THANK YOU, WORLD WAR I:

THE REVIVAL OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES

by

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DEDICATION

To all those who have served and sacrificed past, present, and future. May your stories never be forgotten.

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ABSTRACT

By 1917, Native Americans were considered a Vanishing Race, their cultures and traditions had been under attack through various federal assimilation policies and laws for a minimum of two generations. Yet those cultures and traditions, through Native resistance, survived in order to be employed, making significant contributions within World War I and starting a cultural revival. This research aims to rewrite and reright Native American involvement within World War I, utilizing firsthand accounts, such as the Joseph K Dixon Wanamaker Collection Archives to bring forth the Indigenous voices of those within the Great War both on the Homefront and frontlines. *Thank You, World War I*, starts with the Federal Indian assimilation policies and restrictions of the late 1800s through early 1900s, followed by how Native Americans resisted them, holding on to their cultures long enough to be utilized throughout the war. Because of these efforts, both the resistance to assimilation and contributions within the Great War, we are able to celebrate the continued survivance of Native Americans. Native Americans continue to exist, they did not vanish and their cultures and traditions are still strong today, thanks to World War I.

INTRODUCTION

Standpoint

Haŋ mítakúyapí. Čante waštéya napé čiyuzapí. Dakhóta ia Wítkotkotká Wíŋ de míye. Kaja, eḿakiyapí. Waȟčínča wakpá hed ómawapí. Hunkpapa, Oglala, na Sissítuŋwaŋ oyaté heḿataŋhay. É haŋnaKaŋna Šunka Išnana hetaŋhuŋ wahí. Wíŋuna heḿača. Míhihna Jeff ečíyaṕi. Waŋna waníyetú aké šagdógaŋ kčí wauŋ. Čuŋkší num na čínkši wuŋȟina wičabduhé. Wiḿakoška hehaŋ akíči hed ówápe. Dehán hínaȟ opa waúŋ. Píd amayapí.

I start this research with a simple introduction in my Native tongue, because in the end, it is about the survival of not only my people, the Dakota and Lakota, but about the survival of all Native tribes, their cultures, traditions, and languages. Starting this research in Dakota helps to solidify the end goal, to acknowledge that we are still here and that our history is important. Our achievements and contributions of the past have brought us to this point, of being able to continue to preserve and practice what is left of our cultures and traditions and, though few in number, continue to learn our Native languages, customs, and traditions from those elders that still know it. It is also important for another to know who you are, not only by your name, but where you come from and who your family is.

To translate, “Hello my relatives. I shake your hands with a good heart. My Dakota name is Wítkotkotka Wíŋ, loosely translated to Crazy Woman. I am most known as Kaja. I belong to the Fort Peck Sioux Tribe and am Lakota and Dakota, from the Hunkpapa, Oglala, and Sisseton bands. My family is part of the Lone Dog Clan. I am the oldest daughter of the oldest daughter and oldest son. I have been married to my husband, Jeff, for 19 years now. We have two daughters and one son. I am a member of the military and continue to serve my country. Thank you to all.”

Background

My family has been in the military in every generation that we can remember. We carry a strong sense of warrior pride. I, myself, have a very keen sense of pride in the military, though I also know of the horrors that that said military has committed against my People and others of Native Heritage throughout history. It is important to know who we come from and where we come from so that we can understand the past, which in turn will help us to better understand the present.

I was raised to respect my elders, to respect our veterans. It has been impressed upon me to never stop learning and listening, to never stop training, and to never stop trying. First, by those elders that I learned to respect so much and then by other soldiers that have put effort into training me; because no one will ever know everything, and arrogance can kill. Our own experiences help us to learn and can be used to teach others, just as listening to your elders' experiences can teach you.

My overall life experiences have led me to my interest in Native American culture, the preservation of it, and eventually, to looking at Native American warriors. Since I can remember, I have been fascinated with how we were able to survive so much. I grew up knowing about the horrors of Indian Boarding Schools, heard stories about the Battle of Greasy Grass and the Wounded Knee Massacre. Mixing that knowledge in with the experiences that I have had within the military has brought me to my current project and research interest, Native Americans in World War I. I found it intriguing and rather sad that we had a World War that so many overlook. It seemed as though in school we studied the American Civil War, mentioned World War I and then immediately jumped to World War II. Yet, World War I had just as much of an impact as World War II, maybe even more so, since without World War I, would we even have had World

War II? And not only do we overlook World War I, but Native involvement within it which included the start of the Code Talkers of World War II and many other contributions worth noting are all but ignored. Yet, these have supported the overall preservation of Native languages, cultures and traditions learned from their ancestors and passed down to their children.[1]

Research Significance/Statement

By 1890, after the Wounded Knee Massacre, American Indians were considered a defeated and vanishing race. Many had been placed on small reservations that were beginning to be checkerboarded with the passage of the 1887 Allotment Act, and unable to openly practice their traditions or cultural ways of life. Boarding schools were founded to ensure that Native children were forcibly assimilated into Euro-American culture. Native ways of life were under attack and the United States government had hopes of ridding the country of the American Indian within the next few decades through imposed assimilation policies.

On 28 July 1914, World War I started and within a few short years the United States would enter the Great War.[2] By 06 April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany and the government prepared to send our men to war in Europe, beginning the process of financing the war and gaining support on the Homefront. At this time, an estimated fifty percent of Native Americans were not citizens of the United States, yet many men wanted the opportunity to serve

[1] Throughout history, Native culture, traditions, and languages have been restricted in the name of progress. Native elders have struggled and fought to preserve their cultures to pass down to the next generation. To understand more see 1. Stephanie N. Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja, *Native Studies Keywords* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 233.

[2] See any of the World War I reference books: *The Unknowns* by Patrick K O'Donnell, *The Road Less Traveled* by Philip Zelikow, and/or *The First World War* by John Keegan, along with many, many others about WWI. All have the date that World War I started, while many have at least a short description of why it happened and eventually the date in which the United States joined the Great War and when it ended.

and protect that very nation, their tribal nations, their families, and their lands.[3] Many volunteered to join the military and the war. This was the start of a revival of culture for Native American tribes both on the Homefront and the front lines.

Throughout World War I, Native American soldiers, marines, and sailors utilized their culture, their language, and their traditional ways of life to help ensure the defeat of the Central Powers. Accounts are recorded of Native men counting coup or utilizing their scouting abilities to enhance the success of their squads. Their languages made a code that was never broken and documented to have turned the tide of the war within hours. Native Americans and their cultures survived despite everything the United States threw at them. It brings up the question: what might have happened to The Allies if the United States government was successful in destroying the American Indian way of life and fully assimilating them into Euro-American culture? While the United States provided the much-needed numbers for the Allies towards the end of the Great War, Native American contributions were still significant to the war efforts.

Native Americans are still here to this day. They did not vanish or become extinct; they survived and continue to thrive. How they survived, how they were able to keep their cultures and traditions alive so that they could be employed within World War I, and to this day, is an amazing feat. Because of this, federal Indian policies of assimilation and restrictions placed upon the Native people of the United States from the late 1800s to early 1900s will be included within this research to provide much needed background on what it took for Native cultures to survive prior to their contributions within World War I. This background will also include the effects of

[3] Both Russel Barsh in his article of "American Indians in the Great War" and Thomas A. Britten in his book *American Indians in World War I* record not only the statistics of how many Native Americans were citizens due to the General Allotment Act and/or military service prior to the start of World War I, but also discuss in detail the reasons why American Indians wished to join the military during the Great War.

Indian boarding schools that stole Native children from their homes and families, as well as how American Indians resisted assimilation all prior to the Great War. This research will advance into an examination of how Natives utilized their cultures and traditions which ended up making significant contributions within the war itself, from the Homefront to the frontlines, and eventually led to a cultural revival that lives on to this day.

Literature Review

While Indigenous people are considered one of the most researched topics within the world today, there are still gaps within our knowledge.[4] Research on Native Americans in World War I and specifically their cultural addition to their military service is severely lacking, especially within a more Indigenous context, knowledge, and viewpoint. Although my research of Natives American contributions in World War I will not fill in all the gaps, it will provide more knowledge of how World War I helped Native culture to survive to this day. Looking through a variety of resources and research already completed on topics such as: Federal Indian Policies and Restrictions, Assimilation and Indian Boarding schools, Native American involvement in World War I, and World War I overall, will give a better understanding of the topic on hand—Native American contributions in World War I—and provide a brief overview of the limited data available on the subject.

[4] Shawn Wilson discusses in his book *Research is Ceremony,* how Indigenous communities have been studied throughout the ages. These communities are used to being studied, though not necessarily part of the studies, themselves. Meaning that much research has been conducted on our behalf, but not necessarily the research that we would like to be conducted. Many Indigenous communities have had very little input on what they believed should be researched up until recently. So, while we have been heavily researched, we are just now starting to push back and research what we believe to be important to our own Indigenous communities. You can read more in depth of what Wilson discusses starting on p. 15 of his Introduction see: Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Pub, 2019), 15.

Federal Indian Policies and Restrictions

"Indigenous Peoples have undergone five hundred years of colonization by settler society, which has included attempted physical and cultural genocide, technological revolution, and the imposition of non-Indigenous legislation and institutions," according to Gregory Younging (Opaskwayak Cree).[5] Federal policies and numerous restrictions have been passed or put into place, to not only assimilate Native American peoples, but to extinguish their cultures, traditions, and language. P. L Furnish's dissertation, *"Aboriginally Yours": The Society of American Indians and U.S. Citizenship, 1890-1924* details the end of an era, starting with the Massacre of Wounded Knee and discusses the political growth of the Native people and the 'civilizing of the American Indian' between 1890 up through to 1924 when Native Americans received the right to vote focusing on the influence of the Society of American Indians.[6] Furnish discusses not only the assimilation policies placed upon Americans Indians during this time period, but many of the court cases such as the Marshall Trilogy and *Ex Parte Crow Dog* in conjunction with the Major Crimes Act in regards to how they affected Native citizenship. She also briefly touches on World War I Native involvement, but only in regards to how it helped with citizenship efforts in the United States. Though Furnish's dissertation is the only reference that covers Federal Indian policies and World War I with respect to the American Indian, research also needs to include the Federal Crimes Act of 1825, The General Allotment Act of

[5] Gregory Younging's book *Elements of Indigenous Style* is an instruction style book on how Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples can respectfully write and research about Indigenous issues. He opens with how Indigenous people have suffered and struggled through issues brought upon by colonization. See Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples* (Edmonton, Alberta: Brush Education, 2018), 17.

[6] Furnish, Patricia Lee. 1970. "Aboriginally Yours": The Society of American Indians and United States citizenship, 1890-1924." Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, January 1.

1887, and the Courts of Indian Offenses of 1883, in order to fully comprehend the impact of all the restrictions placed upon Native Americans and their cultures prior to World War I.

Assimilation and Indian Boarding Schools

Now, much research has been completed on the assimilation of the American Indian and the part that Indian Boarding schools have played. While there are phases and distinct types of Indian Boarding schools, David Wallace Adams gives an incredibly detailed overview of these boarding schools and the level of assimilation that Native children endured within their walls. *Education for Extinction* by Adams is a thoroughly researched composition of Indian Boarding schools during the timeframe of 1875-1928. He covers everything from the history of boarding schools, experiences of the children, reform, and resistance of the children, and ends with their homecoming.[7] It is a comprehensive look at the Indian Boarding School era and in the latest edition includes a short insert about Native children's involvement with World War I. The title of his book, alone, is very fitting and describes the overall goal of Indian Boarding schools, the extinction of the American Indian. M.C. Szasz also wrote an article on boarding schools entitled, "'I knew how to be moderate and I knew how to obey': The Commonality of American Indian Boarding School Experiences." Szasz's article gives three more Indian Boarding School points of views. She compared hree different children, from three different boarding schools, and three different time periods to show the experiences that each of them had and the evolution of the Indian Boarding Schools within the United States.[8]

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[7] David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (University Press of Kansas, 2020).

[8] Margaret Connell Szasz, "'I Knew How to Be Moderate. and I Knew How to Obey': The Commonality of American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1750s–1920s," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 29, no. 4 (2005): 75–94, https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.29.4.b2220582h05507u2.

Luther Standing Bear's (Lakota), *My People, the Sioux* is an autobiography that is an account of the life of one of the last Sioux Chiefs of the late 19th century and early 20th century. Standing Bear mentions the first Indian boarding school, Carlisle Indian Industrial School and is recognized as the very first student at the school itself. He was born in 1868 and has documented his people's move to the reservations, the effects of the treaties and loss of hunting grounds, and their inability to be able to openly practice their culture and speak their language.[9] This autobiography gives a firsthand glimpse into how a Lakota band dealt with the oppression of assimilation and how they were able to survive through the eyes of one of their own people.

Along with Standing Bear's account of Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the school itself has kept a large archive of documents and material from the period of time that they were fully operational. Among these archives are letters from alumni of the school that document firsthand experiences and names of other students that were still at the school. There are letters from students that enlisted in the military during World War I, writing about some of their experiences throughout the war to the current superintendent of the school. These letters, while they detail experiences of Natives within World War I, skip over or omit any possible involvement in anything that may be related back to their Native heritage. Instead, they focus on the ways in which the boarding school helped them to assimilate into the military ranks that they were then a part of. These books, article, and archives are among the many researched that cover the assimilation effects of the American Indian but are also the most relatable to the topic at hand, the eventual involvement of Native Americans within World War I.

[9] Luther Standing Bear, *My People, the Sioux* (Arcadia Press, 2017).

Native American involvement in World War I

Other books and research have covered the Native American warrior throughout various wars, but focus within this research project is being given to the American Indians specifically in World War I. Thomas A. Britten and Susan Applegate Krouse (Oklahoma Cherokee) both have books written about the American Indian of World War I. Britten gives an overall review of American Indians on the Homefront and throughout the war.[10] He focused primarily on the *American Expeditionary Forces* while Krouse narrowed in on the primary sources of the American Indian experiences from interviews done and documented by Joseph K. Dixon.[11] Britten's, *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* has a very self-explanatory title. In it he strived to answer these three questions: What were the battlefield experiences of Native Americans, how did racial and cultural stereotypes about Indians affect their duties, and were Native American veterans changed by their military service?[12] Krouse's *North American Indians in the Great War* is a collection of biographies, interviews, and questionnaires of the Native Americans that served in World War I. She used their own writing, documented by Dixon through the Wanamaker Industry, to gain more perspective on the American Indian service during this time. Krouse also delved into their personal histories, i.e. where they came from, how they lived after the war, and when she could find it, how and when they died.[13] Some of the soldiers Krouse focused on talked about how their culture helped or hindered their involvement

[10] Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I at Home and at War* (University of New Mexico Press, 1999).
[11] Susan Applegate Krouse and Joseph Kossuth Dixon, *North American Indians in the Great World War* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007).
[12] Found on the book sleeve of *American Indians in World War I: At War and at Home* by Thomas A. Britten. These questions are answered throughout the book, but not fully reiterated again.
[13] Krouse was very thorough with the information that she was able to glean from the American Indians mentioned within the Wanamaker Collections found in the Indiana University Archives and expanded upon it where she could.

in World War I and the effects of Indian boarding schools upon their culture, but Krouse does not analyze this information to any extent, only records what information is available. Michael J. and Ann G. Knudson's book, *Warriors in Khaki: Native Americans Doughboys from North Dakota,* is similar to Krouse's in the sense that it is a compilation of American Indians that participated in World War I but is specific to North Dakota and the surrounding areas. Within the book, there are recorded names, what military company they served with and sometimes the battles they fought in, their stories after the war, where they came from or where they joined the military, tribal affiliation and when possible, their deaths, but not their actual contributions within the war itself.[14] This record provides a more significant look at the lives after the war of individual Natives from the North Dakota area that contributed to the efforts of World War I.

Al Carroll (Mescalero Apache) takes on the voices of the Native American veterans from as far back as colonial times up through the present with his book, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags: American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War.* He discusses the stereotypes placed upon the Natives that served in the military to debunk them, such as the 'Natural' or 'Savage' warrior. He examines the reasons why assimilation through the military did not, in fact work, in the way that many Assimilationists of the time believed it would, and focused on how Native veterans were able to use "military institutions to preserve, protect, defend, and revive Native cultures, institutions, and spiritual and cultural practices."[15] This is the only resource found that focuses so much energy on tearing down the stereotypes placed upon Native American soldiers, especially during World War I and the way in which Native cultures

[14] Michael Knudson and Ann G. Knudson, *Warriors in Khaki: Native American Doughboys from North Dakota* (Robertson Publishing, 2012).
[15] Al Carroll, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags: American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 2.

were revitalized from World War I on, doing so through Native oral traditions and stories told to him. However, Carroll incorporates veterans of all wars and does not focus solely on Natives in World War I. In fact, he includes very little Native perspective in World War I, but does, however, admit that this was a turning point in history for Native Americans within the military and in the United States.

Trench journals such as *The Stars and Stripes: The Official Newspaper of the A.E.F* and *The Canadian Daily Record* show an astounding way in which stereotypes of Native Americans were broadcast within the war. My own earlier research on Native perceptions during World War I used these journals to highlight some of the contributions of Native American soldiers through, or in spite of, the stereotypes placed upon them.[16]

Gary Robinson (Choctaw/Cherokee) also writes a book about Natives in the Great War but focuses primarily on the American Indian Code Talkers of both World Wars. He gives a very concise history of Native tribes just prior to the First World War, how the Code Talkers came to be and the evolution of the code between the two wars.[17] He ends the book with the recognition and preservation of Native Languages today. Robinson also collaborated with Phil Lucas (Choctaw) to pull together the book, *From Warriors to Soldiers: A History of American Indian Service in the United States Military.* Robinson and Lucas succinctly discuss Native involvement in all the American wars from the time of the Revolutionary War to more recent Operation Enduring Freedom, including a brief summary of Natives in World War I.[18] These six books are

[16] Kaja L. Anderson, "The Natural Warrior of World War I: Native American Perceptions" (thesis, 2015).
[17] Gary Robinson, *The Language of Victory: American Indian Code Talkers of World War I and World War II* (San Ynez, CA: Tribal Eye Productions, 2014).
[18] Gary Robinson and Phil Lucas, *From Warriors to Soldiers: A History of American Indian Service in the United States Military* (Santa Ynez, CA: Tribal Eye Productions, 2010).

among the very few that specifically offer, though distinctly different, aspects of the American Indians in World War I. The rest of the resources available become less specific and detailed about Native Americans overall, if they are even mentioned.

World War I

Among these World War I resources is *The Unknowns* by Patrick K. O'Donnell. While he does not specifically go over Native American experiences within World War I he does focus on how the Unknown Soldier came to be and some of the most decorated American soldiers of the Great War who became his casket bearers. Among these casket bearers was Corporal Thomas Saunders (Cheyenne), the only American Indian to be given this honor.[19] O'Donnell recounts the heroic deeds that caused these men to become renown bearers of The Unknown Soldier. Other books such as *World War I, The Road Less Traveled,* and *The First World War* are all overviews of World War I, but do not mention Native Americans.[20] They offer different perspectives of the Great War from viewpoints of the Europeans to secret under workings of the United States government. These books, if anything, prove the insight that Native American contributions were largely considered inconsequential when compared to other ethnic and racial groups. Both *World War I, The Road Less Traveled* and *The First World War* briefly mention contributions of African Americans and 'other' ethnic groups that the American military kept in segregated units but leave out any mention of Native Americans or how they helped to advance Allied forces within the Great War.

[19] Patrick K. O'Donnell, *The Unknowns: The Untold Story of America's Unknown Soldier and WWI's Most Decorated Heroes Who Brough Him Home* (New York, NY: Publishers Group West, 2018).
[20] Authors include S.L.A Marshall, Philip Zelikow, and John Keegan in the order that their books were mentioned above.

Overall Importance

While all these resources relate to my own research in one way or another, it is the combination of this research that will help to more fully understand why World War I was so important for the cultural preservation of Native peoples. There has been work, such as Brittens and Krouse, that involves Natives in World War I as well as research done on World War I itself, to include O'Donnell's and Robinson's. None of this research considers the depth in which Native American culture was repressed and how they were able to hold on to that culture to be able to use it for the betterment of the Allies in World War I. Al Carroll comes the closest in his book with his focus on Native American veterans and cultural revitalization within different wars, but nothing combines all of this research together and gives the added firsthand accounts of Native contributions of their culture within the Great War.

While to say Native contributions during World War I won the war outright would be very bold to say the least, it would, however, be correct in assuming that their contributions aided significantly in the Allies' war efforts. The research on Native cultural and traditional survivance because of the Great War has not been researched in depth, only alluded to within most current resources. Yet, World War I was the first time in a minimum of two generations that Natives could openly practice their religions, cultures, and traditions that ended up aiding the Allies in the World War.

Research Design and Methodology

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Māori) has stated that as Indigenous people we must be able to rewrite and reright our position in history.[21] Delving into archives to find Native insight has helped to rewrite what we know of Natives within the history of World War I with an Indigenous standpoint. Some may know that Natives were involved in the Great War, but it is uncommon to know the extent of that involvement and the full significance of those contributions. In fact, little more than a handful of research projects have been completed on this topic, supporting Smith's statement that "history [has been] erased before your eyes, dismissed as irrelevant, ignored…"[22] when it is not of the dominant culture. This makes rewriting history all the more important; it helps us to decolonize a blind spot in historical research and reclaim an Indigenous spot in history.

Within this research, Indigenous history was rewritten and rerighted to include the voices of the Indigenous peoples involved in World War I. The use of the Joseph K. Dixon archives within the Wanamaker Collection was a key resource with numerous questionnaires completed by military members in 1919; though only 354 questionnaires in the collection included additional information provided by the individual Natives telling their own stories and experiences throughout the war. Dixon also compiled a total of seven journals which included his interviews in 1919 with Native soldiers, marines, sailors, and their commanding officers and

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[21] Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies* delves into how Indigenous peoples can help to decolonize the research that is being conducted on Indigenous peoples and be done respectfully within their own perspectives and study of interest. She discusses several ways in which research can be conducted within an Indigenous realm to include correcting history in order to include the Indigenous perspectives that have been nearly completely excluded. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London, Great Britain: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 31.

[22] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies,* 33.

non-commissioned officers.[23] Additional primary sources were also found to include newspaper articles, trench journals, and even a few other archives, while secondary sources such as Thomas A. Britten's book *American Indians in World War I* and Russel Lawrence Barsh's article "American Indians in the Great War" ensured that this research did not become redundant and was utilized to supplement the information found within the primary sources.

It was important to understand the overall theme of the thesis prior to the start of the research, Native American contributions within World War I, then determine what stories within the broader theme needed to be retold and where in history to start. This was a way to narrow down the overall theme of the thesis itself into how Native contributions within World War I started a cultural revival; it also gave the thesis a purpose and starting point. A Native American cultural revival would never have been necessary without the restriction of culture in the first place. To include the background of federal assimilation policies and laws explained the reason why Native American contributions in World War I were a vital part of cultural revival and the resistance of those policies is key in understanding the survivance of Native peoples up to present day which allows us the ability to rewrite and reright history.

Once the overall theme of Native American contributions in World War I was set, narrowed down to how it provided a cultural revival and where in history to begin, the research itself was able to be started. Skimming through primary and secondary sources the first time brought out smaller themes as well, such as which federal assimilation policies and laws caused the most damage to Native cultures and why, the reasons why Natives would join the military,

[23] The Dixon journals are also located in the Wanamaker collection archives; however, they are not digitized as yet. Dr. Erin Fehr thus provided the documentation since she personally visited the Wanamaker Collection archives at Indiana University to collect the data.

stereotypes and perceptions of Natives throughout World War I, and the frontlines versus the Homefront contributions. As these smaller themes fell into place, it was important to be able to keep track of which information fell into which theme. Within my own research, color-coding themes became important, to not only keep track of each of the smaller themes, but to be able to separate the information once the rewriting process started. This required rereading research material several times and more in depth, the first time, to color-code the themes and a second and third time while rewriting to ensure that the information found fell into the proper themes and to be utilized to rewrite and reright the stories that needed to be told.

Focusing on firsthand accounts of Native experiences and how they utilized their culture and traditions provides us with an insight on how they were able to survive continued colonization and assimilation pressures. Native Americans are still here to this day. They have suffered and endured and adapted to the world around them. They have survived. Many of their languages and traditions are still currently being used in part, because of Native efforts during World War I, on the front lines and at home. This should be known and celebrated as a victory for so many, because through resistance, Natives persevered against all odds. Not only will my research focus on rewriting and rerighting history, but on celebrating and continuing to celebrate the survival of these cultures that came so close to being extinguished. Gerald Vizenor, Matthew Herman, and Smith all discuss survivance and continued survivance as a methodological way in which research can continue to be conducted.[24] History has focused on what was, but it should be researched as not only what has happened, but how it is still playing a part in our lives today.

[24] Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies,* Matthew Herman's article "Four More Indigenous Projects for the Native American Humanities," and Gerald Vizenor's books *Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance* and *Survivance: Narratives of Indigenous Presence* all discuss at length the importance of research based off of celebrating the survival of Indigenous cultures and continued research on that aspect.

This is where survivance and continuing to celebrate the survival of our Indigenous communities play a part in this research. Without Indigenous survival, our histories cannot continue to be rewritten or 'rerighted.' Native Americans played a crucial role within World War I, by rewriting and rerighting this part of Indigenous history, we can celebrate the continued survival of American Indian cultures through a brief look at Federal Indian assimilation policies and restrictions of the late 1800s through early 1900s and how Natives resisted them, then delve into firsthand accounts of Native American contributions throughout the Great War both on the front lines and the Homefront causing a cultural revival that has continued to the present day.

In order to understand how significant American Indian contributions to World War I are, one must understand the level of repression they faced in the first place. Within the first section of this research, Federal Indian policies, acts, and laws that were passed with the intention of assimilating Native Americans into mainstream America will be discussed. A brief overview of the Federal Crimes Act, General Allotment Act, Major Crimes Act, and the Indian Code of Offenses will provide the necessary background of assimilation policies and restrictions placed upon Natives and their cultures. This will be followed by a look into the establishment of Indian Boarding schools and policies through which Native children were stolen, forced to assimilate to the Euro-American culture and punished for practicing anything within their own cultures. These federal policies and initiatives will be able to shed light on the level of effort that the United States government was willing to go to in order to get rid of their American Indian problem. How American Indians were able to survive assimilation and how they resisted will end this section of research and lead to how it helps us to understand later Native contributions within history.

After the groundwork is laid, Native experiences and contributions on the frontlines and Homefront are examined. It is important to keep a firsthand Native viewpoint here. While there is plenty of research and documentation on Federal Indian Policies, assimilation, and Indian Boarding schools, little research is done on the personal experiences of Native Americans within the Great War and how it relates back to the cultures and traditions that they still hold onto to this day. This is where the majority of my contributions stem. While my subjects are no longer among the living to interview or survey, I have still been able to search through archives for their personal experiences. Within the Wanamaker Collection archives, Native American experiences of the Great War have been gathered through questionnaires sent out by Joseph K. Dixon and interviews with Native American servicemen, conducted by Dixon himself to also highlight those contributions.

A few newspaper articles from this time period have also shed some light on the experiences of Natives, especially on the Homefront, though many are filled with common stereotypes of Natives during this time period that must be sorted through as well. These Native experiences provided a look at how Native Americans utilized their cultures, traditions, and languages throughout the war. They even shed some light on how they used the common misconceptions and stereotypes placed upon them at this point in history. The Wanamaker Collection archives and newspaper articles are able to provide clear evidence to the ways in which Native American cultures, traditions, and languages were able to survive oppressive Federal Indian policies and assimilation to help with the Great War and start a cultural revival.

This leads back to the conclusion, that Native Americans were able to resist assimilation and cultural genocide through their contributions during the Great War, both on the Homefront

and frontlines. This research rewrites and rerights United States history to include the survival of Indigenous cultures, traditions, and languages.

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE

The Wounded Knee Massacre is widely recognized as the end of the American Indian resistance in the United States. The massacre of an estimated 300, mostly Minneconjou Sioux women and children, on 29 December 1890 marked the end of the Indian Wars on the Great Plains.[25] This was the end of freedom for the American Indian. From then on, Native American tribes were confined to reservations and restriction after restriction were placed upon them in order to solve the 'Indian problem' through assimilation. Margaret Connell Szasz aptly stated, "…Congress and the Indian Office launched an assault on Indian sovereignty. Designed to merge Native Americans into mainstream society, it employed three tactics—individual land ownership through allotment, prohibition of Native religions and other civil rights, and federal schooling of Indian children."[26] Even prior to Wounded Knee, Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller stated in his report to Congress on 1 November 1883 that, "If it is the purpose of the Government to civilize the Indians, they must be compelled to desist from the savage and barbarous practices that are calculated to continue them in savagery, no matter what exterior influences are brought to bear on them."[27] Teller fully believed that no matter what was done to

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[25] The Wounded Knee Massacre is widely known as the end of an era for the American Indian, when the Native people had become so few in number through disease, starvation, and warfare that they could no longer continue to fight for their ways of life. 1890 was the year the Native American peoples were at their lowest numbers of 237,196, according to the U.S. Census (Furnish, vii; Britten, 30; Dunbar-Ortiz, 186).

[26] Margaret Connell Szasz, "'I Knew How to Be Moderate. and I Knew How to Obey': The Commonality of American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1750s–1920s," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 29, no. 4 (2005): 75–94, https://doi.org/10.17953/aicr.29.4.b2220582h05507u2, 85.

[27] This report is followed by a letter from Teller to the Department of Interior explaining what he believes needs to be done in order to civilize the American Indian, resulting in The Court of Indian Offenses, Price 1883. Quote from: Laurence French, "Law Enforcement in Indian Country," *Criminal Justice Studies* 18, no. 1 (January 26, 2007): 69–80, https://doi.org/10.1080/14786010500071154, 72.

the Indians, they must be civilized and assimilated into American culture and that steps must be taken to ensure it. This report and a previous letter to the Department of the Interior led to the passing of several laws and policies meant to 'civilize' the American Indian. Understanding the laws and policies put into effect such as the Federal Crimes Act, Court of Indian Offenses, Major Crimes Act, the General Allotment Act, and the Indian Boarding Schools not only sets the stage to comprehending the length that the United States government went to in order to extinguish the American Indian way of life, but will help to gain a better perspective when considering the resiliency of the American Indian and how their cultures have continued to not only help during World War I, but thrive to this day.

Laws and Policies

"We must either butcher them or civilize them, and what we do we must do it quickly."—Henry Pancoast[28]

Throughout the 1800s, several laws and policies were put into place to restrict Native American culture. The Federal Crimes Act 1825, revised in 1866 and also known by the 'Assimilative Crimes Act, was just the beginning of these laws meant to gain more control over the Native populations. This act and the revisions that continued through to the mid-1900s are still in effect today. It ensures that the federal government has the power to prosecute American Indians for even the most minor of crimes committed to include traffic violations and drunk driving.[29] Since its enactment, it has significantly increased the rate of criminal prosecutions

[28] Henry Pancoast and Herbert Welsh were lawyers in 1882 that traveled into Sioux country at the request an Episcopalian minister, Bishop William Hare in the hopes of recruiting them to help with Indian reform. David Wallace Adams opens his book *Education for Extinction* with a brief account of their journey (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2020), 2.

[29] French discusses the contention surrounding the enforcement of laws passed on American Indian tribes beginning as early as 1818, 71.

within Indian territory and continues to chip away at tribal sovereignty. The Federal Crimes Act was the beginning of numerous laws and policies passed for the 'sake of progress' and to civilize the American Indian. It was the belief that if Indians could become civilized, Christian folks, there would be no more need for them to rely on the government for food and resources agreed upon through treaties and more land would become accessible to Euromerican people.

Arguably the most detrimental of these acts and policies were passed in the 1880s. In 1883 two events happened, the Courts of Indian Offenses was established and the US Supreme Court ruled on Ex Parte Crow Dog which resulted in the 1885 passing of the Major Crimes Act. The General Allotment Act also known as the Dawes Act was passed in 1887. Each act passed and policy enforced marks a significant point in which Native American cultures, traditions, and their very ways of life came under attack through the steps taken by the United States government. Instead of shedding blood on a battlefield, the US government took control through the legal system.

Henry M. Teller, Secretary of the Interior wrote of his concerns about the American Indians to Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He wished to bring special attention to the 'heathenish' practices of the Indians and how those practices hindered the progress of civilizing the Indians. Laying out the worst of the practices, he sought to gain the backing of the Office of Indian Affairs and later Congress to put a stop to these uncivilized practices. The result was the Court of Indian Offenses, a list of rules and punishments restricting Native American culture and religion. Price sent out a letter to each Indian agent to see that the "requirements

thereof are strictly enforced, with the view of having evil practices mentioned by the honorable Secretary ultimately abolished."[30]

The first step of the policy included the establishment of the courts at each Indian agency that were to be made up of three Indians there were to be of a high opinion to the Indian agent and already followed the rules put into place by the Court of Indian Offenses. In other words, they must be more on the 'civilized' and assimilated side, Christian and with 'good moral character and integrity.' This court was to meet twice a month to ensure that punishments would be handed out to those that did not follow the rules, giving up their culture.[31]

These offenses were to include: the Sun Dance and scalp dance, any war-dance (or anything that could be construed as warlike), feasts, or gatherings of any kind that might promote heathenish behavior, plural marriages, any practices of medicine men and Natives that turned to those practices for their health, giveaways and the 'destruction' of property after a death in the family, no 'buying' of girls or women for marriage, and no selling, exchanging, giving, bartering or disposing of alcohol.[32] Much of what was outlawed were religious and cultural ways of life for Native Americans.[33]

Without the Sun Dance, a renewal of life and sacrifice could not be made. Luther Standing Bear discussed the importance of the Sun Dance to his people and how it compared to the Christianity that he was taught:

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[30] The report is accessible through the Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections at the University of North Dakota Scholarly Commons. It is amongst US Government Documents related to Indigenous Nations and includes both the letter from Henry M Teller and Hiram Price's response. Hiram Price. *Rules Governing the Court of Indian Offenses.* March 30, 1883. https://commons.und.edu/indigenous-gov-docs/131/.
[31] Price, 1883.
[32] Price, 1883.
[33] Suzan Shown Harjo, *Nation to Nation: Treaties between the United States and American Indian Nations* (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Books, 2014), 167.

> I bring this before you because I want you to know that this dance was our religious belief. According to our legend, the red man was to have this dance every summer to fulfill our religious duty. It was a sacrificial dance. During the winter if any member of the tribe became ill, perhaps a brother or a cousin would be brave enough to go to the medicine man and say, 'I will sacrifice my body to the Wakan Tanka, or Big Holy, for the one who is sick.' Or if the buffalo were beginning to get scarce, someone would sacrifice himself so that the tribe might have something to eat.
>
> The medicine man would then take this brave up to the mountain alone, and announce to the Great Spirit that the young man was ready to be sacrificed. When the parents of this young man heard that he was to go through the Sun Dance, some of his brothers or cousins would sacrifice themselves with him as an honor…
>
> As soon as the women heard that there was to be a Sun Dance in their band, they began making all the things which were necessary for the ceremony. They placed beautiful porcupine-quill-work on the eagle bone whistles which the men carried in their mouths during the dance, as well as beautiful head-dresses for the dances. These were made from porcupine-quill-work. The dancer wore a piece of buckskin around the waist, hanging down like a skirt. This also had pretty quill-work decorations…
>
> Many things were done during this dance which were similar to what I have read about Christ. We had one living sacrifice, and he fasted three or four days instead of forty. This religious ceremony was not always held in the same place. We did not commercialize our beliefs. Our medicine men received no salary. Hell was unknown to us. We trusted one another, and our word was as good as the white man's gold of today. We were then true Christians.[34]

Not only did outlawing the Sun Dance have a crucial effect on Native American religions, but it affected everything involved in planning and preparing for the Sun Dance; from cleansing the spirit and the sacrificial nature of oneself for others, down to the porcupine quillwork that decorated the items necessary for those that participated in the Sun Dance. Participants found in the act of the Sun Dance, scalp dance, or any other type of 'war' dance, including feasting and the recounting of war stories, were punished, for the first time, by withholding their rations for

[34] Luther Standing Bear is considered the last Sioux chief. He saw the deterioration of his culture, being born in 1868, was the Native student to step foot inside Carlisle Indian Industrial School, traveled with Buffalo Bill Cody, and worked to give his people a better life. His autobiography of *My People, The Sioux* documents his life experiences (Arcadia Press, 2017), 60-64.

ten days. The next time they were caught, their rations were withheld for between fifteen to thirty days or even imprisoned for up to thirty days.[35]

Outlawing plural marriages showed another lack of understanding of Native American cultures. Plural marriages were a way to ensure family unity, many of the men married sisters at the request of their first wife. This was a way to lighten the load for the first wife and to bring families closer together. Many plural marriages also came about when there were a considerable number of wars being waged, when there was a lack of males and surplus of females. Plural marriages meant that all females were taken care of and provided for within the tribe. Only men that could afford to feed and provide for more than one woman took a second wife or up to six wives.[36] Outlawing plural marriages meant that many females had to do without the support of a man from bringing in game and protection. It also broke up families and made more work for wives. Any offender would be fined a minimum of twenty dollars or forced into hard labor for twenty days, sometimes both depending on the courts. If the act continued after the first offense, all rations were to be forfeit.[37]

The practice of Medicine men coming under attack meant the loss of traditional medicines and knowledge of plants and herbs in favor of Western medicine.[38] The Court of Indian Offenses outlawed Medicine men and their "various artifices and devices [that kept] the people under their influence [that] prevent[ed] the Indians from abandoning their heathenish rites

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[35] Price, 1883.
[36] Royal B. Hassrick, *The Sioux* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 121-138.
[37] Price, 1883.
[38] Dina Gilio-Whitaker, in her book *As Long as the Grass Grows* discusses how much of plant knowledge has been lost due to assimilation policies, yet at the same time, much of the knowledge went underground where families that held that knowledge kept it guarded and passed it down from generation to generation (Boston: Beason Press, 2019, 82-83). She also notes that her own resources include Clint Carroll's study *Roots of Our Renewal: Ethnobotany and Cherokee Environmental Governance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

and customs… ”[39] In other words the American Indians were not allowed to utilize the help of any Medicine man, via knowledge of medicinal plants to rites that were part of their traditional customs. Teller believed, and Price agreed, that it was Medicine men that were responsible for keeping Indian children away from the civilizing effects of the agency schools, held too much influence over other Natives, and were the cause of deception. Any Medicine man caught practicing was automatically sentenced to ten days in the agency prison, more time could be added on until he also “forever abandon[ed] all practices.”[40]

Funerary rites of giveaway and destruction of property also became a crime. Teller, believing that he was preventing families from becoming destitute upon the death of a loved one, pushed the banning of traditional funerary rites.[41] A mourner was no longer allowed to give away his property or that of the deceased or to destroy it, nor was any person allowed to accept an item without punishment by the courts.[42] The punishment for destroying one’s own property or giving it away included confinement within the agency prison for no more than thirty days.

Any person offering money or anything of value for a wife was also imprisoned for up to sixty days and all rations forfeit for any length of time the agent deemed necessary. Teller believed that the rights of the woman were disregarded when she was ‘paid’ for. He was also convinced that a system of marriage should be adopted by the tribes that could only be negated by legal means.[43] He was not convinced that the offering of anything valuable for a wife was grounds for marriage, disregarding the customs of not only Native people but of many cultures

[39] Price, 1883.
[40] Price, 1883.
[41] Teller notes his reasoning behind why Native funerary rites should become illegal within the letter send to Price. Price, 1883.
[42] Harjo, 4.
[43] Price, 1883.

that provide dowries of some sort when a woman is married. He took away a cherished tradition that allowed a Native woman to see her worth through the eyes of her suitor. Prior to the banning of this practice, young Native men would vie for a young woman's hand by attempting to provide her family with the best gifts possible. It was the woman and her father that chose when the young man and his gifts were worthy of her. It was also a way to show the status of the young woman: the higher the status, the more expensive the gifts that were given.[44]

So many cherished customs and traditions were lost or went underground with the enforcement of The Courts of Indian Offenses. Many tribes lost rites and traditions that have had to become either modified or resurrected from other tribes willing to share what traditions they have remaining. The civil rights and sovereignty of tribes were significantly diminished, all for the sake of progress and to gain more control over Native peoples. People like Frederick Monsen, a photographer in the 1890s-1920s, believed that Native cultures should be preserved and believed them to be vanishing. He wrote that "traditional Indian cultures and tribal characteristics were rapidly disappearing, and that Native Americans were giving up their 'deeply significant nature-lore,' as well as their religions, ceremonies, and ancestral manners and customs."[45] Monsen, like many believed that Native Americans were assimilating on their own terms and not coerced through punishment of imprisonment or starvation unless they chose to do away with their own cultures.

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[44] There are many stories and books that provide insight to this custom within several Native American tribes, among them is Ella Cara Deloria's book, *Waterlily* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988). Deloria's story describes the details of a Sioux woman from birth until death. Roya B. Hassrick also collaborates this within his own research *The Sioux* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 121-138.

[45] Britten mentioned Monsen's view in his book, *American Indians in World War I*, 31.

The next attack on Native American sovereignty and traditional ways of life came through the passing of the Major Crimes Act of 1885. This law provided the federal government jurisdiction over all major crimes committed by Natives on and off any reservation:

> That immediately upon and after the date of the passage of this act all Indians, committing against the person or property of another Indian or other person any of the following crimes, namely, murder, manslaughter, rape, assault with intent to kill, arson, burglary, and larceny within any Territory of the United States, and either within or without an Indian reservation, shall be subject therefore to the laws of such Territory relating to said crimes, and shall be tried therefore in the same courts and in the same manner and shall be subject to the same penalties as are all other persons within the boundaries of any State of the United States, and within the limits of any Indian reservation, shall be subject to the same laws, tried in the same courts and in the same manner, and subject to the same penalties as are all other persons committing any of the above crimes within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.[46]

The enactment of this law came about due to a case just three years earlier, Ex Parte Crow Dog involving the murder of a pro-government Lakota Chief Spotted Tail by another Lakota Crow Dog. The Office of Indian Affairs and the federal government became outraged over the outcome of the case and in the end the federal government used this case as a steppingstone to push through the Major Crimes Act giving the federal government more authority over tribes.

Luther Standing Bear at Carlisle Indian School at the time had received a letter from his father telling him all about the incident:

> You will recall that I have stated …that Spotted Tail had received a nice team of horses and a top-buggy for himself and family; how the Government had furnished him an extra team to haul his gifts home. And he had also been given a fine two-story frame house, and then allowed credit at each of the trading stores.
>
> At that time everybody wondered why he received such favors which nobody else enjoyed. But it was soon learned that he had sold a strip of land in northern Nebraska without the knowledge or consent of the other chiefs. The land was not his, but was the hunting ground of all the Sioux.
>
> When this knavery was discovered, several of the chiefs wanted to shoot Spotted Tail immediately, but my father interceded… When Spotted Tail saw that

[46] French, "Law Enforcement in Indian Country," 73.

> nobody took any action against him, he doubtless began to imagine that all the Sioux tribe was afraid to do anything to him, and he began to get too smart…After that he induced the wife of a cripped Indian to live with him. This was going a bit too far, so the chiefs held a council. They all knew this crippled man needed his wife, so one man was chosen to go to Spotted Tail and tell him he must return the woman…
>
> But Spotted Tail only replied, 'I will not return the woman, and you can tell those other chiefs that I will do as I please. The Government is behind me, and is my friend.
>
> …The other chiefs decided that he could not do as he pleased… Several men were waiting for the chance to kill him.
>
> But Crow Dog was too swift for the others. He lay in wait for Spotted Tail on the road that led to the council hall. When the chief came driving along, with one of his old wives, Crow Dog stood up, threw off his blanket, and shot Spotted Tail right out of the seat of the wagon, killing him instantly."[47]

Spotted Tail, a Brule Lakota not well liked by his people, but by the government was shot and killed by another Brule Lakota Crow Dog. There has always been speculation and different stories to the 'why,' but the aftereffects of the murder have been detrimental to Native peoples to this day. When the Lakota council learned of the murder of Spotted Tail, Crow Dog was taken into custody and tried amongst them. He was required to give blood restitution to Spotted Tail's family for his crime equaling $600, eight horses, and one blanket.[48]

Unlike Western law, Lakota customs rarely included death penalties. It was generally the individual who took the life who was responsible to make restitution for their wrongs if they wished to atone for their wrongdoing.[49] They believed that the taking of a life meant that that family needed to be taken care of and it became the responsibility of the person who committed the murder, to take on the responsibility of that family. It did not make sense to them to kill

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[47] Standing Bear continued saying that the crippled then received his wife back and swift justice came to a man that was willing to be too friendly with the whites to betray his own people in *My People, The Sioux* 80.
[48] Walter Fleming, "Jurisdictional Challenges to Tribal Sovereignty," *Introduction to Native American Studies* (lecture, Johnson Hall, MSU Campus, 2024).
[49] Hassrick, 50.

another person leaving, yet another family, without a hunter and provider. Restitution not only made a person pay for their crimes but ensured that everyone within the tribe was taken care of.[50]

However, upon hearing about the outcome of the case, the Indian agent was not happy with the outcome and arrested Crow Dog, sent him to trial in which he was found guilty of murder and sentenced to hanging.[51] An appeal was made on Crow Dog's behalf and eventually went to the Supreme Court who ruled to dismiss the case based on the lack of jurisdiction of crimes committed by Native Americans against other Native Americans in Indian country.[52] The US Supreme Court ruling in favor of Crow Dog and the way in which tribes traditionally handled crimes was originally a win for the Native American people. Yet, the federal government, enraged at the fact that one of their own supporters were murdered and the killer was not fairly punished in their minds, resulted in the Major Crimes Act.

This act severely encroached upon the power of tribal governments to rule and govern over their own people in the way in which they saw fit. Traditional ways of punishment were no longer allowed in the name of progress and ensuring the 'equal' treatment of all crimes across the country. It made the US government the leading authority over all the major crimes and convoluted the system so much that many crimes on a reservation slip through the cracks of prosecution due to all the red tape involved in bringing in the federal government for any criminal offense.

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[50] Tribal Knowledge—understanding that it is a heavy weight on your soul to take someone's life. Because of that, those that are left behind must be taken care of if that person is to make up for what they did wrong. It is the only way to atone for the wrongdoing. If a person does not wish to care for those that have been left behind, their life may also be taken because taking a life pollutes the soul and no one should be around that in case they, too, become infected with that evil spirit.

[51] Fleming, 2024.

[52] French, 72.

The General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Act of 1887, was passed two years after the Major Crimes Act. It was not enough to restrict Native American culture and traditions. Their whole family and tribal structure had to be taken apart and the land with which they held a relationship, had to be taken in order to make the land more fruitful and profitable (for the Whites).[53] Even with the promises made in treaties, land was meant to be taken so that Natives could become civilized. "…Once transformed to farmers, they [Indians] would require less land, which would then become available to whites…Indians, having land in abundance, needed civilization; whites possessed civilization but needed land."[54] For the policy makers, making the American Indian become a farmer, assigning them plots of land, was considered a win-win for everyone. President Theodore Roosevelt believed that in order to "Americanize" the American Indian, they must be assimilated and adopt "individualized, property driven ident[ies]" that were characteristics of the dominant culture. He even went so far as to describe the General Allotment Act as "a mighty pulverizing engine to break up the tribal mass."[55]

The whole premise of allotment was to "smash the tribal connection, force Indians to work the land, and eventually bring an end to the rationing system."[56] Prior to the Allotment Act, the concept of the reservations were reserved parcels of land that Native American tribes wished to keep, selling off other tracts to the federal government for protection, rations, and other treaty rights. However, this rhetoric changed drastically so that it became 'common knowledge' that reservations were lands 'gifted' or created for the Native Americans by the

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[53] Many references state this fact to include Susan Applegate Krouse and Joseph Kossuth Dixon, *North American Indians in the Great World War* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 7.
[54] Adams, 8.
[55] Brec Cooke and Adrea Lawrence, "Law, Language, and Land: A Multimethod Analysis of the General Allotment Act and Its Discourses," *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 3 (2010): 217–29, https://doi.org/10.4135/97814129862681.n284, 218.
[56] Adams, 20.

federal government.[57] This led to the idea that Indians were also being given rations and relied too heavily on the federal government to survive, completely disregarding treaty rights. Because of these ideas that the Native Americans relied too much on the federal government and were getting a free ride. The Allotment Act gave rise to the idea that once agriculture was pushed upon Natives, they could fend for themselves and no longer need the government to take care of them.

The Dawes Act broke down Native land holdings and allowed the government to assign 160 acres to each head of family, 80 acres to a single person or orphan, and 40 acres to each person under the age of 18.[58] That land would then be held in trust to ensure that the Natives assigned to the land were given time to 'improve' the land.[59] After each tribal member was given the appropriate amount of land, the remaining land was considers surplus and opened up to white settlers.[60] By the time that the Allotment Act was ended, Native land holdings had gone from 156 million acres down to only 50 million acres.

The Allotments Act's main goals were to not only open up reservation lands, but to promote another form of assimilation, the Individual. Senator Henry Dawes stated, "The defect of the [reservation] system was apparent. It is [socialist] Henry George's system and under that there is no enterprise to make your home any better than that of your neighbors. There is no

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[57] Dunbar-Ortiz goes into more depth on how Native perspectives changed into them receiving a 'free ride' from the federal government rather than the government actually honoring treaties in exchange for the land that the Native Americans sold, 11.

[58] This information is in several locations including Adams *Education for Extinction*, 20; Cooke's "Law, Language, and Land," 218, and Walter C. Fleming, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Native American History* (Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books, 2003), 456.

[59] Land was held in trust for 25 years. During this time, the land could not be sold or taxed. By the end of the 25 years, more Native land was lost due to taxation or sold because they could not afford to keep the land.

[60] Suzan Shown Harjo, *Nation to Nation: Treaties between the United States and American Indian Nations* (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Books, 2014), 30, 169.

selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization. Til this people will consent to give up their lands and divide among their citizens so that each can own the land he cultivates they will not make much more progress."[61] It was a way to promote individuality amongst tribal members and keep them on separate plots of land. To become civilized, a Native American had to start looking out for himself and his own immediate family, not continue to consider what was best for the tribe and everyone within it. William Torey Harris, a reformer during his time, explained that:

> attributes of civilization included a commitment to the values of individualism, industry, and private property; the acceptance of Christian doctrine and morality, including the 'Christian ideal of the family;' the abandonment of loyalty to the tribal community for a higher identification and with the state as an 'independent citizen;' the willingness to become both a producer and consumer of material goods; and finally an acceptance of the idea that man's conquest of nature constituted one of his noblest accomplishments.[62]

In order for the American Indian to become a civilized person, they had to not only be able to give up tribal life and everything that went with it, but to also accept the Western idea that man's whole purpose is to conquer the land and nature around him.

The Dawes Act triumphantly ensured tribal communal property no longer existed and that individual property rights and self-reliance prevailed; again, promoting assimilation and destroying more Native culture. It was important to promote the individual's way of thinking for Native American's to become civilized, according to Superintendent of Indian Schools John Oberly, Indians must be steered away from "the degrading communism of the tribal reservation system [and imbue him] with the exalting egotism of American civilization, so that he will say 'I'

[61] Dunbar- Ortiz, 158.
[62] Adams, 18.

instead of 'We,' and 'This is mine,' instead of 'This is ours'."[63] The next best way to promote individualism, agriculture, and self-sufficiency began with off-reservation Indian boarding schools and taking away Native children to teach them how to become properly civilized. It was all part of the plan to continue to "Kill the Indian, and save the man," according to Colonel Richard H. Pratt.

Indian Boarding Schools

"They were coming for the children."—David Wallace Adams[64]

Education was considered the most valuable tool to ensure the complete assimilation of the American Indian. The federal government continued to pass laws and place restrictions on Native Americans; they took their land, but the last piece of the puzzle was to educate the children on Western societal norms. John Oberly, Commissioner of Indian Affairs stated, "I would first teach the Indian how to work, then I would teach him our ideas of the rights of property… and then make the Indian a citizen and enfranchise him."[65] Another Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Jones believed, " To educate the Indian in the ways of civilized life… is to preserve him from extinction, not as an Indian, but as a human being."[66] The goal was to save the Indians from themselves, their customs and traditions, in order to make them into proper human beings that used less land and were functional in Western society. As David Wallace Adams put it, "They were coming for the children."[67]

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[63] Adams, 26.
[64] Adams, 367.
[65] Adams, 24.
[66] Adams, 4.
[67] Adams, 367.

Indian Boarding schools had been around since the 1750s, much longer than the other policies and laws put in place to restrict Native Americans, yet it proved much more effective. The whole goal of these boarding schools was to not only assimilate Native children into the dominant culture and to give them the 'gift' of Christianity, but to be able to gain more and more land from the Native tribes. According to David Wallace Adams, "Indians needed to be saved not only from the white man but also from themselves. In the beginning it was remembered, Indians had been promised the gift of civilization in exchange for their land."[68] The idea of Indian boarding schools became a way of civilizing the children of the Savage Indians. Throughout the centuries, boarding schools could be split up into three distinct types: Privately owned missionary boarding schools, Tribal boarding schools, and federal boarding schools.

The first of these boarding schools were privately run and generally religious in nature. Moor's Indian Charity School was one of the first of these privately run schools, located in Hanover, New Hampshire.[69] Eleazar Wheelock's whole goal of opening the school was to bring Christianity to the Native students so that they may be able to become ministers and pastors to their people. He taught the students to read and write, but like all boarding schools to follow, half of the students' time was spent doing manual labor. Because of this manual labor, Native tribes pulled their children from the school,[70] feeling that their children were better at home with their families rather than working for someone else. By the 1890s the U.S. government randomly assigned different Christian denominations to each Indian agency to promote Christianity and help Indian agents control the Native populations.[71] More missionary-run

[68] Adams, 11.
[69] Szasz, "'I Knew How to Be Moderate…," 80.
[70] Szasz, 81.
[71] Fleming, *The Complete Idiot's Guide…,*448.

boarding schools near or on Native reservations with the added bonus of federal funding, effectively ended many of the privately run institutions, but also required student attendance by the federal government.

The tribal/reservation boarding schools that followed the closing of privately run institutions meant that some tribes had more say about what happened at the schools. These schools were closely located to the tribes that organized them. Schools, like the Cherokee Female Seminary of 1851, were brought about because the tribes understood the importance of having their children be able to function in a world dominated by Whites.[72] The students were taught by seminary teachers and emulated other missionary boarding schools from the East. The girls that were successful within the curriculum ended up marrying mixed-blood or White men[73] and did their best to be fully assimilated into White culture.

While the Cherokee and a few other boarding schools among the 'civilized tribes'[74] were successful in assimilating their children on their own, many federal agents and teachers believed that further removal of the children and for longer periods of time were necessary in order to prevent backsliding into 'heathen cultures.' Many reservation boarding schools by 1885 started to be run more by Indian agents and the Bureau of Indian Affairs rather than the tribes in which they were associated with. These agents believed that returning the children to their homes in the summertime and Christmas break halted the assimilation process to which it had to be started over again. One agent for the Mescalero Apache stated, "They go back at once to the savage mode of life, and a few weeks is sufficient to obliterate every vestige, so far as casual

[72] Szasz, 82.
[73] Szasz, 84.
[74] The five civilized tribes were the Choctaw, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Cree. They had their own written languages, farmed, lived in houses, and were the closest thing to civilized that Native Americans could get.

observation goes, of the teacher's long and patient labor."[75] Many of the agents and teachers believed that close contact with their tribes and parents was not good for the children and made them reluctant to accept the dominant culture and English language.[76] Because of these issues, agents jumped at the idea of having Indian boarding schools far away from the Native children's tribes and relatives. They fully supported the idea of year-round schools in which the children would be fully submerged into the White culture.

The final and most well-known type of Indian Boarding schools were the ones that were federally funded and away from Native reservations. These are the boarding schools that came about because of the idea given to the United States government by Colonel (COL) Richard H. Pratt. COL Pratt, well-known for his statement of "kill the Indian, save the man," believed that with strict military discipline and removal of children from their homes and families, the American Indian children could become educated, productive members of white society. In 1878 COL Pratt was given permission to open the first federally funded Indian boarding school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and as of 1879, Luther Standing Bear became the first American Indian student to set foot on the grounds.[77]

The federal Indian boarding schools had one more objective for these federally funded boarding schools. Not only were they meant to assimilate and Christianize Native Children, but they were also used as a means to calm and control troublesome tribes by taking their children 'hostage.' Ben Rhodd (Rosebud Sioux) stated, "[children were] hostages taken to pacify the

[75] Adams, 37.
[76] Adams, 49-51.
[77] Standing Bear, 69.

leadership of tribes that would dare stand against U.S. expansion and Manifest Destiny."[78] With this idea in mind, only three years after what the Whites considered, "Custer's Massacre,"[79] 86 Sioux children were taken to be the first class at Carlisle Industrial School. Twenty children from the Pine Ridge Indian agency and 66 from the Rosebud agency.[80] One Navajo elder stated, "…the government arrived at our villages and took our children away to boarding schools where they could learn to be like white people. When we put our children in those schools it was like giving our hearts up…"[81] Many families had little to no choice in whether they wanted to send their children to the boarding schools, the children were just taken from them. Tribes understood that while there would be benefits from their children receiving a Western education, they also understood that much of what their children would be learning and how they would be restricted was to ensure the erasure of their Native cultures.[82]

Native children were stolen from tribes and trained in a militaristic fashion. It was the belief that if the children had military style training and discipline it would encourage the "destruction of tribal idea and cultivation of individuality."[83] One woman recalled, "I remember when I first went there, they used to drill us. Drill us to the school, drill us to the dining room, and drill us back to the dormitory…We were just like prisoners, marching everyplace."[84] Students were required to conform to Euro-American style of child rearing that they had never

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[78] Nick Estes, "The U.S. Stole Generations of Indigenous Children to Open the West," *High Country News*, October 14, 2019, https://www.hcn.org/issues/51-17/indigenous-affairs-the-us-stole-generations-of-indigenous-children-to-open-the-west/.
[79] The Battle of Little Bighorn or Battle of Greasy Grass according to the Lakota.
[80] Estes, 2019.
[81] Gary Robinson and Phil Lucas, *From Warriors to Soldiers: A History of American Indian Service in the United States Military* (Santa Ynez, CA: Tribal Eye Productions, 2010), 51.
[82] Suzan Shown Harjo, *Nation to Nation: Treaties between the United States and American Indian Nations* (Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Books, 2014), 4.
[83] Britten, 15.
[84] Szasz, 86.

been subjected to before, such as physical punishments for not subscribing to the assimilation rules.[85] They were beaten if they were caught speaking their language or doing anything that the teachers believed to be a part of their Indian cultures.

Native children were stripped of their Native identity to promote individualism and assimilation. The children were divested of their Native names, made to choose White names that they did not understand or know what they meant, hair was shorn off and deloused with kerosene, and new, White clothes given to them while their moccasins, medicine pouches, and traditional clothing taken from them.[86] While many children found White clothing interesting and excited to wear them at first, they soon found that they did not fit them well and were uncomfortable and itchy. Most children wished to return to their traditional clothing after a brief time of wearing the new clothing. Their traditional clothing was not only more comfortable and fit them but was also warmer.[87] Native children also generally resisted the cutting of their hair, understanding that they could function just as well with it long. In the end, it did not matter.

The children were also not allowed to speak their language, only English, of which they knew little to none. Language was attacked not only to ensure that Native American children could speak the dominant language and function within Euro-American culture, but because it led back to Native American cultures. If the American government could rid the American Indians of their languages, it would be much harder for them to hold onto their traditional

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[85] Szasz, 78

[86] Many sources discuss the negative cultural impacts of the boarding schools including Standing Bear's *My People, The Sioux* p. 70-74, Robinson's *The Language of Victory* p. 11-13, Harjo's *Nation to Nation* p. 8, and Susan Applegate Krouse and Joseph Kossuth Dixon, *North American Indians in the Great World War* (University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 6, 24.

[87] Standing Bear, 73-74.

cultures, histories, and philosophies.[88] Luther Standing Bear, recollected a time while at boarding school, mentioning that his father, Standing Bear[89] once came for a visit, yet he was unable to speak to him in Lakota until COL Pratt gave him permission to do so.[90] They were not even allowed to speak to their family members and elders in their own tongue, effectively cutting off the youth and rising Native generations from the traditions of their elders. Once the children finally made it back to their reservations, some refused to even shake hands with their elders or speak to them, feigning forgetfulness of their Native tongue, ashamed of their culture.[91]

Not all Commissioners of Indian Affairs sought to completely rid Native American children of their cultures and traditions, however. Francis Ellington Leupp believed that while it was important to ensure that the American Indian could function in White society, it did not have to be done in a manner that completely erased Native identity. He did not believe that children singing in their Native tongue hurt their assimilation process, nor did he believe that Native arts and crafts should be completely outlawed in the boarding schools. He understood that Native arts and crafts were a significant source of funding on some reservations and actually promoted children to continue with these traditions. Leupp also vehemently opposed sending children far away from their tribes, cutting their hair, and banning Native ceremonies and dances.[92] Unfortunately, Leupp was one of the few that believed this way. Many policymakers understood

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[88] Gary Robinson, *The Language of Victory: American Indian Code Talkers of World War I and World War II* (iUniverse, Inc., 2014), 11.
[89] When many children choose a white name, their father's name ended up becoming their last names. For Example, Luther Standing Bear was previously known as Kills Plenty, his father's name was Standing Bear. After he was stripped of his Native name, he choose Luther off the chalk board officially becoming Luther Standing Bear.
[90] Standing Bear, 76.
[91] Standing Bear, 96.
[92] Both Britten's *American Indians in World War I* p. 34-35 and Adams *Education for Extinction* p.343-350 describe in detail Leupp's brief influences on Indian Boarding schools.

that the American Indian was a "Vanishing Race" and that it was just a matter of time before they either became assimilated or went extinct.

During their time in these schools, Native children learned to speak English and to read and write, but like the rest of the boarding schools, only half their days were spent in school. The rest of their time was spent 'learning' a craft that would make them productive members of society once they left school. For the boys, they were taught to be farmers, tinsmiths, and carpenters among other trades. Most of the girls were taught to be domestics. They learned how to clean house, sew, and cook, in this way they could be good maids or housekeepers, though a few were taught stenography, typing, and bookkeeping. Yet, many children were never able to utilize their given trade outside of the school, it ended up being useless to them when they returned to their reservations. Once Luther left Carlisle, he was never able to use his trade as a tinsmith to make a living, there was just no need for one on his reservation.[93]

Overall, they were taught menial jobs, nothing that would be considered worthy of promoting the Indian to a higher social class such as doctors, nurses, or lawyers. All of which would have actually come in handy when returning to their reservations. The children were taught just enough to function within the dominant society, but rarely to really become a part of or accepted into that society. They were taught to be the help, nothing more.

Native children not only had to overcome cultural suppression, but many faced hunger, disease, overcrowding, and depression or what some call "broken heart syndrome." Often these resulted in death and caused nearly every off reservation boarding school to have a cemetery.

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[93] Standing Bear, 75.

Indian Commissioner Price went before Congress describing some of the educational conditions these children lived with, stating that they could not learn in this environment, let alone live in it:

> Children who shiver in rooms ceiled with canvas, who dodge the muddy drops trickling throughout worn-out dirt roofs, who are crowded in ill-ventilated dormitories, who recite in a single school-room, three classes at a time, and who have no suitable sitting-rooms nor bathrooms, are not likely to be attracted to or make rapid advancement in education and civilization. [The Indian Bureau] is currently forced to use facilities which long ago should have been condemned as unserviceable and even unsafe.[94]

The living conditions were terrible for them and the food, foreign to them, seemed less than palatable; but even when it was edible or to their liking, there was never enough of it. Many children learned to live with constant hunger or how to steal without getting caught when working in the kitchens.[95] Helen Sekaquaptewa stated, "I was always hungry and wanted to cry because I didn't get enough food. They didn't give second helpings, and I thought I would just starve. You can't go to sleep when you are hungry."[96] One of the staff, Estelle Brown, even mentioned that "[She] did not know that for sixteen years [she] was to see other children systematically underfed."[97] While not all children at boarding schools were malnourished, the majority had to deal with near-starving conditions. It is safe to say that government funding was not spent to ensure Native students stayed healthy, only to reduce spending on warfare through education. Carl Schurz, estimated that "it cost nearly a million dollars to kill an Indian in warfare, whereas it cost only $1200 to give an Indian child eight years of schooling."[98] While

[94] Adams, 120.
[95] Szasz, 86.
[96] Adams, 124.
[97] Adams, 125.
[98] Adams, 23.

money was being saved to not shed Indian blood, it was also being saved, by not properly supplying Indian Boarding Schools with proper food, clothing, and housing for the children.

Limiting funding also created disastrous conditions that promoted the spread of disease. Disease, partially caused by overcrowding, ended up being the single largest reason why Native children passed away at boarding schools or soon after they were sent home. Tuberculosis, trachoma, measles, pneumonia, mumps, and influenza regularly swept through the overcrowded and less than sanitary boarding schools.[99] Six boys died at Carlisle Industrial School within its first year, while another 15 students were sent home,[100] many dying once they made it back to their families. A total of 195 marked graves are at Carlisle cemetery and well over a hundred at Haskell cemetery.[101] Too many of the children were never able to go home.

Children also passed away from what the *Indigenous Voice* calls "Broken Heart Syndrome, a different form of disease. Some children became so homesick, not allowed to go home and forced to stay, as was the case with Ernest White Thunder, that they became depressed and lost the will to live. Standing Bear, at Carlilse with White Thunder claims that he decided that he did not wish to go to school one day and preferred to stay home, the next day he felt sick and still did not wish to go to school, the following day White Thunder had died.[102] Standing Bear did not understand how a healthy boy could become so sick within such a short period of time and pass away. Only later in his life did he consider homesickness. Cora Folsom, director of Hampton Institute's Indian program mentioned:

> Homesickness with them [Native children] became a disease; boys and girls actually suffered in the flesh as well as in the spirit; could not eat, would not

[99] Adams, 135.
[100] Adams, 135.
[101] Adams, 141, 147.
[102] Standing Bear, 80.

> sleep, and so prepared the way for serious trouble… an Indian throws himself flat upon the bosom of mother earth and, scorning the weakness of tears, lies there in dumb misery for hours together, oblivious to dampness, to cold or heat.[103]

Between hunger, disease, and homesickness, many children never made it back home to their families. Not only did tribes lose their children, some families never knowing what happened to their children, but the children that survived lost integral parts of their culture by not being allowed to practice everything from growing their hair out and wearing traditional clothing to speaking their languages and traditional gender roles. Many of those that did survive had small ways of resisting assimilation. They secretly utilized their language, talked about their traditions and culture, and made kinship societies with the classrooms, among other things. Indian Boarding schools unknowingly became the first Pan-Indian movement of resistance, while other traditions went underground to be passed down from generation to generation.

Resistance

"…Awareness of our situation…brought out anger. With anger and concern 'hope' was born. We were aware [that] if we did not take action, in our time, future generations of Indians would be denied the right to share our own heritage…"—Mel Thom[104]

Even with the passing of these acts and policies, with the stealing of their children, Native Americans resisted assimilation and the extinction of their cultures, traditions, and languages. When necessary Native American cultures and traditions went underground. Natives, including their children, hid their traditions and cultures to continue to practice them and, though in some cases, traditions were lost completely such as the Crow Sundance, new

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[103] Adams, 144-145.
[104] Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis, MN: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994), 28.

traditions were formed. "The demise and cultural assimilation of indigenous peoples,"[105] was in full force by the 1900s, yet one American Indian succinctly stated, "we are red men still, even though we have plucked our feathers from our war bonnets and are using them for pens. The battlefield has shifted and the contest has become one of brains and wit."[106] Resistance has kept American Indian cultures alive to this day.

When the Indian Code of Offenses was implemented, many traditions went underground. The Hupa people's Flower Dance Ceremony, a ceremony to celebrate a girl's transition of becoming a woman went underground, practiced little but passed down from generation to generation.[107] It continues to be an important ceremony for the Hupa. Amongst the Canoe Paddlers of the Nakota, stories were told in secret. The government had told them, "It is illegal to teach your kids the Assiniboine language. If you persist we will throw you in jail." Yet, there were those that persisted and the language and culture remain strong to this day.[108] Traditional knowledge of plants and medicines also went underground.[109] Protected and carefully guarded by the families that knew of them, they continue to be passed down from one generation to the next. The Pawnee held strong to the ghost dance and other ceremonies. They "built mud-lodge settlements, planted crops in the usual manner, and attempted to live and worship in accordance with Tirawahut's directives. Spiritual leaders carried out their annual round of religious ceremonies…continued to hold healing and sacred bundle ceremonies…"[110] When Indian police

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[105] Smith, 146.
[106] Furnish, 123-124.
[107] Harjo, 175-176.
[108] Sweeny Windchief and Kenneth E. Ryan discuss sharing Indigenous knowledge within and academic setting in their article "The Sharing of Indigenous Knowledge through Academic Means by Implementing Self-Reflection and Story," *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 15, no. 1 (December 16, 2018): 82–89, https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180118818188, 83.
[109] Gilio-Whitaker, 83.
[110] Harjo, 166-168.

attempted to break up the rituals, the traditionalists continued to dance. They continued even when there were so few priests left; they just combined their efforts to hold the ceremonies.

Some warrior society traditions were practiced out in the open as well. For the Lakota and the Pawnee, amongst other tribes, each took scouting jobs with the U.S. Army, ensuring that warrior traditions were still upheld.[111] Native Americans that joined the Army as scouts were able to conduct "a going-away party, singing and dancing throughout the night and into the early morning hours…recounting brave deeds, mourning dead comrades, and expressing thanks for their own survival."[112] Keep some warrior traditions alive until they could be reinvigorated again with the start of World War I. Those within the Army, not as scouts, refused to cut their hair, despised wearing uniforms, and did not do well with the rigorous routines of military life.[113] Many ended up just leaving the military to ensure their traditions were not compromised.

The enforcement of the General Allotment Act also brought out forms of resistance. Again, amongst the Pawnee, many families refused to separate out into individual plots of land. They continued to live in camps and only engaged in enough farming to sustain themselves.[114] Various tribal leaders, spokespersons, and tribal councils spoke out in protest against the allotment, writing letters and petitions to the federal government to varying degrees of success. The Hopi wrote a letter to the federal government explaining their culture and why they would not be conforming to the Dawes Act:

> To the Washington Chiefs:
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> During the last two years strangers have looked over our land with spy-glasses and made marks upon it, and we know but little of what it means. As we

[111] Harjo in *Nations to Nations* p. 173 mentions this as well as Britten several times throughout his book *American Indians in World War I* to include p. 11, 21, 25.
[112] Britten, 26.
[113] Britten, 22-23
[114] Harjo, 169.

> believe that you have no wish to disturb our Possessions we want to tell you something about this Hopi land.
>
> None of us were asked that it should be measured into separate lots, and given to individuals for they would cause confusion.
>
> The family, the dwelling house and the field are inseparable, because the woman is the heart of these, and they rest with her. Among us the family traces its kin from the mother, hence all its possessions are hers. The man builds the house but the woman is the owner, because she repairs and preserves it; the man cultivates the field, but he renders its harvest into the woman's keeping, because upon her it rests to prepare the food, and the surplus of stores for barter depends upon her thrift.
>
> A man plants the fields of his wife, and the fields assigned to the children she bears, and informally he calls them his, although in fact they are not. Even of the field which he inherits from his mother, its harvests he may dispose of at will, be the field itself he may not.[115]

The Hopi discussed not only their sovereignty that they held and still hold, but also about how their culture is matrilineal in nature and that they had no plans to assimilate into a patrilineal society. The Hopi's land was partially separated into individual lots, but overall, they resisted the Allotment Act with a measured degree of success, held on to their matrilineal traditions, and fought the federal government at the federal level which ended up having the government give up their efforts to carve up the Hopi land base.[116]

Even Native children resisted the restrictions placed upon them at boarding schools. They practiced numerous parts of their cultures. "…the connective themes for these institutions—the removal from home, the imposition of a foreign culture, and the students' skill at matching their wits to take a stand against the system—remained a constant presence."[117] They may have had their hair cut short, their traditional clothing turned in for white clothing, and their language forbidden, but that did not stop them from fighting for what they could hold on to.

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[115]The letter is mentioned in both Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* p. 159-160 and Lawrence and Cooke's article "Law, Language, and Land…" throughout its pages.
[116] Cooke, 226.
[117] Szasz, 75.

Resistance generally happened in little ways. Luther Standing Bear recalls his experience of choosing a name, "When my turn came, I took the pointer and acted as if I were about to touch an enemy."[118] Standing Bear took what control of the situation he could and looked at it as counting coup against the enemy. Many students found ways of counting coups upon the system as well. Some slowed down work they were required to do or put a halt to educational programs, others became mute and expressionless when being taught, while others still, like Chester Yellow Bear called instructors crazy and told stories about them to the other students. In one instance, Yellow Bear was told he needed to apologize to Mr. Jones in front of his entire class, he was made to practice the phrase, "I am sorry I said Mr. Jones is crazy," but when the time came for him to make his apology, he simply stated in a loud voice for all to hear, "I am sorry Mr. Jones is so crazy," instead, effectively and publicly counting coup on Mr. Jones.[119]

Sometimes resistance came in more violent forms such as arson. Many boys believed that if school buildings were burned down that they would be sent home and given a break from boarding school.[120] Some children chose to be personally defiant. When they had decided that they had had enough of school, several children decided to run away. Some of them ran away to their homes, like in the case of one of my ancestors. Hating and humiliated that Flandreau Indian Boarding school cut his hair, my great uncle immediately ran away to his home on the Fort Peck Reservation. He arrived exhausted and starved after his couple-week journey of nearly 700 miles but made it home nonetheless and refused to be sent back. Both reservation and off-reservation boarding schools had issues with hundreds of boys and girls running away. Several

[118] Standing Bear's, 71.
[119] Adams, 257-260.
[120] Adams, 257.

superintendents of the schools even complained that parents supported and sent messages of when and where the children should run away too. Running away was a common occurrence especially when students knew of cultural and traditional events. One agent noted, "A few of these 'large boys' had been enrolled in the winter months, but as soon as the 'tom-toms' summoning the people to feasts and dances sounded on the neighboring hills in the spring, they were gone."[121]

For the older students, they understood that the white man's education and boarding schools were meant as a way to make them culturally extinct. Because of this they found ways in which to continue to preserve their culture in hiding. Students, once settled at schools, established networks based on kinship or other ties at school and set up social societies similar to those from home.[122] They made up terrible nicknames in their language about unliked and cruel instructors and staff of the schools.[123] Others would sneak off at night to tell stories and legends in their own languages and instruct one another in ways taught to them by their own elders.[124] One Omaha boy confessed that he and several other Omaha boys would sneak away to the storerooms at night and by candlelight, tell stories and eat pemmican, stolen from nearby villages.[125] Children from the Navajo and Apache have similar stories.

Some boys took it a step farther, escaping in the dead of night to hide in ravines or nearby wooded areas. While there they would make camp, hunt squirrels and rabbits with bows and arrows and perform "variations of the stomp dance around evening campfires."[126] Back on the

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[121] Adams, 252.
[122] Szasz, 78.
[123] Szasz, 78.
[124] Adams, 260.
[125] Adams, 260.
[126] Adams, 261.

school grounds, girls carried out their spiritual needs and performed peyote meetings.[127] Many children learned the ways of multiple tribes because of the boarding school experiences, becoming one of the first pan-tribal movements in history. Otis Russell (Osage) stated how he made friends with boys from the Arapaho and Cheyenne. "I stayed with them boys all the time…So, I slept with them too. And they had a gourd, they'd sing peyote songs. That's when I learn peyote songs. I know 'em all… That's how I learned to sing Arapaho and Cheyenne songs."[128] Ester Burnett Horne (Shoshone) had a similar experience, "We were curious about one another's tribal culture and language. We'd discuss the kind of dances or ceremonies that each tribe had and learn about each other's traditions."[129] These children not only kept their cultures and languages alive amongst those of the same tribe but were able to spread their cultural knowledge to members of the younger generation and other tribes, effectively preserving their culture. When Luther Standing Bear was working in the Wanamaker store, he was asked if it might be a good idea to bring a number of Indian boys to Philadelphia to go to school with white boys. He agreed it could work out, so 60 Pine Ridge Sioux boys were brought in to go to school with 60 White boys. In the end, the White boys were dismissed because they were learning how to speak Sioux rather than the Sioux boys learning English.[130] Even White children were willing to learn Native languages that were not supposed to be taught.

Not only did children preserve their culture in hiding, but they utilized the skills they learned at school to do it openly. While at Pine Ridge, one teacher, Thisba Huston Morgan

[127] Adams, 261.
[128] Adams, 166.
[129] Adams, 166.
[130] Standing Bear, 94.

recalled this instance of the Lakota girls gathering sewing materials to take out to the schoolyard and the subsequent reactions of 'braves' from the nearby reservation:

> Thus equipped, following the life patterns they knew, they would set up camps in the several corners of the playground, complete with tepees made of unbleached muslin, about two feet high for the families of Indian dolls made from sticks, covered with brown cloth, with beads for their eyes and real hair clipped from their own braids. Their dresses were cut Indian style, decorated with the tiniest of belts and necklaces and moccasins. Wagons would be made of the boxes and spools, to convey them and their belongings when on visits to a camp in a neighboring corner. There a feast would be prepared from scraps brought from the kitchen. One could see as many as fifty tepees at one time. One group would be encamping, another decamping, and another moving their heavy laden wagons. Sometimes another touch of reality would be added to the camp when a travois would be seen near a tepee, a tiny horse or dog, molded from the sticky gumbo with twigs for legs and dried in the sun, would be between the poles… Frequently, there could be seen a dozen or more braves squatting on the high ground looking down upon these miniature camps with nostalgic interest. They said it reminded them of their camps in the hills and they would recall their exploits on the Little Big Horn.[131]

Children utilized every opportunity possible to resist cultural extinction. They utilized their language in secret by telling legends and stories told to them by their elders, and in public to those willing to learn. Girls braided their hair in Native styles not allowed. Boys snuck off on hunting trips to also dance and sing around campfires. They taught one another their cultures, traditions, and languages, and above all, defied the odds through their various ways of cultural preservation.

Because of Native resistance, American Indian cultures did not become extinct. They may have changed, yet change can also be a form of resistance.[132] Only in American Indian culture is change thought to be less 'authentic,' yet change is a part of life, a part of culture, for any group of people, including American Indians. Without change, a people would not be able to

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[131] Adams, 261.
[132] Smith, 84.

adapt to the circumstances around them. Resistance and a willingness to adapt and overcome the changes of the world around them has helped Native Americans survive and helped to preserve their culture so that it could be utilized when it was needed, as was the case in World War I.

CHAPTER TWO

SAVING WWI: NATIVE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTIONS

"As Americans, in fact the original Americans, this war really and truly means something to us. Our young men have gone forth to war and have been cited for bravery just as in 1918. Because we are Indians doesn't mean that we do not have as much as stake in the land as you do. Our stake may not mean so much in dollars, but in respect and feeling it means as much and probably more, because of our religion about the land and its resources."—Thomas Yallup, Yakama[133]

In 1917 the world changed for the United States. The ongoing World War in Europe caused turmoil within the United States, some wishing to stay out of it, others feeling like the United States had a responsibility to help end it. For the 141-years that the United States had been a country, their foreign policy was neutrality. President Woodrow Wilson fully intended to continue that policy and worked to end the war through peace talks. Sadly, peace talks ended when Germany resumed their U-boat war that resulted in the killing of American lives and giving America no choice but to enter the war on The Allies side.[134] The United States declared war on the Central Powers on 06 April 1917, officially ending America's foreign policy of neutrality forever, and becoming the first time that American men and women were sent overseas to fight in a war that was not our own. Amongst those men and women were the American Indian. Though World War I pales in comparison to World War II in many ways, it is the war that altered American foreign policies and changed the lives of American Indians all together.

Native American contributions within World War I are often overlooked in many of the standard historical accounts of the conflict. With the lack of available sources, it could be argued

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[133] Gary Robinson and Phil Lucas, *From Warriors to Soldiers: A History of American Indian Service in the United States Military* (Santa Ynez, CA: Tribal Eye Productions, 2010), 49.
[134] Philip Zelikow, *The Road Less Traveled: The Secret Battle to End the Great War, 1916-1917* (New York, NY: Hachette Book Group, 2021), 10, 276-277.

that on a historical level, many consider their contributions and efforts of little significance in comparison to other minority groups like the African Americans and Mexican Americans.[135] And yet, Native Americans served in World War I at a higher rate per capita than any other ethnic group, and they continue to do so to this day.[136] It is estimated that over 12,000 Native Americans served in what was then called the Great War. That is roughly twenty-five percent of the entire male population of the American Indian at that time.[137] These estimates range from about 10,000 to 17,000 depending on sources, but regardless, it is a significant amount. Unfortunately, the true numbers will never be known due to lack of records and the practice of local recruiters recording Native Americans as 'White' to fill county quotas.[138] This indifference to Native American involvement within the Great War has led to a lack of knowledge of significant achievements and contributions within the war itself.

Because of research done by Joseph K. Dixon[139], promoted and funded by Rodman Wanamaker of the Wanamaker family and business, we are able to gain first-hand perspectives of

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[135] Historical books such as *The Road Less Traveled* by Philip Zelikow, *The First World War* by John Keegan, and *World War I* by S.L.A. Marshall all cover either the European and/or the American aspects of the Great War, yet when mentioning American troops within the war and minority groups, Native Americans are omitted. African and Mexican American troops and the way in which they were segregated are mentioned, some with more details than others, along with their skills, but not the American Indian. Even Britten who wrote an entire book, *American Indians in World War I* felt they were overlooked in comparison to other minority groups. There are only a handful of references that go into any great detail of Native American involvement within the Great War.

[136] Lucus et al., *From Warriors to Soldiers,* xv.

[137] Both Barsh, "American Indians in the Great War," 277 and Britten's, *American Indians in World War I,* 59 have similar numbers and percentages for the amount of Native American men that were drafted or volunteered to go to war. Their numbers differ only slightly.

[138] Some counties, wishing to be able to fill their quotas of enlisted man sought to label American Indians as 'White' on their enlistment cards to bring down the number of white men drafted within WWI. Bighorn County of Montana was renowned for it. See Britten, 56-57.

[139] Joseph K. Dixon was considered a "friend of the Indians." He worked for the Wanamaker Business whose wish was to document the "Vanishing Race." Rodney Wanamaker, the owner of Wanamaker store, placed Dixon in charge to record the American Indians. Dixon also believed strongly that the American Indians and their contributions throughout World War I earned them the trust of the United States Government and in turn should receive citizenship. His interviews and questionnaires of Native Americans after WWI were meant to provide the U.S. with the necessary documentation of the contributions of those that served.

the American Indians that participated in World War I. The collection of the questionnaires in which Dixon sent out to numerous Indian agencies, tribes, and American Indians themselves provide an invaluable look at Native American contributions in their own words. Dixon also recorded interviews with several American Indians and their commanding officers, compiling them into seven journals that were meant to be turned into a book later.

Dixon spent his life researching and recording Native Americans believing that it was the 'moral obligation' of the Whites to preserve what they could. He noted, "so rapidly are the remaining Western tribes putting aside their native customs and costumes, their modes of life and ceremonies. We belong to the last generation that will be granted the supreme privilege of studying the Indian in anything like his native state."[140] He very much believed in the Vanishing Race theory. Fortunately, this theory has been proven false and over one hundred years later, Native American culture is still strong today. However, without this belief, we may not have the fruits of Dixon's labor and his efforts to showcase the significant contributions Native Americans made within the Great War. This chapter will provide an analysis of Dixon's questionnaires and interviews to attempt to understand the reasons why American Indians joined the American military throughout World War I, how they dealt with the stereotypes and perceptions placed upon them at that time, as well as the overall contributions of American Indians with an emphasis of the cultural aspects of those contributions on both the frontlines and the Homefront. Bringing to light American Indian efforts in World War I will help to gain a better understanding of how those efforts helped to secure a revival of American Indian cultures and traditions for generations to come. There are only a handful of archival records of American Indians'

[140] Britten, 34.

involvement in World War I, but no others provide the voice of the American Indian. Dixon did this by sending out this letter with each of the questionnaires he had delivered in 1919:

> TO ALL THE TRIBES,
> Dear Friends:
> Mr. Rodman Wanamaker is employing every effort to make a historical record of the participation of the North American Indian in the great World War. For this purpose Doctor Joseph K. Dixon, Leader of the Rodman Wanamaker Historical Expeditions to the Indian country, has visited all of the camps and hospitals on the Eastern seaboard, taking photographs of returned Indian soldiers and wounded Indians, interviewing the Indians and the officers in command of Indians.
> Officers of all rank speak in highest praise of the Indian as a man and as a soldier. Of all the thousands of Indians who served in all branches of the Service, it has been possible to obtain a record of only about 1,500 of them. *There is no record of Indians serving in the Air Service. There is no record of Indians serving in the Navy.* If the record of the Indian in this Great War is preserved, the Indians must not fail in giving the information asked. It is Mr. Wanamaker's desire to make so complete and accurate a record that the history of the Indians in the War will be preserved by your own people as a thrilling story of your achievement, and also that the world may know of your patriotic service.
> It is so vastly important that an accurate historic record of the participation of the North American Indian in the World War be made, that this questionnaire is sent forth seeking the earnest cooperation of all Superintendents of Reservations and Superintendents of Schools—all Indians, and all friends of the Indian...[141]

This letter helped to compile the voices of the American Indian in World War I.

Why Join

"Loving liberty as he does, he will fight for it. Knowing the tragedy of 'broken treaties,' he will fight that there be not more treaties broken. The Indian fights because he loves freedom and because humanity needs the defense of the freedom-loving man. The Indian fights because his country, his liberties, his ideals and his manhood are assailed by the brutal hypocrisy of Prussianism. Challenged, the Indian has responded and shown himself a citizen of the world and an exponent of an ethical civilization wherein human liberty is assured."—Arthur C. Parker, First President of the Society of American Indians[142]

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[141] Joseph K. Dixon, 1919. *Wanamaker Collection: Ethnographic Collections.* Comp. Indiana University. Indianapolis, IN. Accessed December 2024. https://iumaa.iu.edu/collections/ethnographic-collections/wanamaker.html.
[142] Britten, 88.

On 18 May 1917, just over one month after the United States declared war on the Central powers, Congress passed the Selective Service Act and on 5 June 1917 the first call to register for the draft went out.[143] With the need to rapidly grow a standing Army, consisting of only about 108,000 troops at that time, with another 130,000 in the National Guard and the Marines numbering only 15,000,[144] the federal government required that all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-one sign up for the draft.[145] This was a requirement that included all Native American men, though only fifty percent of all Native Americans were citizens of the United States at this time.[146] Indian boarding schools became perfect for recruiting stations and were nearly emptied with ninety percent of all eligible men enlisting in the war.[147] The Native students' militaristic form of school aptly prepared them to join the military.

The War Department estimated that 17,313 American Indians registered for the draft, with some 6,509 of them actually drafted to go to war.[148] While a great many more Native Americans volunteered to join the military, there was backlash from many tribes questioning the legality of the draft due to the lack of so many Natives not being citizens and the treaty rights that were being violated.[149]

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[143] Russel Lawrence Barsh, "American Indians in the Great War," *Ethnohistory* 38, no. 3 (1991): 276, https://doi.org/10.2307/482356, 288.
[144]John Keegan, *The First World War* (Vintage Books, 1998), 352.
[145]Thomas A. Britten, *American Indians in World War I at Home and at War* (University of New Mexico Press, 1999), 51.
[146] Native Americans who were citizens of the United States at this time had gained it through owning individual property through the General Allotment Act, those who were not citizens were still members of their own sovereign nations apart from the United States see, David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (University Press of Kansas, 2020), 160.
[147] Britten, 67; Lucus et al., 45; Barsh, 278.
[148] Barsh, 277.
[149] Al Carroll, *Medicine Bags and Dog Tags: American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 102-103.

Most scholars believed backlash was due to the lack of understanding the English language and American cultures or that some tribes were located in areas so remote that traveling to registration boards was out of the question.[150] One Navajo field officer explained that, "Our primitive Indians here apparently have not yet reached the state in education where they have arrived at an understanding of their own countries need."[151] Yet, this argument does not hold weight for some of the tribes who were outraged at the necessity placed upon them to register, including the Navajo that the officer worked with. Tribes such as the Dine (Navajo), Utes, and Goshute of the Southwest protested enough that governors asked to have the National Guard called in. The Pamunkey and Mattaponi, located in Virginia, were able to successfully petition to be exempt from the draft.[152] Tribes that were not remote enough to warrant being left alone, as was the case with some Pueblo tribes, had enough knowledge to fight for their sovereign rights. The Creeks and the Seminoles, of the Five Civilized Tribes,[153] also did not lack an understanding of English or American ways, yet some of these members also protested the draft.[154] They had a long history of dealing with the legal system and federal government. The same goes for the Oneida and Onondaga of the Iroquois Confederacy. They fought the draft through the legal system and brought their case all the way up to the Supreme Court. The Oneida and Onondaga argued that the United States had no right to draft citizens of their tribes because they were a

[150] While Carroll states this on p. 103 of his book *Medicine Bags & Dog Tags*, Britten also mentions the theory on p. 52 of his book, *American Indians in World War I*.
[151] Barsh, 278.
[152] Carroll, 102-103.
[153] The Five Civilized Tribes, namely the Creeks, Seminoles, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw, were so named because of their willingness to assimilate into the dominant culture in the late 1700s and early 1800s prior to the Trail of Tears and Indian Removal Act. They had taken up agriculture, supported Reservation schools for their children, and even made their own alphabet to have a written form for their Native languages in the hopes that the federal government and White settlers would leave them alone to live on their traditional lands in peace.
[154] Carroll, 103.

sovereign nation with their own citizenship. The United States Supreme court ruled that only those Oneida and Onondaga men who were citizens of the United States were actually liable to the draft. Natives that were not citizens of the United States were required to register for the draft but were not required to become drafted.[155] Even though the Iroquois Nation fought for the right to not have their men drafted by the U.S., they supported the United States' entrance into the war and actually declared war on Germany, as a sovereign nation, claiming to be America's first ally.[156] Other tribes, like the Chippewa in Northern Wisconsin, had tribal elders who discouraged their men from joining the war. This was the same for the Bannocks and Utes of Utah, Hopis in Arizona, Shoshones from Idaho, and the Paiutes and Klamaths of Nevada and Oregon. They worried that all their young men would be taken, lost forever.[157] Tribal elders also resented the idea that the United States government could draft their men, disregard treaty rights, and showed their distrust of the federal government (and rightly so).[158] In the end, however, Provost Marshal General Crowder reported that only two percent of all Native Americans who registered for the draft deserted and/or resisted and only 228 Native men claimed a deferment outright.[159] Some like George Pineaux (Sioux), however, never realized that deferment was an option. Bitter about his military service he wrote, "I could never forget my family and the way I was taken away from them." He had a crippled wife and five children that he left at home.[160] Yet, the majority of American Indians tribes and men supported the call for duty.

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[155] Britten, 51.
[156] Britten, 69.
[157] Britten, 21.
[158] Britten, 63.
[159] Britten, 71.
[160] Barsh, 281.

Participation and support for the war was very much dependent upon the Indigenous nation that they came from. As with all Nations, each had their own perspectives and motives behind whether or not they wished to participate in the war. Of the tribes, about one percent of Navajo and Pueblo men served, fifteen percent of South Dakota Sioux men served, and nearly sixty percent of all Oklahoma tribes enlisted with thirty-nine percent of the Osage and fifty-four percent of the Quapaw.[161] The vast majority of support came from tribes that had strong warrior traditions, as the numbers for the Sioux, Osage, and Quapaw reflect. Chief Plenty Coup of the Apsáalooke (Crow) and Red Fox James of the Niitsitapi (Blackfeet), both tribes of Montana, requested that their young men be given the "chance to fight."[162] Red Fox James actually called on the War Department himself to ensure that his people had the chance to join the military. Chief Plenty Coups encouraged the men from his tribe to enlist to prove their patriotism and "rescue them from the miseries of reservation life."[163] He also believed joining the military would help to keep warrior traditions alive stating "this is a new day, with new ways of counting coup and proving your manhood."[164] Chief Strongheart, of the Yakima Tribe in Washington, visited over two hundred military posts and entertained servicemen with stories of Indian life and warfare.[165]

Just as tribes each had their own reasons for wanting their men to join or defer; each Native American had their own reasons for serving during the war, whether it was for themselves, their families, their tribe, or their country. Sam Thundercloud, a Winnebago, from

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[161] Barsh, 278.
[162] Britten, 63.
[163] Britten, 63.
[164] Norman B. Wiltsey, *Brave Warriors* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1963), 36.
[165] Britten, 63.

Mauston, Wisconsin, stated, "I am fighting for the rights of a country that had not done right by my people."[166] He served in the Company D, 128TH Infantry, 32D Division. Others told Lieutenant Gaulke, "When the war broke out, the Indian just couldn't stay out because he felt that he was as good as the best American."[167] Many felt that because they were the first and thus true Americans it was their duty to serve. They belonged to the land, and it was their job to protect the land they came from and their families that had no other place they called home. Owen Hates Him, Cheyenne River Sioux, stated along the same lines, "I ought to do something for my country as we Indians are the real Americans."[168] Phil C. Cato, Tewa Pueblo, from Chamita, New Mexico wrote, "As a true full-fledged American Indian, I entered the service of Uncle Sam, not to obtain any medals or be decorated for my bravery. I entered the service because I saw that my services were needed, and I felt it my sacred duty to offer up myself to my good Government."[169] George Horse Capture (Gros Ventre) explained his patriotism to his country in another way, "Our devotion and spirit is not for mom's apple pie but for grandma's dried meat. We are dedicated to our country, the physical land, not the country as most other groups think of it. This is *our* country. It makes no difference whose name is on the deed. We are the landlords."[170] Several American Indians also stated that they served to prove their loyalty to their county in the hopes that when they returned, citizenship would be granted to them. Leander Frank One Stand, a Miami from Hominy, Oklahoma, declared this of his service in an interview with Dixon in 1919,

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[166] Sam Thundercloud interview, Mar. 3, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 2, 2-3.
[167] Dixon, "American Indian," Book 2, 9.
[168] Owen Hates Him questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[169] Phil C. Cato questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[170] Carroll, 5.

> I think it benefited our people. The war was carried on for the benefit of humanity. I was glad that I was in it and did my bit. While I wear scars of a wound and while I wear one wound stripe, I would gladly carry more wound scars than the one I have had they been needed to do the business. The war will help my people because the country will feel that we staked all to help win freedom, and now we are counting on the country to give us that freedom. They must and they will see to it that we are fairly dealt with.[171]

Others leaned on strongly held cultural beliefs and their loyalty to both family and tribe as to whether or not they felt the need to join the military. Some refused to join because they did not wish to cut their hair or undergo routine physical examinations that made them uncomfortable.[172] William Apess, Pequot, hostile towards the thought of becoming a soldier had once stated at a recruiting station, "I could not think why I should risk life and limb in fighting for the white man whom had cheated my forefathers out of their land and become as bad as them."[173] While some Natives felt like Apess and held more anger towards the U.S. government for the treatment of their people, the majority wished to fight like their fathers before them to prove their worth, drawing on the long standing warrior traditions of some tribes celebrating the nobility of the warrior.

The military provided an opportunity to "preserve, protect, defend, and revive Native cultures, institutions, and spiritual and cultural practices."[174] Like that of James Hawk, Sioux from Pine Ridge, South Dakota stated, "I wanted to see the old thing through. My grandfather was a chief and was in the Custer battle and at the Battle of Wounded Knee, but I wanted to be in any battle that would wound the Germans."[175] Fred

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[171] Leander Frank One Stand interview, May 18, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 6, 13.
[172] Britten, 22.
[173] Carroll, 91.
[174] Carroll, 2.
[175] James Hawk interview, Apr. 1, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 3, 27-28.

Fast Horse also Sioux from the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota stated something along the same lines, "When they drafted me, I wanted to go because my people were fighters. My father was a chief and fought Custer, and I wanted to go and fight the Germans because they would come over here and destroy our free Government."[176] Private Simon Cusick also noted that his wish was to become like his grandfathers of old during his interview with Joseph K. Dixon. His grandfathers and fathers before him had been warriors since the Revolutionary War, and he wished to do his part. He "served in the World War [from] 1915-1918."[177]

Many Native men from a young age trained to become warriors with no way to prove themselves in battle with the reservation systems and the assimilation policies, entering the military and participating in World War I helped these young men to achieve the honor of becoming warriors for their tribes and all the status that came with it. The contemporary political scientist Tom Holm, Cherokee, described the American Indian contributions as a way to fall back on warrior traditions and Native identity that they felt had been previously lost to them and summed up Native Americans who choose to fight for traditional reasons as such:

> Participating in warfare in traditional times allowed young men to demonstrate important tribal virtues, including leadership and bravery, kinship loyalty, and respect for spiritual powers. If they were successful warriors, warfare also provided wealth and status…In several tribes the status of an Indian veteran of World War I equaled that of a warrior who fought against the whites one hundred years before. He had done the right things. He had fought well, survived, and abided by the treaties signed between his people and the federal government; most importantly, he had taken part in those time-honored tribal traditions linked to

[176] Krouse, 23.
[177] Krouse, 21.

> warfare. In short he was a warrior and, whether clad in traditional dress or in olive drab, he had reaffirmed his tribal identity.[178]

In the end, there is no monolithic reason as to why American Indians participated as strongly as they did within World War I or why they continue to serve in such vast numbers to this day. Many joined because of their cultural beliefs and tribal warrior traditions that included protecting family, land, and country, yet the reasons are as numerous as the ones that served.

The Natural Warrior

"An Indian man had all the qualities of a natural soldier: strength, courage, intelligence, loyalty, power of endurance, stoicism, sagacity, persistence, and relentlessness of purpose. He is a good hater and a staunch friend, a valorous ally and a fearless foe."—Joseph K. Dixon[179]

World War I marked the first time in history that American Indians were fully integrated into the military instead of being auxiliary units with separate command structures.[180] In 1866, Congress passed the Army Reorganization Act, authorized the army to enlist the help of thousands of Indians as scouts, trackers, interpreters, and advisors. They became valuable assets for the U.S. cavalry during the Plains Indian Wars of 1860s-80s but were not truly a part of the unit.[181] Indian scouts did not have to conform to the rigorous life of the Army, they did not have to wear the uniform, cut their hair and basically came and went as they pleased; they were able to keep their warrior traditions instead of bending to assimilation practices. By the end of the Indian Wars, and due to the success of Indian scouts, the War Department decided to experiment with all Indian units. These units were tested and failed for the same reason that the use of Indian scouts succeeded. Natives wished to continue to practice traditional warrior practices, but did

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[178] Krouse, 22.
[179] Britten, 40.
[180] Lucus, 38.
[181] Harjo, 173.

not wish to travel far away from family nor cut their hair and wear a uniform. There was also resistance from White officers of the time to lead them into battle or to accept them as useful for anything other than scouting.[182] Yet American Indians made marked impressions and made powerful allies in former President Theodore Roosevelt and General John "Blackjack" Pershing, who became the General of the American Expeditionary Forces throughout World War I.

Unlike other minority groups, most Native Americans were not placed in segregated units with a White officer in charge. They were combined with other White troops. "Friends of the Indian," the Office of Indian Affairs, and other groups believed that segregated units would only hinder the progress that American Indians had made within the last few decades under assimilation policies.[183] They felt that the final leg of assimilation would be the inclusion into white military units, ensuring that the American Indians were surrounded by English and other aspects of the dominant culture. The opposing argument was given by those wishing to preserve Native culture and the "pure Indian identity."[184] The idea of segregated Indian units was dismissed in favor of the hope of solidifying assimilation into the Euro-American culture for good. General[185] Henry R. Pratt stated that integration, "would wipe out, instead of strengthen racial prejudice. It would also make real soldiers out of the Indians and abolish exploitation of

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[182] See Lucus et al., 38-39; Britten, 12-23 for more information in regard to how Native Americans were utilized by the Army prior to World War I, the commanders that they fell under and how those commanders reacted to all Indian units and the ways in which Native Americans responded to being scouts and part of all Indian units. There were mixed feelings about the all Indian units, but the end results were the same, disbanded due to the reasons mentioned above.

[183] "Friends of the Indians" were a predominately White group, who believed they had the best interest at heart for how to 'protect' and handle Native Americans at this time. They helped to push education and assimilation policies through at a federal level and worked to have Native Americans gain citizenship after World War I.

[184] Britten, 28.

[185] This is the same COL Pratt that had started the off-reservation Indian Boarding schools, he received his promotion after to the start of the boarding schools.

the race, which is one of the evils they have been subject to all the years."[186] The Office of Indian Affairs agreed with Pratt, believing that the American Indian needed constant contact with the White population in order to complete his assimilation into white culture.[187] While there were rare instances of all Native companies, such as Company E of the 142D Infantry early on in the war, a majority of the units were interspersed with American Indian Soldiers. Though Natives that were in the same units generally stuck close together even in predominantly White units.

When Dixon asked Colonel Snyder what he thought of the fighting qualities of African Americans versus Native Americans, COL Snyder made an unflattering and racist claim that Blacks would run back to the rear or hide behind a tree at the first sign of trouble, but that he could always rely on his Indians to stand firm, "…you never knew an Indian to stand behind a tree. He stood in the very forefront of the fight, and when one Indian fell another Indian could be placed, and he marched right up in the face of all the guns."[188] Many officers embraced an oddly positive biological racism, believing that some of their very best men were Indians because they had the "natural instincts" of a warrior, that it was in their blood. Most even within their units got along well with the American Indian and were appreciated.[189] Albert Lowe, Winnebago from Black River Falls, Wisconsin, notes in his questionnaire that he, "was appreciated to do this [scouting] because of the Indian's keen sense of direction."[190] Lowe, himself believing in his innate scouting abilities because of this Indian blood. David Thief was

[186] Barsh, 282.
[187] Barsh, 282.
[188] COL Snyder interview, May 17, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 6, 8-9.
[189] Barsh, 283.
[190] Albert Lowe questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.

cited as being a "Sioux brave" with "great coolness"[191] as if being Sioux automatically makes you calm and collected.

It is possible that American Indians were more accepted into White units due to the many stereotypes that were associated with them. As with any time in history, the American Indian had certain stereotypes associated with them depending on what picture Euro-Americans wished to portray. They have gone from being depicted as Savages within the Spaghetti Westerns and dime novels of old to dehumanize them, to the Noble Indian of the Vanishing Race that needed to be preserved, to the Noble and Natural Warrior that was needed in World War I.[192] The Natural warrior was naturally camouflaged, had perfect eyesight and night vision. He could run for days and not get tired and never lost his sense of direction. The Natural warrior knew how to fight instinctively and was a great shot with the rifle. Every American Indian was supposed to be a Natural warrior and many worked to live up to those stereotypes placed upon them. Who would not want to be the perfect soldier?

Articles from various newspapers and trench journals supported the stereotypes of the Native American as a natural warrior, and many of the officers and other enlisted that worked side by side with the Native Americans embraced them. For example the American Expeditionary Force's (A.E.F) own trench journal, *The Stars and Stripes* reported, "…they [Indians] were all fighters, aggressive and resourceful, and there's not a doughboy in the Army who, having seen them in action, doesn't look upon them with a friendly, comradely eye"[193] or had titles such as "Yank Indian was Heap Big Help in Winning the War."[194] Other newspapers

[191] David Thief questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[192] See Gilio-Whitaker, 59 as well as Carroll, 86-113 and Britten, 28-32.
[193] Anderson, 6.
[194] Anderson, 22.

claimed, “they are perfect specimens of manhood and if their fighting ability is on a par with that of their forefathers, it is to be regretted there are not thousands of them where there are hundreds,” or “none the less courageous for the absence of feathers and war paint.”[195] Another noting the ‘natural fighter’ boldly claimed:

> The war whoop of the greatest natural fighter the world has ever known—the American Indian—will be shrilled over the red fields of France. With a machine gun instead of a tomahawk, with new weapons but the old craft and courage, Sioux, Cheyenne, Apaches and the rest of the red tribes are on the war path for Germans[196]

Many of the newspapers and trench journals utilized old stereotypes used throughout the Plains Indian Wars but turned them around to benefit the United States and promote the Natural Warrior and all of the courage and instincts that were supposed to go along with being an American Indian. Whether the American Indian had natural instincts or not, many of them ended up feeling the need to prove themselves in battle. Especially since the officers were not much better, one of them going so far as in an interview with Dixon mentioned that his Indians had such keen eyesight, that they could see in the dark like a cat.[197] Imagine trying to prove you had night vision.

The Germans themselves had stereotypes of the ‘bloodthirsty Savages’ that were the ‘First Americans.’ Though they held a high respect for the American Indians, they were also very wary about them, even to go so far as to proclaim to their troops that they need not fear the First American. The Germans had been fascinated with the Native American even before the start of

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[195] Barsh, 277; The headlines are ironic considering the time period was one of “Kill the Indian, Save the Man” yet they wished for more Natives to fight for them and used common stereotypes of war paint and feathers to sell papers.
[196] Barsh, 288.
[197] Major Reilley interview, Mar 14, 1919, Dixon, “American Indian,” Book 3, 4.

World War I. The Wild West Shows that toured Europe up until the war were well-known by the Germans. And a popular author of theirs, Karl May, who wrote about the Native Americans, focused primarily on the stereotypical image of the bloodthirsty, torture-hungry, savage warrior. All the negative perceptions of Natives as savages were what the Germans knew of them. May emphasized how noble the American Indian was, but also detailed their torture techniques, their thirst for scalps and their exceptional fighting skills. He even proclaimed that they could, "throw a tomahawk and cut off the tip of an outstretched finger at a hundred paces."[198] One World War I German Officer proclaimed that, "The most dangerous of all American soldiers is the Indian… He is an army within himself. He is the one American soldier Germany must fear."[199] So the German soldiers learned to be fearful of the Indian and their perceived natural abilities and bloodthirstiness as a warrior and went as far as having special snipers to take out Native American soldiers. When American troops found out about the Germans' fear of their Native American soldiers, they played upon it. Military officers suggested that a number of "night raids be conducted using men camouflaged as Indians in full regalia."[200] Thus, aiding in the demoralization of the enemy.

The respect and admiration were unique to Native Americans amongst minority groups.[201] While Hispanics were not trusted because of the number of draft-dodgers fleeing to Mexico they were still integrated into predominantly White units. However, African Americans received the worst treatment, believed to be dimwitted and always willing to run from a fight

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[198] Britten, 107-108.
[199] Paul C Rosier, *Serving Their Country: American Indian Politics and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 78.
[200] Britten, 109.
[201] Britten, 116.

they were denigrated to menial jobs and always in segregated units. Despite this, African Americans served in largely disproportionate numbers compared to their White counterparts and wished to serve largely for the same reasons as Native Americans, to prove their loyalty and gain citizenship.[202]

African Americans were often compared to the American Indian throughout the war. A journalist at the time of World War I, Miss Lou B. Robinson claimed that African Americans as a race were "irresponsible [and] incapable of high mentality, except in exceptional cases, or when due to a mixture of white blood. To compare the Indian to the black man, is an insult to the Indian." Eugenicists were even brought in to prove this.[203] Yet, when in combat with other countries, like France, one French soldier stated, "the blacks were faithful, loyal and tireless in their periods of active military operations…" he fully supported the idea of African American soldiers, but then backhandedly went on to say but, "they could not undertake missions requiring intelligence [yet] their lack of nervous system made them cool under the most trying situations, and their bravery, even to the point of rashness, was conspicuous."[204]

American Indians, on the other hand, were treated well and highly respected by both the men they served with and their commanding officers. Captain Hurley of the 165TH Regiment stated, "I have the most intense admiration for the Indian and his fighting qualities."[205] Lieutenant Philip T. Boone, Company F, 165TH Infantry, 42D Division testified that, "We never get into a tight place that we didn't depend upon the Indian to help us out…I would just as soon

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[202] Britten, 116-119.
[203] Britten, 118-119. This 'proof' was very much imagined. No one ethnic group can be proved to be better than another, through Eugenicists did try.
[204] Britten, 126.
[205] Captain Huley interview, Apr. 16, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 4, 22.

eat and sleep with an Indian as any white man I ever saw, and I had rather fight with them than with half of the brave men I know."[206] And a Sergeant First Class John Bilek stated in an interview, "I wished many times that all the boys in the American Army were Indian. We sure would have an undefeated army."[207] First Sergeant Ernest C. Goddard claimed, "They were without question the very best soldiers that we had."[208] The American Indian proved himself time and time again, despite the lack of respect received at home prior to the War. In the end, their efforts in the war earned them the respect that was given by those who served closely with them.

The Front lines: From Soldiers to Warriors

Men of honor, men of daring,
Men of courage, onward faring,
Men our nation's hearts are cheering;
Ninth Infantry.
From all Walks of life collected,
When poor France needs be protected,
And ne'er ray of hope detected,
America sent thee. —A Chaplain of the 9TH Infantry[209]

American Indians served in every aspect of the War. Overall, the best estimates suggest that about 10,000 Native Americans served in the Army under General Pershing, in the A.E.F, which would ultimately grow to a force of some two million men. Two thousand more served in the Navy and there are branches and military occupations named of individual American Indians

[206] Lieutenant Philip T. Boone interview, April 16, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian, Book 4, 23.
[207] Sargeant First Class John Bilek interview, Sept 14, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian, Book 5, 4.
[208] First Sargeant Ernest C. Goddard interview, May 17, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 6, 6.
[209] Michael Knudson and Ann G. Knudson, *Warriors in Khaki: Native American Doughboys from North Dakota* (Robertson Publishing, 2012), 6.

who were a part of the Marines and the Army Air Services, but the actual numbers or even estimates are still unknown at this time.[210]

They worked in all capacities from carpenters' mates and shipwrights, blacksmiths, electricians, firefighters, and musicians, to truck drivers, medical corps, doctors, pilots, and aviation specialists, calvary men, and most commonly as scouts, runners and messengers, and snipers.[211] Fourteen Native American women even served as nurses in World War I.[212] They served in every major engagement from the Chateau Theirry, in May 1918 to the Meuse-Argonne, in September 1918.[213] American Indians also became some of the most decorated soldiers in World War I, recognized for their courageous deeds, the French awarded twenty-six Croix de Guerre, the Belgian Croix de Guerre was awarded to one American Indian. The United States recognized fifteen for the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military medal awarded; seven were awarded the Silver Star, and thirty-two the Purple Heart, and estimated two thousand others were cited for bravery.[214]

Many Native soldiers were cited for bravery due to their scouting, sniping, and messenger abilities, but many were also killed in action because of those actions, considered some of the most dangerous jobs of World War I. Because of this they also have the highest casualty rate per capita than any other ethnic group in World War I at five percent, compared to the less one percent of the rest of the A.E.F.[215] Lieutenant Gaulk, the Battalion Adjutant of the 127TH Infantry 32D Division 3D Battalion stated in an interview with Dixon,

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[210] Erin Fehr, "Home - World War I Centennial Site," Home - World War I Centennial site, 2019, https://www.worldwar1centennial.org/.
[211] Britten, 66, 76, 101-102.
[212] Barsh, 280.
[213] Britten, 75.
[214] Fehr, "American Indians." www.worldwar1centennial.org.
[215] Britten, 82.

> A full company of Chippewa Indians were in his battalion, recruited at Shauane, Wisconsin, Company F—2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry, 32nd Division. These Indians were of more than ordinary intelligence. They showed promise of the highest type of Indian Military Prowess—they were in good physical fitness and marked military efficiency and excelled in Scout Duty and Patrol Service…The fundamental of his religion is 'Courage' and the man he takes to the most of all is the man of courage. The Indian will not make friends with a Weakling.[216]

Lewis Sanderson, Klamath mentioned in his questionnaire that if you were a scout, you were a sniper too and "if you couldn't find them [Germans], then walk out in the open let them shoot at you and find them."[217] Ward Bowman, a Cherokee from Oklahoma, received orders to conduct a scouting mission in "No Man's Land," he was not the only Native American within his regiment to be send out on scouting missions, recalling that Officers in the 167TH Infantry Regiment sent an Indian soldier "twenty-one times in succession in patrols, night after night until he was finally killed."[218] Even those that were injured, possibly by walking out to find the German snipers, were eager to make it back to their units. Sergeant (SGT) John Victor Adams, Siletz, mentioned this to Dixon about his own service:

> I enlisted. I was in High School, and I wanted to get into the fight that I might help the country win out…I was wounded at Chateau Thierry in the leg and eye, and gassed. I got back for the St. Mihiel drive. Went on through. I felt the best of our boys were getting killed, and I wanted to put my life up against theirs. I felt that no American could be or should be better than the first American. Therefore, I did not linger in the hospital.[219]

American Indians were eager to serve in whatever capacity they could. SGT Adams was no exception. The *Washington Sunday Star* reported on Five Osage Natives that served in the aero squadrons in 1919:

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[216] Lieutenant Gaulk interview, Mar 3, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 2, 5.
[217] Lewis Sanderson Questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[218] Britten, 82.
[219] Sergeant John Victer Adams interview, Dixon, "American Indian," Book, 46.

> The Aviation Corps of the Army makes an appeal to the red-skinned youth as fully as to the pale-face. There is a sharp fascination to youthful imagination in learning to take to the clouds like birds of the air. And then there is a kinship with nature, too, in the religion of the genuine Indian, which makes the ability of human beings to rise and go skyward doubly alluring.[220]

While the article holds on to some of the stereotypical narratives of the Natural Warrior, it also shows the extent to which American Indians were able to serve. They did not just serve as scouts and runners, though many did, and did so with great warrior pride; but they were also able to hold higher ranking military occupations such as pilots. They were not restricted to menial or servitude occupations like many other minority groups but were able to become pilots and aviators or in the case of First Lieutenant Josiah A Pawless, Chippewa from Wisconsin, doctors for the Army. He earned a Distinguished Service Cross, posthumously, for going above and beyond his call of duty and rescuing four soldiers, providing them with aid before being shot in the back. He saved the lives of the four only to lose his own.[221]

American Indians also served with distinction in what were considered non-combat roles. Private Moses H. Smith, Sioux, was commended for keeping his "transport outfit in better shape than any other man in the Supply Company," Corporal Benjamin Barnett was characterized as "one of the best clerks in the Regiment," while Sergeant John Shawnego, from Chilocco Indian Boarding school was "in charge of two large ovens that bake[d] over 200 pounds [of bread] at a time."[222]

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[220] Barsh, 280.
[221] Major Breckinridge interview, May 2, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 4, 41-42.
[222] Britten, 82-83.

The American Indians serving in the Navy were no less distinguished. William Leon Wolfe, Cree, was in charge of "the massive twelve-inch gun on the forward deck of the *Utah*."[223] The commander of the *Utah,* Captain H.H. Hough, took notice of Wolfe and commented, "I know little of the individual cases in the 1,200 men on board the *Utah*, but the Indian, Wolfe, has forced his character upon my attention by his stalwart service and ability."[224]

Two of the most renown and decorated American Indians to have served in World War I include Corporal (CPL) Thomas D. Saunders, Cheyenne and PFC Joseph Oklahombi, Choctaw of Oklahoma. Corporal Thomas D Saunders became the only Native casket bearer of the Unknown Soldier for his deeds in battle. He was a part of the 2D Engineers, tasked with being a wire cutter, amid two companies. They were meant to clear the way for the 2D Division's 9TH Infantry Regiment to push through Jaulny, a tiny township about two and a half miles northeast of Thiaucourt. Chateau Jaulny was a massive stone castle, which controlled one of the few river crossings in the area, with thick stone walls and four levels of cellars that was seized by the Germans. CPL Saunders, along with one of his squad members, braved artillery and sniper fire to rush the chateau. Prior to reaching the chateau, Saunders and his squad member encountered eight German soldiers that they took hostage. Once inside the chateau, the two men cleared the four levels and took a total of sixty-three Germans prisoners. By the end of it, the two of them were able to capture a key German stronghold for the Allies in Jaulny.[225] CPL Saunders earned the French Croix de Guerre and the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions that day.

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[223] Britten, 83.
[224] Britten, 83.
[225] Patrick K. O'Donnell, *The Unknowns: The Untold Story of America's Unknown Soldier and WWI's Most Decorated Heroes Who Brough Him Home* (New York, NY: Publishers Group West, 2018), 177-180.

Private Joseph Oklahombi, Choctaw, was another French Croix de Guerre and Distinguished Service Cross recipient. His citation states:

> Upon approval of the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary forces in France…cites the order of the Division. Private Joseph Oklahombi…of Company D, 141 Infantry. 'Under a violent barrage, dashed to the attack of an enemy position, covering about 300 yards through barbed wire entanglements. He rushed on Machine Gun Nests, capturing 171 prisoners. He stormed a strongly held position containing more than 50 Machine Gun Mortars. Turned the captured gun on the enemy, and held said position for four days, in spite of a constant barrage of large projectiles and of gas shells. Crossed "No man's land" many times to get information, concerning the enemy, and to assist his wounded comrades…'[226]

In addition to these feats, PVT Oklahombi became one of the first Code Talkers of World War I, using his language to help defeat the Central Powers. This ended up, arguably, making him the most well-known American Indian soldier of WWI.[227] These are only two of the thousands of decorated Native American soldiers of the War, in which many feats of bravery and skill were shown. Throughout the questionnaires and interviews, dozens of stories were told on how the American Indians were amongst the bravest and most reliable soldiers in their units.

Languages

By 1919, American policies were aimed at assimilating the American Indian. The old phrase, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man," by COL Pratt was quoted often and is reflective of the type of system that the American government pushed upon Native Americans. American Indian policy, by this time had outlawed Native American cultures, traditions, and languages for decades. Fortunately for the Allies, these American policies of assimilation had failed. Native American cultures, traditions, and especially their languages had persevered. While many

[226] Joseph Oklahombi questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[227] Britten, 81.

American Indians joined the military out of respect for the elders and chiefs who encouraged them, or because of warrior society traditions, there were other cultural aspects that also helped the Americans and their Allies to win the war. One of the most significant was the use of Native languages over the telephone wires.

Two stories are credited to the invention of utilizing Native languages as code. One credits the Military Intelligence community for producing the idea, the other credits the American Indians themselves, and especially Major Mose Bellmard, of the Kaw Nation. By late 1918, the outlook was looking dire for the Allied forces. The Germans were able to crack every code within hours, if not minutes of the transmissions over the telephone, and were fully able to anticipate any attack that the Allied forces pressed upon them.[228] Colonel A.W. Bloor of the 142D Infantry was given the idea of utilizing some of the Native American languages for code by one of his junior officers who had come across some of the Choctaw Indians speaking to one another. Realizing that since he could not understand what the Indians were saying, the Germans probably could not either, he relayed the idea to higher command.[229] COL Bloor, wrote to Headquarters on 23 January 1919, of the idea and the subsequent actions taken afterward. Once the two Choctaw Natives were chosen and separated into different companies, they transmitted plans for a delicate withdrawal of two companies of the 2D Engineer.[230] The plan went off without a hitch. Next, the languages were used in preparation of an attack on Forest Farm where the Germans were taken by complete surprise. The use of Native languages as code was a

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[228] Gary Robinson, *The Language of Victory: American Indian Code Talkers of World War I and World War II* (San Ynez, CA: Tribal Eye Productions, 2014), 20.
[229] This story is told with slight variations in Britten's *American Indians in World War I,* 106-107, Robinson's *The Language of Victory,* 19-23, and Lucus et al, *From Warriors to Soldiers,* 46.
[230] Robinson, 20; Britten, 107.

success! COL Bloor reported, "Within 24 hours after the Choctaw language was pressed into service, the tide of the battle had turned and in less than 72 hours the Allies were on full attack."[231]

The Department of Defense estimates that a total of twenty-six Native languages were utilized throughout the rest of World War I. However, it was not considered 'Code Talking' at this time since the Natives just talked on the radio in their Native tongue. Military jargon, such as machine gun and battalions were substituted with other words within the Native languages due to the lack of words to describe them in those languages. For example, a machine gun was, "little gun shoots fast" and battalions were labeled as one, two, and three grains of corn.[232]

According to another story, similar to the first, Major Mose Bellmard (Kaw) had the idea to use Native language to transmit messages across the telephone. A Lieutenant at this time, knowing the men in his unit, suggested that two of the Choctaw be placed on either end of the receivers. His plan worked and he was promoted to Captain. Bellmard eventually became the commanding officer of the All-Indian division. He was well-respected by his men and stories later came out of his feats.[233] Bellmard was among the first Indian warriors from his region to enlist in the Army and was made a Lieutenant of his company. Later he is remembered as leading by example, always going over the top first and saving his men from enemy snipers with the idea to pull a mattress across enemy lines to locate the sniper nest and take them out. Another story placed in *The Ponca City News* after his death states that he was considered a main instigator of tales that reached the German lines about the "primitive savagery of the American

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[231] Robinson, 23.
[232] Robinson, 20-23.
[233] United States Congress. 2012. *Senate: Remembering Code Talker Mose Bellmard.* Congressional Record, Washington D.C: 111th Congress, Vol. 156 No. 102.

Indians" only to capture some of his enemy, feed them chocolate and provide them with cigarettes to be let loose. Once the Germans reported back, they relaxed their vigil and Bellmard and his men were able to capture a total of 150 Germans.[234]

Cultural Usage

Other aspects of Native cultures were also utilized during the war. Corporal Henry A. Ankle, Sioux, was in the Battle of Argonne, amongst the Lost Battalion. According to his questionnaire he states, "…supply couldn't reach us for several days and some of the boys got weak and faint. I showed the boys how they could keep their strength by eating Elm tree buds and bark when marching into the forest. I [noticed] that some of the trees were slippery elm trees which acted as food to all those that eat it."[235] Without the use of CPL Ankle's knowledge of plants, many in his company may have very well ended up being badly malnourished waiting on supply to reach them.

Another Native in the Lost Battalion, Robert Dodd, Paiute, also utilized his knowledge of fire and smoke. "Dodd stuck to it with a grin on his face. He had a big German holder in which he would crowd handfuls of dry leaves, and would smoke, and fire his gun, the smoke furnishing a screen so that the men around him could not be seen by the German snipers."[236] He was wounded by the second day, but it was stated that he never complained and kept shooting until first aid could be rendered.

Private (PVT) Alex Antoine, Ottawa, from Traverse City, Michigan was an Infantry Scout for H Company, 18TH Infantry. His occupation as a woodsman and boatman helped him

[234] Joel Fant, "Bellmard Lived a Colorful Life," *Ponca City News*, March 28, 1948.
[235] Henry A. Ankle Questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[236] Interview of Robert Dodd, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 4, 37-38.

throughout his time in the military. PVT Antoine wrote in his questionnaire, "I have traveled thru (*sic*) woods without a compass and have always found my way. I always travel and get my bearings by the Sun, Moon, and Stars, I also keep my bearings by observing everything that I pass such as stones, fallin (*sic*) trees or branches of trees lying across the trail. I have travel thru (*sic)* woods for 48 hours without any water or anything to eat."[237] PVT Antoine was well trained to work as an Army Infantry Scout. The use of his occupation on both at home and the frontlines showed how he used the land around him and sky above him to guide his way.

Frank Young Eagle, Pawnee is quoted for talking about how he "felt good, for I knew that I had good medicine…"[238] It is also documented that Francis Pegahmagabow, an Ojibwa carried a personal medicine, crediting it with his survival throughout the War. He recalled how an elder had spotted him near the ship port and pressed a medicine pouch into his hand, he stated, "I have no idea what was in it. Sometimes it felt as hard as a rock, other times it seemed to be empty. At night it seemed to be rising and failing like it could breathe. I kept it with me at all times and I don't think I could have survived the war without it."[239] Many Native Americans carried personal medicine that included items such as medicine bags, or pouches like the one Francis Pegahmagabow carried with him. Other times they carried blessed or sacred items with them. Some Native soldiers relied on spiritual guides from ancestors or animals as well.[240]

In one instance, Dr. Orange Waler Starr, considered a Cherokee Medicine Man to his people, talked about how he once directed an Indian dance for the King and Queen of England during his overseas tour with the Army in WWI. While this was not specifically helping with the

[237] Alex Antoine Questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[238] Frank Young Eagle interview, Apr 30, 1919, Dixon, "American Indian," Book 4 21B-21E.
[239] Carroll, 111.
[240] Carroll, 13.

war efforts, it is worth mentioning due to the interest that was taken of Native American culture even at a time when it was not widely publicized or popular within the United States. Starr discussed his time in England, mentioning how he befriended tribes of all languages, customs, and dances. At one point they produced the idea of working together to pull together a performance from each of their traditions. He later wrote about the performance, "I pulled off a good stunt for them. We have several full bloods here so we pulled off a Stomp Dance for them and made a hit as no one had ever seen anything like it in this country."[241]

All of these instances are times when Native cultures and traditions came into play, and in a very significant way, their languages helped with the war efforts and the people within their own units. The assimilation that was forced upon Native Americans at home, in boarding schools, on the reservations was all shoved to the side when it came to not only entertainment of troops and royalty, but at times, the survival of a soldier and his men.

Native Americans contributed greatly to the war efforts: in numbers, the feats of bravery, and even their cultures, traditions, and languages had a part to play. Their contributions are far from insignificant. Some tribes lost as many as fourteen percent of their men, like the Pawnee, and the Sioux with a loss of ten percent, causing a serious blow to their tribes.[242] Native languages, alone, were used to turn the tide of war, it is amazing to think that these actions went unnoticed for so long. Especially considering the way in which Native American efforts help to start a cultural revival.

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[241] Richard Starr Colley, "The Search for History Never Ends," *The Goingsnake Messenger* XXXIX, no. 2 (2022): 43–49, 45.
[242] Britten, 82.

The Homefront: Going Traditional

"Now we two shall sing the War Dance of olden times
As when they used to be fighting in ancient times
Hey ya hey"—Simeon Gibson[243]

On the Homefront, Native American's efforts to support the war did not end once their men and women left for the frontlines. Native men and women worked in a multitude of ways to serve their men and women while overseas throughout World War I from promoting the sale of war bonds, joining the Red Cross, working in war-effort jobs, and even performing traditional send offs and welcome home gatherings. These Homefront contributions helped to solidify a cultural revival.

War Bonds and Red Cross Efforts

Following the example of their young warriors, Native Americans went above and beyond the call of duty. Cato Sells, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs throughout World War I, and other government officials utilized the enthusiastic purchase of war bonds by the American Indians to encourage other Americans to buy. Sells declared that even with the American Indian in relative poverty, they still managed to invest in war bonds.[244] A government press release declared, "None of the races which mingle in the American melting pot have a better Liberty

[243] An Iroquois War Dance that may have been performed during the Iroquois Declaration of War, sung by Iroquois soldiers: Simeon Gibson, George and Joshua Black after WWI. See Carroll, 108.
[244] Barsh, 284.

Bond record!"[245] Native Americans purchased over 4.6 million dollars' worth of war bonds within the initial push to fund the Great War. They averaged 4.3 million dollars with each issue of war bonds, totaling well over 25 million dollars' worth of Liberty bonds by the end of the war.[246] Cato Sells and the Bureau of Indian Affairs encouraged Native American participation in purchasing war bonds, believing that it would help them develop money-saving habits and hasten assimilation.[247]

Yet, even with assimilation continuing to be a prominent goal behind encouraging Native Americans to participate in war efforts, Native cultures and stereotypes were utilized to promote the war. Several American Indians toured around the United States to promote the sale of war bonds and were able to do that in traditional regalia. Believing the myth of the "Vanishing Race," Americans were enthralled with seeing American Indian cultures and Indians were more than willing to accommodate. Chief Strongheart, a Yakima from Washington, toured several military posts to advocate the purchasing of war bonds. Chief White Elk (Cherokee) and his wife Princess Ah-tra-ah-saun (Klamath) traveled throughout Oregon, California, and New York. Working the stereotype that all Native men were 'Chiefs' and all Native Women were 'Princesses' their tours were very successful. Within one week, it was reported that the couple sold 1.8 million dollars in Liberty bonds.[248] Chief Don White Eagle, from Wind River Reservation, was able to dress in full Native regalia and "perform war dances on the steps of the New York Public Liberty to sell war stamps."[249]

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[245] Barsh, 285.
[246] Britten, 133.
[247] Britten, 133.
[248] Britten, 134.
[249] Barsh, 285.

Using similar tactics for encouraging participation in Red Cross efforts, 'Chief Mexes' (Mescalero) and his wife 'Princess Lone Feather' (Passamaquoddy) went on tours across the country with the *New York Evening World* declaring, "Fired with the patriotism of their native land they are stirring the inherent spirit of just war in the hearts of their people."[250] 'Chief Mexes' and his wife were able to promote the Red Cross better as a Chief and Princess compared to their real names.[251] They were also able to dress in traditional regalia'; Chief Mexes' war bonnet and other regalia as well as Princess Lone Feather's beaded buckskin dress and headband are now displayed at Hett Art Gallery and Museum in Indiana.[252]

An estimated five thousand Native adults and thirty thousand Indian students enrolled in the Red Cross.[253] Private Edward Laundry (Chippewa) reported on his tribe, "Of the information I have, 1100 Indians of our tribe on the Fon *(sic)* Du Lac Reservation over four fifth of them bought Liberty bonds, and a great per cent of the Indians contributed to the Red Cross and other organizations."[254] J.H. Lawson stated that he did not know how much his tribe contributed to the Red Cross and Liberty Bonds, "but they were very active in all causes, such as Red Cross, Salvation Army, YMCA, in fact showed themselves one hundred percent Americans."[255]

Some of the South Dakota Sioux tribes utilized the Red Cross as a substitute for their traditional Sun Dance, which was associated with caring for the sick and ensuring the stability of their tribe. Many Natives chose to fulfill their Sun Dance vows "by contributing to the Red

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[250] See Barsh, 285.
[251] Chief Mexes' was the Red Cross persona of Mescalero Native, Homer Bruce. His wife 'Princess Lone Feather's' real name was never recorded.
[252] Todd Jay Leonard, "Docent- Program for the Hett Art Gallery and Museum," Camp Chesterfield, September 29, 2016, https://campchesterfield.com/, 9.
[253] Barsh, 284.
[254] Edward Laundry Questionnaire, n.d., Wanamaker Documentation.
[255] Krouse, 30.

Cross or donating livestock and property, and a few Sun Dance participants reportedly wore a Red Cross on their chest in lieu of the traditional chest and back skewers."[256] Native women, traditionally ensured that their men were taken care of prior to going off to war, continued the tradition by also contributing to the Red Cross. They helped to provide food, clothing, and other supplies that were to be sent to the frontlines. While each tribe's women prepared, encouraged, and provided for their men in diverse ways, they were able to do so in traditional fashions. "Mandan women fasted when their brothers were away on war expeditions, while Apache women were supposed to pray for their husbands every morning for four days."[257] Native women knitted socks, mufflers, sweaters, and hospital garments and provided comfort kits for American soldiers that also contained bath towels, combs, toothbrushes, shaving equipment and handkerchiefs.[258] 'Victory gardens' were also planted and food canned to help conserve food after the Food Administration director, Herbert Hoover, requested it.[259]

Native women did all within their power to support the war and their men. Some became nurses at home, while a total of fourteen of them became nurses in Europe, including Lula Owl, an Eastern Cherokee who is the only Cherokee able to claim to become an Army officer during World War I. Tsianina Redfeather (Cherokee), Iva J. Rider (Cherokee), also known as 'Princess Atalia', and Anne Ross also went overseas to provide entertainment for the troops.[260]

Prior to World War I, Native women were looked at with contempt, believed to neglect their children and be naturally promiscuous; after the war however, public opinion changed for

[256] Britten, 136.
[257] Britten, 136-137.
[258] Britten, 137.
[259] Britten, 137.
[260] Britten, 137.

them. American Indian women became known for their Indian beadwork and weaving skills and considered the most devoted mother to her children.[261] Throughout the war, Native American women were praised for their "thrift, hard work, and patriotism," that helped to change public perception of them even after the Great War ended,[262] even though their efforts were in large part due to them being able to embrace their traditional gender roles within their own tribes.

The Land

During World War I, the push for additional land to be cultivated to provide food for all made agriculture and farming a priority once again. Native Americans participated as much as they could within what is called the "Great Plow Up."[263] Between the years of 1916-1919 the cultivation of Native land went from 678,527 to 759,933. Native land that was not previously farmed was tilled and planted to help expand the efforts to provide food for both the Homefront and the soldiers at the front. Native Americans that did not have the ability to farm often leased their land for pennies on the dollar. Some were fortunate enough to be able to build their livestock, increasing Indian stock raisers by nine percent by the end of the war.[264] Sells declared that the "war situation make[d] it imperative that every tillable acre of land on Indian reservations be intensively cultivated [that] season to supply food demand."[265] Unfortunately this also led to the loss of more Indian land considering Franklin K. Lane, the Secretary of the Interior at the time, stated, "idle Indians on idle land must lead to the sale of the lands, for the pressing populations of the West will not long look upon resources unused without strenuous and

[261] Britten, 139.
[262] Britten, 138.
[263] Britten, 132.
[264] Britten, 144.
[265] Britten, 141.

effective protest."[266] Therefore many Natives sold off their land in an effort to do their part in the war effort.

Native Americans that could not become successful farmers and ranchers also worked to do their part. Many that could not serve in the war chose to work in war related industries, such as shipyards and aircraft plants.[267] Native students from the boarding schools were able to be trained as mechanics and technical automotive engineers to work for the Ford factory in Detroit, Michigan. Others gained employment in tractor factories, aircraft industries, in lumber mills and shipyards.[268]

Welcome Home Veterans

Native Americans participated in every available aspect of World War I, from being a soldier on the frontlines to the Homefront efforts of contributing to war bonds and the Red Cross, farming and ranching, and working in war-related industries. Yet, their biggest contributions, arguably, may come from the way in which they sent off their soldiers and welcomed home their veterans. Though Cato Sells tried to curb the number of Native dances and traditional ceremonies that were held, he eventually resigned himself to allowing it saying,

> The 'Welcome Home' which Indians give their young men returning from military service is usually the most cordial and commending character. Occasionally they feel that by reviving the native costume and some form of old wartime dances they can best express complete approval of those who enlisted under the banner of American freedom.[269]

[266] Britten, 142.
[267] Britten, 132.
[268] Britten, 147.
[269] Britten, 149.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, along with Sells, severely underestimated the warrior spirit and traditions of Native Americans and though they fully believed that contributions to the Great War would speed up assimilation efforts for both those left and home and on the frontline, in reality it had the opposite effect.

Only a few Native tribes provided going-away ceremonies for soldiers. Amongst them are the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in South Dakota and the Apache of the White Mountain reservation in Arizona. Of the Standing Rock Sioux, the White Horse Brigade, a traditional warrior society whose members included what may have been left of the old warriors of the tribe, inducted seven of their young soldiers prior to them leaving for war. They paraded them through the town all while singing the old war songs of the 'ancient Indian warriors'[270] in preparation for what those soldiers would experience in war and to provide protection for them. The Apache soldiers were honored with war songs prior to leaving for Camp Cody, New Mexico.[271]

Welcome Home ceremonies, meant to help cleans soldiers of wartime energies and bring peace after war experiences, became commonplace with the return of many returning soldiers. The Lakota were cleansed and renewed through sweats and elders talking them through their wartime experiences, followed by feasts and traditional giveaways.[272] Seaman William Jones (Iroquois Confederation) returning home, shortly after took part in the traditional Green Corn Dance of his people, followed by the War Dance, and later the Six Nations council.[273] Traditional giveaways and feasts became commonplace when welcoming home Native soldiers. Old victory

[270] Britten, 149 and Carroll, 106-107.
[271] Britten, 150.
[272] Carroll, 110.
[273] Carroll, 94.

songs and dances were renewed with various tribes as well. Myrtle Lincoln (Arapaho) attended a "Scalp Dance" or victory dance in Canton, Oklahoma in which a young Cheyenne managed to bring home a German scalp to display while veterans sang and danced around a huge bonfire. Birdie Burns (Cheyenne) remembers going to a Give Away Dance that included a night and singing and dancing as well as a renaming ceremony for some of the veterans. She recalls that after the veterans had received their new names, they "stood on a new blanket and covered themselves up. At this time, friends and relatives placed gifts of food and shawls next to their loved ones."[274] At one victory dance held in Cannon Ball, North Dakota, a crude representation of the German Kaiser Wilhelm II was constructed. At this time, Native warriors were allowed to creep up on the statue and shoot at it until it fell down. After its fall, four children, who were previously selected were able to count coup on the statue, followed by four men on horseback.[275] The Apache and Pawnee promoted victory dances that included their veterans wearing German soldier helmets and other items stripped from German uniforms.[276] The Lakota Sioux even replaced one of their traditional warrior-society songs about Indian enemies, with a war song that contained non-Indian enemies:

> The Germans retreat crying.
> The Lakota boys are charging from afar.
> The Germans retreat crying.
>
> Lakota boy, the Germans,
> Whose many lands you have taken,
> are crying like women there.
>
> German, I have been watching your tracks
> Worthless one! I would have followed you

[274] Britten, 151.
[275] Britten, 151.
[276] Adams, 323.

Wherever you would have gone.[277]

Death rituals were also able to be revived with instances that included Lee Rainbow (Yuma) who had died in France. His tribe was able to erect a huge funeral pyre to burn his body and casket as was Yuma tradition. True to Sioux tradition, with the death of Allen Otterman, a young man rode a horse through town leading the mourners who chanted lamentations for the death of their warrior.[278]

In many instances, the traditional giveaways, feasts, victory dances, and death rituals performed as early as November of 1918 for World War I veterans were the first time that many of the youth had seen or taken part in them. The older generation were able to hold on to these traditions and take the opportunity provided by the United States' entrance into World War I to openly share them with their younger generations. Clyde Ellis, a historian of the World War I time period stated that the war, "created a new generation of warriors, and Indian communities rushed to resurrect old society dances and rituals that now had renewed meaning."[279] A cultural revival was possible with a new generation of Native Americans that became soldiers and returned home as warriors.

World War I is a war that is overlooked and overshadowed by World War II. It ended ten million lives compared to the seventy million estimated in World War II. The technological advances of the Great War like the U-boats, airplanes, mustard gas, flamethrowers, and tanks were just the starting point for advancements in World War II with the submarine, bomber planes, chemical warfare, and more effective ordnance and tanks.[280] Yet, without the First World

[277] Britten, 150.
[278] Britten, 152.
[279] Adams, 323.
[280] Keegan, *The First World War,* 3-9.

War, the Second World War would never have happened. Without the contributions of the American Indian within the First World War, their continued contributions may not have been as large with the Navajo Code Talkers or even well-known Marine and Pima Indian Ira Hayes. The cultures and traditions of the American Indians may have become lost to time. The assimilation policies would have continued to be enforced with no real reason to stop. Warrior societies that were reborn and reorganized because of Native soldiers' participation in World War I may never have started again without a new generation of Native Warriors. Victory songs, feasts, giveaways, openly wearing of regalia would never have been necessary if World War I were resolved without bloodshed. Native American languages would have continued to be outlawed with no need for their uses as a wartime code. Native American cultures were able to be revived, and traditions passed down to the next generation, because World War I ensued; and on account of the significant contributions American Indians were willing to make on both the Homefront and the front lines.

CONCLUSION

THE AFTERMATH

"We have demonstrated to you how many hundreds of years we have survived. We wish to continue to exist."—Marie Sanchez (Northern Cheyenne)[281]

In the summer of 2007, my husband was stationed near San Diego, California on the island of Coronado. I was working at the Navy Exchange when a patron came up to me, asking where I was from. I told them I was from Montana. The conversation continued and somehow turned to Native Americans and how I was Sioux. After immediately finding out I was Native, the patron eagerly and earnestly asked how I enjoyed living in a house and I liked driving a car? I became confused and asked what they meant, they responded saying, "Well if you are an Indian and from Montana, you must have only lived in tipis and rode horses everywhere before coming here to California…"[282]

I was completely dumbfounded by this way of thinking. I grew up in Montana, where Natives are everywhere with the seven reservations and twelve individual tribal nations.[283] It was not until years later when I really realized that for many across the United States and the

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[281] See Dunbar-Ortiz, 204. This was the closing of a speech by Northern Cheyenne tribal judge Marie Sanchez as she was addressing the first conference at the United Nations on Indigenous Peoples of the Americas on behalf of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) in 1977.
[282] Kaja Anderson, North Island Navy Exchange, Summer 2007, face-to-face.
[283] "Seven Essential Understandings," Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2019, https://www.wmplc.org/seven-essential-understandings.html.

world, Native Americans are in the past. We do not really exist in the world today, or if we do, we must all live in tipis and ride horses everywhere.

Survivance

According to Gerald Vizenor (Anishinaabe), "the nature of survivance creates a sense of narrative resistance to absence, literary tragedy, nihility, and victimry. Native survivance is an active sense of presence over historical absence, the dominance of cultural simulations, and manifest manners. Native survivance is a continuance of stories."[284] In essence, survivance is the ability for Native Americans to continue to be able to tell their stories despite the lack of historic context within the dominant society. It is resisting assimilation and actively participating not only in the cultures and traditions themselves, but to ensure their preservation for future generations. Telling the stories of Native Americans within World War I ensures that those sacrifices do not become lost in time, that they are recorded within history, and take their rightful place amongst the significant contributions of the Great War. They have been overlooked for far too long. And because of those contributions, those stories, Native Americans and their cultures are able to not only survive to this day, but to thrive.

Native Americans from hundreds of different tribes each with their own cultures and traditions exist today because of the sacrifices and struggles of their ancestors. For over five hundred years, Native Americans have dealt with colonialism and its attempt at physical and cultural genocide. They have dispensed with technological advances, imposed assimilation

[284] Gerald Vizenor, *Native Liberty: Natural Reason and Cultural Survivance*, 1st ed. (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 1.

policies and still managed to survive with the bedrock of their cultures intact.[285] The United States government and policy makers underestimated the profound need for Natives to preserve their cultural heritage for future generations.

Throughout World War I, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Cato Sells earnestly believed that Native contributions were the final step in the assimilation process. In their eyes, they were able to turn more Native lands into farms and ranches, Native women became more domestic with their knitting and sewing, providing for their Soldiers and being a part of the Red Cross efforts. Native American men either found jobs with war-effort industries, farmed, or became soldiers; all of which they found to be an appropriate way for Natives to become Americans. However, the BIA and Sells underestimated the power and resistance of the Native American Warrior culture within so many Native tribes. They allowed traditional dances, ceremonies, feasts, and giveaways to begin in the open again in the name of supporting the war efforts.

Practicing those ceremonies after a minimum of two generations of outlawing them shows the level of resistance that Native Americans had. They were able to hide their cultures away and bring them to light to allow them to be passed down to the next generation. The consequences of these actions persist today. Even after World War I had ended, Natives openly practiced their traditions more and more.

Shortly after the war had ended, four Winnebago Indians gathered to tell their wartime experiences in their traditional manner. The ceremony lasted four nights, throughout that time they spoke to the "spirits of the German soldiers they killed in war… and told the German

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[285] Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples* (Edmonton, Alberta: Brush Education, 2018), 17.

soldiers to accompany Hino'nika, one veteran's wife who passed away, to gather wood and food for her and carry her tobacco." This was their way of honoring the spirits of the German soldiers they had killed in battle.

Taking place around the same time in Oklahoma, hundreds of Native soldiers from a number of tribes gathered together to sing and dance and retell their own wartime experiences. This pan-tribal reunion represented Natives from amongst the Apache, Comanches, Navajos, Papagos, Sioux, Blackfeet and many others that A'wa Tseighe (Pueblo) could not recognize.[286] Native American veterans returned home with a sense of pride for their deeds within battle, for their traditions, their tribes, and their nation.

Warrior traditions were reignited and adapted to the ever changing world. Victory Dances and songs added in new enemies and Flag songs became popular and are now sung at every Powwow to honor Native veterans. Jennings C. Wise, a lawyer and Army officer in World War I, noted that Indian victory songs, "praise those who fight in defense of home."[287] Andrew Blackhawk and Jim Carimon (both Winnebago), fought in France during World War I and wrote these lyrics that provide a wonderful example of how warrior traditions were able to continue and adapt:

> I love my flag,
> so I went to the old world to fight the Germans.
> If I had not loved the American flag,
> It would not have come back,
> But now we are still using it.[288]

[286] Britten, 84-85.
[287] Krouse, 17.
[288] Britten, 150.

Even today, war songs are performed to honor the American Indians that served as warriors within each of the United States' wars, the Black Lodge Singers (Blackfeet)[289] have this veteran's honor song:

> World War I, World War II
> Vietnam, Korea, Desert Storm
> Soldier boy, soldier boy[290]

This also manages to show how Native Americans have continued to serve their country, tribe, and family long after World War I. They continue to hold onto the traditions that honor their warriors.

On the Crow Reservation in Montana there is an area with panels of petroglyphs, one of the earliest versions of writing and keeping a record of history in the Americas. In the midst of these petroglyphs is one inscribed in the "MEMORY OF St. MihiEL" and "MEM. OF ArRgonnE,"[291] and has depictions of two, presumably, Crow servicemen in uniform. A number of the Crow people believe that it is a record of two friends that served in World War I together, James Cooper and Clarence L. Stevens.[292] Amongst the Crow, rock art (petroglyphs) was a way to publicly memorialize events. Whoever the author of this particular petroglyph was, they took the opportunity to traditionally record an event in their history that they believed should be memorialized forever.

The United States government continued to loosen its grip on assimilation policies well after the end of the war. During the second anniversary of the armistice that ended World War I,

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[289] A popular drum group that continues to travel the powwow circuit today.
[290] Carroll, 1.
[291] See Keegan, 185-186, St. Mihiel and Battle of Argonne Forest are two of the major offenses that American troops were involved in during World War I.
[292] Timothy P McCleary, *Crow Indian Rock Art: Indigenous Perspectives and Interpretations* (London, UK: Routledge, 2020).

the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was unveiled. Chief Plenty Coup of the Crow tribe was selected by the federal government to show their gratitude for Native American contributions within the Great War. Chief Plenty Coup was allowed to wear traditional regalia at the initial ceremony of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He was able to lay a wreath on the tomb and present a beautiful eagle-feather war bonnet and decorated coup stick to honor all American Indians that had participated in World War I. Chief Plenty Coup was then allowed to speak in his native tongue, "I am glad to represent all the Indians of the United States in placing on the grave of this noble warrior this coup stick and war bonnet, every eagle feather of which represents a deed of valor by my race… I hope that the Great Spirit will grant that these noble warriors have not given up their lives in vain and that there will be peace to all men hereafter."[293]

The federal government also sent out American flags and certificates of appreciation to some of the Natives who participated in the Great War. The Yuma tribe, upon receiving them, incorporated them into their traditional "Ceremony of the Dead" and flew the American flag over their "Temple of the Dead."[294] Again, reaffirming the ways in which Native Americans were able to carry on their warrior traditions in a new age. Military service provided a means for Native Americans to continue on with their warrior traditions. Even now, the Native American veterans from all the American wars are honored at American Legion events on reservations and at powwows with special honor songs.[295]

World War I also became a starting point in which tribes that had no previous warrior society traditions started honoring their veterans. Even prior to World War I, tribes in California,

[293] Britten, 160.
[294] Britten, 160-161.
[295] Britten, 184.

the Great Basin, and the Arctic and Sub-Arctic cultural areas had few customs that revolved around warfare until European contact.[296] The Great War not only helped to strengthen traditional warrior customs, but also helped to create new traditions and customs for tribes that previously did not have them.

Warrior traditions were not the only pieces of Native cultures to make a comeback after the war, however. A variety of other traditions and ceremonies were able to survive long enough for policies such as the 'New Deal' or Indian Reorganization Act, 1934 to be put into place.[297] That was the beginning of the end for forced assimilation policies.[298] For example, the Pawnee, while they no longer live in camps, have many of their people who still have a strong sense of traditional identity. They continue to practice customary values and their traditional ceremonies and dances.[299] Lois J Risling (Hupa) tells of how their Flower Dance Ceremony, an important ritual meant to welcome their young girls into adolescence, where the girls were required to "run long distances, fast, sing, pray, and learn, with the love and support of her family, community, and tribe" was outlawed with the Court of Indian Offenses.[300] Yet, when she was a girl, her grandfather filled her with pride the day that she received her menstrual cycle and prepared for the Flower Dance to welcome a new young woman into their tribe. The government was not able to make this ceremony disappear and it is still held to this day to welcome in their young women. Risling stated that her elders, "stood firm to keep alive our culture, so that now I can

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[296] Carroll, 102.
[297] Robert Allen Warrior, *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* (Minneapolis, MN: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994), 20, 24.
[298] Britten, 27.
[299] Harjo, 170.
[300] Harjo, 175-176.

plan the Flower Dance Ceremony of my granddaughter, Arya Yisuan Risling Baldy Mettier, and sing over her."[301]

Other laws and policies were gradually passed later that protected what was left of Native Americans' heritage, their cultures, traditions and even their language. To include the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, and Native American Languages Act also in 1990.

The Native American Languages Act states that its policy is now to "preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages."[302] While Natives were no longer punished for speaking their languages in the open, by 1990 the damage from the Indian boarding school era had already been done. Postcolonial theorist Nagugi wa Thiongo'o states, "language carries culture and culture carries the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world."[303] Many Native languages, and through languages, cultures, have become endangered with few fluent speakers in tribes across the United States. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Arizona, like all tribes, understand that "language is the foundation of… culture and spiritual heritage."[304] Language is integral to continuing to build upon traditions and cultures. And so, after over a century of assimilation and abuse, Native languages were able to gain the support necessary to begin to rebuild and preserve Native languages.

The contributions of the Code Talkers of World War I and subsequently World War II helped to eventually bring about this nationwide support. Though these particular contributions

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[301] Harjo, 176.
[302] Robinson, 127.
[303] Teves, 246.
[304] Robinson, 130.

within the war significantly aided in winning the wars, they were only recently recognized in the Code Talker Recognition Act of 2008. Nearly ninety years after the end of the First World War, the Choctaw and other code talkers were finally recognized for their deeds.[305]

Finally, on an international level, Indigenous peoples gained the right to "revitalize, use develop, and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems, and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places, and persons" through the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 30 October 1990. It was ratified by 143 nations at that time, though it took the United States another twenty years to reverse their own position on it and ratified it in 2010.[306]

Native Americans have resisted and survived the efforts of cultural genocide for centuries. Thanks to World War I, Native Americans were able to prove their worth in an environment that the United States government understood and came to appreciate. World War I became the first steppingstone to preserve the Native cultures, traditions, and languages that are left today. Native Americans are still here today, we have survived so that we can continue to practice our cultures but also rewrite and reright our histories.

Rewriting and Rerighting our Histories

Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues the importance of history is not only to stand for justice and trying to set things right, "history is also about power. In fact, history is mostly about power. It is the story of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their power to

[305] Robinson, 34.
[306] Robinson, 129-130.

keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate others."[307] Understanding that having history is also power furthermore provides a reason to rewrite and reright our own histories. Native American history has been modified to suit the colonizers, but now we have the chance to rewrite ourselves back into history using our own words; to highlight the important roles that American Indians have been a part of for their people and even the United States. Native Americans have made significant contributions within World War I and few people know about them. It is time that changes. Reclaiming our own history is a "critical and essential part of decolonization."[308]

Once the overall theme of Native American contributions in World War I was set, narrowed down to how it provided a cultural revival and where in history to begin, the research itself was able to be started. Skimming through secondary sources and primary sources the first time brought out smaller themes as well, such as which federal assimilation policies and laws caused the most damage to Native cultures and why, the reasons why Natives would join the military, stereotypes and perceptions of Natives throughout World War I, and the frontlines versus the Homefront contributions. As these smaller themes fell into place, it was important to be able to keep track of which information fell into which theme. Within my own research, color-coding themes became important, to not only keep track of each of the smaller themes, but to be able to separate out all of the information once the rewriting process started. This required rereading research material more in depth, the first time to color-code the themes and a second and third time while rewriting to ensure that the information found actually fell into the proper themes and to be utilized to rewrite and reright the stories that needed to be told.

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[307] Smith, 37-38.
[308] Smith, 33.

Rewriting and rerighting our own histories, telling our own stories, our own experiences, as has been done within this research, gives us a voice and a way to show that we have always existed and will continue to exist. It is one more way that we, as Native Americans, can show our resistance to all of our past traumas; all of the policies and laws that were emplaced to keep us down and the boarding schools that were meant to erase us. We have survived and continue to survive. Rewriting our own histories ensures that our voice starts to be heard and helps to reright all of the wrongs that have been committed against us.

Continuing

It will continue to be argued that Native American cultures and traditions today are not truly authentic because they have changed over time, that they are not the same as when the First American Indians were here because they have had to adapt to colonization.[309] However, Indigenous peoples are the only ones held to this standard. Cultures and traditions change for people based on the circumstances that are presented to them. They change because their climate or area, their food source or any number of things shift and change around them. Culture is not something that is stagnant. Stephanie Nohelani Teves (Kanaka Maoli) has written, "The investment in authentic tradition is complicated by the systematic removal of Native peoples from their ancestral lands alongside the institutionalized forms of violence that erased Native cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. In many cases the mixing and adaptation of tradition has been necessary for survival."[310] She continues to say that tradition is static, but that it can be

[309] Teves, 266.
[310] Teves, 233.

continued at any point in time. The Native Americans that were around during the time of the Great War have proven this.

Many elders were able to hold on to their tradition, their customs, their languages until there was a point in time at which they could be utilized again, to be passed down to the next generation. Some of their traditions and customs have adapted to the changing world. Many of their warrior traditions changed because the enemy changed, the weapons they used changed, and the way in which they were able to honor their warriors changed. But that is all part of continuing. "Continuing…shows how change and mobility are not the enemies of culture but rather necessary preconditions, since cultures that can't change don't survive."[311] Dr. Matthew Herman goes on to say that continuing "supports the perpetuation of Native life and culture by battling conceptual discontinuities aiming to cut the peoples off from their various pasts, presents, and futures across time and space."[312] Native Americans have adapted and continue to adapt and survive today.

Dina Gilio-Witaker has poignantly said:

> "To be born American Indian today is to have survived a holocaust of a very particular kind, one whose evidence is everywhere, all the time. After a pattern of simultaneous denial and justification of the five-centuries-long genocidal rampage on the continent and the settler population believing they knew what was best for the land and original inhabitants, Indigenous peoples focus on revitalizing their cultures and healing from intergenerational trauma."[313]

Native Americans continue to be a part of this world. Many of our rich cultures, traditions, and languages have survived centuries of oppression and colonization.

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[311] Matthew Herman, "Four More Indigenous Projects for the Native American Humanities," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 31, no. 1–2 (2019): 31–53, https://doi.org/10.5250/studamerindilite.31.1-2.0031, 34.
[312] Herman, 34.
[313] Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2019), 129.

Through survivance, we are able to make our mark known within this world, through the rewriting and rerighting of our histories through our own eyes, our own stories. We will continue to survive and continue to work towards even more hope and resiliency for the next generation. World War I was a point within our own histories that helped to make continuing possible.

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