give it the prominence that they accorded to other kinds of objects. It appears to have lacked the cache attached to religious items, weapons, and other "craft" forms such as basketry.

The presence of beadwork throughout many of the exhibition components exposed an international audience to a range of beaded and other objects. Kiowa materials were not included in the 1876 exhibition, but all tribes would feel the effects of an era of expositions celebrating various markers in the nation's history and the technological achievements of the late 19th century. The Kiowas were featured in the largest expositions following the Centennial as a result of the arrival of James Mooney, a government anthropologist employed by the Bureau of American Ethnology

of the National Museum.<sup>41</sup> Mooney collected objects, conducted field work and commissioned models and miniatures of Kiowa material culture between 1891 and 1918. He collected a large body of objects specifically for two exhibitions, the World Columbian Exposition at Chicago (1893), and the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis (1904).<sup>42</sup>

Mooney had a close working relationship in this period with Silverhorn, a Kiowa artist whom he called Haungun. Their relationship was one of collaboration in which Silverhorn produced miniatures and models for the anthropologist who in turn made materials available to the artist. His collection of shields and tipis is perhaps the most widely acclaimed and has drawn the attention of scholars and a popular exhibition audience. Mooney organized the models into a Plains exhibition for the World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago, 1893) and expanded it for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (St. Louis, 1904). The Kiowa exhibition also traveled to the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition at Omaha (1898) and the Columbian Historical Exposition at Madrid (1893). Fieldwork carried out by government anthropologists like Mooney was funded under the auspices of the expositions. Mooney, for

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<sup>41</sup> William L. Merrill, Marian Kaulaity Hansson, Candace S. Greene, and Frederick J. Reuss, A Guide to the Kiowa Collections at the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), p. 5.

example, was able to collect objects, transport them to the exhibition and deposit the materials into the collections of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum when the exhibition concluded. The Kiowa collection is documented in a recently published guide for the Smithsonian Institution Kiowa collection.

As the century drew to a close public interest in American Indian cultures had grown justifying the expenditure of federal funds for yet another exposition, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition at Omaha. Again, the Indian exhibition was modeled on an ethnological approach. The circular distributed to Indian agencies carried an urgent tone, noting "It is represented that the Indian tribes are rapidly passing away, or modifying their original habits and industries by adopting those of civilization."<sup>43</sup> Thankfully for the exhibitors, "there are. . .many tribes. . .whose quaint habits and mode of life" have remained "practically unchanged since the days of Columbus..." The greatest beneficiary, despite the Interior Department's claim that the exhibition would benefit Indians, was the Department itself. The exhibition would indeed justify the Department's existence "both by portraying. . .the arts and characteristics of savage life,

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>W.A. Jones, Office of Indian Affairs, to F.D. Baldwin, Indian Agent, Kiowa Agency, March 26, 1898, Kiowa File, Roll 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

and by showing. . .the difficulties of the problem confronting the Indian Department in its efforts to educate and civilize the Indian."<sup>44</sup> The threat of backsliding Indians fulfilled numerous agendas that were attached to the exhibition, including the promotion of science, entertainment for the masses, and a public justification for the Indian Department's budget.

The purposefulness with which the planners set forth to emphasize Indian primitivism was remarkable. Agents were instructed to choose Indian participants carefully in that "It is desired that the encampment should be as thoroughly aboriginal in every respect as practicable, and that the primitive traits and characteristics of the several tribes should be distinctly set forth. This point should be constantly kept in view in the selection of the Indians, and in the collection of materials." Nothing was left to chance. The Department urged that "Necessary cooking utensils should be brought, and these should be as primitive as possible."<sup>45</sup>

In the process of exploiting Native cultures for political purposes, manipulating Indian identity to defend its federal budget, and promoting itself as the means to achieve a heretofore failed Indian policy, the Indian Department created productive opportunities for reservation

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

people. The exhibition it promoted offered an American audience contact with Native America. The imprimatur of science ensured its authenticity while the presence of living representatives of Indian tribes added entertainment value and uniqueness of experience. The disappearance of Indian cultures was believable in the context of the passing of the frontier. Audiences could gather with a sense of immediacy and urgency as final witnesses to the end of an era. In the midst of those American congregations hungry for a taste of their own passing history yet another opportunity was offered. The Department circular urged Indians to bring "the necessary materials for carrying on their native arts...so that they may engage in making articles for sale on the grounds. Where this can not be done they may bring things illustrative of their crafts in reasonable quantities for sale."<sup>46</sup>

The southern Plains tribes had a strong identification as "wild Indians" which made them especially popular with organizers of commercial fairs and federally funded expositions. In one instance, the tribes' reputation was perceived as a handicap prompting special arrangements. Organizers of the Indian International Fair at Muskogee (1884), chaired by the Cherokee Nation, enticed Agent Hunt with the assurance that "There will be a Wild Indian Dept.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

so that Wild Indians will compete only with Wild Indians."<sup>47</sup> The "premium list," for which \$200 had been set aside, included a number of beaded object categories. A beaded buckskin gown was included in the top prize category of ten dollars.<sup>48</sup>

Out of state fair organizers such as the Dallas State Fair and Exposition Association also inquire about obtaining "bands of Indians."<sup>49</sup> In 1889, the Kiowas and Comanches were invited to participate in the Texas State Fair at Dallas. Fair organizer and local businessman, Ben Cabell, included in his request an appeal for about fifty Indians and "two or three older Chiefs some that have some history."<sup>50</sup> The Office of Indian Affairs granted the Texas fair organizers' proposal with instructions to Agent Myers to "permit representatives of Texas Fair to take an equal number of progressive and non-progressive Indians. . . ."<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, on occasion, the Indian Office exhibited discomfort with the common identification of the southern Plains tribes' as "wild Indian." Instructions from the Indian Office to Agent White in 1888 concerning the Indians' participation in the Indian International Fair at Muskogee

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<sup>47</sup> Israel G. Vork to P.B. Hunt, April 7, 1884, Kiowa File, Roll KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Sydney Smith to Lee Hall, July 16, 1886, Kiowa File, KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>50</sup> Ben Cabell to Myers, September 29, 1889, Kiowa File, KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.



were pointed. The commissioner wrote, "You will see that such parties are composed as nearly as may be, of the most progressive and industrious of your Indians, whose attendance at the Fair would be likely to result in benefit to the tribes."<sup>52</sup>

The Indian Office was no less concerned about Indians' image at federally funded expositions. Commissioner Price expressed the dilemma that arose out of the Indian's participation in such affairs. He called attention to the contradiction of "allowing [Indians] to be paraded over the country and exhibited the same as wild animals" when "the policy and design of this office is to induce the Indians to abandon their wild roving habits and to become peaceable industrious and useful citizens."<sup>53</sup> A good Indian farmer or mechanic would do more to advance the civilization program "than one hundred Indians parading through the country for exhibition."<sup>54</sup>

The presence of southern Plains Indians in federally funded expositions increased with the arrival of government anthropologist, James Mooney. Despite the Indian Office's documented objections to the "wild Indian" image, the expositions consistently emphasized the inclusion of "native

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<sup>51</sup> T.J. Morgan to Henry Exall, October 12, 1889, Kiowa File, KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>52</sup> Blepshaw to E.E. White, August 17, 1888, Kiowa File, KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>53</sup> H. Price to P.R. Hunt, October 24, 1884, Kiowa File, KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

dress," relics and ceremonial objects. The distinction between large expositions and commercial affairs was science, or ethnology, versus entertainment. But it was not always a convincing distinction given the language of some of the correspondence. One member of the Department of Anthropology wrote concerning Indian participation in the Louisiana Purchase Exposition: "How would it do to have a family of Kiowas go to the Fair to live for sixty days or so, putting up a native shack and dressing up in their native costumes, one of which at least, would be the elk-tooth gown?"<sup>55</sup> It is no wonder that Commissioners of Indian Affairs despaired over their prospects of civilizing the Indians when they were constantly being undermined by other agencies of their own government.

Inconsistency and cross purposes in the implementation of the stated Indian policy was again evident. Expositions and fairs were perceived as invitations to subversion of the assimilation program because they encouraged spectacle. Indian traditionalism was the source of attraction for audiences who found Indians much more exciting in their pre-reservation state than as acculturated farmers. But expositions and fairs also subverted the Indian policy in less visible ways. They opened up new pathways for the circulation of women's handmade goods, which were drawn out

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

of the reservation and into a tourist goods market. Indian culture was undergoing a shift in value, from dangerous threat to Anglo civilization to the object of scientific inquiry. Indians also represented a component of the nation's history, one increasingly romanticized by Anglo writers in books and dime novels. Once that shift had occurred the nation rapidly embraced the relics of the period, creating a demand for mementos of the vicarious encounter with the wild Indians of the southern Plains.

Developments within the reservation reinforced the production of trinkets as a subsistence activity. In 1890 the United States government expressed its wish to see the General Allotment Act of 1887 applied to the southern Plains tribes. The Jerome Commission was sent out to begin negotiations with the Kiowas, Comanches and Apaches in September 1892. The immediate obstacle to the division of lands and sale of remaining "surplus" lands was article 12 of the 1867 Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek. The article stipulated that no further land cessions would take place without the consent of at least three-fourths of the adult males. Numerous leaders who had been present at the signing of the treaty demanded that article 12 be upheld.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> S.M. McCowan to Randlett, November 27, 1903, Kiowa File, KA 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>56</sup> See Blue Clark, Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock: Treaty Rights and Indian Law at the End of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

The Kiowas in particular took the lead in protesting allotment and the Comanche leader Quanah Parker led the counteroffensive on behalf of the Comanches. The southern Plains tribes had only to look to the experiences of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes to predict the economic reversals that would accompany allotment. Small allotments would undermine farming and stockraising progress and would deprive the tribes of the benefits of grass leases.<sup>57</sup> Despite their protests and stalling maneuvers, the tribes faced the allotment of their lands and the sale of remaining surplus lands in 1900. The act of June 6 of that year transferred title to 2,991,933 acres of reservation land to the United States. Approximately a half million acres were set aside as common grazing lands and another half million were divided into individual parcels.<sup>58</sup> The Kiowas protested the agreement as illegal and ultimately took the case to court in the famous Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock decision which affirmed Congress' plenary power over Indian tribes which left the Kiowas and Comanches to face allotment.<sup>59</sup> The economic impact of allotment is evident in the decline of cattle, which dropped from 25,000 in 1892 to 17,000 in 1901.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 54-55.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

<sup>60</sup> Foster, Being Comanche, p. 80.

Licensed traders assumed an important role in the circulation of Indians goods. Although licensed merchants were regulated by the federal government, from the outset the economy was in many ways informal, local and not unfamiliar to Indians. Personal relations became prominent factor in trader calculations about the extension of credit and leniency shown toward indebted Indians. Trade store ledgers, correspondence and documents provide a window into the dynamics of the reservation community in which reciprocity, reputation, and interpersonal relations intertwined with economic activities. Merchant records document account numbers, names of Indian and Anglo customers, their purchases, charges to their accounts, and payments in cash or trade. But store records offer more than evidence of trade and commerce. They detail interaction between Indians and Anglo-Americans and confirm that material circumstances varied within the Indian population. Indian purchases were described generally as merchandise or goods, unless the customer was white or an Indian of apparent stature.<sup>61</sup> The most prominent example is

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<sup>61</sup> The Museum of the Great Plains archives contains several merchant ledger books that document trade with local Indians as well as non-Indians. Three ledgers were particularly useful in identifying some of the patterns suggested in this chapter. They include "Sneed's Book" for the year 1886, "cash book c" for the period December 1908 to November 1913, and "Day Book" which covers the period April 29, 1905 to September 22, 1913. Other ledger books were less descriptive and therefore less useful, even undecipherable in some instances. The Sneed book is the earliest book known to exist for the old Red Store. Lawrence's

that of Quanah Parker, the famous Comanche figure, whose purchases were always fully itemized. Quanah's patronage was important to the traders as evidenced in C.E. Hank's letter to Lawrence. He wrote, "Quanah has just been to see me stating that he wanted to buy of you a saddle for his boy Johnny Parker. Quanah does not use the red card and I have always let him have what he wants. If you will let Johnny have the saddle and charge Quanah I will see that you get your money."<sup>62</sup> The traders did not extend preferential treatment to all Indian customers. During the previous year, a Kiowa engineering student at Chilocco Agricultural School wrote to Lawrence requesting a suit of clothes be charged to his account. He assured Lawrence that his step-father would pay the bill.<sup>63</sup> Lawrence wrote back to him that "I am perfectly willing to send what you order if your father will bring in his trading ticket. . . You know there

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documentation began in 1905 when he took possession of the store.

<sup>62</sup> C.E. Hank, Cache Mercantile Co. to A.D. Lawrence, October 21, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence Files, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma. The "Red Card" system came into existence after the turn of the century. Under the system the Indian Department permitted Indians to trade on credit at certain designated stores which were guaranteed payment. The head of the household received a small red card about the size of a postcard which showed the individual's name, the size of the family and the amount that he or she was permitted to charge with red card stores. Obviously, Lawrence's store was designated as were other famous Indian trade stores, such as Levite of Apache. Laws and Regulations Related to Trade with Indian Tribes, Office of Indian Affairs, April 1, 1904. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904).

<sup>63</sup> Philip Motah to A.D. Lawrence, January 24, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence Files, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

is a new system in work here now, and we can sell nothing on credit without the Red Trading Card." He continued, "If he will agree to it, and let me put it on his red card, I will send what you want at once."<sup>64</sup>

A.D. Lawrence bought the Red Store at the Fort Sill Sub-agency in 1905. Lawrence's son preserved his father's business records and donated them to the Museum of the Great Plains at Lawton, Oklahoma. The Lawrence collection documents the turn of the century trinket trade. He, like Reynolds, carried an inventory of beads, German silver and notions from S.A. Frost and Marshall Field and Company.<sup>65</sup> He gave credit and made cash loans to his Indian customers. Lawrence had ambitions to distribute locally produced Indian goods to businesses outside of Oklahoma. Moccasins, beaded bags, leggings, baskets, beaded watch fobs, and other goods were featured prominently in a trinket business that stretched from Los Angeles to New York, and from San Angelo, Texas to Minneapolis. Letters exchanged between Lawrence and buyers of Indian trinkets suggest a steady demand for goods

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<sup>64</sup> A.D. Lawrence to Philip Motah, January 25, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence Files, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>65</sup> S.A. Frost to A.D. Lawrence and Son, February, 9, 1907, Lawrence Correspondence Files, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma. This order from S.A. Frost included 607 bunches of beads in 31 colors. In July 1909 Lawrence ordered 500 bunches of beads in assorted colors from Marshall Field and Company. Marshall Field and Company to A.D. Lawrence, July 7, 1909, Lawrence Correspondence Files, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

ranging in quality and quantity. Lawrence's network included other traders who also supplied general merchandise stores, theme parks, and curio shops. Their eclectic inventories included beaded items, leatherwork, pottery, and other locally produced goods, to far more exotic objects such as idols, mastadon bones, and "ancient goods."

Lawrence's letters reflect his ability to obtain a wide assortment of Indian handmade goods, ranging from "Indian Curios" to "more expensive goods."<sup>66</sup> The latter category included "papoose cradles, war bonnets, canes, belts. . ." as well as "cradles, sashes, Indian suits, Eagle Head Dresses, Peacock Feathers, Bow and Quiver outfits, Bows and Arrows, Chains, Baskets, Moccasins, Quirts, etc. . ."<sup>67</sup> How Lawrence came by his "more expensive goods" is not documented. One letter, however, indicates that he was also in the pawn business. In May 1909 Lawrence wrote to C.L. Eliis, Special Indian Agent at Anadarko, responding to charges of misconduct in the matter of the war bonnet of a local Indian, Ar-rus-che.<sup>68</sup> Ar-rus-che had left his bonnet

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<sup>66</sup> A.D. Lawrence to A.F. Hatfield, April 2, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma. Lawrence's business transactions concerning the sale of Indian goods were also recorded in the store ledger, Day Book April 29, 1905-September 22, 1913, A.D. Lawrence Collection.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., and A.D. Lawrence to A.F. Hatfield, July 17, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>68</sup> A.D. Lawrence to C.L. Eliis, May 19, 1909, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.



with Lawrence in exchange for \$5.00 with the understanding that he would retrieve it within "a few days." When Ar-rus-che failed to return for the bonnet Lawrence exchanged it for a "bunch of peacock feathers" with "an Indian from the North part of the state."<sup>69</sup> Ar-rus-che claimed that Lawrence had failed to honor the terms and contested Lawrence's story that he had held the bonnet for a month before trading it.<sup>70</sup> Such practices have a long tradition in Anadarko which even today is the home to numerous pawn shops. Pawn enabled Lawrence to boast of an inventory that included "relics" and "rare items in Kiowa, Apache and Comanche work."<sup>71</sup>

As a licensed Indian trader, Lawrence was aware of the annuity payment schedule and the amount of the payment. Even when payments were short, traders found business remained good. It left the Indians "hard up," and "for that reason we have been able to pick up these goods at reasonable prices." As a result, Lawrence obtained a "fur robe, bow and arrow outfit and head dress..."<sup>72</sup> Lawrence's revelations about his business practices suggest that

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> A.D. Lawrence to Ed Estes, November 18, 1907, December 3, 1907, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>72</sup> A.D. Lawrence to E.A. Estes, December 3, 1907, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma. The beaded leather fob, a small pocket for a watch, became very popular during this period,

individuals parted with masculine objects through pawn or outright sales for cash.

Lawrence boasted that his Indian goods were "GENUINE" and bought "direct from the Indians."<sup>73</sup> He was able to "guarantee every piece to be GENUINE, for the write [sic] has bought them personally, and knows all the Indians of whom I have bought."<sup>74</sup> Lawrence gave attribution to the tribe if not the producers of his Indian goods which reinforced his claims. Invoices listed items such as "Tobacco Pouch 'Kiowa', Apache Bag, Comanche Moccasins" and "Kiowa Fob Pouch."<sup>75</sup>

Lawrence also had a vigorous trade in the "curio" line. He promoted his curios alongside the finer goods. Although the distinction was sometimes blurred, curios tended to include beaded bags, moccasins, beaded watch fobs, dolls, purses and other small items. Curios had their own cache as a line that was "changing all the time."<sup>76</sup> Lawrence's correspondence suggests that handmade items came into his

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according to the correspondence between Lawrence and his business associates.

<sup>73</sup> A.D. Lawrence to M. Loeb, June 15, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>74</sup> A.D. Lawrence to E.A. Estes, November 18, 1907 and December 3, 1907, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>75</sup> For example, A.F. Hatfield to A.D. Lawrence, January 21, 1909, and Purdy Brothers, Galveston, Texas to A.D. Lawrence, May 28, 1909, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>76</sup> A.D. Lawrence to M. Loeb, June 15, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

possession somewhat regularly and the quantities that he sold in certain items, particularly beaded watch fobs, indicates a steady production pace. Other items such as beaded and partially beaded bags, appear in fewer numbers.

The Lawrence Collection includes a number of store ledgers which are somewhat cryptic, but further document his trade in Indian goods. Numerous entries contain language suggesting that people brought in items to trade or sell. Some entries appear to document such transactions by inclusion of the word "from." Typical entries read, "mdse ac Ear Bobs *from* Pecinah," "Mdse 1 pr Mox *from* Permah" and "Mdse a/c 1 Belt *from* Maggie 1.50" [*italics mine*].<sup>77</sup> Other entries do not include the preposition, such as, "Mdse a/c 1 watch (Nah dah yaker)," "Mdse a/c Beaded chain Tochocozoo," and "Mdse a/c Ear Rings (Pemah)."<sup>78</sup> It appears that Lawrence was documenting part of his trade in Indian goods, but not entirely. Watch fobs, for example, never appear in cash book "c," nor does his pawn activity.<sup>79</sup>

Lawrence's letters never name the sources of his Indian curio line, but they are without doubt predominantly reservation. Men might have produced leather goods such as moccasins and silverwork, historically, women produced clothing and regalia worn for family events and continued to

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<sup>77</sup> Cash Book "C," A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

do so through the reservation period. Beadwork was a prominent element of buckskin clothing, moccasins and regalia prior and during the reservation period. Beadwork for personal consumption might have increased in importance during the reservation period. David Penney has argued that reservation confinement and changes in economic life increased the symbolic value of ceremonial dress.<sup>80</sup> As a result, dress became more elaborate as a way to make a statement as to ethnic identification. Dress, Penney concluded, symbolized ethnic solidarity and contrasted Indians with the dominant culture. It followed that beadwork, silk applique and other applied ornament became exaggerated during this period. Those particular techniques represented traditional women's industry, which reinforced the association with symbols of cultural identity and resilience especially when worn for celebratory events. Women who excelled at arts such as beadwork enhanced their family's standing within the community, and, as a result, reinforced their own reputations. They were sought after when special circumstances required a skilled beadworker and

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<sup>80</sup> David Penney, Art of the American Indian Frontier: The Chandler-Pohrt Collection (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), pp. 49-50. The Chandler-Pohrt collection was exhibited at the National Gallery of Art, the Seattle Art Museum, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, and the Detroit Institute of Art between May 1992 and February 1994. The book is a companion to that traveling exhibition.

their name as producer of a ceremonial garb added to the significance of the piece.<sup>81</sup>

Bernard Mishkin's Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians was based on Kiowa data collected in 1935 in Oklahoma. Mishkin attached an appendix to the last chapter on rank in which he listed 25 of the most famous men in the tribe and 21 of the most famous women and the basis of their prominence. The first nine women were known for tipi-making, tanning and saddles, women ranked ten through twelve for beadwork, and thirteen through twenty-one for good looks, dancing and cooking. Of the first twelve, all famous for proficiency in women's crafts, seven were wives of *ondei*, or the highest rank.<sup>82</sup> The traditional values of women's industry persisted throughout the reservation period and well into the 20th century. Their abilities was valued within the community, enhanced their marriage opportunities, and secured their reputations within the community. That women dominated craft production, particularly beadwork, at least until the middle of the century, and that it carried significance within the community is unquestionable.

Nevertheless, women are nearly invisible in the records of licensed Indian traders and correspondence related to outside opportunities such as expositions and fairs. On only one occasion did Lawrence allude to a specific

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

individual in his Indian goods correspondence. He wrote to Frank Rush in Cache, Oklahoma who wished to have some unspecified item made from a buffalo hide. Lawrence conveyed an invitation from "the best Indian in the country for that kind of work" to "bring the hide to Mt. Scott sometime when you are coming that way." Rush should expect to speak to her through her daughter who would interpret for the unnamed woman.<sup>83</sup>

The letter contains hints as to possible explanations for the invisibility of Indian women. This unnamed woman was clearly a speaker whose English was too poor to converse with a white man. She needed her daughter to be able to understand what he wanted done with it, to obtain proper measurements and to communicate her price.<sup>84</sup> She lived in Mt. Scott and was willing to do the work only if the gentleman traveled to her home to negotiate the project. Apparently, Lawrence traveled to Mt. Scott to do business with her, as hinted in his affirmative line: "I bought some beautiful things of her yesterday."<sup>85</sup> At least in this instance, a respectable woman with proficiency in hide work and the production of "beautiful things" did not approach

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<sup>82</sup> Bernard Mishkin, Rank and Warfare Among the Plains Indians (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 54-56.

<sup>83</sup> A.D. Lawrence to Frank Rush, October 23, 1908, Lawrence Correspondence File, A.D. Lawrence Collection, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, Oklahoma.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Lawrence for work. Her reputation preceded her and drew him to her, away from his store and ledgers.

The scenario suggests an informal agreement based on mutual awareness of the other's reputation, prices negotiated and arrived at mutually, an exchange based on goods she had on hand, vague agreements about future exchanges when Lawrence made his next trip to Mt. Scott, promises of payment or credit to the woman's account when her "beautiful things" were sold, and her acceptance of those terms.

On the one hand, the scenario suggests a passive attitude on the part of the unnamed woman. But Lawrence's letters suggest another possibility. Trade documents reveal that despite their subaltern status, women maintained control over the pace and volume of trinket production. Lawrence's letters contain references to being short of curios and of his inability to fill orders to specification. In one letter he wrote: "It is quite hard to always send just what our customers want as the Indians do not make a regular line of goods." In another letter, "Our line of curios is changing all the time, that is to say, we do not have exactly the same things at all times." Indian goods were seldom produced, as Lawrence wrote, according to the dictates of a distant market. Rather Indian producers manufactured them on a somewhat irregular basis, perhaps as

the need for cash and credit arose. As the case of the Mt. Scott woman suggests, women produced not only on demand, they simply produced items that they were willing to part with when the opportunity presented itself, such as the arrival of Mr. Lawrence from the Lawton Red Store. It was an informal series of transactions characterized by acknowledgement of different kinds of boundaries and limits.

The volume of articles women produced cannot be quantified. We do well to detect their presence in an informal hidden reservation economy where women's exchange practices contributed to the construction of the internal environment. The system that they inhabited and engaged was represented and perceived as one controlled by outsiders. The limits of control is evident in the absence of sweat shops or other exploitative mechanisms, the women's control of aesthetic decisions, and the pace of trinket production based not on mass production but instead on rhythms of household need. As a result the women's trinket exchange system avoided becoming a means of gross exploitation which surely would have presented yet another assault on the community's self-determination.

To the contrary, the production of handmade things was a source of community stability as grandparents and parents passed down the knowledge of their craft to the young, perpetuating skills and reinforcing their ties to the tribal



community. Women's ability to obtain cash and credit by their handiwork and trade with local businessmen allowed them and their families to remain within the community. Women's participation in the trinket trade lent them an economic presence within their communities and with traders. The absence of mass production reinforced the authenticity of women's handcrafts, added value to their product and reinforced women's prestige and cultural authority through their fine beadwork, hide production and sewing.

Traders were crucial to reservation women's engagement with the world outside the reservation. They brokered new pathways of circulation. They marketed to Anglo American consumers whose desire to own a piece of the past had been encouraged by wild west shows, expositions, fairs and the unfolding history of the western frontier. Traders made available goods whose authenticity was greatly valued by people who had no experience with the reservation or the American West. They encouraged the production of tourist arts, but only indirectly influenced them, less in terms of aesthetic than in terms of increasing quantity. Clearly there were limits to their ability, or even perhaps desire, to control the production and aesthetic of tourist arts.

The personalized relations between traders and reservation women generated a system that provided additional income for households. The consequences of the

circulation of women's handmade things were far more significant than the small sums that women realized from their work. The world outside the reservation received women's crafts in various ways--as curios, treasured keepsakes, exotic items and valueless trinkets. Hidden from public view, however, women's work was centered in the home on the reservation. There, they gathered with daughters, older family members, and perhaps other women and engaged in a craft that their mothers and grandmothers had passed down to them. Perhaps they told stories, gossiped, and sang songs. Smaller children might have played at their feet, experimenting with small buckskin or cloth remnants, listening to their relatives speaking in the first language

The lives of artists and the objects they produce are connected, but, as Octavio Paz has noted, "the relation is never simple: the life does not entirely explain the work, nor does the work explain the life."<sup>86</sup> The value of women's handmade things rested in those small unseen places where they lived their lives in connection to and apart from the outside world. Within their daily lives the knowledge of beadwork, leatherwork, correct behavior, family history and language quietly passed between generations. The work, the activity that surrounded it, and circulation of it to the

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<sup>86</sup>Octavio Paz, Sor Juana, Or, The Traps of Faith, Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 3.

outside world affirmed a separate and distinct tribal identity.

The exploitation of Indian culture does not negate a co-existing presence of creative innovation. Both can explain diversion of goods from traditional pathways.<sup>87</sup> American exploitation of American Indian women's work, in addition to other inconspicuous small-scale income-producing strategies, also created opportunities for Kiowas and Comanches to maintain a close physical proximity which permitted the retention of traditional communal values. Those values persisted even though external pressures to prostitute the culture for commercial purposes were present.

The Kiowa, Comanche and Apache experiences within the reservation system between 1875 and 1910 did not conform to prophecies of uplift through cultural revolution or degradation through rupture. Following the surrender of the off-reservation bands, the tribes found themselves within an artificially constructed and imposed economy. The economy was crucial to the assimilation program because, its proponents believed, it was through economic success that the Indians would acquire values of independence, individualism and the American work ethic, the substance of the desired cultural transformation. The reservation economy traveled an uneven course of Indian failure and progress in farming and stockraising ventures, with an ever-

present system of small subsistence strategies that carried them through lean years.

The early reservation failed to provide the means by which this deterministic model might transmit the American values of independence and individualism to the southern Plains tribes. The old system of raiding, trading and hunting had come undone by 1875. Farming was not a viable option in the midst of drought, Indian inexperience, inadequate resources and a variety of other stressful conditions of the tribes' existence in the post-1875 period. But, what the Kiowas and Comanches were able to do was to construct a strategy out of numerous activities by which they accumulated cash, credit and goods that contributed to community subsistence.

The economic picture improved as the tribes moved into the 1880s and 1890s. Stock herds increased in number as did land under cultivation. But, it was stockraising that was the Indians' best hope of substantially improving their material conditions according to the Indian agents who resided among them. That, coupled with cash-generating grass leases, represented a movement toward a more stable economic environment, if not the expected cultural transformation. Indeed, it was in this period that Kiowa

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<sup>87</sup> Appadurai, The Social Life of Things, p. 26.

Ghost Dance appeared.<sup>88</sup> The largest Ghost Dance in Kiowa history took place in October 1890 at Rainy Mountain Creek. By 1894, Kiowa Ghost Dance had taken two forms—large outdoor dances and smaller sings.<sup>89</sup> Ghost Dance continued until 1914 throughout the allotment and into the post-allotment periods. Ghost Dance people shared the same stigma of non-compliance with the assimilationist project that the early young men experienced. Agents attempted to break up Ghost Dancing, but the Kiowas responded by wrapping it the celebration of an annual Fourth of July holiday—again hiding in plain view.<sup>90</sup>

Allotment destabilized the trend toward improving economic conditions. As was frequently the case with American Indian tribes, the division of lands into individual parcels undermined the collectivity that afforded Indians a measure of security. It pitted individual Indians against non-Indian neighbors in disputes. It left individual Indians to protect allotments against persons desirous of acquiring that land. Allotment made it more difficult, and perhaps with limited resources, impossible to cooperate in stockraising and farming. In the context of

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<sup>88</sup> Kracht, "The Kiowa Ghost Dance," p. 459. Kiowa Ghost Dance "represented a syncretic relations, blending aboriginal Kiowa beliefs, Christianity, and peyotism." P. 455. Kracht takes the position that Kiowa Ghost Dance was a response to cultural crisis that also reflected the religious diversity which included Christianity and peyotism within the reservation.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 460.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 468.

late 19<sup>th</sup> century American society where individualism had become even more exaggerated, American Indian people found themselves in a most vulnerable state economically.

Land losses, reductions in herds, the cessation of annuity distributions and other blows to the tribes' economic gains of the previous two decades increased the value of small income generating activities. It is in this context that we can appreciate the commoditization of Indian culture—material and otherwise. While much of that economic activity remains hidden, clearly large quantities of materials that are necessary to the production of crafts were present. The presence of evidence of trade relations within the reservation that moved goods between Indian women and licensed traders, and the evidence of those same goods circulating beyond the reservation via trader marketing activities and large public venues paints a picture of Indian goods generating income.

It would be deterministic to suggest that maintenance of the Kiowa and Comanche tribal identities results from such activities. And clearly, documented museum collections attest to the ongoing production of goods for private community consumption. But, the importance of this argument is that it demonstrates the futility of the proposed cultural revolution. Engagement with the outside market, foreign activities such as farming and other new activities

did not corrupt the Kiowa's and Comanche's distinct tribal identities. Life within the reservation introduced them to new experiences, but those new experiences did not destroy their long-held value systems.

The Kiowa and Comanche subversion of the sought-after cultural revolution and transformation of their identities was not a finely tuned purposeful plan. It came about through the inconsistencies of the colonial plan, the American ambiguity toward Native people's place in the history of the United States, and the tribes' ability to adjust to new circumstances without abandoning old practices and values.

## Conclusion

Colonialism takes many forms. In this case, the initial target of the United States government was an expanded exchange system that permitted the southern Plains tribes to enjoy an enviable degree of independence and freedom. Trade with Euro-Americans appeared not to have sapped Indians' autonomy as the usual model of Native-Euro-American relations dictates. This was not a fleeting state of affairs. The system referred to here remained in place for approximately two hundred years.

During that period Native American tribes and Euro-American groups inhabited the southern Plains, weaving a system of economic and social relations that reflected disparate interests and cultures. Violence, victimization and coercion were as evident as cooperation and accommodation. Despite enormous cultural differences and varying, sometimes completely opposed sets of rules and normative behaviors, Euro-Americans and American Indian tribes were part of a system that circulated goods and ideas among themselves. Goods circulated within and were central to tribal cultures and social organizations as much as they were a part of the economics of post-contact southern Plains life. Exchange among Euro-Americans and disparate Indian tribes failed to produce the alleged Kiowa and Comanche



"dependence" on foreign goods that is widely and popularly attributed by historians to various American Indian tribes in the post-contact era, including the southern Plains people. Rather, the regional political economy of the southern Plains complemented Kiowa and Comanche social organizations, though they remained, in fact, distinct.

The arrival of the Americans brought a new perspective into the region. Americans, like the Spanish and the French before them, desired trade with the Comanches and Kiowas, but, unlike the Spanish, French and other Indian tribes, were unwilling to abide the costs of doing business with the southern Plains Indians. Loss of horse and cattle herds, loss of life and other costs exacted by the Kiowas and Comanches were, for the Americans, cause for government intervention. The Americans, more than any previous group, desired to control the Kiowas and Comanches, in contrast to the willingness of the Spanish and French to work within the frame of a mutually beneficial system. It was this American desire to impose its will and to coerce Indian conformity with a broader federal Indian policy that produced the reservation.

The desired outcome of the established reservation was the destruction of the early system and the assertion of United States control over the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache tribes. The goal and the prescribed means of achieving it

were consistent with 19<sup>th</sup> century colonialism as it was expressed throughout the non-western world. The southern Plains tribes' success in thwarting that model for nearly a decade demonstrates the limitations of locally applied policies. Equally important, it demonstrates the enduring flexibility of the tribes' social organizations, economy and culture. The combination of porous "boundaries" outlined in a formal treaty document and the tribes' familiarity with an environment in which social, political, economic and physical boundaries were quite fluid provided them the ability to subvert the hegemonic model in ways that were productive for them and their communities.

Yet, if federal Indian policy and, in particular, the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek proposed the theoretical category of reservation, it did not after all determine the lived reality. In reality, the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache reservation, at least for the first near decade, resembled the old Indian system despite significant stressors such as rapidly diminishing bison herds. In theory, the treaty sought both peace and the cultural transformation of southern Plains tribes through the adoption of agriculture and education. But, the reality of the reservation was the persistence of old exchange patterns (which were inconsistent with "peace"), the reinforcement of community

values and the perpetuation of respective Kiowa and Comanche social organizations.

At the center of the post-treaty period were Kiowa and Comanche young men. They are known to us because they, more than any other group, were identified as the source of resistance to the reservation and the source of persistence of old practices. Authorities stigmatized these young men, pressured headmen to bring them under control, blamed them for outrages and stereotyped them as the new savages to be either reformed or excised in the name of the reservation project.

Nevertheless, American participation in the exchange system worked against its own agenda of determining the Indians' cultural transformation. Traders and the early corrupt agent Jesse Leavenworth and his partners opened additional pathways for the circulation of Indian goods—horses, mules, cattle and hides—much of which were the result of off-reservation trading and raiding. Rations and annuities provided additional resources to on and off-reservation bands. The means of circulating goods was central to the stabilization of tribal social units during the transition. Specifically, Indian goods continued to change hands between young men and headmen, and headmen continued to distribute goods among the people. Social values of responsibility for tribal groups, generosity,

building of reputations through distribution of gifts and resources persisted rather than declined.

The young men who generated those goods fulfilled community responsibilities at the same time that they became the authorities' symbol of aberrant behavior and even savagery. The headmen's appropriation of the authorities' description of the young men as "renegades" and "outlaws" correlates directly to the fact that the agents frequently withheld rations in order to force Indian conformity with policies. Withholding these rations posed a threat to the bands' precarious situation and could not be ignored. Yet all evidence of the headmen's helplessness to control the young men suggests that the young men continued nevertheless to assert their authority in certain circumstances.

At the same time, however, it is also possible that the headmen's helpless talk abetted the young men by hiding them in plain view, so to speak. By agreeing that they were outlaws, but doing little besides professing impotence to curb their behaviors, the headmen created a buffer between the young men and the authorities. For was it not also, after all, in the headmen's interests to protect the young men as a source of goods from which they, as leaders of social units, derived part of their personal power? As a purely practical matter, too, the off-reservation bands grew increasingly needful of annuities as a secondary source of

subsistence. In this sense the, the old system and the reservation system had integrated.

The web of relationships between off-reservation bands, reservation groups, traders and the authorities is evidence that colonialism in the southern Plains was a cultural process in which mutual relations contributed to an evolving structure rather than the simple subjugation of Native peoples to a monolithic American government that scholars have long portrayed it to be. Indeed, If we were to focus exclusively on the public image of Indians, we would be misled by the language used to describe the young men. The "renegade" Indian exists as a category because young men were defying government efforts to stop unwanted activities such as stock thefts, captive taking and murder. And those activities were in turn all part of the larger web of relations within the tribes and between tribes and the colonizers. The epithet "renegade" represented a manipulation of Indian identity, but it also signified an entire scope of activity that involved living up to tribal community standards of behavior as well as collaboration and mutual benefit between Indians and Americans. To be sure, the term "renegade" derived from the language of power and conquest. It was another essentialist generic category that dehumanized Indian individuals. But, in that respect, it also worked to the young men's advantage because it gave

them invisibility. Given the tribes' later resistance to enrollment, the anonymity that was reinforced by such categories was clearly an advantage, and the loss of it through formal head-counting was the final significant blow to the young men's off-reservation autonomy.

The young men experienced a jarring relocation when they departed the reservation in leg irons and headed for Fort Marion in 1875. The limitations of the reservation as a facilitator of cultural transformation would contrast sharply with Richard Pratt's total assimilationist prison experiment. There, the anonymous renegades would become minor celebrities as Americans imposed the identity of romanticized warriors on them. The garnering of public sympathy was Pratt's aim in his schemes to expose St. Augustine society to the captive warriors. He hoped that small doses of contact would lessen the hostilities that Americans felt toward Plains Indians which would in turn justify his plans for an Indian education system. The records of prisoners life at St. Augustine provide us a glimpse we might not otherwise have into their experiences as occupants of a particular historical and cultural cusp.

As Pratt's own writings about the Fort Marion experiment make clear, he wished nothing to be left to chance within the Fort Marion environment so far as the prisoners' education was concerned. He structured their

time around activities that would impart a western education, Christianity, and a variety of key values, such as independence, producerism and individualism. Pratt's program was in practice what the reservation had promoted in theory. Complete immersion, he hoped, would work a transformation on the younger men, in whom he, like other reformers, invested great hope for channeling the arts of civilization into their respective tribal communities. The prisoners were cooperative. They submitted to haircuts and uniforms, endeavored to learn the English language, attended religious services and engaged in odd jobs around the Fort and St. Augustine. It is not surprising that the transformation did not take hold. Indeed, it would be reasonable to find Pratt's optimism about manipulating individuals' identities naïve, but for the consistency of his ideas with those of other reformers and social scientists of his times.

More interesting, however, is the record that the prisoners themselves left behind through their art and letters. The drawings leave a record of the prisoners' awareness of the cusp that they occupied--a record that reveals them as fully human, in contrast to their constructed identities, capable of art, anxiety, humor, insecurity, fantasy and longing. The work of these artists reveals, moreover, a transformation of a very different type

from the one envisioned by Pratt. Their drawings, petitions to Washington and later letters exhibited their intellectual engagement with the assimilation project and efforts to conceptualize productive approaches that were consistent with their respective community values. Unlike their new public image as romanticized warriors, the young men were quite serious in their efforts to grasp the new country in which the landscape was simultaneously recognizable and unfamiliar.

Celebrity proved to be temporary, as the warriors quickly learned following their return to the reservation. The reservation reality of 1878 was just as removed from the promises made or implied in the Treaty of Medicine Lodge Creek. There the prisoners became Indians again--not the generic romanticized savages who performed for St. Augustine tourists, but members of tribal communities. Reservation poverty was for the long-separated warriors an unprecedented and frightening experience. The tribes' agricultural and stockraising failures, the inadequacy of annuities and the end of the old raiding, trading, and hunting practices justified the men's anxieties. Many patched together a living--one which was insufficient, but enough to prevent complete disaster.

In this period following the return of the warriors, a number of factors contributed to a fluid reservation economy



that alternately allowed for still further preservation of older Indian social organizations. First, the distribution of government annuity payments and rations helped to shape the economy. Rations were uneven in quality and were not always regularly available. Nevertheless, they provided the basics of the reservation diet, including coffee, flour, cornmeal, beef and lard. Annuity payments made it possible for reservation Indians to establish credit with the local licensed traders who could obtain payments on Indian accounts directly from the Indian Agent. Second, licensed Indian traders did business with both Indian and non-Indian customers, but the Indian trade was a steady source of guaranteed income. Not only did annuity payments ensure that Indian accounts would be paid up, but the trader was positioned to take part in the bison and cattle hide trade, and, later, to benefit from grass lease payments. Traders were sources of manufactured goods as well as short terms loans against future payments and hides. Third, Kiowas and Comanches possessed the willingness to engage in a variety of income-generating activities over time. Freightng, day labor, odd jobs around the agency, farming, and the hide trade were ways in which men obtained credit and currency.

Yet because no single economic activity that was available to the majority of reservation people was sufficient to sustain a household, it took the labor of

women as well as men to accomplish that end. Women shared in what amounted to an ongoing strategy of supplementing through their handmade manufactures which, like many other economic activities, generated the kind of income that tends to remain hidden. But, unlike men's economic activities, women's work (regardless of how comparably "insignificant" in gross figures) was not documented at all but in two sources. First, museums and private collections around the country are filled with the results of women's labor in the form of beadwork, leatherwork and other crafts. Second, and less apparent but perhaps more crucial, licensed traders' records hint at the informal and hidden economic relationships between them and reservation women. Women's work, like the Fort Marion drawings, found an outlet in American society because of developments beyond the reservation. There, the language of conquest had nurtured a fascination with Native American people and material culture and a desire to capture it before it all disappeared under the weight of assimilation and the vision of a homogeneous American society.

The construction of false American Indian identities is unquestionably a by-product of colonization. But as this dissertation has argued throughout, it was a by-product that, in this case, worked to the Kiowas' and Comanches' economic advantage. The exchange of trinkets—whether we

speak of women's handmade things or ledger drawings which only recently have been recategorized as "art"—was the means by which American Indian people interacted with and manipulated their own false generic American Indian identity. But interaction with that identity, indeed, exploitation of it, did not compromise their identification with distinct and viable tribal communities. Even the production of curios served to reinforce tribal identities because they emerged from the energies of daily life, where the Indian agenda thrived while hiding in plain view.

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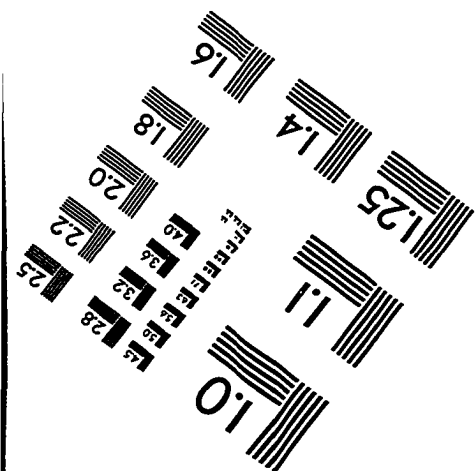
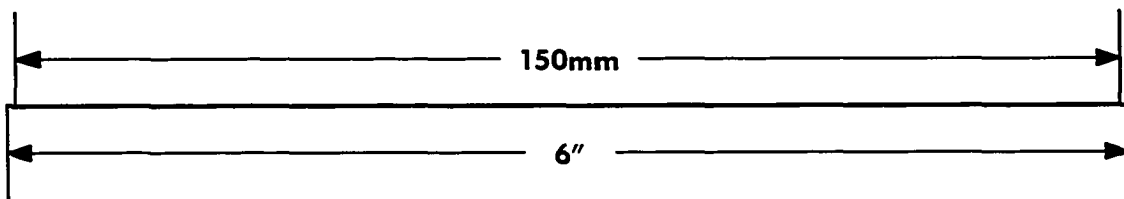
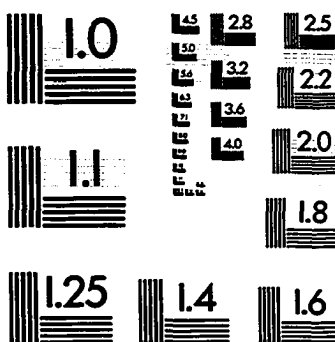
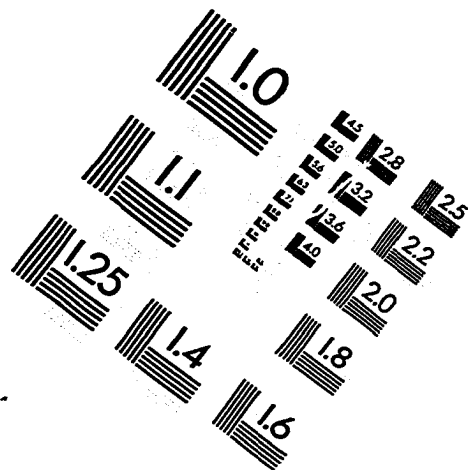
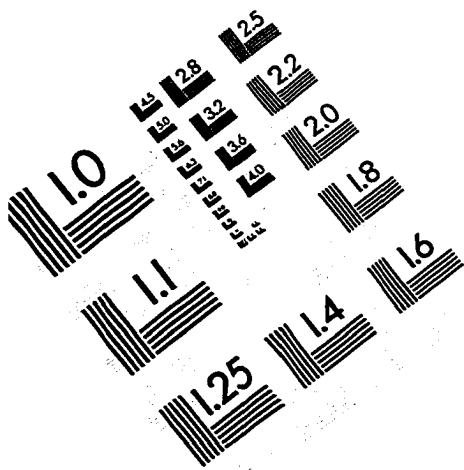


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