

Forest Grove's Adopted Children:
A Look At
The Indian Industrial Training School
At Forest Grove, Oregon,
1880 - 1885.

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Introduction

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before I have in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Ta-hool-hool-shoot is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the younger men who say yes or no. He who leads the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away into the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are--perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. May be I shall find them among the dead. Hear me my chiefs; I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.

-From Chief Joseph, of the Nez Perce Indians, upon his surrender to General Howard.¹

At seventy, General Oliver Ottis Howard could still remember how clearly his grandfather described to him those "wild red men."² Though as a boy he couldn't have known the impact that such stories would have on him, Howard would later be remembered for his military dealings with various Indian tribes throughout the US.

In 1855, just out of West Point, Howard was assigned to Kennebec Arsenal Florida to help rout out Seminole Indians to be placed on a reservation.³ After this short assignment, Howard was asked to teach Mathematics at West Point, and he did so until the taking of Fort Sumter in 1861.⁴ In 1863 Howard was given command of the 11th Armed Corps and

¹David Lavender, *Let Me Be Free: the Nez Perce Tragedy*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992) pp. 325-326.

²Oliver O. Howard, *My Life And Experience Among Our Hostile Indians* (A. D. Worthington & Company Hartford, 1907) p. 45.

³*Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 96.

was involved in the battle of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, and then was given command of the 4th army Corps and was involved with the Army of the Cumberland.⁵ On July 26, 1864, General Howard took command of the Army and Department of the Tennessee, and he served there until the May 12, 1865, when he was assigned as commissioner for the Freedmen's Bureau.

In 1872, while Gen. Howard was still serving as the commissioner for the Freedmen's Bureau, President Grant sent him to try and "make peace with the Chiricahua Apaches under Cochise."⁶ Before heading west, General Howard selected his aids from Washington. He brought with him an interpreter, a celebrated Indian Agent by the name of E. P. Smith, and his aid-de-camp, Captain Melville C. Wilkinson.⁷ Howard was successful in making peace with Cochise's band of Apaches, but during his dealings with surrounding Indians, he couldn't help but think "that there was a better way to deal with the Indian than to begin with the conquering sword and follow it up with starvation."⁸

After the Freedmen's Bureau was shut down in 1874, General Howard was reassigned on September 1, 1874, to the Department of the Columbia , headquartered in Portland, Oregon.⁹ From this department, Howard was responsible for twenty-five distinct tribes of Indians, among which were the Nez Perce.¹⁰ In fact, the Nez Perce proved to be General Howard's main concern during his appointment in the Northwest. Howard was to be involved in a few negotiations with chief Joseph, as well as a few

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 232.

battles. Howard again brought with him his aid-de-camp, Wilkinson, who was present on at least one of Howard's negotiations with Joseph.¹¹

Though it was not known at the time, the arrival of Captain Melville C. Wilkinson in Portland, Oregon would introduce to the Northwest a new approach to answering the Indian question. In 1879, Wilkinson was asked by the Board of Trustees for the Tualitan Academy and Pacific University to be the military instructor for said university. During the same year, Wilkinson asked for, and received appropriations for an off-reservation boarding school, and in 1880 eighteen Indian children were brought from their reservations in Washington, to the Indian Industrial Training School at Forest Grove, Oregon.

This paper will first set the stage for the story of the Industrial Training School by examining education as a means to Indian Assimilation. The paper will examine the Indian agencies from Missionary to Government control. It will examine Grants "Peace Policy," and it will take a look at the nation's desire to see the Indian fully assimilated, or fully destroyed. The paper's second purpose will be to place the Industrial Training School within the broad context of Indian Education. It will examine the schools successes, its failures, and its local mission. And thirdly, it will try and show all the circumstances that lead to its departure for Salem in 1885, a mere five years after its initial experimentation.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 246.

The Rise of Off-Reservation Boarding Schools

In the 1860's the U.S. found itself in a situation that would take all of its attention. The Civil War, consumed many, if not all, of the North's industries, as it totally crippled the South. In fact, the South had been so decimated both economically and culturally that even after the war, the U.S. would still need to direct most of its resources and energy into the reconstruction of the South. With the war over though, the issue concerning the expansion of slavery into the western territories was at last put to rest, and the country could now look to the west as a means of supporting the virtuous farmer.

In looking westward, the U.S. was forced to determine the status of yet another inferior people. Unlike the blacks, however, the status of Native Indians was to be more optimistic. In short, the Indians could be assimilated. Annie Beecher Scoville summed it up best when she said,

If there is an idol that the American people have, it is the school. If you don't believe it, go out to Pine Ridge, where there are seven thousand Sioux on eight million acres of land...and find planted...thirty-two school houses, standing there as a testimony to our belief in education.... It is a remedy for barbarism, we think, and so we give the dose.... The school is the slow match.... [I]t will blow up the old life, and of its shattered pieces [we] will make good citizens.¹²

This paper will use five sources to determine to what extent this statement is true as well as the methods used to attempt assimilation. The

¹² Clyde Ellis. "A remedy for Barbarism": Indian Schools, the Civilizing program, and the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache Reservation, 1871-1915. *American Indian Culture And Research Journal* Vol. 18, (1994) Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, p. 85.

sources also shed light as to how the Indians viewed these methods of reeducation as a means to assimilate them into an American civilization.

In his book, *Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education*, David H. DeJong gives a general overview of Indian Education in the U.S. from colonial America through the Kennedy Report on the treatment of American Indians.

In 1870, President Grant urged that all open Indian agencies were to be filled by appointments recommended by various religious denominations.¹³ Grant's main reason for doing this was to keep peace between the Indian agencies and the missionaries working on the reservations.¹⁴ Indian education prior to 1870 was usually in the hands of either the Protestants or the Catholics.¹⁵ "By 1882, because of political and religious conflicts, most of the Indian agencies were back under military control."¹⁶

Conflict mostly arose between Protestant missionaries -- who believed the spending of Federal moneys was a joining of church and state -- and Catholics who saw Federal funds as Indian moneys.¹⁷ These conflicts were at least one reason why "beginning in the late 1870's, government officials adopted the view that off-reservation boarding schools offered the best opportunity for incorporating Indian children into the white-dominated society."¹⁸ The main reason for this change, however, was that "such schools kept the Indian children away from their

¹³ David H. DeJong. *Promises of the Past: A History of Indian Education in the United States* (Colorado: North American Press, 1993) p. 71.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

homes for protracted periods - in some cases years at a time." The theory being that releasing the child from the tribal life would help solve the Indian problem.¹⁹

Government officials were sticking to the theory that education was the fastest way to fully assimilate the Native American. By teaching the Indian to read and write English, as well as practical skills needed to compete in the "white-dominated" society, the system would give the Indians a chance to survive.²⁰ What isn't addressed by DeJong, is whether or not tribal councils were ever involved in determining what was best for the Indian people. This question would especially need answering when looking at certain tribes that had already become assimilated into American culture, and politics.

Though the thoughts of government officials are very important in understanding the U.S. treatment of Indians, it is also important to look at societies view of the Indian. Frederick E. Hoxie adds this dimension in his book *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920*. Hoxie states that "the Grant and Hayes administrations tried to revitalize [the separation of Indian and Civilized culture] with their celebrated peace policy."²¹ This is the policy by which Grant filled all unfilled agency positions with appointees recommended by religious groups. Hoxie explains that this ambitious scheme did not work because "President Grant assigned most of the agency openings to Protestants, thereby alienating the one group - the Catholics - with the most experience in the West."²²

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹ Frederick E. Hoxie. *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880 - 1920* (New York: University of Nebraska Press, 1984) p. 3.

²²*Ibid.*

It is quite possible that this "scheme" didn't work for other reasons as well. Hoxie states that Standing Bear -- a Ponca chief arrested for leaving the reservation -- started touring the eastern states with stories of life on the reservation. Standing Bear would end some of his messages by stating "we are bound, we ask you to set us free."²³ This kind of language was sure to remind people of the not-to-long-ago struggle to free the Negro. To Hoxie this is important because it reveals the optimism with which the Indian was seen in the late 19th century; it was hoped that assimilation of the Indians would negate the need for a perpetuated paternalistic dependence. Such optimism would evaporate in the 20th century when science starts making racial distinctions.

Before the change however, Hoxie points out that the U.S. took ambitious steps towards the assimilation of the Indian. The 1868 Peace Commission "promised a schoolhouse and a teacher for every thirty [Indian] children."²⁴ Starting in 1879, and over a period of fifteen years "congressional appropriations for native schooling rose from \$75,000 to over \$2 million."²⁵ The growth rate was slowed down, however, when the Democrats took control of the Presidency as well as the House of Representatives in 1884."²⁶

In 1893, the view of an assimilated Indian race, started to diminish due to the Indian exhibits at popular fairs. "Superficially, the Indian exhibits changed only slightly between 1876 and 1904. All three fairs presented Native Americans as 'uncivilized'... By 1904 the Indian's

²³*Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

future...appeared limited."²⁷ It should be noted however, that the exhibits put together at such world fairs, was not done with the Indian in mind, as much as they were done in an attempt to celebrate white America. The Chicago fair, for instance, "was a celebration of the power and promise of a new America."²⁸ Many of the exhibits were set up so that one would see, while walking through it, the progress that the Indian had made in American society. In order to fully show this, the Indian was first shown as savage and then another section would display cases containing "descriptions of missionary work, public education efforts, and government programs to encourage farming."²⁹ In fact, the World's Fair was divided "into two racially specific areas. The White City depicted the millennial advancement of white civilization, while the Midway Plaisance, in contrast, presented the undeveloped barbarism of uncivilized, dark races."³⁰ Whatever the goals, though, the fairs depicted the Indian more negatively than optimistically. Hoxie states that "positioned in the center of a bizarre anthropological curio shop and described as an element of the 'white man's burden,' the tribesmen seemed best suited for a life of manual labor," and in fact, now the Native American "appeared handicapped by their race."³¹

Advances in science only diminished societies trust in the ability to fully incorporate the Native Indian into American Culture. Daniel Garrison Brinton's work as an anthropologist "prefigured the more explicitly racial

²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁰ Gail Bederman. *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) p. 31.

³¹ Hoxie, p. 93.

approaches to Indian life that appeared after 1900.³² Brinton's themes seen throughout his work were...

first that one's capacity for progress was determined by race.... Second, Brinton predicted that the Indians' racial inferiority would bring about their extinction. And Finally, he warned against intermarriage.³³

Again the latter statement would probably have stirred the fears of people who remembered the depiction of the savage Negro in search of the white mistress. No wonder that "modern academic opinion suggested that total assimilation was an unrealistic goal."³⁴

It is equally important to see the attempts at assimilation through the eyes of the Native American as well. This is what Clyde Ellis does in his article "A Remedy for Barbarism." Ellis stresses that the promise of schools and teachers were very slowly kept. He uses the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache reservation as his case study.

First he introduces the reader to Thomas J. Morgan, the commissioner of Indian affairs in 1889. Morgan ambitiously stated that

Education is the medium through which the rising generation of Indians are to be brought into fraternal and harmonious relationships with their white fellow-citizens...together with the pleasures that come from literature, science, and philosophy, and the solace and stimulus afforded by a true religion.³⁵

³²*Ibid.*, p. 124

³³*Ibid.*

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 145.

³⁵ Ellis, p. 87.

At the heart of this plan lay "an elaborate tier of schools. A combination of day schools, reservation boarding schools, off-reservation boarding schools, mission schools, and public schools made up the components."³⁶

"At the heart of the program," however, "lay the schools and teachers promised by the treaty -- one each for every thirty pupils on the reservation."³⁷ Yet, "limited facilities forced agents to turn children away every term."³⁸ The school at Fort Sill, with seventy-five students crowded into it, "was strained beyond capacity."³⁹ The government was not able to keep to its promises.

Unfortunately, this did not keep the government from requiring Indians to attend the crowded schools. "To be sure [that attendance was being implemented] there were incidents that required coercion and a variety of punishments."⁴⁰ So even though students were being turned away at overcrowded schools, it was government policy to punish those that refused to go to schools. Matters did start to improve, but not until 1879, eleven years after Grant's administration had promised a school for every 30 pupils.⁴¹ It is safe to speculate that the Indians probably didn't have too much trust in governments attempts at including the Native in the American culture.

Another historian, quite skeptical of government attempts to assimilate the Native American, is David Wallace Adams. Early in his book *Education For Extinction*, Adams lets his readers know his assessment of assimilation tactics when he states that

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

the white threat to Indians came in many forms: smallpox, missionaries, Conestoga wagons, barbed wire, and smoking locomotives. And in the end, it came in the form of schools.⁴²

Adams is particularly troubled by the rise in off-reservation schools. He states that "the idea was gaining force that Indian children needed to be removed from their tribal homes for the assimilationist promise of education to be realized."⁴³ In fact, Adams uses attendance records to show that "although attendance at day schools grew slightly through the 1880's and 1890's, boarding school attendance rose at an enormous rate." In fact, by 1900, "of the 21,568 students in school, nearly 18,000 were attending either an off-reservation or reservation boarding school."⁴⁴ It would be erroneous to believe that the increase in off-reservation schools was due to the acceptance of Indian policy by the Indians. "The bottom line was that parents resented boarding schools...because they severed the most fundamental of human ties: the parent-child bond."⁴⁵ This was most likely not a major concern to white reformers when they only saw savages when they looked at Indians.

Adams' book goes a little further than the others in that it attempts to explain the teacher turnover at the Indian schools. He claims that maintaining a stable working force was difficult due to several factors: teachers' living conditions were primitive, drinking water was often unbearable, work was exhaustive, and most teachers were cut off from

⁴²David Wallace Adams. *Education For Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875 - 1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 1995) p. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

civilization for the first time.⁴⁶ In addition, because early public opinion depicted the Indian as easy candidates for acculturation, many teachers were disappointed at the Indian children's lack of appreciation. Most teachers found it difficult to teach the Indian child, and some found the stark reality of the Indian way of life to be very shocking.⁴⁷

The Indian children, as expected, would most likely have the most to become accustomed to, and unlike the teacher, the child was unable to leave. Indian children immediately had to respond to new hair cuts, uniforms and names. These methods were means of stripping the Indians of their old identity, while replacing it with an acceptable white one.⁴⁸

These actions were the first experiences that greeted the children who were just recently stripped from their families. It is this, more than anything else, that must have led Adams to conclude his work by saying that "...the white man had concluded that the only way to save Indians was to destroy them, that the last great Indian war should be waged against children."⁴⁹ Unlike Adams though, those interested in Indian education and assimilation most likely didn't see their efforts as negative, and so off-reservation boarding schools were begun.

Though the Hampton school for freedmen was initially the first boarding school, off of a reservation, to receive Indian student's, it was already formed with African Americans in mind, and so it was not usually considered the first off-reservation Indian boarding school. The first off-reservation school was founded by Captain Richard Pratt.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 87 -89.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 101 - 109.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

After the Civil War, Captain Pratt was assigned to in the western part of the U.S., and was eventually ordered, in 1875, to escort 72 Kiowa, Comanche, and Southern Cheyenne warriors to fort Marion, Florida. During his charge of the Indian warriors, Pratt began to teach them, for they were in "childish ignorance of the methods and course best to pursue."⁵⁰

In 1878, Pratt received permission to send his charges to the Hampton Institute in Virginia, and it is there that Pratt met General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Hampton's director, and one of the leading reformers in the country. With the contacts that he gained from his friendship with Armstrong, Pratt was able to win support for a separate school for Indians, and so in 1879, the old barracks at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, were approved as the first off-reservation Indian industrial training center.⁵¹ It was started with 150 students, and a curriculum that would include reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as industrial skills such as wagon making, blacksmithing, shoe making, sewing, ironing, printing, and carpentry. And so the model off-reservation school was started and the acculturation had begun.⁵²

⁵⁰ Hoxie, p. 55.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Indian School At Forest Grove.

The desire for an Indian School in Oregon, came from many different viewpoints. The missionaries in the state, of course, wished to convert the Indians from their pagan beliefs. Others did believe that the Indian could be fully brought into civilization, and others believed still differently. The author of an article in *The Oregonian*, for instance, stated that the Indian can either, "remain as they are [on reservations], or be exterminated, or be civilized."⁵³ Later in the article, however, the reason the Indian can not be exterminated is made quite clear. The author states that it is too expensive to kill off the Indians and

after a little such work we would be involved in numerous wars, and it is very doubtful whether in the end, taking into account all the massacres of women and children which would take place, for this would be a game that two could play at, it would not be as expensive as the government method.⁵⁴

This writer is not looking at the social welfare of the Indian, but rather the safety of whites. The military solution (government method) has too high a price in white people's lives. Whether the reasons for the Indian school were altruistic or not, makes no difference in the end. The Northwest would be better off with educated, industrious Indians, then it would with the "ignorant and vicious renegades."⁵⁵

Captain Wilkinson, the school's first superintendent, received more from O. O. Howard than experience in dealing with Native Americans. He was also involved with Howard in a few local revival's. In a letter, Samuel

⁵³ "What To Do With The Indians." *The Daily Oregonian* 17 Dec, 1879.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Walker wrote that he "first met Captain Wilkinson in Astoria, Oregon in the winter of 1874-75. He was at that time serving on Gen. Howard's staff. . . they were hold[ing] a series of revival meetings."⁵⁶ Not only did Howard have a hand in molding a young officer; he also was involved in shaping a reformer and evangelical as well. Small wonder then that Wilkinson was solid in his beliefs about Indian assimilation and education. He believed that Indian education could not be done "by any one who has an idea that the Creator must have made a mistake in creating this race."⁵⁷ To Wilkinson, the "first rule next to cleanliness and obedience is '*No Indian Talk*'," and he found hope in "their entire removal from family and reservation influences."⁵⁸

Dr. H. J. Minthorn, on the other hand had different priorities. To him the most "important of all is religion, next is speaking English, next reading, then writing and composing, then speaking in public, and these things we keep constantly before them."⁵⁹ Of course industrial education was still the primary function of the school. It is important to see that the transition from one superintendent to another may not have been an easy thing to deal with, but none the less the primary function of the school remained the same throughout its stay in Forest Grove, as well as its existence in Salem.

Before discussing the school's origins, it will be beneficial to make a distinction between industrial training and exploitation. It might be easy

⁵⁶ Walker to Bates, Jan. 26, 1917. P.U. Archives, Sicade folder.

⁵⁷ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior* for the year 1881. (Washington: GPO 1881) Later to be referred to as Annual report for specific year. p. 199.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Annual Report for 1883, p. 182.

for someone living during the late twentieth century to look back at Indian industrial training and see the Indian working hard for the gain of white people, but this might not be the right way to study history. Instead, we need to understand these institutions within a culture that stressed the productive use of western land. Jefferson, who is most closely associated with this emphasis, believed that "those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God," and that "corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example."⁶⁰ Labor, therefore, was not regarded as undesirable.

It is doubtful then that too many of the school's teachers were merely trying to get out of working hard; nor were the Indians ever told what to do and then left to do it. In fact, Samuel A. T. Walker, the cobble instructor at the school, was involved on several occasions in painting a building built by the Indian students.⁶¹ Walker was a great example for the Indian Students in the area of hard work, because he went to work every weekday by seven at his private business, and would then spend the afternoon working at the Indian school.⁶²

There is no evidence that points to "personal gain" as one of the reasons for the starting of the school, yet this is not so in Salem. When the *Salem Senator* found that the Indian school was being moved to its present site, an article was written stating that "residents of Salem, and especially business men, will be highly pleased to learn that the Forest Grove Indian school. . . is to be located near Salem."⁶³ A couple of days later it stated again the "business men and property owners will be

⁶⁰ From Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, 1787, personnel collection.

⁶¹ Journal for Samuel A. T. Walker, 16 May, 1881. Pacific University (PU) Archives.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ "The Indian School." *The Salem Senator* 13 Feb, 1885.

correspondingly happy."⁶⁴ It could be speculated that the school is seen as more than a way to assimilate the Indian, but this kind of evidence is not available, and it should be remembered that Wilkinson's evangelical zeal would be all the reason he needed to start the School.

It might be argued that because certain community members tried so adamantly to keep the school in Forest Grove, that certain people saw the school as a source of local prosperity, as no doubt it was. This of course is only speculative due to the lack of written evidence. So, when Captain Wilkinson brought the first eighteen Indian children from the Puyallup Agency in 1880, it can only be safely assumed that he did so from moral motivations, and not narcissistic or exploitative ones.

Captain Wilkinson, already employed as the Pacific's military instructor, initially brought fourteen boys and four girls to Forest Grove, who were admitted on February 25, 1880.⁶⁵ All except one came from the Puyallup tribe in the Washington Territory; the exception was from the same agency, but from the Nisqually tribe. It is hard to say exactly what kind of "home" the Indian children were introduced to upon their arrival. It is known though just what kind of work was started right away.

Prior to the Indian children's arrival, the ground of four acres adjoining Forest Grove was broken up.⁶⁶ Then the children arrived and immediately began their industrial studies. They were responsible for a boys dormitory, a carpenters shop, a store room, a well and drainage ditch, and a garden.⁶⁷ The work must have gone well because between that time

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, "Good News." 27 Feb, 1885.

⁶⁵ Student Roster for Forest Grove Indian Training School (1880 - 1885) p. 1.
Transcribed from records in the National Archives.

⁶⁶ "Apprentices to Civilization at Work at Forest Grove." *The Oregonian* 12 Jan, 1883.

⁶⁷ Resolutions #6 - #9, Minutes from the Board of Trustees for Pacific University and Tualitan Academy, Book 3, p. 134, PU Archives.

and a year later the school was instructing in such fields as Blacksmithing (a local shop), shoemaking, carpentry, girls' industries, and farming.⁶⁸ The school, by then, also experienced a large rise in attendance. It went from eighteen in February 1880 to around eighty students by September 1881.⁶⁹

Upon arrival, the children were most likely faced with many changes. It is difficult to know exactly what they wore; a discussion on the validity of early reports of blankets and moccasins will come in a different section of this paper. At first, the Indians may have already adopted an "Americanized" name, but by October 1881 some Indians are registered under what appear to be adopted names like Atkinson, Minthorn, and Walker.⁷⁰

A couple of changes would have proven very difficult to deal with at first. One was the "no Indian Talk" rule. To be immediately thrown into a community that used a language that, though it may not have been new, was hardly common, must have been frightening. The second, was the rigorous discipline of a military unit. Wilkinson set the school up as a military unit. Dr. Minthorn stated in one of his reports that a particular boy "had risen to the position of first sergeant among the boys."⁷¹ The girls were also "divided into companies with officers and are drilled in marching and calisthenics."⁷² In fact, they were even awakened, every morning, with revelry at 5:30.⁷³

⁶⁸ Annual Report for 1881, pp. 198 - 200.

⁶⁹ Student Roster

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Annual Report for 1884, p. 202

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Captain Wilkinson started a school for the purpose of assimilating Indians into civilization and Christianity. He did this with the help of a Professor Boynton (principal), Mrs. Huff (the matron), a five thousand dollar appropriation, and eighteen Indian children, who may or may not have been recovering from a series of culture shocks.

Success and Setbacks

Discussing the success of the school is difficult for there are many different ways in which the school could have been seen as a success. Did it accomplish its original goals, particularly, did it prepare the Indians to enter civilization in equal standing with whites? Did it kill the savage Indian while retaining the human being, or was success to be measured by the growth of enrollment, or the position it secured in the community? These are all legitimate questions in dealing with the success of the school, and one might see that the school was successful according to some criteria, while it inevitably failed in others.

Because the early editions of both the *News Times* and the *Hillsboro Independent* (both were local papers during the school's existence in Forest Grove) are unreadable, our only real source of public opinion comes by way of correspondence between G. H. Atkinson and the Department of the Interior. George Atkinson was serving on the Board of Directors for P.U. and T.A. during the school's stint in Forest Grove. He was also serving as the County Public School Superintendent. He originally came to Portland *via* Oregon City. His original function was to start churches for the Congregational Churches, and as a Congregational Missionary, he was instrumental in forming the United Church of Christ Congregational in Forest Grove. He was also instrumental in the formation of Pacific University and Tualitan Academy.⁷⁴ He was also very concerned with the work taking place at the industrial school.

Atkinson believed that the community had grown to accept the school. He stated in one letter that the Indian school

⁷⁴ G. H. Atkinson Biographical Sketch, Atkinson File, PU Archives.

has won the public confidence to a large extent. If in respect to order, neatness, studiousness, industry, and economy, it shall continue as it has begun, it will merit and receive a still larger degree of that confidence.⁷⁵

In another letter, Atkinson claims that "the citizens have welcomed the Indian children and given them much attention at Forest Grove, and cordial welcome," and in turn the Indians "have been docile and industrious and orderly."⁷⁶

It is difficult to understand Atkinson's stake in the Indian Industrial School. As a resident of Portland it was likely that he would not have felt the economic fallout from the departure of the Indian school. As a religious man and member of the Congregational Churches, it is possible that he was merely concerned for the Indian children; he might have felt a paternalistic responsibility to the children. Finally, as a member of Pacific's Board of Trustees, he may have been defending the economic interest of the university, though without any proof that the University actually benefited from connections with the Indian school, this connection is mere speculation. Whatever the reason for his correspondence, it does give one a view of how the school might have been successful by showing how the community's view of Indian education was changing.

In Wilkinson's second report to Washington, he wrote that a battle had started in trying to locate an Indian school "in a community where the hope was expressed that the buildings might burn down before scholars could be gathered to put in them."⁷⁷ This was written in 1881, so when

⁷⁵ Atkinson to Price, Dec. 4, 1884. Atkinson letters.

⁷⁶ Atkinson to Painter, March 5, 1884.

⁷⁷ Annual Report for 1881, p. 198.

Atkinson was writing in 1884, that "the citizens have welcomed the Indian children and [have] given them much attention at Forest Grove," it would seem that the communities position may have changed. And because Atkinson wrote that "in return [the Indian children] have been docile and industrious and orderly," it would appear that the Indians had been trained well enough that they were no longer considered a threat to the community. At the very least the community's view seems more optimistic than when Wilkinson first started out.

The growth of the school supports this optimistic view. As stated above, the school originally started with eighteen students and three employees. By 1885, the year of the school's move to Salem, the attendance was around 150 students, and the employees numbered twenty-nine, seven of whom were Indians, and several of whom held two or more positions.⁷⁸ It also was involved in teaching the following trades: carpentry, cabinet - making, blacksmithing, shoemaking, wagon - making, printing, tailoring, farming, sewing, and housework.⁷⁹

In fact, reports from those in charge of the above departments, gave the government some very optimistic news, which would lend to even further support. In Wilkinson's second report, for instance, Samuel Walker, the cobbler, reported that the Indian children "have done far beyond my expectations; they learn very fast and take a great interest in their work."⁸⁰ An in the same report an even greater acclamation was given to the students by Rep. M. C. George. After George had given a talk, the students were asked to respond in writing to the remarks. Upon receiving two of the best responses, George wrote that

⁷⁸ Annual Report for 1885, p. clxxxiv - clxxvii, & 222.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Annual Report for 1881, p. 199.

the two statements made by the Indian pupils of my remarks are very good indeed; better in some respects than the original. I very much doubt if any of our race could have done better than the two whose work you send me.⁸¹

Even though this kind of praise was well received in Washington, the industrial production itself was positive proof of the school's efforts.

Minthorn's second annual report is very detailed as to the production of the Indian students. In 1884: farming reported 156 acres of land cultivated and \$3,195.00 raised in stock and produce, the shoe shop reported an estimated \$1,848.25 earned (as compared to \$710.00 reported in 1881), the blacksmith shop earned \$1,137.20, using a shop outside of the school, and the wagon and carpenter shop reported \$2,845 earned. It was this kind of report that positively proved the Indian was more than capable of industry and agriculture, but perhaps the best proof of success was the words of the Indians themselves.

By that time the school had its own paper called *The Indian Citizen*. Although this could be seen as a sign of success in and of itself, it is what was printed that helps to show the success of the assimilation process. On the front page of the first volume, the Indians wrote that

if we want our people to learn and be civilized we must do something for them, teach them the right way of living and when they hold to the right way, they can become citizens and be protected by laws of the U. S. . . . They have never known what goes on daily with the white people. So let us try and make the future brighter for them in lifting them out of their ignorance, lift them to love and worship

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

the true God and our loving Savior Jesus, who died
for Indians as well as others. . .⁸²

Though the paper is very religious in its writing, it is not always so. Later in the issue, a more practical reason for education was given. Miss Olney continued by writing that "when the Indians have received a little education and are taught different branches of industry, the white man cannot cheat and do other things that he would like to do to the Indians for they will know how to stand up for their rights in a lawful manner."⁸³ She concluded her article by writing

if we succeed, countless blessings await us. If we fail curses and death will be our lot. And in the great judgment day when all men shall come into the light of God's wisdom, even our poor people will testify against us. That they were in darkness and we gave them no light.⁸⁴

These excerpts are evidence that assimilation was taking place at least on the outside. Whether the Indian children really thought this way or not is not as important as the fact that they were, at the very least, trying to act as if they were white; they were writing like other writers, like the one in the *Oregonian* who wrote that the "church, school and labor are the means of elevating" the Indian.⁸⁵

Of course it would be much easier to determine the success of the school if there was a distinct starting point to refer to. In other words, if it could be determined what the children knew prior to coming to Forest Grove, then it could be determined what they learned while at the school. *Harper's Weekly*, for instance, reported that the Indians "came to the

⁸² "The Future of the Indians." *The Indian Citizen* Vol. 1 No. 1. Date Unknown.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ "What to do With the Indians." *The Daily Oregonian* 17 Dec, 1879.

school from the prairies and the mountains, dressed in blankets and moccasins, with uncut and unkempt hair, as wild as young coyotes."⁸⁶ It also stated that all of the work in carpentry, shoemaking, blacksmithing, etc. . . was all taught to them "in the space of two years, and a clear proof of the results attained was given in a local exhibition."⁸⁷

Note that this exhibition was not the same as those like the Chicago World Fair. It was more of a local exhibit of industry, but none the less the Indian work on hand did become an attraction. *Harper's* recorded that there were shoes made entirely by the Indian children, wood-work, in the form of a wash-stand and bureau, and some items from the blacksmith shop as well.⁸⁸ The report, however, was obviously meant to booster support on the east coast for Indian reform and education. It definitely told the reformers what they wanted to hear; that this off-reservation industrial education was "the best solution of the difficulty which confronts us in our dealings with the Indians."⁸⁹

The legitimacy of such claims, however, was soon questioned by a local writer for the *Oregonian*. In response to the first claim the local writer stated that none of the Indians were "blanketed or moccasined when they left the reservation nor had they been."⁹⁰ In response to the second claim by *Harper's Weekly*, the writer stated that

it would indeed be surprising if these results had been accomplished in the space of two years by young savages. . . it is not surprising in the light of

⁸⁶"Indian Schools in Oregon." *Harper's Weekly* Vol. xxvi, No. 1327, 27 May, 1882, p. 327

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ "The Indian Training School At Forest Grove." *The Daily Oregonian* 26 June, 1882.

the fact that, of the 24 who formed the foundation of the school, two had been raised by white people and attended white schools, had learned the carpenters' trade. . . of the remainder, 19 came from an industrial boarding school, on a reservation where the Indians dress in civilized garb. One was a carpenter, two had worked at blacksmithing and most of them had spent from two to four years at the school, and all had received many lessons in the "various operations of agriculture. . ."91

Looking at the government documents supports this challenge as well, for they reveal that Wilkinson was after the "exceptional cases," because his purpose was to train these Indians in order to return and train their people. Wilkinson purposefully went into a tribe looking for the brightest. If Wilkinson had gone to the Puyallup tribe in search of students in 1885, he would have found that 500 of the 560 Indians spoke English enough for ordinary intercourse. He would have found that all 560 Indians wore citizens' dress. 530 of the 560 Indians would be living on land that they had cultivated.⁹² It is safe to say that this accomplishment was not the immediate result of the return of those first Indian children from boarding school.

A report from Minthorn also supports the local writer's skepticism. Minthorn wrote that "of the 102 children recently brought tot the school, 26, could speak English well, 36 moderately well," and in fact only "30 could neither speak or understand enough to be of much benefit to them."⁹³ So it is safe to assume that the Indian school did not start from scratch as *Harper's Weekly* would have had its readers believe. Of course

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Annual Report for 1885, pp. 352 - 353.

⁹³ Annual Report for 1883, p. 180.

the paper was most likely trying to do its part of the work. It was probably answering its own call: "let us then take the rising generation away from the evil influences which have surrounded their progenitors, and train them up to be useful and orderly members of society."⁹⁴ One must remember that this view of the Indian most likely needed much defending, at least early on.

Just because there is support for the *Oregonian's* article, however, does not mean that the school should not have been seen as a success. The motivation behind Indian education, at least for reformers like Richard Pratt, Samuel Armstrong, and Wilkinson was the peaceful inclusion of the Native American in the white American society. How this was achieved was not the issue. For example, when Pratt was bringing some of his original warriors to the Hampton school, Armstrong instructed him to "be sure and have them bring their wild barbarous things. . . . Good pictures of the Indians as they are will be of great use to us."⁹⁵ This does not necessarily portray Armstrong as a schemer, as much as it does a pragmatist. Pratt and Armstrong, though being dishonest, were also being pragmatic; they knew the importance of government support. The most important thing to these reformers was that there were students at their schools, and that those students were learning how to be civilized. So though the *Oregonian* article may have suggested some setbacks with the Indian school, it was no doubt seen as a success at the Mechanics Fair, and to the reformers, that was what mattered.

The writer of the *Oregonian* editorial concluded with a list of defects (setbacks) experienced by the school. These also help to make clear the

⁹⁴ "Indian Schools In Oregon."

⁹⁵ Hoxie, p. 56.

writer's bias, for he writes that "Indians are like other ignorant races, unreliable, treacherous, vindictive and vicious, with their minds and spirits in a state of torpor. Their awakening and development will only be begun when these generations shall have passed away."⁹⁶ The school, according to the editorial, has a "strained and unnatural religiosity" which is always placed on display.⁹⁷

Another setback for the school was the entrance of politically minded people in its top positions. R. H. Milroy, United States Indian Agent for the Puyallup agency, wrote in one report that

The fact as to whether the presence of government employees among Indians conduces to their progress in civilization or not depends wholly upon the character of the employees. If they are selfish persons, who take employment among the Indians wholly for the purpose of making money, and care nothing for the good of the Indians, their presence among them will be more of a curse than a blessing. But, on the other hand, if the employees are unselfish, and their highest object is seeking employment among the Indians is the good of the Indians, and they are skillful and possess good judgment, energy, missionary zeal, &c., then their presence is a constant blessing to the Indians.⁹⁸

Perhaps this is why Henry Sicade, one of the original Puyallup children remembered liking Captain Wilkinson as a superintendent more than he did Dr. Minthorn. In a letter he wrote that "the captain really was the only Supt. that we could swear by as our best friend; we loved him, we honored him, we obeyed him explicitly. Dr. Minthorn was just the opposite."⁹⁹ This

⁹⁶ "The Indian Training School At Forest Grove."

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Annual Report for 1879, pp. 151 - 152.

⁹⁹ Henry Sicade to Sam Walker, Jan. 20, 1917. Sicade Letters PU Archives.

The School's Departure.

In 1885, the school at Forest Grove was relocated at Chemawa, North Salem. Why in the midst of all this apparent success, one might ask, did the government decide to move the school? The answer, ironically, came from Wilkinson himself. In his second annual report, Captain Wilkinson articulated the material needs of the institution.

One hundred and fifty acres of land for this school, with a reasonable outlay for farming implements and stock, would produce quite sufficient to provide subsistence for 300 pupils, besides giving the absolutely required instruction in agriculture. . . there should be 300 pupils at this school.¹⁰⁰

The initial plea for more land came from Captain Wilkinson.

It was clear to those concerned for the school that the federal government wanted to own the land that the school was on, but it was unclear how much they required until September 27, 1884. On this date G. H. Atkinson received a letter from the department of the Interior stating that "the school ought to have not less than 180 acres of which 100 acres should be tillable."¹⁰¹ The fact that the number of acreage closely resembles that of Wilkinson's proposal could be a mere coincidence, but more likely it is government's slow response to Wilkinson's initial plea.

Captain Wilkinson didn't seem to be aware of the problem that this request, and a similar request from Minthorn, would cause. Perhaps this is because Wilkinson, like G. H. Atkinson, was aware of "a large tract of hill, wood and timber land, still owned by the U.S. which will furnish timber for lumber, wood, materials for various industries, and also pasturage, farm

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, for 1881, p. 200.

¹⁰¹ H. Price to G. Atkinson, Sept. 27, 1884.

and orchard land."¹⁰² Atkinson had procured seventy-five acres right next to this tract of land with obvious hopes that the school could relocate there.¹⁰³ Yet, there seemed to be hesitation and confusion on both sides of the issue.

Alanson Hinman, Chairman of the Committee Appointed by the Citizens of Forest Grove (as well as the president of the Board of Trustees for P.U. and T.A.), shows his frustration with the situation in a letter to Senator Dolph in Washington DC. In the letter, Hinman stated that he could not

understand why it is that these things are represented in this manner. The superintendent does not hesitate to state to me and others, that he prefers this location to any other in the State, and yet his actions seem to contradict this.¹⁰⁴

Meanwhile, Senator Dolph was replied that he felt "quite certain if the site is approved by Dr. Minthorn the school will be permanently located at Forest Grove."¹⁰⁵ So it seems that everything was basically up to Dr. Minthorn, and this is where his machinations seem to have begun.

Samuel T. Walker, a teacher at the Indian School stated in retrospect that as far as he was "able to know, Dr. Minthorn was sent here with the purpose of removing the school to Newberg."¹⁰⁶ Coincidentally, Newberg was where Dr. Minthorn was originally from. It was also one of the three Oregon cities trying to secure the Indian School. It appears then, that Minthorn was playing in politics. In another letter to Senator Dolph, A.

¹⁰² Atkinson to Price, Dec. 4, 1884.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ A. Hinman to J.N. Dolph, March 4, 1884, Hinman Family file, PU Archives.

¹⁰⁵ J.N. Dolph to Hinman, March 18, 1884.

¹⁰⁶ Sam T. Walker to Dr. Bates, Jan. 26, 1917.

Hinman reveals that Dr. Minthorn "desired the removal of the school but asserted the contrary to the citizens of Forest Grove."¹⁰⁷

When the government required a certain amount of land to be procured for the Indian school, it was found, but Forest Grove was still denied the School, and in turn it was relocated to Salem, seemingly because of Minthorn. Why was Minthorn so seemingly set on moving the school from Forest Grove?

One reason could be the condition of the school. In Minthorn's annual report for 1884, the physician (W.V. Coffin, the next superintendent of the school) reported the

present location of the school buildings, considered from a sanitary stand-point, is not a good one, for two very important reasons; the first is, the drainage is very poor, and cannot be bettered without considerable expense; the second is, that the water supply is totally inadequate to the needs of the school. Of the four wells on the grounds all fail during the dry season and it becomes necessary to haul water from 1/2 to 1 mile, which, for so large a number, is not a small task. . . Now that the number of children in school is increased from 150 to 200, if the location of the school buildings is not changed, immediate action should be taken to improve the drainage and to furnish the school with an abundant supply of fresh water.¹⁰⁸

So, Minthorn may have been responding to a legitimate problem. If the school was starting to get run down, it would seem justifiable to move the school to a larger area and start all over again.

The other problem that Minthorn could be responding to is that of racial differences. In Walker's letter to Dr. Bates, he stated that

¹⁰⁷ Hinman to J.N. Dolph, Nov. 27, 1884.

¹⁰⁸ Annual Report for 1884, p. 207.

perhaps no one else aside from myself and Dr. Minthorn know the reason why the school was removed from here. I might just say that there was quite a strong sentiment among some of the townspeople and the faculty and trustees of T.A. and P.U. against it.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately there is no evidence of racial conflict in Forest Grove, apart from this letter, but it is possible that Minthorn was responding to a real threat to the well being of the school, be it violence or ill will.

It is difficult to place this hint of racism, in a broader scope of Indian education, for the secondary information doesn't seem to deal with it. Most opposition is looked at on a less molecular level, meaning Hoxie, Adams, and Dejong seem to be more interested in the opposition found in government officials and conservatives, and not in that of local towns or counties. One does learn the direction that racial thinking was taking the nation, in respects to the Indians, but again the scope is too broad to be able to understand it at a more local level.

There is a sense that some racial tension did exist locally during the School's existence, but it is unclear whether this tension had anything to do with the school's removal. Wilkinson alluded to the hope that some citizens had for the destruction of the school in his second annual report. One editorial in the *Oregonian* also spoke to a racial stance when it stated that "Indian's are like other ignorant races, unreliable, treacherous, vindictive and vicious," as stated earlier. It is however, possible that by the time the removal of the school was being contemplated, the community had become accustomed to the school, as another article in the *Oregonian* claimed it would. The article boldly challenged that any visitor "who inspects [the

¹⁰⁹ Sam T. Walker to Dr. Bates.

Indian school] and learns from its workings, cannot fail to be impressed favorably with the civilizing effects upon the Indian youth, and will look with interest as the years go on."¹¹⁰

Whatever the reason or reasons, Dr. Minthorn seemed to be instrumental in getting the school moved from Forest Grove; when Newberg was denied the appropriations, Minthorn left the school and went to another assignment. Forest Grove, however, lost the school as a result of Minthorn efforts.

In the five years that the school was in Forest Grove, however, it shined. It received constant surveillance from admirers and skeptics alike, and it received press at the same levels. Even though the Carlilse school in Pennsylvania received greater attention and support, the school at Forest Grove kept pace. It was industrious as well as academic. It grew substantially within the five years that it was in Forest Grove. The payroll increased as well, and the teachers did not seem to face the same problems that other schools would face, as seen in the fact that most of the teachers stayed on, even through the move to Salem. This could, however also be due to the fact that the men and woman of the Northwest had their share of hardships.

The land issue was very frustrating for some and eventually a source of prosperity for those who were involved with it in Salem. It is unclear whether the Board members at Pacific were acting out of Christian motivations or economic ones, but it is apparent that they had wished for the school to remain where it is.

Perhaps it is fitting to let an excerpt from a letter determine whether or not the school succeeded in its goals. This letter is from Henry Sicade,

¹¹⁰ "Apprentices to Civilization at Work at Forest Grove," *Oregonian* 12 Jan, 1883.

one of the first Indians to Forest Grove (as well as the first Indian allowed into Tualitan Academy), to Samuel T Walker, one of his teachers.

My community has been all any man would wish as they have given me trusts without bonds, I have always advocated good rural schools so in enlarging and rebuilding our school both grade and high schools, I asked for \$20,000 to build it right; they came back at me and put in a big proviso, that I must as a committee of one to see that amount be spent right... I have much work for my race and I hold power of attorney for my tribe, trustee of property in the city limits and other work. Our Indian school takes time and we have a church right her in my premises. I Simply write to you not in boastful way, but to tell you how I am faring.¹¹¹

This may not have been a success to some people, but Wilkinson would have considered it as one. It also suggests that Wilkinson's strategy of seeking out the brightest children may not have been a bad one. Perhaps Sicade was trained in some fashion prior to his arrival at Forest Grove, but it seems that he has no problem crediting the school for his success, and to the reformer of the late 19th century, Sicade's success was their success.

¹¹¹ Sicade to Walker, Jan. 20 1917.