4-2016

Using Photography as an Anthropological Approach to Studying Culture at the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School, 1893-1934

David Brown
Western Michigan University

USING PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING CULTURE AT THE MOUNT PLEASANT INDIAN INDUSTRIAL BOARDING SCHOOL, 1893-1934

by

David Brown

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Anthropology
Western Michigan University
April 2016

Thesis Committee:

Jon Holtzman, Ph.D., Chair
Bilinda Straight, Ph.D.
José Brandão, Ph.D.

USING PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO STUDYING CULTURE AT THE MOUNT PLEASANT INDIAN INDUSTRIAL BOARDING SCHOOL, 1893-1934

David Brown, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 2016

This project is designed to study the culture of Native American boarding schools through the visual domain of photography. I have chosen the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School, located in Mount Pleasant, Michigan as a case study. I specifically examine how photographs depict themes of Native American student assimilation, domestic care and order, living conditions, communication, ethnic composition, and resistance. There has been very little written on the history and culture of the boarding school in Mount Pleasant, much less any analysis that has been done with the photographs. I am combining the available written and visual materials of the school to analyze six aspects of its culture.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Jon Holtzman, Dr. Bilinda Straight, and Dr. José Brandão for assisting me in this process. I appreciate their input and advise as I developed the idea and transferred it to paper. I would also like to thank the staffs of the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways and the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University for their time and efforts in providing me with the resources to put this project together.

David Brown

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents—Continued

LIST OF FIGURES

List of Figures—Continued

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This project is designed to analyze the culture of Native American boarding schools using the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School as a case study. Specifically, my goal is to contribute to understanding the culture of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School using its photographs. The photographs that I have collected were taken from the period when the boarding school was in operation. These photographs are the artifacts that I will use to supplement the written documentary material to reconstruct aspects of boarding school culture.

First, I present an historical overview of the government boarding school program that was in operation from the late-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. I then provide a description of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School history to lay the foundation and context in which I analyze the photographs. From there, I briefly discuss the theoretical dispositions in approaches to visual anthropology, followed by comparative works of other ethnographers and anthropologists.

The second half of this project is devoted to analyzing the thirty-three photographs that I have assembled from a variety of sources. I combine the documentary evidence with these photographs to extract information pertaining to Native American student assimilation, domestic care and order, living conditions, communication, ethnic composition, and resistance at Mount Pleasant. The final section discusses these themes in greater detail as they relate to defining the Mount Pleasant boarding school's culture.

Government Boarding Schools

The history of Native American boarding schools in the United States begins in the seventeenth century, when European colonists and their subsequent Euro-American descendants established missionary schools with the goal to convert Native Americans to Christianity (Archuleta et al, 2000). These missionary schools were the progenitors of assimilation tactics used against indigenous inhabitants of North America. In addition to Christianity, missionaries sought to bring their new native converts under the penumbra of "Western civilization." The degree to which these early schools could impact Native American communities depended on a number of factors: the amount of funding they received from parishioners, native resistance to assimilation, competition with other schools, and major events like wars.

During the Reconstruction Era, reformers debated the future of how to deal with Native Americans whom they saw as obstacles to expansion. Some reformers were determined to "destroy every aspect of Native American societies so that 'white civilization' would be the only option for Native American peoples" (Grinde 2004: 27). Others sought to transform the natives and bring them into the fold of their 'white civilization' expansion. One of those who belonged to the latter group was a young United States Army officer named Richard Pratt.

In the early 1870s, Pratt was stationed at Fort Marion, Florida, with twenty-two prisoners under his keep. He experimented with educating his prisoners, teaching them English, Christianity, and other aspects of Western society. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that it would be cheaper to educate—and thus assimilate—Native Americans, than it would be to exterminate them (Pratt, 1964). Pratt petitioned the federal

government to grant him a plot of land where he could construct a schooling establishment for this very purpose. He sought to emulate the missionary education programs, yet forewent constructing schools on reservations or in close proximity to large native communities. He believed the only way to begin moving Native Americans towards "civilization" was to remove them from their respective reservations where parents and elders were still teaching the "savage" ways (Enoch, 2002; Pratt, 1964). Pratt argued that as long as schools were operating on reservations, children would be tempted to run away from school and return home to their traditional ways, thereby subverting assimilation efforts (Smith, 2004). It was necessary, therefore, to have children separated from their homes at an early age and be allowed to return only when they were educated young adults.

In 1879, Pratt was finally granted a plot of land in Carlisle, Pennsylvania to construct his boarding school. A series of abandoned army barracks on the property were furnished as dormitories and classrooms. For Pratt, it was a start and that November the Carlisle Indian Boarding School officially opened (Pratt, 1964). Ensuing petitions from education reformers expanded the federal government's grants and over the next two decades, subsequent boarding schools appeared in states like Kansas, Oklahoma, Arizona, Minnesota, South Dakota, Oregon, and California.

From a Euro-American perspective, educating Native Americans involved extreme "resocialization" (Collins 2001: 16) and training that would equip pliant students to assimilate socially and culturally with mainstream American society "by bleaching out the last traces of their Indian identity" (Collins 2001: 17). The ultimate goal for Pratt and other reformers was to "civilize" the Native Americans and simultaneously prevent them

from backsliding into savagery (Grinde, 2004). Through social engineering processes of off-reservation boarding schools, reformers believed they could transform the minds and bodies of Native American youths into subservient members of society. Even the 1883 Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs supported Pratt's vision, calling for off-reservation schools whose superiority to on-reservation schools resided in the segregation of children from "idle and vicious Indian" influences (McBeth 1983: 122).

In addition to reformers' efforts to construct government boarding schools and populate them with Native American children, the Dawes Act of 1887 assisted with school recruitment. The Act divested Native Americans of their land and divided it into parcels for single families to live on and work. The remaining land was open to future homesteaders—the intent being that Euro-Americans would move west, thereby expanding mainstream American culture while simultaneously removing Native Americans. These land allotments resulted in a drastic reduction of Native American land holdings and hastened the breakdown of the "traditional, collective, and cooperative nature of Indian society" (McBeth 1983: 121). Confronted with the reality of their situation, native parents encouraged their children to attend government boarding schools in hopes they would learn English and achieve success in mainstream American society; for some of them, it was liberation from the rough life on reservations (Collins, 2001; Lomawaima, 1994; Coleman, 1990).

Pratt and his social engineers devised alternative ways to persuade and coerce reluctant parents into allowing their children to attend school. In Arizona, for example, native groups protested splitting up families and sending their young women to the schools, away from the protection of their fathers and brothers. Pratt admonished Native

American men for ostensibly treating their women as subservient family workers. This accusation worked to an extent: a number of Native American women fled from their intolerable conditions at home. For these women, the schools became safe havens from overbearing parents who had repeatedly threatened to harm them (Trennert, 1982). To others who were orphaned, the schools and teachers became specious surrogates of the home and parents; they depended on the school for everything (Burich, 2007).

Reformers enlisted the help of native leaders to persuade families into sending their children to these schools. As the first boarding schools commenced operation, school officials selected native students from the early classes to serve as recruiters. These students were sent back to reservations to coax more children into enrolling (Dejong, 2007). Reformers believed that Native Americans would listen to their own kin more than they would to white recruiters. This approach, like the others, worked to a degree, while some parents stubbornly continued to refuse enrolling their children.

Such were the beginnings of government boarding schools. Life at these schools was exceedingly different from anything they had experienced on the reservations; "it was an almost totally alien world" (Coleman 1990: 33). Despite the varying geographic and cultural locations of each boarding school, all schools were structured in much the same fashion.

The overarching environment of school life was dominated by the regimented structure and militaristic atmosphere (McBeth, 1983). School officials outlined a military organization where the punctual, routine order of life engineered a mainstream American societal work ethic (Reyes, 2002; Horne & McBeth, 1998; Sekaquaptewa, 1969). It attempted to eliminate the students' sense of "Indian time." The merits of military

organization, drill, and routine were all attempts to discipline children and teach them patriotism, obedience, courage, courtesy, promptness, and constancy (Trennert, 1982).

Students were subjected to poor and inadequate accommodations. School officials housed them in segregated male and female dormitories that were usually overcrowded and poorly insulated. Most students shared beds to keep warm and were subjected to weekly lice inspections (Reyes, 2002; Horne & McBeth, 1998). They were also responsible for cleaning their own dormitories and lavatories. The latter were generally antiquated and unsanitary, exposing children to the spread of diseases (Collins, 1998).

Each school had, at minimum, one dining hall where students ate their meals, however the recurring insufficient funds to purchase substantial supplies resulted in school officials putting children to work as incipient farmers and producers of their own food. Other children were put to work in the kitchen preparing meals (Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Sekaquaptewa, 1969). Despite these production efforts, poor nutrition and hunger pervaded almost every school and stunted the physical growth and well-being of Native American children (Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Dejong, 2007).

Sickness was another problem that many students faced at the schools. Native American parents, recalling when their ancestors died as a result of poor defenses to European-based diseases, feared sending their own children to the schools and subjecting them to the same thing. Periodic influenza and tuberculosis were the leading diseases that killed students, but they also suffered from pneumonia, diphtheria, typhoid, trachoma, measles, chicken pox, mumps, smallpox, and colds (Stout, 2012; Vuckovic, 2008; Dejong, 2007; Trafzer et al, 2006). The students' susceptibility to diseases was further

exacerbated by the federal government's habitual practice to fill the schools beyond capacity (Dejong, 2007).

The classroom stood at the center of the boarding school assimilation effort. Instructors sought to implement a curriculum of the "circular segmentation of reality" divided into individual subjects like English, history, geography, and arithmetic. Their purpose was to break the traditional, holistic outlook on life that was characteristic of Native American worldviews (Coleman 1990: 37). The curriculum emphasized piety, obedience, and manual labor, contributing to the absolute transformation of Native Americans from idiosyncratic savages to obsequious, God-fearing Christian working husbands and Victorian middle-class domestic housewives (Lomawaima, 1993). For the most part, half the day was devoted to the curriculum.

Vocational programs comprised the other half. These programs were organized in a manner where each student learned a specific trade like carpentry, nursing, masonry, tinsmithing, weaving, metalworking, etc. (Vuckovic, 2008; Horne & McBeth, 1998; Sekaquaptewa, 1969). Sometimes these programs served to assist with the upkeep of the school, such as learning carpentry to repair buildings or learning agriculture to cultivate gardens for food. It was the officials' way to extract and exploit free labor from students in order to offset the financial constraints of these struggling institutions (McBeth, 1983). All students were required to perform manual labor to one extent or another, reinforcing the ideas of habitus and a routinized way of life distinctly different from how they were raised on the reservations (Dejong, 2007; Pratt, 1964).

Another practice employed by school officials was known as the "outing program." Select astute students were sent to live and work with a local family or

business where they were taught to be individualistic, acquire useful skills, and secure a working knowledge of the English language (Trennert, 1982; Standing Bear, 1931). The outing program, combined with the vocational skills training, concomitantly helped Native Americans find employment in white communities after they finished school while discouraging them from returning to their reservations.

Corporal punishment was another hallmark of school life that Native American children experienced. Students were castigated for a multiplicity of reasons including answering incorrectly in class, speaking in their native tongue, neglecting to finish their daily chores, mistreating fellow students, smoking, drinking, and running away (Fortunate Eagle, 2010; Reyes, 2002; Horne & McBeth, 1998; Sekaquaptewa, 1969). Punishments ranged from being whipped or given extra chores for minor offences to being expelled or imprisoned for major offences (Collins, 1998; McBeth, 1983). Harsh discipline served to avert wayward students and keep them in line due to the widespread belief that Native Americans were, by nature, undisciplined and wild (Stout, 2012; Child, 1998; Pratt, 1964).

Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School

While there is no lack of material on the general history of government boarding schools, and while a few schools have been subject to comprehensive works published on their individual histories such as the Haskell Institute and the Phoenix Indian School, the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School suffers from a dearth of published history and analysis. In one sense, this lack of material and analysis supports the purpose of my project, which seeks to contribute to understanding culture at the school. In another sense, it challenges my project by putting me in a position to piece together the

information retrievable from a range of incomplete sources: passages within books, magazine articles, chapters on the school within compiled reports from the federal government, and essays by those few individuals who have conducted minimal research on the school. The remainder of available information comes from primary documents: newspaper clippings, annual school reports submitted to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior, and official correspondences between the school administration and federal officials.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, there were an estimated 10,000 Native Americans living in Michigan ("Mount Pleasant," 1913). Citizens began asking themselves how they could assimilate their native neighbors and suggested erecting one of the boarding schools in their state. Of the Michigan day schools in operation, there were those Native Americans who had already enrolled their children. The majority of indigenous inhabitants, however, were poor and uneducated and clung to traditional farming settlements or lumber camps and towns (Edwards, 2002).

On February 16, 1891, Congress passed an act directing the construction of an Indian Industrial Training School in Isabella County, Michigan with an initial appropriation of $25,000. A plot of land was sought out and purchased—200 acres—in the vicinity of the city of Mount Pleasant. Not long after, another 120 acres were purchased. The land already contained several farm buildings in fairly good condition ("Mount Pleasant," 1913). It was believed that this location was the most accessible for the various Native American settlements within the state to bring their children to school.

The school officially opened on June 30, 1893, with Mr. E. E. Riopel appointed as the first superintendent and thirteen pupils and seven employees ("American Indian,"

2011). The students were housed in a building in downtown Mount Pleasant for the first year. In a matter of weeks the school increased by forty pupils, who had arrived from the Upper Peninsula, and then it increased to 125 pupils. The year 1893 saw not only the coming and going of Mr. Riopel, but also two more superintendents: James A. Cooper and Andrew Spencer, the latter coming from the Cherokee Indian School in North Carolina. Beginning in 1894, the school moved into the first building on its newly purchased land (Edwards, 2002; "Mount Pleasant," 1913).

Under Mr. Spencer's supervision, several infrastructure additions were made. In total, the school had a brick building for the girls' dormitory, kitchen, dining room, sewing room, and shop, with the school rooms and chapel in one wing. The brick building's basement had a laundry and boiler room and the attic was finished for the boys' dormitory. Two hay barns were purchased and another barn and storehouse were erected. Mr. R. S. Graham followed up Mr. Spencer's contributions with some of his own when he took charge of the school from 1897 to 1900. During these years, an electric light plant was installed and a waterworks system was completed; the school now being dependent on its own utilities (Benz & Williamson, 2005; "Mount Pleasant," 1913).

In 1900 Mr. E. C. Nardin became superintendent and set to work improving the buildings against the risk of fire. A farm had been cultivated in the first years of operation and Mr. Nardin expanded on its production. A variety of fruits, vegetables, and grains were grown, supplying the students and employees with their own sustenance. Special industrial departments were erected for teaching students valuable skills while simultaneously reciprocating their specific benefits back to the students. Farming, carpentry, engineering, blacksmithing, tailoring, sewing, laundry work, and cooking

constituted the selection of skills in which students could be trained. Also at this time there were refurbishments made to the hospital, dining hall, and general assembly room ("Mount Pleasant," 1913).

By the time Mr. R. A. Cochran took over as superintendent in 1904, the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School resembled a small village, self-sustained and equipped with all the modern conveniences of the time to include steam heat, electric lights, and hot and cold running water. Under his leadership, enrollment at the school exceeded 325 students, who broadly represented groups of Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomie ("Mount Pleasant," 1913).

Mr. Cochran served as superintendent for over twenty years and was then replaced by Mr. Ora Padget. After Mr. Padget's brief stint, Mr. L. E. Baumgarten presided over the school. In the final two years of its operation, Mr. Frank Christy was the superintendent. Throughout each administration, the superintendents were under the supervision of the Department of the Interior in Washington, D. C. They bypassed all local and state officials to correspond directly with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (Champney, 1934).

In keeping with Richard Pratt's original goal, the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School abided by all of the guidelines set out to assimilate Native American children:

> The one great aim of this school is to help prepare the Indian boys and girls for the duties, privileges, and responsibilities of American citizenship, by training them in the formation of good habits and character, in giving them a reasonable amount of knowledge of civic rights and duties, in developing the physical,

mental and moral faculties, and in encouraging industrial development ("Mount Pleasant" 1913: 13).

From the beginning, school policy allowed only Native American students from Michigan to be enrolled there. Children from out-of-state were prohibited from attending ("Mount Pleasant," 1913). Those who applied for and were accepted to the school were enrolled for three-year terms, which could be renewed up through the eighth grade. Those who wished to continue their education would apply for admittance to attend the Mount Pleasant high school. The government paid for their initial transportation to the school as well as home to their parents once they completed their term (Littlefield, 1989).

Like the majority of other government boarding schools that were in operation during this time, the school at Mount Pleasant operated on a half-day rotation. Students would spend one half of the day in the classroom learning reading, writing, and arithmetic, and then spend the other half of the day working at their assigned vocational training (Benz & Williamson, 2005). For girls, this consisted of housekeeping, sewing, laundry work, cooking, nursing, and other domestic sciences. For boys, their options were engineering, farming, carpentry, baking, shoe mending, and tailoring. These occupations and the interaction that students experienced while performing repetitive tasks support an observation made by Alice Littlefield, who conducted her own analysis of the Mount Pleasant boarding school:

> In addition, however, public schools tend to socialize working-class children in ways which seem calculated to produce a docile labor force, by emphasizing obedience, punctuality, and rote performance of alienating tasks. At the same time, the ideological content of the curriculum is supportive of capitalist

economic, political and social arrangements, and of the values of the dominant culture. Little, if any, recognition is accorded the language, customs, and values of ethnic minorities or immigrant groups (Littlefield 1989: 435).

The school observed all major holidays, and this often entailed a special entertainment for the students, possibly to include performances by the school band, a moving picture, a guest speaker, a parade, or a school dance. Religious activities were also observed at the school with various ministerial speakers. Students were encouraged, although not required, to attend the church service of their choosing on Sundays, so long as it was Catholic or Methodist. Employees would escort the children to town for service ("Mount Pleasant," 1913). As far as extracurricular activities were concerned, athletics were a big part of the school. Football, baseball, tennis, basketball, track, and softball were all very popular sports (Edwards, 2002). Music and singing attracted great interest, with student bands and choirs performing for both the student population as well as the local community.

In the summers, the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School followed the protocols that other government schools had put in place with the outing program. Since the school refused to pay for students to return home for the summer, many pupils found work and lodging in town. Girls did housework in the homes of Mount Pleasant families or worked in the laundries or hotels at Michigan's summer resorts. Boys were hired to work in the sugar beet fields of nearby farms or in the tailor shops at resorts ("Mount Pleasant," 1913).

For all its perceived "positive" aspects, the school did impose a strict policy of discipline to keep the assumed "wild savages" in line. It was a paramilitary institution

with organized companies, student captains and majors, drills and parades, and levels of castigation for doing wrong (Littlefield, 1989; Dobson, 1978). Infractions merited punishments in the forms of beatings with a rubber hose, kneeling on hard surfaces for extended periods of time, extra drills or work assignments, deprivation of meals or going to a movie or into town on the weekends. Some students met these reprimands with forms of resistance and contestations such as running away and pilferage. Littlefield argues that these forms of resistance helped to create a sense of autonomy for Native American children. The unequal balance of power between the oppressor and the oppressed was so great that direct confrontation led only to additional punishment. Therefore, most forms of resistance were indirect and involved a degree of stealth (Littlefield, 1989).

Other students ran away because of unfair punishments or because they were not able to adjust to life away from their home and family. For some students, the pressures to learn the "white man's customs" and forget their own was too great for them. Pamela Dobson notes that instructors engaged in verbal and physical abuses toward students in order to instill a sense of inferiority about being Native American. Children were shamed into not speaking their native tongues. This perennial effect on the students resulted in a key loss of their heritage—the knowledge of their language and the ability to pass it on to their offspring (Dobson, 1978).

Despite its continued successes with education and maximum student enrollment, the decade of the Great Depression brought economic hardship to Native American communities (Edwards, 2002). The school initially closed in 1933 with 375 enrolled students. The problem, however, was that 64 of those students were orphans and the school officials didn't know what to do with them. They decided to extend school

operations for an additional year until the state's social service system could take responsibility of them. The Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School officially closed on June 6, 1934. After its closure, the school facilities were converted into a location for the approximately 2,800 mentally disabled inmates in Michigan who were committed but who had no place to go (Littlefield, 1989; Champney, 1934).

As Michigan's Native American community grew more accustomed to sending their children to boarding schools, they also became more dependent on them. The traditional ways of life on reservations had little-to-no place in mainstream American society. Young people who ventured into the world to make a living had practically none of the skills or knowledge necessary to survive. The boarding school served as a bridge to that life. If Native Americans wanted to survive in the United States, they needed to learn how to successfully function in its society. This was the major reason that the native community of Michigan protested against the closing of the Mount Pleasant school. Littlefield argues that, "The Mt. Pleasant school was closed not in accord with the demands of the students or their parents, but against them" (Littlefield 1989: 439). Native proponents of the school argued that to disband it would prevent children from learning the tools necessary to adapt and succeed in modern society. Already in the early twentieth century, commercialized agriculture and industrial expansion—especially taking into account Michigan's automobile industry—rendered the vocational skills of Native American students obsolete.

It would be simplistic to write off the actions of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School as an effective means of oppression against Native American heritage. What is baffling to the younger generations of Native Americans today is the

fact that some of their relatives reflect positively on their experiences at this school—one that determinedly set out to erase their heritage. As Michigan Native American activist Paul Johnson explained it, "To understand those positive experiences you really had to look at the negative environment these kids were coming from" (Edwards 2002: 41). Early treaties in Michigan pushed Native Americans to live in remote areas with poor soil for farming and restrictions on hunting. As mentioned above, a majority of Michigan's Native Americans lived in poverty with little-to-no prospects for a better future. The school provided a way out for the next generation. Littlefield points out that many children were better clothed, better housed, and better fed than what they received on the reservations. Students from different native groups suffered the same cultural assimilation, compelling them to form strong bonds and friendships as well as a new language—English—in which to communicate with one another. Students at other boarding schools underwent the same aggregation of Native Americans to form a pan-Indian identity that later on helped advance Native American rights in the mid-twentieth century.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

In addition to letters, annual reports, and news announcements, the administration at the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School documented its history through images. Eric Margolis, in his essay on Native American boarding school photographs, argues that these images were taken for purposes of documentation as well as to use in propaganda campaigns promoting the schools (Margolis, 2004). Perhaps the most striking are those captioned as "before-and-after" photographs. These images depict the stark contrast between the dress and style of Native Americans before and after they were in the government schools. Other photographs show students in class or in hands-on vocational training. These images would be reproduced and published in newspapers and magazines to advertise not only that Native American families should send their children to boarding schools to be educated, but also for the local communities to support—financially or materially—the schools' efforts.

In the previous section, I attempted to reconstruct a synopsis of the history and culture of the boarding school at Mount Pleasant based solely on documentary evidence. Building on that foundation, I expand my analysis to incorporate visual anthropology using the photographs taken at Mount Pleasant while it was in operation. Like Margolis, I examine the possible meanings and theoretical understandings that I am able to extract from these images. What can these particular photographs contribute to the cultural understanding of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School?

Visual Anthropology

What does visual anthropology contribute to our understanding of culture? How can photography be used to reconstruct a society, a way of life, or a specific event? In this section, I seek to answer these questions and provide a framework in which I examine and analyze the photographs from Mount Pleasant. I also show how visual anthropology has already been used by ethnographers to record their fieldwork and redefine their conclusions.

The visual has always been of interest to humans. In their comprehensive work *Visual Anthropology*, John and Malcolm Collier explain that, "It is through perception, largely visual and auditory, that we respond to the humanness that surrounds us" (Collier & Collier 1986: 1). David MacDougall applies this to anthropology when he says, "Anthropology has had no lack of interest in the visual; its problem has always been what to do with it" (MacDougall 2006: 213). People—not just ethnographers—have always attempted to capture the images of life, whether it be through carvings, embroideries, paintings, etc. "Man has always used images to give form to his concepts of reality" (Collier & Collier 1986: 3). What separates photography from other means of capturing reality is that for the first time in history, humans could see the world as they perceived reality.

Along with practically every other science, anthropology took advantage of this unique apparatus to document culture. There was even a new section of the American Anthropological Association founded in 1984 called the Society for Visual Anthropology (SVA). That same year, the SVA published this statement:

> The use of images for the description, analysis, communication and interpretation of human (and sometimes nonhuman) behavior-kinesics, proxemics and related forms of body motion communication (e.g., gesture, emotion, dance, sign language) as well as visual aspects of culture, including architecture and material artifacts. It also includes the use of image and auditory media, including still photography, film, video and noncamera generated images, in the recording of ethnographic, archaeological and other anthropological genres—how aspects of culture can be pictorially a source of ethnographic data, expanding our horizons beyond the reach of memory culture. It is the study of how indigenous, professional; and amateur forms of pictorial/auditory materials are grounded in personal, social, cultural, and ideological contexts (El Guindi 2004: 448).

The SVA's definition of visual anthropology primarily describes the media uses of what technically constitutes visual anthropology. However, the purpose of communication is at the root of visual anthropology. In one of her classic articles, Margaret Mead admonished anthropologists for their passivity and resistance to using pictures in field research. She criticized ethnographic inquiry based solely on "words, and words, and words," and for anthropology having become a "science of words" (El Guindi 2004: 256). As Collier & Collier put it:

> Both visual communication and visual evidence confront the literacy-based value system of modern Western society. We are compulsively verbal in both our communication and thought. Our memory image is codified and now computer-organized. There is small room in our literate society for *visualization*. We feel visual observation belongs to preliterate people and artists. Hence we distrust

> visual phenomena and look for written directions to guide our reasoning (Collier & Collier 1986: 154).

My analysis of photography extends beyond the verbal and the written. What are the features of culture which can be discovered from images and cannot be discovered from the spoken or written word?

As "little narratives" (Edwards, 2001), photographs provide their own snapshot of past action. The questions become: "What kind of past is inscribed in photographs? . . . Do photographs have their *own agency* within this? If there are *performative* qualities in photographs, where do they lie? In the thing itself? In its making? In its content?" (Edwards 2001: 5). Photographs were made for a reason—for an audience. What is the aspect of performance that they offer? There is a communicative meaning behind the production of the photograph—a reason to convey something to the observer, and this from within its context of space and time (Edwards, 2001). I believe Fadwa El Guindi's definition of visual anthropology encapsulates the entirety of its purpose:

> First, it seeks to transmit knowledge about humankind. Second, it serves as a tool for discovery—data gathering, elicitation and research experimentation, and cross-cultural comparison. And third, it develops visual modes to communicate anthropological analysis of primary cultural, archaeological, and primatological data on human societies and nonhuman primate behavior and of ethnographic insights from other cultural sources. These parameters situate the field of visual anthropology squarely within the discipline of anthropology (El Guindi 2004: 486).

Having defined the purpose for using visual anthropology in cultural analysis, I turn now to examine a number of ways by which to approach it. What are the approaches and what types of meaning can be gleaned from them? The answers to these questions could entail numerous aspects, and I will attempt to consolidate them in what follows.

To begin, photography captures the total environment in its range. It is a frame of reality frozen in time, which reveals the entirety of content in that moment in space. The observer must then lay the general view aside and "make a more penetrating study of selected aspects" (Collier & Collier 1986: 15). Analysis is narrowed to focus on *particular* evidence pertinent to the goals of the research. Not only that, but the challenge comes into play with looking beyond the *obvious* particular evidence to the more subtle or inferred characteristics that can be derived. Edwards offers a succinct explanation of this approach: "Rather than starting from a series of observations and assumptions imposed on a body of material, the starting-point here is always with photographs themselves, the entangled histories and their significations, to look for an intelligible structure that will recognize both possible closures of meaning, and open spaces of articulation, in an attempt at methodological exploration" (Edwards 2001: 2).

This approach—from the general to the particular—introduces a second meaningful approach to analyzing photography: considering the photograph as part of an ever-evolving organism. Examining photographs from this angle, we can trace continuity and changes in culture over time. It also identifies cultural patterns, both large and small, that might otherwise have been overlooked if we were to rely solely on written field notes (Collier & Collier, 1986). Patterns in culture, as represented in a series of photographs taken over a span of time, broach the question of their significance. Why do these

patterns exist? What forces are causing these patterns to surface in this particular culture? Edwards and Hart argue that this type of analysis is not restricted to the overt and obvious patterns of culture, but also:

> Through dwelling upon the more mundane sensual and material qualities of the object, we are able to unpack the more subtle connotations with cultural lives and values that are objectified through these forms, in part because of the qualities they possess (Edwards & Hart 2004: 252).

Cultural patterns and continuity provide an insight into comparative methods. This approach analyzes features of photographs from either different stages within the same culture or from different cultures in order to analyze similar and disparate characteristics. In one sense, it can be used as a tool for measuring a particular feature (Collier & Collier, 1986). In the case of the boarding schools, how do we measure levels of assimilation in each location? What characteristics from native heritage are featured in photographs versus characteristics from Western culture? Linking images together allows for the comparability of these measurements as well.

The approaches to visual anthropology that involve cultural patterns, continuity, and comparability open the door for us to identify and assess aspects of *microcultures* embedded within the larger cultural framework. According to El Guindi, "Cultural and social relations can be visually manifested, and invisible domains, including underlying rules and hidden premises, are part of the visual anthropology project" (El Guindi 2004: 466). What are the hidden features of culture and subculture that are represented in photographs? We need more than a once over, cursory view of the photograph in order to

amass these specific traits. Collier & Collier discuss the manner in which we should approach this:

> Such studies lead us into the examination of "microculture," the situationally conditioned patterns of behavior that shape the daily activities of most humans. Observing how people mingle and regroup themselves is basic to an understanding of social structure in motion. Psychologically and socially, photographs diagram spatial relationships of gatherings . . . Photographs allow for the observation of personal physical bearing, posture facial expressions, arm and hand gestures (Collier & Collier 1986: 93).

The range of facets to analyze are limited only by the photograph itself: nonverbal communication, body language, social relationships reflected in spatial and interactional patterns, formal and informal associations of society, familial relationships, social and ceremonial activity, psychological expression, change and continuity of behavior over time, and more (Collier & Collier, 1986).

Finally, analyzing photographs involves examining them as literal raw histories—primary data—with points of fracture. Edwards describes this approach as consisting of the unprocessed and the painful: "Through the photograph's points of fracture, the rawness, we can begin to register the possibility of a history that is no longer founded on traditional models of experience and reference" (Edwards 2001: 6). The photograph is an artifact—an extracted fragment of space and time that contains symbolic and metaphorical meaning. It is treated like any other artifact would be treated once acquired from the field. The photograph is no longer viewed as an archival document, but a tangible piece of the past pact with meaning and dimension.

Whatever the approach, it is important to remember that visual anthropology engages in the decoding of visual components into verbal and written forms of communication. It is, at its core, a means by which to communicate. No analysis of photographs can ignore this crucial translation process from the visual to the verbal.

And yet, as with any other scientific approach, visual anthropology does have its shortcomings. This is not to say that visual anthropology should be regarded as a meaningless study or that its methodologies are not beneficial. Rather, it is important to be constantly cognizant of the limitations to what it can provide in terms of cultural understanding.

One of the great habitual challenges when dealing with the visual is that we often see what we want to see as we want to perceive it. In order to effectively study photographs, we need to develop a critical eye and learn to see with visual accuracy. Textual documentation does not always capture the detailed complexities of culture, but sometimes visual snapshots are able to do just that in a specific space and time. The literary-trained fieldworker is challenged to adjust the inclination to see what is preferable, and instead to critically look at the photograph (Collier & Collier, 1986).

Not only should we scrutinize our visual analysis of photographs, we also need to be cognizant of how we are interpreting what we see and how we verbally record it. This involves a new area of cultural construction by which we become effective interpreters between the visual and the verbal. MacDougall argues this point well:

> Foremost is the need to build an intellectual foundation for visual anthropology by enabling a shift from word-and-sentence-based anthropological thought to image-and-sequence-based anthropological thought. Visual anthropology can never be

> either a copy of written anthropology or a substitute for it. For that very reason it must develop alternative objectives and methodologies that will benefit anthropology as a whole (MacDougall 2006: 225).

And yet some research insight and knowledge may be difficult, if not impossible, to transfer from visual into verbal form (Collier & Collier, 1986). In addition to this challenge, El Guindi cautions us not to speak for others, even if we are conducting research with the goal of facilitating their causes:

> True, anthropologists do undertake projects of advocacy and anthropologists do engage in activist projects to protect the rights and interests of groups they associate with, but where has it ever been stated that the goal of the scientific discipline of anthropology is to simply "speak for" other peoples? (El Guindi 2004: 342)

Although photographs often provide a good deal of information about the social dimensions of relationships and hierarchy based on spatial stance, posture, expression, and other characteristics, this too has its limitations. A single image can give us insight into the symbols and levels of social statuses, but it may not always communicate to us the *character* or *quality* of the "behavioral give and take of culture in motion" (Collier & Collier 1986: 84). To overcome this shortcoming, we have to use textual documentation from the same time as that which is represented in the photograph to garner information about social relationships.

Context presents yet another significant challenge to the methodologies of visual anthropology. Edwards and Hart claim that, "visual representation of any kind is never separate from its cultural formation, and indeed helps to shape it" (Edwards & Hart 2004:

298). Visual evidence requires context that positions it in the time and location respective to its production (Collier & Collier, 1986). MacDougall warns:

> To the anthropologist who knew the cultural context, the visual image spoke volumes, but that power was also a source of danger. An uncaptioned photograph was full of undirected potential. Unlike written descriptions, which always provided some sort of context, a photograph could be supplied with any sort of meaning by the viewer—from competing scientific discourses or unwelcome popular ones such as racism (MacDougall 2006: 223).

There is also the danger of attributing too many meanings to photographs. Without proper context, we may fall into the bad practice of seeing what we want to see, thus deriving meanings that are not really there (Edwards, 2001).

One final challenge confronting those who use these approaches of visual anthropology is the context of the photographer. Edwards again addresses issues, which arise from this:

> Photography here cannot be reduced to a totalizing abstract practice, but instead comprises photographs, real visual objects engaged with in social space and real time. In such contexts, the analysis of photographs cannot be restricted only to sorting out structures of signification, but must take into account that signifying role of photography in relation to the whole nature of the object and its social biography (Edwards 2001: 2).

What role does the photographer play in capturing the object, the environment, or the action? How does the presence of the photographer and the camera itself affect the objects or humans being preserved on film? The subjects' awareness of the photographer

can potentially alter the propensity of events and disrupt the natural environment of the culture, which the photographer seeks to capture.

Despite these shortcomings to methodologies of visual anthropology, analyzing photographs does assist in supplementing textual data with recreating the picture of a specific culture. As it relates to the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School, I seek to extract indicators from visual evidence and translate them into written communication to better understand its culture and history.

Comparative Works

Highlighting a few comparative examples of ethnographers using visual anthropology will help provide a paradigm on which I construct my own analysis. There are, however, distinctively different reasons for why ethnographers produced photographs and why boarding school officials produced them. Here, I focus on the approaches to general extraction and analyzing of information from photographs. The following examples supply their own theories behind this use of the visual in reassembling culture. They also illustrate the use of some of the approaches I have already mentioned.

The first example I discuss involves the exhibition of the *Okiek Portraits*, created by Corrine Ann Kratz and based on the Okiek people in west-central Kenya. This exhibition was on tour in Kenya and the United States from 1989 to 1997. In 2002, Kratz published a discussion of these photographs in her book *The Ones That Are Wanted: Communication and the Politics of Representation in a Photographic Exhibition.* The discussion of these photographs centered on the various meanings and expectations that came together for those recipients of the exhibition.

The primary question surrounding these photographs deals with the politics of representation. How do descendants respond to their ancestors being put on display in the photographs? What's more, how do descendants feel about the selective choices of the ethnographer in depicting their relatives? "The very notion . . . conveys authority; images and interpretations presented are often assumed to be true and incontestable because museums are seen as important educational institutions" (Kratz 2002: 92). Very rarely, if ever, do we give a second thought to the impact on those whose relatives are essentially put on display.

Considering interpretation, Kratz warns against the open interpretation of photographs as each individual wishes to see it:

> But it can also suggest a false or sentimental universalism that effaces significant differences in meaning, history, and life circumstances. In visiting exhibitions, as in other domains of representation, every viewer needs to maintain an interpretive stance that is open yet critically aware of these possibilities and problems (Kratz 2002: 13).

Photography is a medium of communication and representation, yet it also raises questions about the boundaries between art, science, and history. At what point does artistry and technical skill become exploitation of the "distant, exotic-seeming places" and giving voice to the Other (Kratz 2002: 96-97, 118)? We must be cognizant of the visual relationship that we are encouraging whenever we are working with photographs that depict real humans with real lives and descendants who are living with us today.

This idea of images with changing interpretation based on the observer is also found in Paul Stuart Landau's and Deborah Kaspin's work *Images and Empires:*

Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa. Here, too, these ethnographers study the politics behind photographs and argue that they are in actuality a set of ideas associated with a subject. Those ideas—or conclusions—that are extracted from the photographs are sensitive because of the effects of their messages:

> The way Africans were pictured and the selection of which pictures circulated—and where—were the results of many individual decisions, and they cannot be reduced to a formula. Moreover, while pictures appear very specific in their denotations, they are vulnerable—even more than are texts—to widely varying interpretations (Landau & Kaspin 2002: 142).

When attempting to define culture based on photographs, it is crucial to remember the reason behind producing the photograph in the first place. In the colonial and postcolonial eras of Africa, images were used for repressive functions and as tools of empire: "Photos documented "progressive" and "savagery" by showing African land mastered by railroads and scarified African bodies still in need of taming" (Landau & Kaspin 2002: 175). This same concept can be applied to the boarding school photographs, where visual documentation was made of the "savage" Native Americans who needed to be "tamed" and assimilated into Western society. An advantage that imperialists had in both climates was the technological advent of the camera itself:

> Because primitives often cannot interpret what photographs signify without being shown how, they reasoned, it follows that photographs must employ arbitrary conventions that Westerners have naturalized among themselves. Similarly, noting that "primitive" peoples who had never seen photographs apparently do

not know what to make of them . . . the photographic sign must be deciphered like any other . . . the photograph is an arbitrary sign (Landau & Kaspin 2002: 11).

A paradigmatic example of visual anthropology in ethnographic work comes from Isaac Shapera. *Picturing a Colonial Past: African Photographs of Isaac Shapera* describes the ethnographic work of Shapera from 1929 to 1934 among the Kgatla chiefdoms in Botswana. Shapera used the camera as a visual notebook to preserve what he felt was a soon-to-be lost culture (Comaroff et al, 2007). Despite the cautions of theoretical analysis that were mentioned above:

> [H]is photographs seem to have taken on an especially vivid life of their own. They appear as much more than simply visual data, more than mere mnemonic shadows on celluloid or dispassionate jottings-without-words. They reveal a palpable proximity, an unusual quality of relationship, between subject and object, ethnographer and informant (Comaroff et al 2007: 6).

The Kgatla of Botswana were comfortable with photography and allowed Shapera to capture their portraits. For him, this amicable relationship with the Kgatla reflected their ideas of selfhood and social beings (Comaroff et al, 2007).

Shapera's work gives hope to those who wish to take images beyond their purely visual record:

> The real power of Shapera's images lies in the fact that, despite their black and white two-dimensionality, they capture enduring passions and interests, enduring relations, enduring ways of being in the world. Even more, they appear at once to convey both contemporaneity *and* diachrony, congealing the passing of time at the very moment of their production (Comaroff et al 2007: 11).

Images capture those moments in space and time that would otherwise be lost to history; they give us insight into another time and another place where a culture—long since passed away—was alive and in motion.

Another archetypical example of visual anthropology in action comes from Francis Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Institute photographs. Johnston was commissioned by the principal of the Hampton Institute to take photographs of African American and Native American students who were attending Hampton as part of assimilation efforts for American minorities. This institute, much like other missionary schools of the post-Civil War decades, focused primarily on vocational training as part of the "uplift" ideology to economically raise persons of minority races out of their impoverished conditions. Another similarity with the missionary schools was the total reliance on funds from parishioners. Johnston's photographs were used in a number of exhibits, chief of all in the 1900 *American Negro Exhibit*, to make white European-descent audiences aware of the institute's sincere motives to better the economic advancement of African American progress (Bassnett, 2008). In addition to impressing an international audience, the effects of Johnston's photographs sparked a debate about biological racism and narrow depictions of black culture from no less than individuals like Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, among others.

> Bassnett also considers what Johnston's Hampton photographs do not show:
>
> In focusing on racial uplift, Calloway excluded images that would have been truly challenging to an audience of white Europeans and Americans. Photographs of the racial violence and discrimination that hindered African Americans (particularly in the South) from attaining the trappings of a middle-class lifestyle,

> let alone social and political equality, would have disrupted the vision of racial uplift that the Hampton photographs and other exhibit materials presented . . . Johnston's photographs were shown . . . presenting a positive vision of African American life in the U.S. Within this context, the photographs supported the notion that a vocational education is what had made a difference in the lives of African Americans (Bassnett 2008: 159-160).

These photographs were used, in part, to raise funds for the institute; so, why show the negative aspects of it? The Native American boarding schools, which followed Hampton's lead, like the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School, were guilty of the same actions. In light of this, it creates a challenge to analyze the photographs that do exist, while constantly questioning whether or not they are survivors of a deliberate editing scheme between positive and negative portrayals.

In 1966, Johnston's Hampton photographs were again on display at the Museum of Modern Art. This exhibit provoked a far different discussion than the one in 1900. Observers at this exhibit arrived at different conclusions in their interpretations of these images. For some, the images were records, which captured the "hopes and dreams of Hampton students," who longed for a shared social paradise. For others, the photographs were "a fascinating, campy comment on how one well-intentioned group tried to improve the lot of the freed Negro and the American Indian." Yet for others, Johnston's images were outdated ideologies that "did not acknowledge the contentious nature of racial uplift" (Bassnett 2008: 161-162) against the backdrop of the mid-twentieth century Civil Rights movement. These examples show how the meanings of photographs do change

with time, especially when it is not the context of the photographs' production that is being considered, but the context of the time in which the observer is analyzing them.

The vast majority of published materials on government boarding schools for Native Americans pay minimal, if any, attention to photographs. They are cursorily mentioned as supplemental documents, which contribute to shaping the school's public image for purposes of propaganda. One exception is an article by sociologist Eric Margolis, in which boarding school photographs are the exclusive subjects. Margolis analyzes images produced from a range of schools—including the one in Mount Pleasant. He says that, "Photographs have been unearthed and as with frescoes and cave paintings, meanings have to be imputed based on documentary evidence and theoretical understandings" (Margolis 2004: 72). Abiding by the documentary evidence, Margolis draws a few basic conclusions about his selection of photographs, albeit with serious theoretical underpinnings.

From the beginning of Native American assimilation at Carlisle, Richard Pratt produced photographs of his students as testimonies to illustrate the transformation of the "uncivilized" to the "civilized." In keeping with his deeply held belief that education was the best solution to the Native American problem in the United States, Margolis argues that Pratt used these photographs as propaganda for the general public to illustrate the benefits of investing in these children. He says the photographs collaborated to "force children's bodies to 'emit signs' of assimilation, Americanization, rank, discipline, symmetry and order. The freezing of these postures into photographs was intended to convey to others, Indian and Anglo alike, the presumed changes in the soul" (Margolis 2004: 75). He goes on to point out the institutional context of Native American

assimilation that can be concluded from studying the photographs: "In examining the photographs one can also discern a number of covert institutional agendas including power, propaganda and the surveillance to which teachers and students alike were subjected" (Margolis 2004: 80).

In addition to propaganda and power structures, Margolis notes the characteristics of socialization, which prevailed at these institutions:

> Socialization takes place in all schools, but generally alongside or behind formal curricula that emphasize skills learning. Because the Indian schools' primary function was acculturation, the socialization elements that tend to be part of the 'hidden curriculum' were made specifically visible. This makes photographs of Indian schools a unique view of schooling as a socialization process (Margolis 2004: 92).

Margolis echoes other ethnographers' caution when it comes to the extent of meaning we place on photographs as well as their limitations:

> The viewer has no way of knowing if education is taking place – if students and teachers are sullen, bored to tears, or stimulated and intellectually excited. We do not know if resignation or resistance is going on. Photography cannot represent social relationships or mental transformations. Thus we are looking at carefully constructed arrangements of objects in space that have been (com)posed to give out signs suggesting progressive 'education', or 'socialization' or 'discipline' or a number of other social relationships or internal psychological changes (Margolis 2004: 77-78).

The methodology that I use in examining the Mount Pleasant photographs falls in line with many of the same sentiments expressed by Margolis. Additionally, the examples listed above and the overall approaches to visual anthropology are incorporated as part of this study. In the next section, I give a general description of the photographs and how I acquired them before detailing the specific features of each photograph as well as their history (when applicable). Where appropriate, I include evidence from the documentary sources to assist in contextualizing each photograph. In the final section, I consolidate my findings to produce my own conclusions on the culture of this particular institution in terms of the six features I have identified: Native American student assimilation, domestic care and order, living conditions, communication, ethnic composition, and resistance.

CHAPTER III

EXAMINING THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Collecting photographs of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School was a challenge. There are thousands of photographs that were taken throughout this era of Native American assimilation at the twenty-five government boarding schools.[1] A majority of these images are attributed to certain schools, which were in operation for longer durations and were better known. Other schools, which had not been in operation as long and were not as popular (partially due to their remote locations), there are fewer known photographs. The Mount Pleasant school belongs to this latter group. In total, I compiled thirty-three photographs, which met the three main criteria for my collection: 1) Proof that the photograph was taken at the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School during its operation, 2) Resolution of the photograph had to be such that it was clear to study the contents—not blurry or damaged, and 3) The photograph contains humans—either employees, students, or both—as part of the social analysis of its culture.

My collection comes from three main sources: 1) The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways archives located on the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe territory in Isabella County, Michigan, 2) The Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, and 3) A 1913 work from the Library of Michigan detailing the history of the school up to that year. There were overlaps in the photographs; some that I found at the first source I also found at the second source, etc. This helped to confirm the veracity of these particular photographs as authentic reproductions of the school. The Ziibiwing Center and the Clarke Historical Library received photographs from local residents who donated their personal collections over the

course of several decades. Some of these pictures correspond with official postcards that had been printed when the school was in operation as an additional measure of propaganda. Again, this corroborated the authenticity of the personal collections. Additional proof for these photographs come from features we can see in the images themselves: photographs of sports teams and band members wearing uniforms, which say "Mt. Pleasant Indian School" or "MP" on them, or buildings in the background, which are identical to those in aerial and ground photographs of the school's infrastructure.

Group 1

I have divided these thirty-three pictures into seven groups based on similarities in their content and purpose. Analyzing these pictures not only reveals features of the boarding school culture, but it also shows the changes over time for each particular area. The first group contains photographs of graduation classes and the assembled student body. We can see from these images how the style of clothing that the students wore changed in unison with the mainstream fashion. Younger students wore hats and headdresses, whereas older students did not have anything covering their heads.

The first photograph in my collection is an early picture of the assembled student body at the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School. It was most likely taken around the late 1890s when the school was beginning to grow exponentially. A couple of adults are posing with the children in the picture: one is standing with the children and one is off to the side, symbolizing the "gentle" guiding hand and control they had over them.[2] The fact this image was taken in front of one of the well-kept dormitories is a psychological communicator of the extent to which the administration cares for its

students—to properly clothe, feed, and house them in decent conditions. The overt harmony of dress and hairstyle is apparent as well.

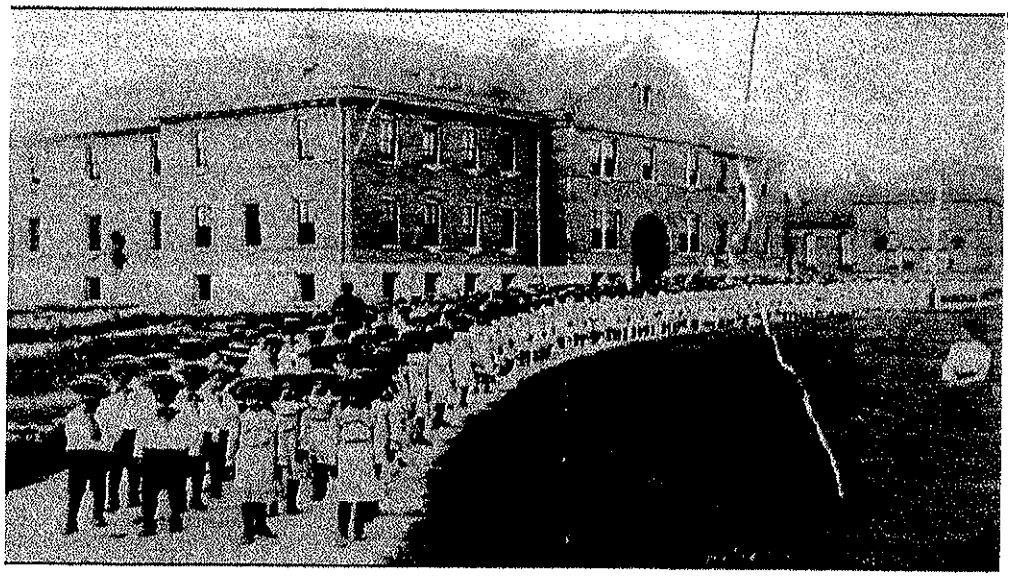


Figure 1. Student body assembled in front of the school

This photograph from 1913 shows a graduation class and each student with their diploma in hand. The continuity of dress and hairstyles are evident, as are the serious expressions on each countenance. This is similar to the description of the graduation class mentioned in the *Mount Pleasant Times* two years prior on June 12, 1911:

> Ten young people, five girls and five boys, graduated from the Indian Industrial school last Thursday evening. The girls were dressed in pretty white gowns made by themselves, and wore the class flower red geranium, grown at the school. The boys wore well fitted suits which they also made for themselves.[3]

It is probable that the photographer is not the only person standing on the opposite side of the camera, but that other onlookers are observing the new graduates, expressing their pleasure for once again completing another round of assimilation. Annual reports on the school's progress repeatedly state that each graduation class is now capable of succeeding

as ordinary citizens who are bright and smart and will become civilized men and women in society: "It is rather hard to predict their future, however, most of them plan to continue their education in one line or another."[4] Some of the students appear to be distracted by something beyond the scope of the lens. Another interesting feature to note is the lack of instructors in the photograph.

Graduating Class.

Figure 2. Graduation class with diplomas in hand

As is common in many of these images, this photograph from the late 1910s symbolizes the uniformity in hairstyle, dress, and posture of a group of students. The *Mount Pleasant Times*, dated June 12, 1911, mentions the fact that girls were responsible for weaving their own dresses and boys were responsible for tailoring their own suits.[5] Perhaps one reason for this photograph is the promotion of self-made products. The back of the image states that this is a graduation class taken by the Rev. John A Mulvey. The complexions of each student brings to light the question raised by J. Franklin House, the Supervisor of Indian School, in his May 15, 1902 letter to the Department of the Interior about the issue of poor nonnative students covertly attending school, who were posing as

natives. There is some question about "white Indians," or students whose ethnicities are called into question. Mr. House spoke with a number of students and found that many of them knew little about their parents' heritage.[6] The positioning of instructors on either side of the group is indicative of what several photographs infer: that these students are contained within the power of these "civilizers" and that they are on display as positive results of "progress" and accomplishment at "civilizing" the "savages." Yet perhaps the most intriguing thing about this photograph is the facial expressions of each student. While many have chosen a stoic pose for the camera, it is clear how relaxed these students feel. This indicates a lack of tension, at least for the older students, and quite possibly due to the fact that in their minds they are on the verge of leaving the school indefinitely.[7]

Figure 3. Graduation class in front of the schoolhouse

This photograph appears to be only a section of a bigger photograph, which captures a larger body of students on the front steps of a building. I could not find any other photograph that correlated with this one to reveal the rest of the original image, but there is information that can be gleaned from this fragment. We observe a congregation

of young female students of various ages all facing the camera. There is an obvious contrast in attire between the front rows and the back rows, although it is unclear why. Partial writing at the bottom indicates that it is a photograph of Mount Pleasant students and that it is from May 9, 1929. Looking at the features on each face, it appears that there is no question as to the ethnicity of the children. Note also the hats and headdresses they are wearing.

Figure 4. Partial photograph of young students on building steps

This 1930 photograph, as indicated on the reverse side, features a group of very young female students standing in front of a bridge. They are dressed in clothes symbolic of a particular event or graduation for their end of the three-year term, and that are not like those worn in a classroom or vocational setting.[8] The bland expressions on their faces, combined with their youth, suggest their unfamiliarity with the camera and its purpose. This curiosity no doubt played into the wonder that these children had for the new, the unfamiliar, and the foreign components and machines of the school.

Figure 5. Young girls posing in front of a bridge

Group 2

The second group of photographs depicts students engaged in their vocational training. These pictures open a window to look at the details of their training, their classroom surroundings, and what they wore as part of their work. However, the few images that do let us see this part of school life do not offer enough for us to observe patterns of continuity or change.

This photograph, probably from the first decade of the twentieth century, depicts a couple of male students working in a shop class as part of their vocational training.[9] Since the administration organized the work in such a way that students assisted with the self-help of construction and repair at the school, it is no surprise that the furnishings of this room resemble those of an actual woodshop and not a modified classroom setting.[10] The young men at work seem to be dressed in their nicer school clothes (shirts and slacks), but with an apron over their uniform as standard dress for woodworking. An instructor is standing off to the left and appears to be engaged with what is going on. He does not

seem to be micromanaging the actions of his trainees, who look older and more experienced in their work.[11]

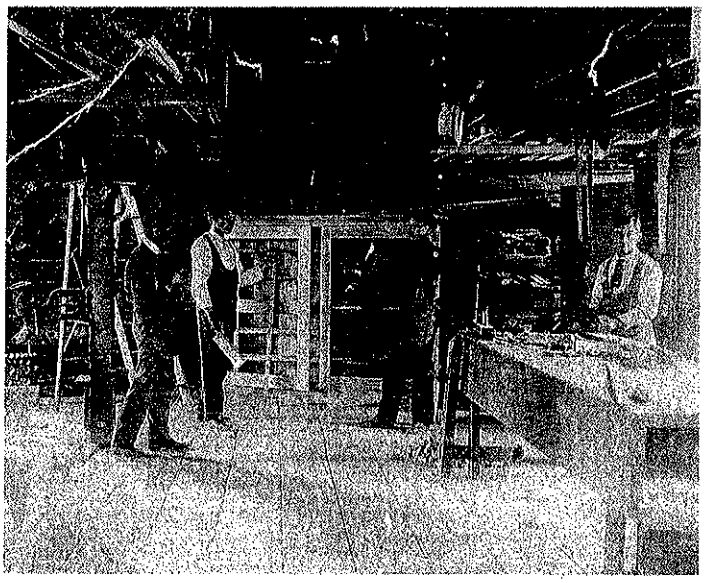


Figure 6. Shop class with male students

The domestic science building where the female students practiced their vocational training is captured in this 1913 photograph. We can see the assembly line of workers around the table, lending support to reformers' beliefs that Native Americans could make good assembly workers in the civilized world. The girls appear to each have their own necessary equipment for training. They again are all uniformly dressed. There is quite possibly a female instructor standing behind them near the door on the right, observing their actions, but not appearing to micromanage them. This may also be true considering the students look older, and therefore more experienced at following orders and performing their tasks. It is reflective of the effectiveness of assimilation over time.[12] It also symbolizes a change in policy from when Andrew Spencer presided over the school. In his September 24, 1895 Report of the Superintendents of Schools, he said:

> The problem is that most of these children are good at rote memorization, but in terms of intellect and abstract ability they fare far worse than whites. More emphasis must be placed on this kind of intellectual education and less on memorization.[13]

The diligence of students concentrating on their work may be purposeful due to the presence of the camera, and it is uncertain whether or not this is the reason for why one individual decided to take a quick glance at the camera. The absence of cracks and missing wall and ceiling pieces is a testament to the financial soundness of at least the portion appropriated to infrastructure. It would appear that at Mount Pleasant the administrators were not negligent in their care to house the pupils.

Kitchen View, with class at work, Domestic Science Department.

Figure 7. Domestic science class with female students

This image depicts a group of older female students congregated on the steps of the log cabin, which was used as the domestic science building. The photograph is dated around the late 1910s. We are able to observe the uniform dress and hairstyles of each young lady and the obvious presence of the instructor at the back center of the group. The

fact that this is a photograph of older students most likely indicates that domestic science was something acquired over time as a person spent several years being educated and vocationally conditioned at the school. It also speaks to the fact that older students were employed as assistant instructors to help teach the younger students, confirming the psychologically conditioned success of a younger student observing an older student performing a task and then mimicking that person.[14] Additionally, it equips the girls to survive on their own without the need for male companionship as mentioned in the *Isabella County Enterprise* on April 15, 1910: "The educated Indian girl looks for a higher type of manhood in a husband than satisfy her mother. If she does not find her ideal, she is perfectly capable of earning her own living."[15] This was one of the goals reformers had planned for girls—to break away from their native patriarchy and dependence on traditional males and become success stories of their own making. Put into historical context, this goal was concurrent with the women's suffragette movement already underway in the United States. Education for women not only provided a means for independence among Anglo girls, but it also helped to break down the traditional gender roles to which Native American girls were accustomed.

Figure 8. Domestic science students on the log cabin steps

We can observe a boys' 1929 tailors class in this image. The plaque on the bottom step indisputably identifies what this group is. The students are deliberately posing for the camera with stoic expressions and formal postures. It is also noticeable they are wearing attire other than what would have been used in day-to-day classroom and vocational activities. Perhaps this is another image that is boasting of the students' ability to tailor their own suits, once again corroborating the policy of self-sufficiency in all manners of production at the Mount Pleasant school.[16]

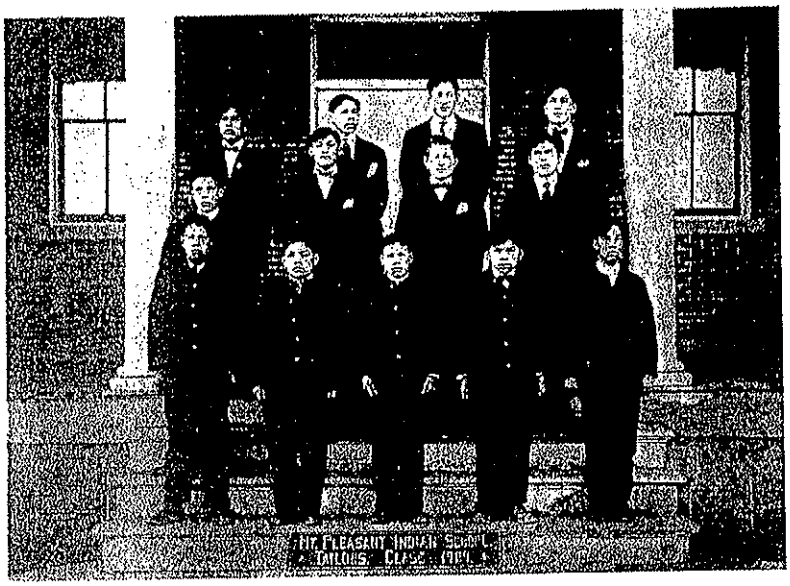


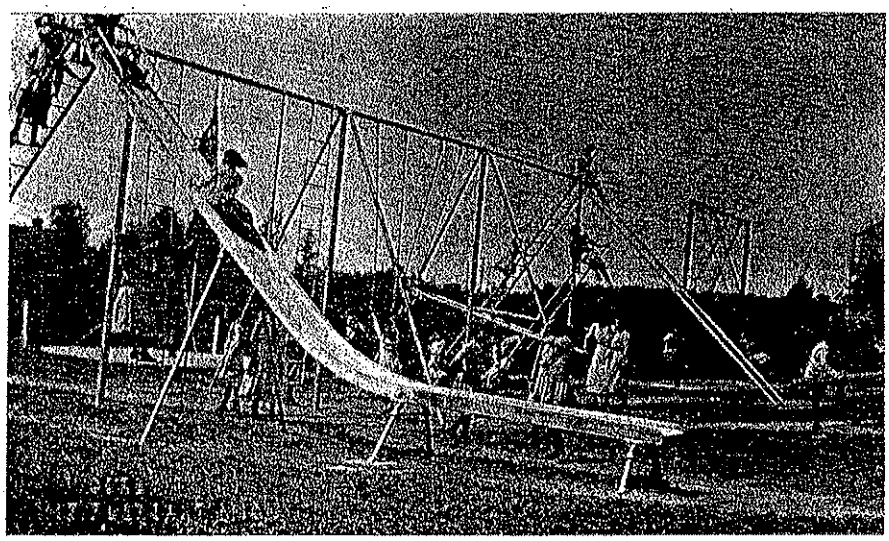
Figure 9. Tailoring class with male students

Group 3

The third group of photographs in my collection shows students participating in miscellaneous activities, which were a central part of their recreation and the community's involvement. They are all taken outside, and they give some good information on the landscape of the school grounds as it changed over time. We can see the neatness and cleanliness of this place—a characteristic that reproves claims of and criticisms about the school's physical environment.

In this photograph from the early 1910s, we can see children playing on one of the playgrounds furnished by funds appropriated to the Mount Pleasant school. Note again the dress of each student and the seeming lack of a visible supervisor, although supervision may have been done by someone standing out of view of the camera or from one of the buildings across the open field. An important feature of this photograph is the existence of the playground in the first place. For one thing, it serves as a "civilized" alternative to students occupying their time running off to the woods and engaging in

"savage" activity such as hunting small animals and telling native stories over an open fire. Another purpose for the playground was that the administration believed students who played outside more often would combat the effects of respiratory diseases.[17] Yet another purpose for the playground was that it confined the students to a small area where they could play under supervision and increase the likelihood of conversing with one another. According to a February 15, 1905 letter from instructor Walter G. West to Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, this tactic was employed as a means to stimulate the subconscious use of English among Native American students as opposed to speaking in their native tongues. Letting the students roam free and converse would subconsciously add to their knowledge of English as they practiced using it in preparation when they graduated and were on their own.[18]



Girls' Playground.

Figure 10. Children on the school playground

A group of boys have stopped playing baseball and are posing for the camera in this picture from an unknown year. It is interesting to note the diversity of clothing each boy is wearing, and this seems out of place for the apparent regimented attire that was

imposed on all pupils. The facial expressions and postures of each individual suggests they are enjoying themselves in a relaxed environment, albeit their close interaction on the open field in front of the buildings is concomitant with the psychological purpose for the girls on the playground; let the boys relax and play baseball as they wish while they subconsciously converse in English with one another. Again, in Walter G. West's letter to Estelle Reel:

> The out of doors industrial work affords exceptional opportunity for the teaching of the English language, as there the child finds a multitude of objects with which he is familiar, and about which he has, or can be made to have, a desire to talk, and he feels more free to talk in the open air.[19]

Figure 11. Boys playing baseball in the schoolyard

This photograph, possibly from the late 1920s, is one of two that captures the same event being held on the school grounds. Much activity is occurring, which gives us insight into characteristics of culture at the school. Stoic facial expressions, uniform dress, hairstyle, and posture are all again visible for the purpose of communicating the

requirements for regimentation and sameness of the students. The countenances of the military and administrative officials looking on indicate how proud they are of their accomplishments at assimilating these students. The militaristic and patriotic attributes, which show through this photograph, are highly symbolic of the purpose behind the school. The *Isabella County Enterprise*, dated May 18, 1906, says as much:

> The performance of the Indian children was as near perfection as could be wished and was productive of great admiration on the part of the audience. The event was a great success in every particular and in addition, it is a complete demonstration of the usefulness of the school in that it proved the good work of the superintendent and teachers, endeavoring to make citizens of high standing of these children of the forest and render them capable of following effectively in all the vocations of life.[20]

There also seems to be community members witnessing the parade from the background, which is indicative of the community's awareness of and involvement in what was taking place at the school.[21] It is hard to miss glances from the other students assembled on the right as they look on at their companions marching in front of them. This psychological aspect is key to the assimilation process. If one person of ethnicity witnesses another person of that same ethnicity performing an action foreign to their heritage, it may compel the onlooker to follow in-turn and perform that same action. How many times this must have been repeated at the boarding schools for reinforcement of what the administrators required.

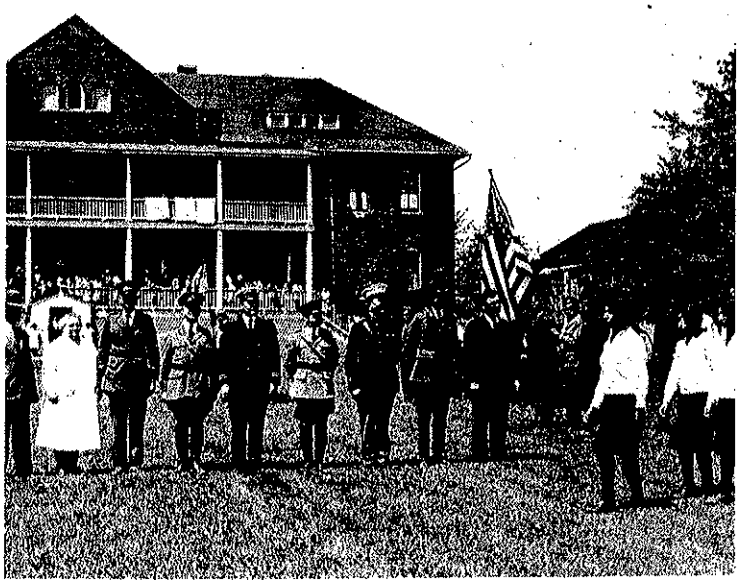


Figure 12. School event part one

This photograph is the second half of the parade field with a performance by the students. It shows the diversity of dress among the boys and girls, the band, the patriotic symbols, and the overall regimented, militaristic style of presentation. It also symbolizes the coordination with which the school's administration engineered public performances, displaying the diversity of assimilation taking place. They are showing off their musical talent, cleanliness and neatness of their bodies, order and regimentation conditioned with routine, and supposed pride in the United States as opposed to loyalty towards Native American heritage.[22]

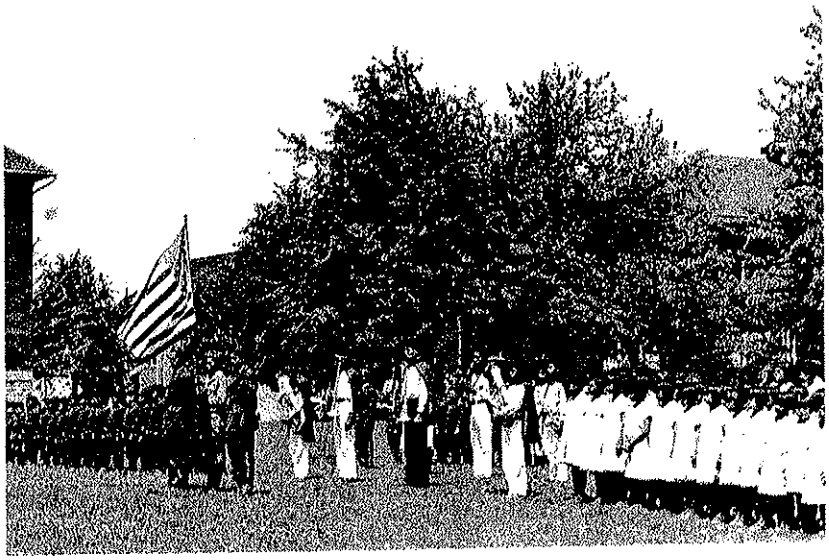


Figure 13. School event part two

Another photograph, which shows the wide expanse of the school grounds and buildings, is pictured here from the early 1930s. The children playing in the open field before the imposing façade of a building speaks to the psychological factor of the all-seeing institution over the native. The students, in uniform dress, appear to be enjoying themselves as they play with one another. It speaks also to the freedom of students who were able to venture outside the confines of classroom and vocational instruction, but not so far as to escape the watchful eye of their supervisors. As the *Isabella County Enterprise* reported on July 5, 1912:

> This is vacation at the government school, but a stranger would scarcely recognize the fact. The children romp and play, work and sing, and the regularity of the call to mess and the evening concert on the lawn all combine to make life at the school pleasant.[23]

Figure 14. Children playing in the schoolyard

Group 4

The fourth group of images comprises those that feature Native American students as part of the Mount Pleasant boarding school bands. These images express the complete foreignness of natives with Western instruments. It symbolizes the total transformation of those beings who learned primarily through activity. Putting an instrument in their hands and teaching them to march and follow the conductor's lead were entirely new for them, yet they quickly adjusted to this due in part to that sense of learning through performing the activity. We can observe the change in uniform and logo (especially on the drum face) over the course of the school's forty years in operation.

This photograph is one of eight, which I will identify as postcards. It features the Mount Pleasant Indian School Band from the early 1900s. It is worth noting that this band is composed entirely of males, yet there is the obvious absence of a band conductor. Perhaps it signifies one purpose behind the photograph—to keep the focus on the assimilated students as an advertisement of the success of the Mount Pleasant school.[24] It is difficult to tell the age range of these students, but there is the question of ethnicity that

could be argued based on their facial features. A few of the students are shades darker than the rest, and more than any other photograph in my collection, there are overt signs of minimal-to-no traces of Native American ethnicity in a few of them.

Figure 15. School band one (postcard one)

This photograph is another postcard propagandizing an all-male student band. The caption at the bottom indicates that this is the Mount Pleasant Indian School Band, and from the logo on the drum face, we can compare it with that of the previous photograph and date the picture around the early 1900s as well. There is also the seeming lack of a band conductor in the picture, signifying once again the exploitation of the students as successfully assimilated and "civilized" beings who are products of a successful school.[25] Questions could again be raised about the ethnic makeup of this student body, and thus far a pattern is developing whereby only the male students' ethnicities are called into question.

Figure 16. School band two (postcard two)

This photograph comes from another postcard featuring the Mount Pleasant Indian School Band. The band logo has changed, placing the image's date around the middle of the 1910s. From the camera's distance, it is difficult to tell the gender of a few band members, but they appear to be predominantly male. Even though sports were naturally considered to be gender-segregated, it is interesting to note that among the more artistic activities, there was still segregation by gender. The band conductor is again standing in the foreground near the center and is possibly distracted by something off to the side. Each student is holding his instrument in a professional manner, and it appears that the age range for this group is more diverse. It says that musical training was an extracurricular activity in which anyone of any age was allowed to participate.[26]

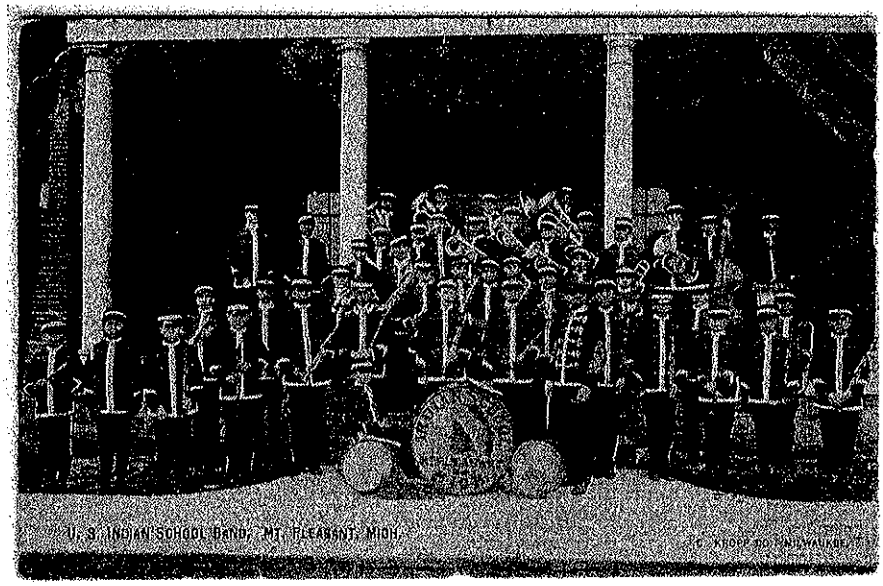


Figure 17. School band three (postcard three)

Unique from the other photographs of bands, this one features an all-girl band from the school.[27] Like the other band photographs, there seems to be a range of ages represented as well as a diversity of instruments. It is important to note, however, that the conductor is male and is somewhat hidden sitting off to the left. There is also the question of whether or not this band comprises entirely female students or if there are female instructors also participating. This is due to the fact that a change in attire is noticeable between those assembled in front of the door and the three ladies seated in front of the conductor on the left side. We can observe that the school logo on the drum face is the same as in the previous photograph, again placing its date to sometime in the 1910s.

Figure 18. School band four (females)

The Mount Pleasant Indian School Band is again featured in this 1920s photograph—one of the more popular images of Mount Pleasant in circulation. Several news outlets bragged about the school band on several occasions.[28] Note the formal manner in which each student is holding his instrument and his posture. The band conductor, standing in the foreground, is symbolic of the instructor "leading the way" for the others to follow. The facial expressions are once again stoic and attentive toward the camera, albeit closer examination reveals a couple of boys with their attentions directed elsewhere. As in other photographs, it is emblematic of the fact that distractions will always take their toll on attention spans. No matter how much these educators try to shape the students into their ideal of civilized citizens, there will always be those few who lack self-control to follow the requirements to the last detail.

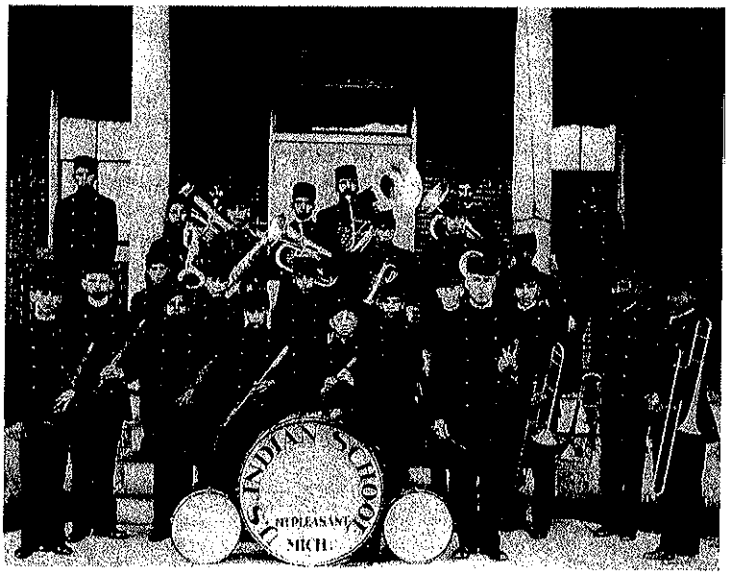


Figure 19. School band five

Group 5

The fifth group of images continues in this line of extracurricular activities and features sports at Mount Pleasant. As numerous news articles from its day state, both the students and the community were very enthusiastic about sports, competing against other schools, and bringing a sense of pride through representing their own.

Here we have the Mount Pleasant boys' baseball team from 1913—again, as indicated on the reverse side. Similar to the football team's photograph, this image of a Native American athletic team reflects positively on the camaraderie felt between its members.[29] A majority of the boys' facial expressions also reflect their cheery disposition of being on the team and receiving at minimum a token of public notoriety. The placement of the coach in the background is worth noting, possibly indicating a reverse interpretation of the instructor leading from the front. In this case, it is the coach parading his successfully assimilated students before him. Questions could also be raised about the

ethnic features on some of the boys' faces, alluding once again to the possibility that not all pupils at the Mount Pleasant school were of Native American origin.[30]

A Mt. Pleasant Indian Base Ball Team.

Figure 20. School baseball team

This photograph captures the Mount Pleasant Indian School football team in a game against Saginaw High School. The reverse side says that it is also from 1913. Although the image is somewhat difficult to make out, there is enough clarity to observe the players as well as the crowd watching from the sideline in the background. Photographs such as these are yet additional images of the athletic and band groups that were used to show how Native American children possessed the capacity to become "civilized" humans who could engage in entertaining activities without resorting to the "savage" ways of their ancestors, such as fighting from horses, hunting with primitive methods, living in wigwams, and dancing around fires.[31]

Football Game Mt. Pleasant vs. Saginaw High.

Figure 21. Football game against Saginaw High

The Mount Pleasant Indian School boys' basketball team of 1930 is featured in this picture. As with other athletic team images, the boys' facial expressions are sober. Basketball was popular with the community and reinforced both the community sentiments as well as the camaraderie of the students in a competitive setting.[32] Note the coach is once again placed in the back center as the overriding authority of these assimilated students and the question of ethnic makeup for one or two teammates.

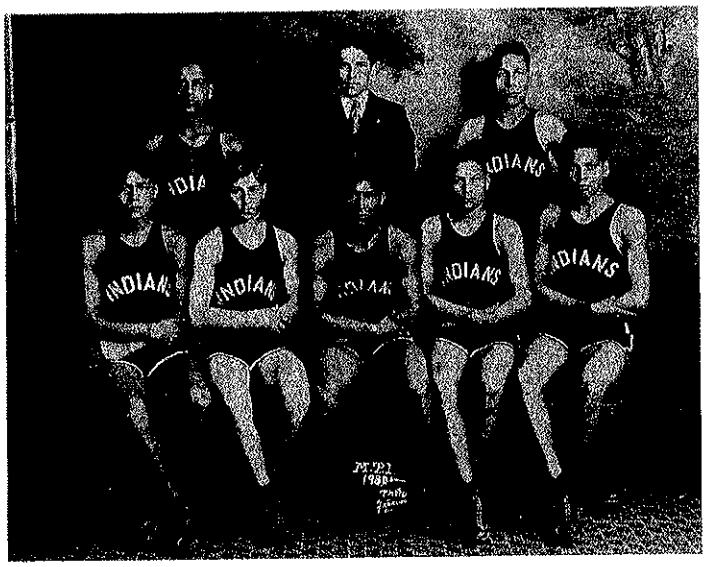


Figure 22. School basketball team

A boys' football team is depicted in this photograph. The writing on the football in the bottom center indicates that this is the Mount Pleasant school football team of 1931. As previously mentioned, sports were an important part of the boarding school, especially to advance its reputation and success in the community and surrounding counties. The students also took great pride in their athletic teams, and for some it was a way to express themselves as Native Americans on the field of battle or as naturally competitive beings.[33] For these reasons, students were fond of sports and were proud to be a part of its competition. It provides yet another psychological route to conditioning students into integrating as members of the larger culture of "civilized" America.

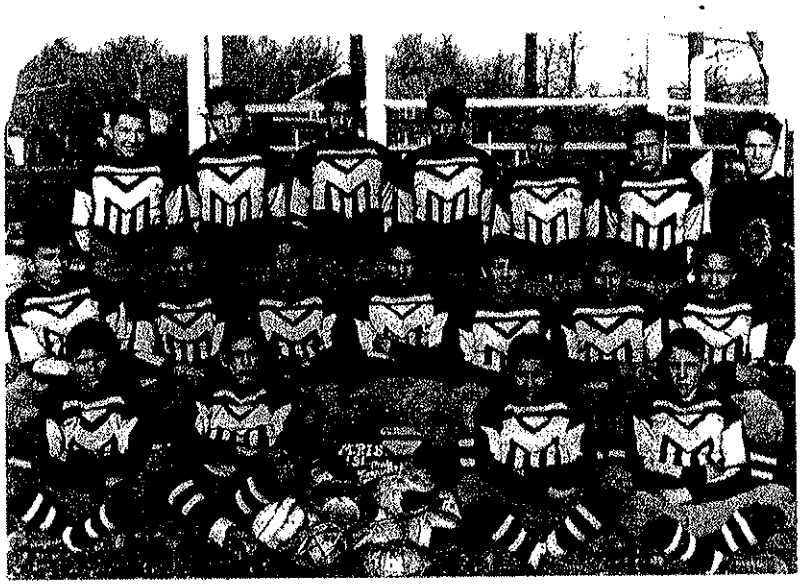


Figure 23. School football team

Group 6

The sixth group contains pictures of the school grounds, the dormitories, and the infrastructure that housed students. These images are important because they bring clarity to the physical environment—something that is difficult to envision in writing. Changes

to the school are evident, though, with new buildings constructed on almost a yearly basis, at least in the first two decades of operation.

This photograph too comes from a postcard collection. It is one of two exceptions to my requirement that the photographs include humans. The reason I have singled out two photographs showing only buildings is to illustrate how the school was promoted as a place that was kept up, clean, and orderly. There were constant requests for funds appropriated to the upkeep of buildings.[34] What could better illustrate the positive results of these investments than a postcard? Despite its propaganda use, this image reveals a few characteristics of the school. To the students, the spatial relationship of the buildings infers that the institution is always watching. The many windows, high walls, and fields devoid of brush and trees communicate the fact that the administration, the instructors, and the supervisors were at all times able to keep an eye on the students. This would discourage them from misbehaving, running off to the fields to dress in their native garments, or even speaking in their native tongues. The size of the windows in proportion to each building suggests a two-fold purpose: for instructors to keep a constant eye on the students playing outside, and for quick evacuation in the event of a fire.[35]

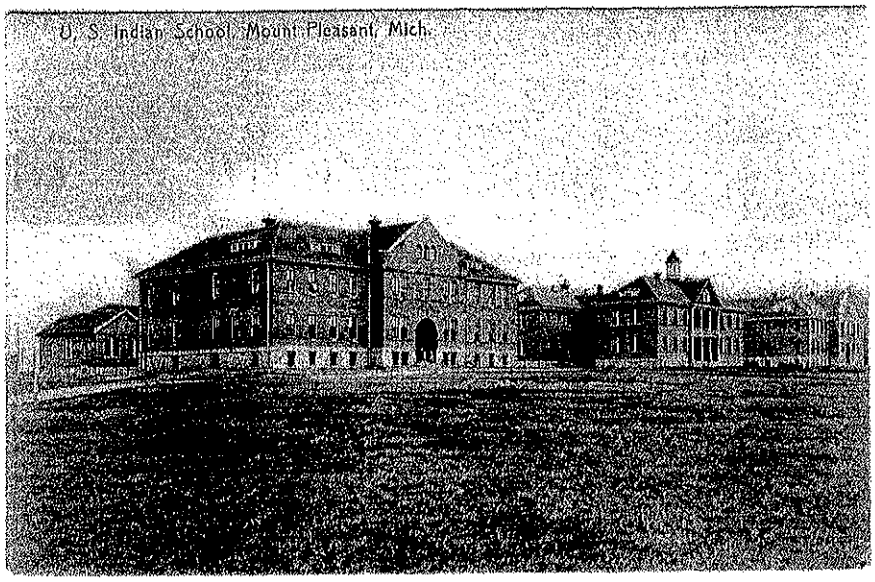


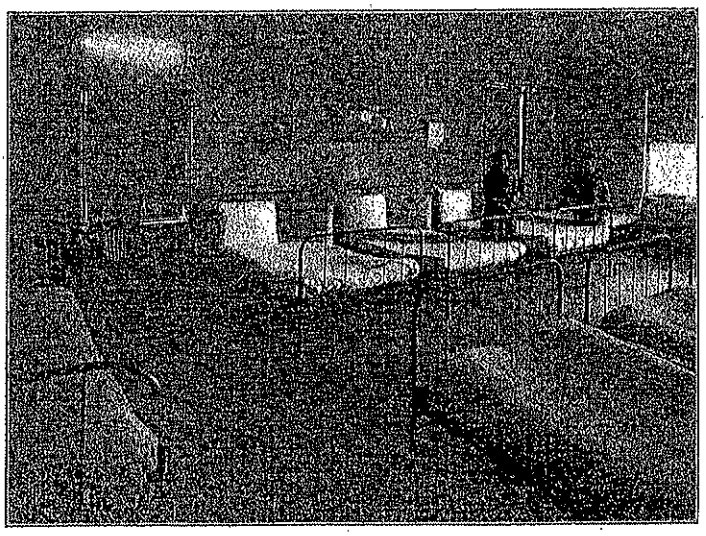
Figure 24. School buildings and yard (postcard four)

Few photographs give us a glimpse into the dormitories and accommodations as this one does. In a letter from Robert Cochran to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated February 6, 1905, we learn about the care and upkeep of student housing. This image captures the reality of that care.[36] The room is void of dilapidation and untidiness. Cleanliness and order are evident, akin to the fact that students slept on what appear to be good mattresses and pillows. This is corroborated in the school's annual report of 1911:

> In our industrial departments our girls are given just as careful training as our boys, all of the girls are taught homemaking, each girl also learns to keep her own room in order, make her bed, sweep, dust, etc., and in the laundry she learns to wash and iron clothes properly, while in the dining room she is taught to set tables correctly with dishes which have been made thoroughly clean.[37]

One of the chronic problems for the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School was the overcapacity of enrollees.[38] Admittance denials were mailed out practically every year because there was no more room to house additional prospective pupils. Although it

is uncertain for which age group this specific room was intended, it is clear that there does not seem to be a lack of space for bedding down students in this particular facility.



View in one of the Domitories in Girls' Quarters.

Figure 25. Female dormitory

This photograph shows the interior of the laundry room at the school. On the back it states that this image is from 1913. It is a little difficult to clearly see all of the detailed features of what is inside, especially since the individuals are congregated in a separate room at the back. The overall appearance of the room, however, is yet another testament to the care and upkeep that each school administration had for their buildings.[39] It quite possibly supports the argument that Native American children should be housed and educated at the boarding schools because they would be better fed, clothed, and housed than in their impoverished conditions on the reservations.[40]

An Interior View of School Laundry.

Figure 26. Laundry room

One of the school's prides was the log cabin that had been constructed by male students under the supervision of their shop instructor. The *Isabella County Enterprise*, dated April 18, 1913, praises the boys for doing a good job building the log cabin and even completing its plumbing system.[41] This is a subtle reference to the capabilities and accomplishments of these transformed students, which merited the image worth printing as a postcard. The log cabin was used as a domestic science building.[42] Also revealing is the relaxed pose of the girls sitting on the steps, once again featuring their school outfits that were most likely woven in that very building. Based on the completion date for when the log cabin was built—and its good condition—we know this photograph is probably from the late 1910s or early 1920s.

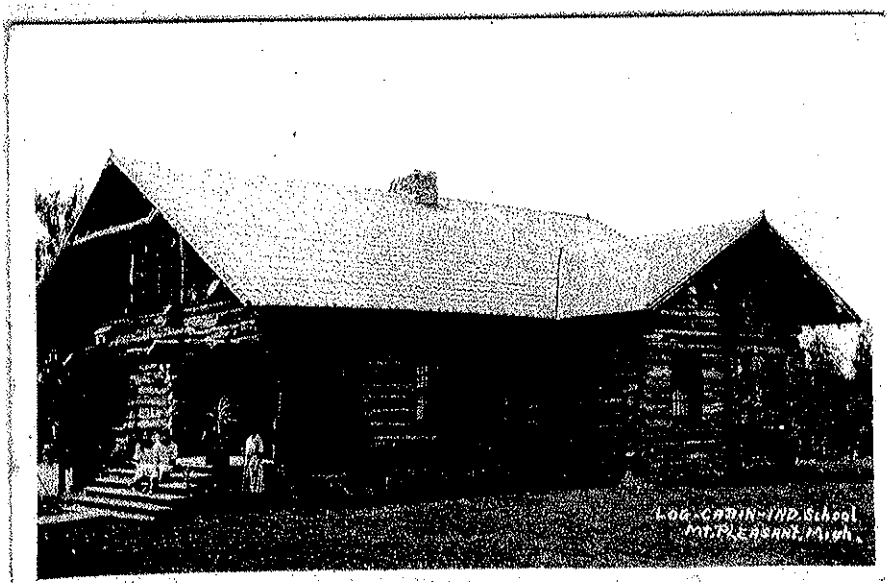


Figure 27. Domestic science log cabin (postcard five)

The second of two photographs absent humans is pictured above. My purpose in selecting this photograph is to present an aerial shot of the school grounds and buildings. Note the spatial relationship of the buildings to one another as well as the minimal, sporadic spacing of brush and trees. This deliberate mapping of the school grounds is once again indicative of the all-seeing, watchful eye of the institution wherever students went. The dense forest to the north presents something of a problem for those pupils who would sneak off to clandestine areas to "play Indian" in the woods.[43]

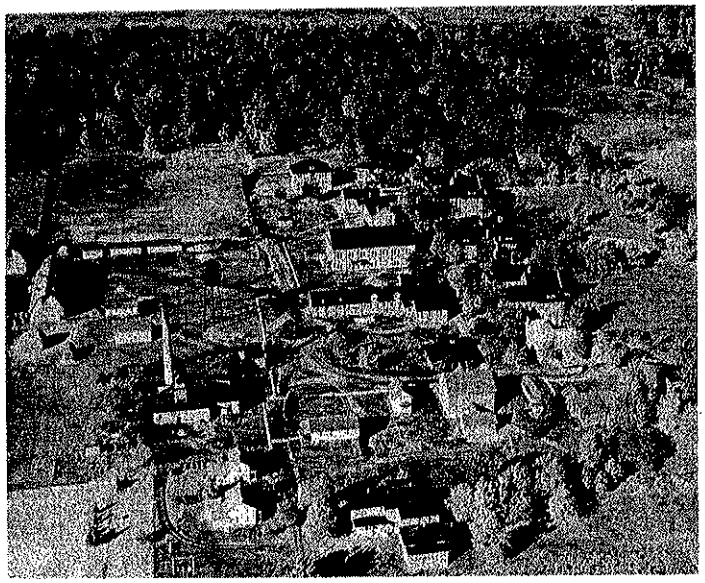


Figure 28. Aerial view of the school grounds

Group 7

The seventh and final group of images in this collection are those that do not fit a specific theme, but provide miscellaneous pieces of information to the overall understanding of the Mount Pleasant boarding school culture. If there was a specific feature that these photographs have in common, it is that they capture random poses of students in the middle of their workday and/or studies. Female students comprise the majority of persons who are featured here, and we can analyze the changes and continuities in dress and hairstyle over the years.

This photograph from the early 1900s captures the familiar attire and hairstyles of a group of female students in front of the dormitory building. As with several others in my collection, this image was used as a postcard to advertise the school. The facial expressions of the girls appear bland, and all but one is attentive to the camera taking their picture. It is unclear why the girls separated into three groups, and this may be for aesthetics reasons or possibly where they happened to be standing. The ethnic features of

each face appear to be native. There were also difficulties for the matrons in handling girls of various ages, as reported in the school's 1928 annual report.[44]

Figure 29. Female students posing on a dirt road (postcard six)

Another postcard is depicted here, and as such this means that the image was deliberately taken from this position with certain intentions in mind. One of these intentions is to display the infrastructure of the school in the background, noting the upkeep and neatness of the school grounds. In the foreground, the lineup of female students corroborates not only the uniformity of dress and hairstyle, but also the degree to which a relaxed atmosphere was present. Many students testify to the horrors of pressure and discipline in their school experiences, yet there seems to be a relative lack of pressure for this group of girls at this moment. Close analysis reveals how distracted some of the girls are by looking in other directions instead of straight at the camera or sitting on the ground picking grass. Again, the facial expressions are for the most part stoic, signaling that despite the more relaxed atmosphere, there were still expectations of formality. It

would be safe to say that the students were relatively unfamiliar with how to act in front of the camera.

Figure 30. Female students posing on the schoolyard (postcard seven)

In this picture, also printed as a postcard, there stands the hospital building along with a number of students (and possibly student assistants to the matrons of the hospital).[45] Again, the uniformity of dress and hairstyle is noted. There appears to be a multi-purposed reason for capturing this particular photograph with the hospital, bridge, and children all in one setting, so as to communicate the care for student health, the order and decency of assimilated Native Americans, and the aesthetic features of the beautiful school with the bridge and trees.[46] What are the psychological implications on the observers of this postcard when they see the orderliness and cleanliness of this institution? Note also the serious facial expressions on each of the visible faces.

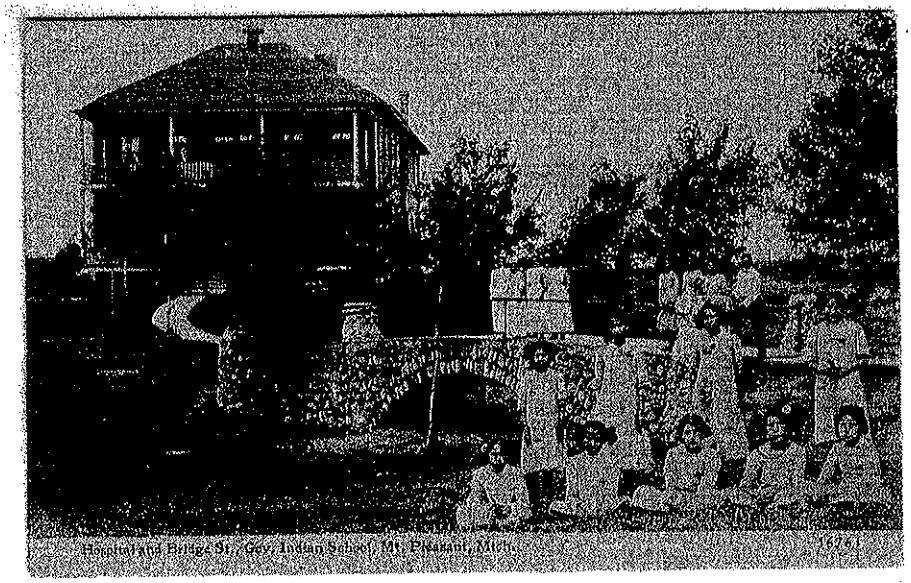


Figure 31. Students posing by a bridge (postcard eight)

Here we have a rare look at one of the Mount Pleasant school employees who is also not an administrator, coach, or teacher. A question that we could raise about this photograph is the reason why an employee would have her picture taken in the first place. The reverse side of this photograph indicates that it is from 1935, also the same time that the boarding school closed. It seems that this individual is working on the bushes, which have grown around the school. The buildings were converted into mental facilities after the school closed, yet there is evidently still a working force tending the grounds. It tells us that the school served not only as a tool for educating and assimilating Native American children, but that it also provided a means of employment for local nonnative citizens. While the school administration was disbanded after 1934 with little regard for the impact on the remaining Native Americans (those who were in the process of assimilation or who were orphans and had no home to return to), the city had more regard for their own citizens and employment. It once again symbolizes the level of importance this community had for its own over Native Americans.[47]

Figure 32. School employee

In this photograph there is a woman who is standing alone in front of the corner of one of the school buildings. It is not clear what her exact age is, but a note on the back identifies her as Angeline Sacalouh. This picture was taken in 1935 at the time of the school's closing. This image was most likely intended to document where the individual had attended school. She could quite possibly be one of the orphans who was either adopted or fostered after it was closed, and her new family wished to document where she had been educated. It is curious to note that this girl is still wearing the same dress patterned after the others that females were required to wear while they attended the school—stronger proof that she was in fact once a student there.

Figure 33. Young girl

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF DATA

There are six themes that I wish to discuss, which pertain to aspects of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School that are better understood by these fragments of material culture. These six areas include: 1) Native American student assimilation, 2) Domestic care and order, 3) Living conditions, 4) Communication, 5) Ethnic composition, and 6) Resistance. It is from these examinations that I draw concluding remarks regarding my assessment of the culture of this particular school.

Native American Student Assimilation

It is clear from the photographs and documentary evidence that the school's administration and the city of Mount Pleasant prided themselves on their repeated successes assimilating the Native American children of Michigan. As Margolis puts it, the boarding school photographs had no greater purpose than to propagandize the intentions and end goals of the boarding school system (Margolis, 2004). Capturing "progress" and "development" of indigenous people groups, the photographs were viewed as natives who shed their "savage" skins and evolved into "civilized" members of society. Over two-thirds of the photographs in my collection show these children on display as test subjects—experimental results of education reform scientists who believed that it was better to transform the mind than to exterminate the human. In Walter G. West's 1905 letter to Estelle Reel, he says:

> In the teaching of this most important subject in the past we have not confined ourselves to any one system or method laid down in text book, but have employed any means available which might bring about the desired result, environment and

characteristics of the individual child being considered. I might say, in general, however, that upon first entering school the child is made to feel as much at home as possible, and for the first few days our chief aim is to get him interested, and to create in him a desire to continue in his attendance. Having once accomplished this, - having overcome the child's natural timidity and indifference and created in him a willingness to speak the language if he but knew it, and a desire to learn, - we feel that the greatest difficulty has been overcome, and a firm foundation is laid for future work.[48]

Not just the mind, but even the outward social aspects of the native human would be transformed, and there is no better way to communicate this to the public than through images. Annual reports on the school's progress submitted by the superintendent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the first two decades of the twentieth century repeatedly state the following:

> The drinking of strong liquors among the pupils has never been known to occur here, and to that reason mainly do I lay the fact that we have no incorrigible pupils and that no corporal punishment has been necessary. A jail has never been maintained at the school and I have never, at any time, felt the need of one.[49]

In the sports and band photographs, there are overt representations of assimilation evident to the public, who fed on these trophies of progress and local accomplishment. Some of these photographs were converted into postcards, expanding the geographical distribution of awareness about the Mount Pleasant school. Edwards & Hart discuss the meanings that are transmitted with images as postcards and how they shape the identity of what is being represented (Edwards & Hart, 2004). There are also several news

articles, which speak fondly of the band and sports teams and their accomplishments "representing" the school.[50]

The school also prided itself on the educational aspects of the children. In the *Isabella County Enterprise*, dated January 14, 1916, there was this report:

> Miss Trammell, who among other teachers in the Indian School, attended the Normal last summer, seems to be securing wonderful results in penmanship with her fourth grade pupils. She recently sent in a specimen of movement drills by Evangeline Pokagon, a full-blooded Pottawatomie, done after only three lessons in penmanship, which far surpasses the average work done by even adult students at such a stage.[51]

This same newspaper reported on July 3, 1908, how:

> Miss Irwin and Miss Kincaid of the government school left the first of the week to attend the National Education Association at Cleveland, O. Six Indian children accompanied them. They will show their attainments to the assembled teachers of the nation and demonstrate to them the peculiar training necessary for the Indian and which cannot be obtained in the rural schools. According to the Detroit News dispatches, the achievements and skill of these children were a surprise to those who witnessed their demonstrations.[52]

It would seem that one of the boarding school purposes, according to the photographs, was to bring praise and attention to the community as much as it was to educate and assimilate the natives. Yet another report, dated February 16, 1900, said:

> Charles H. Dickson, who has been in the city for two weeks past on Indian school matters, left for Washington yesterday morning. He reports everything about the

school in a most satisfactory condition and says he never visited a school that gave evidence of such perfect discipline and order and general thrift.[53]

Another reason that the photographs were spread around for the community to see was that the administration hoped they would have an influence on other natives who were resistant to change and assimilation. A January 1, 1915 article reported how the Native American pupils put on a performance with singing and organ playing for the Native American congregation of the Delwin Indian church during Christmas night festivities.[54] This was significant because the performance showed off the students to the local natives in hopes of convincing them that their children would be better off being educated and trained at the boarding school. The photographs would assist in playing a huge role for these same reasons.

Domestic Care and Order

The images from the Mount Pleasant boarding school reveal the cleanliness and neatness of the infrastructure as well as the students. This factored into the public image of the school as the instrument by which the natives would be cleansed from their barbaric, heathen ways. The 1915 annual report talks about how sanitation and cleanliness were strictly enforced at the school. Several photographs are apparent examples of this neatness and order. There is a lack of clutter, decaying infrastructure, and dirty children wearing tattered rags as poor excuses for clothing.

One of the limitations of having so few photographs of the Mount Pleasant school in particular is the fact that we do not have visual evidence about those who became ill. Several reports mention outbreaks of different diseases in one form or another, yet the school was adamant about quarantine protocols. In the *Central Michigan Times* article

from August 27, 1909, there was a report about several cases of scarlet fever having been discovered at the school. Those who were taken ill were confined to the school hospital to halt its spread. In addition, no new pupils were admitted until the disease was thoroughly stamped out.[55] The *Mount Pleasant Times* reported the following year about a quarantine that was put in place and the suspension of visits to the school due to a smallpox epidemic.[56]

Living Conditions

One of the ways in which the school's administration pressured the Michigan Native American communities into sending their children to the school was by appealing to their desire for survival. In the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, native families were, for the most part, extremely poor and struggling to survive. The school administration persuaded several of these families to send their children to the school, because at least there they were assured to receive decent housing, clothing to wear, and food each day. A majority of images in this collection that reveal up close personal features and show students in seemingly good health, not emaciated, thin, or fatigued. They are optic symbols of the significantly better and improved chances for survival and success contrasted with those living on impoverished reservations or who are with economically struggling families. The 1915 annual report states that children are physically well; they are nourished, rested, and fit. There is also a local dentist who examines their teeth and is treating those with dental problems.[57]

Care for infrastructure was a key factor in the upkeep of the school as well as adequate housing for students. Despite letters and reports dealing with the years of overcrowding due to an overwhelming number of applicants and enrollees, various

superintendents maintained consistency with funding the integral upkeep of the buildings. A March 11, 1898 article in the *Isabella County Enterprise* said:

> The pupils of the government school are now occupying their new school building to their great comfort and delight. The change from the old quarters was made Monday. With plenty of room, air and light, the pupils will do much better work and more of it.[58]

When Edwin L. Chalcraft, the Supervisor of Indian Schools in the first years of the twentieth century, paid a visit to the Mount Pleasant boarding school, he remarked to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on May 27, 1901, that the students were doing well and learning a lot, as well as being kept clean, healthy, and fed.[59] These comments echo those made by Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, only a few months earlier on February 19, 1901, when she remarked that conditions at Mount Pleasant were excellent and students were sharp, quick, well clothed, and well fed.[60]

Sometimes there were accusations brought against the school for the neglect or mistreatment of students. In one letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated February 1, 1905, Superintendent Robert Cochran sent a reply to a letter written by George James to the Secretary of the Interior complaining about the conditions suffered to his daughter, Martha James. The accusations were that Martha became sick and when George came to pick her up he found her not properly fed, "lousy" in hair and body, she wore the same pair of shoes, nothing but cotton stockings on her, unclean clothes and too light for winter, walked half a mile to church with no covering on her hands, and was sent to the field to husk corn instead of to school. In his reply, Cochran explained that Martha was in the hospital, and so they only fed her what the doctor had recommended. He also

said that her clothes were fine, she was not "lousy," that she did have only one pair of shoes but that they were new, that attending church was her choice, and that she went one day to the field to husk corn as part of a competitive "husking bee" all the children had attended for fun. He suggested that George sent the complaint because he wanted to keep Martha out of school. Cochran advised that Martha be dropped entirely due to her ill health and her father's wishes.[61]

Communication

A facet of school culture that was ubiquitous at every institution was the great struggle with Native American children who were communicating in their native languages and who were surrounded by native influences. This was one of the motives behind Pratt's campaign for off-reservation boarding schools, to get the children away from these kinds of influences that would impede the process of assimilation. In his portion of the Reports of the Superintendents of Schools to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on September 20, 1894, Superintendent Andrew Spencer noted that, "The parent, uneducated and suspicious, believes that the child is improperly treated at any school, and especially is this true where the child has an opportunity to bring every fancied slight or injury to the parent every day." He goes on to say that, "All their lives they are told 'don't.' They need to be taught 'what to do,' not 'what not to do'."[62]

Even though the students were being instructed to speak, read, and write in English in the classroom setting, once they were on their own they would revert to conversing in their native tongues. The students were reverting to their subconscious use of the familiar means of communication in which they had been nurtured. One of the solutions to this problem was increased punishment. However, another solution soon

came to light. The administration decided to construct playgrounds and advocate for recreational activity close to the school buildings, while at the same time allowing for autonomous interactions between pupils. This way, they could monitor the students' language, but let them familiarize themselves with English. In turn, this would stimulate the subconscious use of English among the pupils. The following year, on September 24, 1895, Andrew Spencer reported that the school was doing very well in teaching the children English. He noted that even in their playing they are using English more and more.[63] A few photographs in this collection confirm this interaction among students, and it synchronizes with reports about the school's intent on perfecting their subconscious use of English. Teachers also encouraged this use of English in recreational activities and fieldtrips, closely monitored by chaperones, yet still allowing students free reign to enjoy themselves and have fun, all the while not knowing they were communicating without the use of their native, nurtured language.[64]

Reinforcements in using English included not only recreational activities, but also vocational training and the outing program. When students were tasked out as hired hands in the field or in the community, they had to communicate in English.[65] In these photographs, students are interacting with each other in an open space—an atmosphere with an inclination to converse in native tongues—yet the close supervision of instructors prevents that from happening, and students become acquainted with speaking in English when they talk with each other.

Ethnic Composition

Composition of the student body in terms of ethnicity is yet another, albeit more difficult, feature of the Mount Pleasant boarding school that can be deduced from these

photographs. As previously stated, there were problems with poor white families sending their children to the boarding school intended for Native Americans.[66] Yet there is the issue with the school trying to integrate their Native American "successes" into the culture of mainstream white America. As mentioned in the school's 1916 annual report, "The greatest trouble with the pupils going out to make their livings, is that the white people place them on the same level which the negro holds in the south, they want them as servants and not as associates."[67] It is no wonder the school placed an emphasis on the outing program and prided itself on educating their children and boasting of them as being equipped with the same tools as the white man to survive in the world. They attempted to portray their pupils in these photographs as if they were practically white students without any trace of a minority in them.

Said the school's annual report of 1929: "If the employers would consider the Indian in the same light as other races both employer and employee would be benefitted." No doubt the photographs that show students assembled for graduation or engaged in vocational work are intended to convey the argument that these "former" natives are ready to fully integrate and be accepted as capable members of society on an equal footing with all others. Said the same annual report:

> The public schools of Mt. Pleasant have pupils of Indian blood attending and apparently no attention is given to the fact, at least no word has ever reached this school. At socials given our pupils we have had at different times had a number of guests from town and no attention was paid to race or color. Unfortunately the Indian, like the white and other races, have individuals who are not successful

which prevent a free mingling such as we desire. This community is not different in that way from others.

It continues:

> The intermingling of the races in this community has been more or less satisfactory. Our pupils have their friends in the city of Mt. Pleasant and there is a noticeable difference in the last few years in the feeling of our Indian pupils.[68]

It is interesting to note that this was probably an evolution over time away from identifying students as native and keeping alive the distinguishing features of their race. For instance, the Musical-Literary Programme from the September 30, 1904 school performance lists each student in his or her role in the program in addition to identifying each of their respective ethnic groups such as Chippewa, Shawnee, Cherokee, Pawnee, Pima, etc.[69] Over the next two decades, we see the slow eradication of the native labels and an effort to impress the students upon society as, for all intents and purposes, white citizens.

Resistance

No discussion of photographs could take place without also acknowledging what they do not reveal. In this case, there are a few important characteristics about what took place that we have no visual documentation of, but where textual documentation does exist. In an effort to portray the school as productive and successful, there is no question that the camera is selective in what it captures. Just as Edwards stated earlier, there are limitations to visual anthropology and there are subjective prejudices, which play a role in the production of imagery (Edwards, 2001). This tends to overshadow those traits of the school that would be considered unbecoming and deviant to the school's purpose.

Perhaps more than anything else, the theme of resistance is something that evades practically every boarding school image. Several reports and newspaper articles discuss the issues the school had with runaways, pilferage, and arson.[70] There are also those cases of abuse that the texts reference, but are left completely absent by the photographs.[71]

Other happenings at Mount Pleasant that would be considered amoral with respect to positive or negative effects on its reputation also seem to be missing from the photographs. For instance, we see a number of pictures of outdoor recreational activities, sports, and ceremonies, but we do not have pictures of school socials and indoor events where students put on performances for the community.[72] Also absent are images of parents who came to visit their children, although we know from the textual documents that these did occur. For example, the *Isabella County Enterprise* reports in a March 19, 1915 issue that:

> Fred Ermatinger, a pupil at the government school, was taken to Ann Arbor Tuesday, by Dr. Smith, government physician, for examination and treatment for spinal injuries received several weeks ago in athletic practice. He is reported to be in serious condition. His father came from the Soo and accompanied him to the hospital.[73]

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School was one of twenty-five official government boarding schools in the United States that sought to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream Western society. The effects of its impact can be measured in a variety of ways—from suppressing native languages to strengthening the pan-Indian bond that rose to prominence in the mid-twentieth century. The general structure and intentions behind the school are straightforward, since they were largely consistent with other boarding schools across the nation. What are primarily missing are the detailed day-to-day aspects of its culture—the characteristics of the school itself.

This thesis has attempted to analyze six themes of the Mount Pleasant boarding school culture—student assimilation, domestic care and order, living conditions, communication, ethnic composition, and resistance—utilizing primarily photographs taken during its operation, supplemented with documentary sources from the school. By analyzing photographs as raw histories and artifacts of their respective era, they have the potential to reveal aspects of culture and narratives to better understand this specific place in time.

Photographs show how images of Native Americans were purposely taken to propagandize the success of the school's assimilation efforts and bring a sense of pride to the community. They present a community of cleanliness and order; one that took care to nourish, clothe, and treat sickness. They illustrate the conditions in which students lived and visualize the surroundings they interacted with each day. Photographs also show the covert tactics of school officials to erase native languages, depicting students interacting

in conditioned environments where they spoke English. They raise questions of ethnicity and whether or not the student body was made up of only Native Americans or if there happened to be lower class white students who attended there as well.

Aside from these reasons, these particular photographs reveal characteristics of the Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School that we would not have otherwise known. The spatial relationship of students and the layout of the school grounds are two important aspects, which only the photographs can depict. Several buildings, mostly the ones constructed from wood, are no more. Approximately a dozen brick buildings are all that remain standing on what was once the school property. These photographs clearly illustrate the layout of the school as well as the movements of students in their daily work and play. They visualize the special programs and performances for the community and the area in which students played with one another to reinforce their changing habits and activities (speaking in English and playing baseball, for example).

This set of photographs allows us to look at the interactions between students and instructors. We can better understand the role that instructors played over these Michigan Native American students by observing their proximity to the pupils in these images. Were they micromanaging students, helping them along in their educational studies and vocational training, or were they standing back, allowing the camera to capture their "success" story for itself?

We can also make use of these photographs by comparing the caliber of housing, attire, and upkeep to those of other schools. Even though the boarding schools were largely consistent in their curriculums and goals, they nevertheless had distinctive features that individuated the struggles and issues each of them faced. Some schools were

rich in educators and school supplies, but poor in housing and other domestic cares. Other schools were abundant in food and natural resources, but lacked a sufficient number of teachers and matrons. These photographs open the door for future study to compare the Mount Pleasant boarding school with other boarding schools.

One point that must be made is the fact that the entirety of these photographs is considered foreign to Native Americans. The very idea of these pupils—who came from a culture where learning was achieved through activity—sitting in classrooms, marching in lines, holding instruments, playing basketball and football, or posing for the camera as part of a graduation class, this was foreign to them. More than anything else, these photographs show us just how radically different the whole concept of assimilation was to traditional native practices. They are testaments to both good and bad intentions behind erasing native heritage and integrating them as part of society.

And yet, there remains the question of what the photographs do not show. Forms of resistance, abuses and student responses to the school are extremely difficult to apply toward photographs, especially ones which were produced for advancing the school's assimilation narrative. We have discussed the selectivity of images—photographers capture images they wish to record and interpret them as they perceive reality, not as reality itself. The historical context of these boarding school photographs opens more doors for additional discovery and cultural understanding of its system. Themes of gender and racial biases, especially how the educational experiences of blacks differed from those of Native Americans, are some of the cultural aspects that are open for further analysis. One of the challenges lies in measuring how much photographs can expand our understanding of these themes. A comparison of the Mount Pleasant boarding school

photographs with those of other government and nongovernment schools is another theme that is worth studying. This project isolates photographic analysis to a single school, but there is certainly a case to be made for comparing and contrasting the photographs of multiple schools to better understand their cultures.

ENDNOTES

[1] A note on the photographs: None of the photographs in my collection are copyrighted. The vast majority of photographs taken at these government boarding schools have no authorship attached to them. They are a compilation from donors or were found among the school's archives, and thus there is no way to determine authorship of them. There are precedents for this with other authors who have published works on the boarding schools and have used photographs absent an author and copyright. See Trennert, Robert A. (1988). *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press and Vuckovic, Myriam. (2008). *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students Between Two Worlds, 1884-1928*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, for examples.

[2] *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 30, 1915.

[3] *Mount Pleasant Times*, June 12, 1911.

[4] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1911.

[5] *Mount Pleasant Times*, June 12, 1911.

[6] Report from J. Franklin House, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 15, 1902.

[7] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1911; Letter from E. C. Nardin to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, April 20, 1901.

[8] *Mount Pleasant Times*, June 12, 1911; Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1911.

[9] *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 4, 1895.

[10] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 24, 1895; *Mount Pleasant Times*, April 5, 1912; *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 18, 1913.

[11] Letter from Rodney S. Graham to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, January 16, 1900.

[12] *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 4, 1895; Letter from Rodney S. Graham to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, January 16, 1900.

[13] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 24, 1895.

[14] *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 6, 1894; *Isabella County Enterprise*, December 23, 1904; Letter from Robert Cochran to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, January 6, 1905; *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 15, 1910.

[15] *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 15, 1910.

[16] Letter from Rodney S. Graham to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, January 16, 1900; *Mount Pleasant Times*, June 12, 1911.

[17] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1914.

[18] Letter from Walter G. West to Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, February 15, 1905.

[19] Letter from Walter G. West to Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, February 15, 1905.

[20] *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 18, 1906.

[21] *Isabella County Enterprise*, September 26, 1902; *Mount Pleasant C. I. of R.*, May 27, 1910; *Isabella County Enterprise*, June 2, 1916; Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1932.

[22] *Isabella County Enterprise*, September 26, 1902; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 18, 1906; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 8, 1908; *Mount Pleasant C. I. of R.*, May 27, 1910; *Isabella County Enterprise*, June 2, 1916; Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1932.

[23] *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 5, 1912.

[24] *Clare Sentinel*, June 23, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, August 18, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, May 15, 1903; Miller, R. H. & Chas V. Seely. (1906). Faces and Places Familiar. *Courier Press*; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 14, 1915.

[25] *Clare Sentinel*, June 23, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, August 18, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, May 15, 1903; Miller, R. H. & Chas V. Seely. (1906). Faces and Places Familiar. *Courier Press*; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 14, 1915.

[26] *Clare Sentinel*, June 23, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, August 18, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, May 15, 1903; Miller, R. H. & Chas V. Seely. (1906). Faces and Places Familiar. *Courier Press*; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 14, 1915.
[27] *Clare Sentinel*, June 23, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, August 18, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, May 15, 1903; Miller, R. H. & Chas V. Seely. (1906). Faces and Places Familiar. *Courier Press*; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 14, 1915.
[28] *Clare Sentinel*, June 23, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, August 18, 1899; *Northwestern Tribune*, May 15, 1903; Miller, R. H. & Chas V. Seely. (1906). Faces and Places Familiar. *Courier Press*; *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 14, 1915.
[29] *Isabella County Enterprise*, June 15, 1894; *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 1, 1904; *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 18, 1907; *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 27, 1926.
[30] Report from J. Franklin House, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 15, 1902.
[31] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 24, 1895; *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 29, 1897; *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 1, 1904; *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 18, 1907; *Isabella County Enterprise*, November 19, 1915; *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 27, 1926.
[32] *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 1, 1904; *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 18, 1907; *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 14, 1924; *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 27, 1926.
[33] *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 29, 1897; *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 1, 1904; *Isabella County Enterprise*, October 18, 1907; *Isabella County Enterprise*, November 19, 1915; *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 27, 1926.
[34] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1928.
[35] *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 6, 1894; *Isabella County Enterprise*, June 23, 1899; Report from J. Franklin House, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 15, 1902; *Isabella County Enterprise*, November 13, 1925.
[36] Letter from Robert Cochran to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, July 14, 1905.
[37] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1911.
[38] Letter from A. O. Wright to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, March 19, 1900; Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1928.
[39] *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 11, 1904; *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 25, 1904; Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1911.
[40] Letter from Rodney S. Graham to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, January 16, 1900.
[41] *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 18, 1913.
[42] *Mount Pleasant Times*, April 5, 1912.
[43] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 24, 1895; *Isabella County Enterprise*, September 29, 1916.
[44] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1928.
[45] *Isabella County Enterprise*, December 23, 1904; *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 15, 1910.
[46] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1911.
[47] *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 28, 1895.
[48] Letter from Walter G. West to Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, February 15, 1905.
[49] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1916.
[50] *Isabella County Enterprise*, May 15, 1896; *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 30, 1899; *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 12, 1901; *Isabella County Enterprise*, September 18, 1925.
[51] *Isabella County Enterprise*, January 14, 1916.
[52] *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 3, 1908.
[53] *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 16, 1900.
[54] *Isabella County Enterprise*, January 1, 1915.
[55] *Central Michigan Times*, August 27, 1909.
[56] *Mount Pleasant Times*, December 9, 1910.
[57] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1915.
[58] *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 11, 1898.

[59] Letter from Edwin L. Chalcraft, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 27, 1901.
[60] Letter from Estelle Reel, Superintendent of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, February 19, 1901.
[61] Letter from Robert Cochran to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, February 1, 1905.
[62] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 30, 1894.
[63] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 24, 1895.
[64] *Isabella County Enterprise*, August 30, 1895; Letter from E. C. Nardin to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, August 30, 1901.
[65] Report of the Superintendents of Schools from Andrew Spencer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, September 24, 1895.
[66] Report from J. Franklin House, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 15, 1902.
[67] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1916.
[68] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Annual Report of 1929.
[69] Mount Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School Musical-Literary Programme, September 30, 1904.
[70] *Isabella County Enterprise*, July 7, 1899; *Isabella County Enterprise*, August 4, 1899; *Isabella County Enterprise*, December 28, 1900; Letter from Edwin L. Chalcraft, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 29, 1901; *Isabella County Enterprise*, January 3, 1902; *Northwestern Tribune*, April 25, 1902; *Northwestern Tribune*, May 29, 1903; *Isabella County Enterprise*, April 22, 1904; *Clare County Enterprise*, December 13, 1907; *Central Michigan Times*, July 24, 1908; *Isabella County Enterprise*, December 4, 1908; *Isabella County Enterprise*, September 26, 1913; *Isabella County Enterprise*, December 26, 1913; *Isabella County Enterprise*, January 16, 1914; *Isabella County Enterprise*, November 16, 1917; *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 15, 1918; *Mount Pleasant Daily Times*, August 9, 1925.
[71] Letter from Edwin L. Chalcraft, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 27, 1901; Letter from Edwin L. Chalcraft, Supervisor of Indian Schools, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, May 29, 1901.
[72] *Northwestern Tribune*, December 27, 1907; *Isabella County Enterprise*, February 22, 1923; *Isabella County Enterprise*, January 25, 1924.
[73] *Isabella County Enterprise*, March 19, 1915.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archuleta, Margaret L., Brenda J. Child, & K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Eds.) (2000). *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879-2000.* Phoenix: Heard Museum.

Bassnett, Sarah. (2008). From Public Relations to Art: Exhibiting Frances Benjamin Johnston's Hampton Institute Photographs. *History of Photography, 32* (2), 152-168.

Benz, Charmaine M. & R. Todd Williamson (Eds.) (2005). *Diba Jimooyung, Telling Our Story: A History of the Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek.* Mount Pleasant, MI: Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.

Burich, Keith R. (2007). "No Place to Go": The Thomas Indian School and the "Forgotten" Indian Children of New York. *Wicazo Sa Review, 22* (2), 93-110.

Champney, Stella M. (1934). Uncle Sam Closing the Door on 45 Indian Children. *The Detroit News.*

Child, Brenda J. (1998). *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Coleman, Michael C. (1990). Motivations of Indian Children at Missionary and U.S. Government Schools. *Montana: The Magazine of Western History, 40* (1), 30-45.

Collier, Jr., John & Malcolm Collier. (1986). *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Collins, Cary C. (1998). Through the Lens of Assimilation: Edwin L. Chalcraft and the Chemawa Indian School. *Oregon Historical Quarterly, 98* (4), 390-425.

Collins, Cary C. (2001). A Future with a Past: Hazel Pete, Cultural Identity, and the Federal Indian Education System. *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly, 92* (1), 15-28.

Comaroff, John L., Jean Comaroff, & Deborah James (Eds.) (2007). *Picturing a Colonial Past: African Photographs of Isaac Shapera.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dejong, David H. (2007). Unless They Are Kept Alive: Federal Indian Schools and Student Health, 1878-1918. *American Indian Quarterly 31* (2), 256-282.

Dobson, Pamela J. (Ed.) (1978). *The Tree That Never Dies: Oral History of Michigan Indians.* Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids Public Library.

Edwards, Elizabeth. (2001). *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology, and Museums.* Oxford: Berg.

Edwards, Elizabeth. (2002). To Educate the Indian. *Traverse*, 40-45.

Edwards, Elizabeth & Janice Hart (Eds.) (2004). *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images.* New York: Routledge.

El Guindi, Fadwa. (2004). *Visual Anthropology: Essential Method and Theory.* Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Enoch, Jessica. (2002). Resisting the Script of Indian Education: Zitkala Sa and the Carlisle Indian School. *College English, 65* (2), 117-141.

Fortunate Eagle, Adam. (2010). *Pipestone: My Life in an Indian Boarding School.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Grinde, Jr., Donald A. (2004). Taking the Indian out of the Indian: U.S. Policies of Ethnocide Through Education. *Wicazo Sa Review, 19* (2), 25-32.

Horne, Esther Burnett & Sally McBeth. (1998). *Essie's Story: The Life and Legacy of a Shoshone Teacher.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Kratz, Corrine Ann. (2002). *The Ones That Are Wanted: Communication and the Politics of Representation in a Photographic Exhibition.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Landau, Paul Stuart & Deborah Kaspin. (2002). *Images and Empires: Visuality in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Littlefield, Alice. (1989). The B.I.A. Boarding School: Theories of Resistance and Social Reproduction. *Humanity & Society, 13* (4), 428-439.

Lomawaima, K. Tsianina. (1993). Domesticity in the Federal Indian Schools: The Power of Authority over Mind and Body. *American Ethnologist, 20* (2), 227-240.

Lomawaima, K. Tsianina. (1994). *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

MacDougall, David. (2006). *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Margolis, Eric. (2004). Looking at Discipline, Looking at Labour: Photographic Representations of Indian Boarding Schools. *Visual Studies, 19* (1), 72-96.

McBeth, Sally J. (1983). Indian Boarding Schools and Ethnic Identity: An Example from the Southern Plains Tribes of Oklahoma. *Plains Anthropologist, 28* (100), 119-128.

Pratt, Richard Henry. (1964). *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Reyes, Lawney L. (2002). *White Grizzly Bear's Legacy: Learning to Be Indian*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Sekaquaptewa, Helen. (1969). *Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa as told to Louise Udall*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Smith, Andrea. (2004). Boarding School Abuses, Human Rights, and Reparations. *Social Justice, 31* (4), 89-102.

Standing Bear, Luther. (1931). *My Indian Boyhood*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Stout, Mary A. (2012). *Native American Boarding Schools*. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood.

Trafzer, Clifford E., Jean A. Keller, & Lorene Sisquoc (Eds.) (2006). *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Trennert, Robert A. (1982). Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools: 1878-1920. *The Western Historical Quarterly, 13* (3), 271-290.

Vuckovic, Myriam. (2008). *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students Between Two Worlds, 1884-1928*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.

Mount Pleasant School for Indians. (1913). Library of Michigan.

American Indian Boarding Schools: An Exploration of Global Ethnic and Cultural Cleansing. (2011). Mount Pleasant, MI: Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways.