SMELTER, CARA ANGELA. ‘Not as they were before and never can be’: Hampton’s Black and Indian Students Remaking Culture in the Face of Trauma (1870-1920). (Under the direction of Blair L.M. Kelley).

‘Not as they were before and never can be’: Hampton’s Black and Indian Students Remaking Culture in the Face of Trauma (1870-1920) examines black and Indian student identity at Hampton Institute, a school established amidst the chaos of Reconstruction in the South and Indian Removal in the West. Founded in 1868 by the American Missionary Association, Hampton began as a school for freedmen and women and later, in 1877, opened its doors to Indian students for an experimental Indian program. Hampton functioned as a normal school with an industrial education curriculum, commonly found in missionary schools in the 19th and 20th centuries, and it created a model for education particularly unique to the school. First principal and co-founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong developed the Hampton model, often referred to as “Education for Life.” He envisioned a program to train “the head, the hand and the heart.” Students received teachings in academics, manual training, and Christian education in hopes they would take what they learned and act as teachers and leaders of accommodationism. ‘Not as they were before and never can be’ utilizes the folklore collected by students, student letters, and student illustrations found in newspapers, and photography produced at Hampton to find signs of students’ attempts to retain, incorporate, and remake their identity despite the administrations’ desires to dilute African American and Indian identity and instill racial accommodationism.
’Not as they were before and never can be’: Hampton’s Black and Indian Students Remaking Culture in the Face of Trauma (1870-1920)

by
Cara Angela Smelter

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

History

Raleigh, North Carolina

2014

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Blair L. M. Kelley
Committee Chair

Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron

Dr. Judy Kertesz

Dr. Owen Kalinga
DEDICATION

For Phillip and Tinker. My Favorites.
BIOGRAPHY

Cara A. Smelter is a native North Carolinian. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in History from North Carolina State University in 2012. She resides in Raleigh with her partner Phillip and their cat, Tinker.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I will begin my acknowledgements with those at NC State that supported me most. Dr. Blair Kelley, Dr. Judy Kertesz, Dr. Katherine Mellen Charron, Dr.Owen Kalinga, and Dr. Susanna Lee, thank you for giving me the encouragement I needed when I was in doubt and for providing me space to grow.

To D.H. Hill Library, the Triangle Research Libraries Network, The New York Public Library, and Hampton University, it’s museum, and archive, without these institutions, this would not be possible.

I am forever grateful for the support of my family. To my mother, Barbara, my brothers, Bob and Tom, and my sister, Maura, thank you for making me the lady I am. To Connie, thank you for reading drafts of my papers from undergrad through grad school. To Brian, you have always let me know I am supported in everyway. I love all of you.

To Phillip and Tinker, you are everything to me. Thank you for being my love, my comfort, and my home. You are my forever study buddies.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 1.  
“…I often ask myself who am I”: Hampton Publications and African American Student Identity at Hampton Institute.................................................................24

CHAPTER 2.  
Incorporated Identity: Indian Student Identity at Hampton Institute.......................41

CHAPTER 3.  
“When you are the camera and the camera is you”: Photography, Identity, and Hampton Institute...........................................................................................................70

CONCLUSION............................................................................................................. 98

REFERENCES.............................................................................................................100

APPENDIX..................................................................................................................108
INTRODUCTION

In his autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, Booker T. Washington wrote of his alma mater, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, “The plan of the school was not modeled after that of any other institution then in existence…”¹ Washington’s quote speaks to the various facets of Hampton that made the school not quite like any other of its time, including the educational model, the student demographics, and the students’ resilience.

Hampton Institute emerged out of the chaos of a disillusioned country engaged in Reconstruction and Indian Removal. 1865 brought the close of the Civil War and the opening of Reconstruction. Implemented by Congress, Reconstruction, which lasted from 1866 to 1877, aimed at realigning the Southern states after the Civil War. Reconstruction intended to allow these states readmittance into the Union and guidelines were implemented under which whites, blacks, and Indian populations were to coexist in America where whites expanded their boarders into Indian territories and blacks no longer belonged to the institution of slavery. Although Congress enacted Reconstruction to unite the country, the South remained embittered by this new era and found it humiliating. Southerners resented their defeat in the Civil War and as if defeat weren’t humiliating enough, occupation of southern states by federal troops added insult to injury in the minds of many.

The humiliation of the South yielded volatile race relations and the rise of white supremacy. Many white southerners opposed Reconstruction because of the fear of freedmen voting, holding office and sharing the same freedoms as a white man. White southerners strived to restore white supremacy during Reconstruction, unorganized violence

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reigned with blacks being assaulted and murdered for various “offenses” to white supremacy, including refusing to step off a sidewalk for whites, challenging contracts, or attempting to buy land.  

2 In 1866, the Ku Klux Klan emerged out of Pulaski, Tennessee. The terrorist organization aimed to intimidate, through violence, freedmen who voted and held office, white and black Republicans, and proselytized white, Anglo-Saxon, fundamentalist Protestant supremacy.  

3 Although the first Klan disbanded in 1871 following a number of high profile trials of Klan members, white supremacy continued to impact the lives of blacks in the South well into the twentieth century.  

4 As blacks endured the turmoil of Reconstruction in the South, Indians suffered removal throughout the West. 

White Americans’ desire for native land is rooted in the founding of the country. From the first settler colonies to the creation of the Hampton Indian program, the mission to remove native peoples from their land was an on going process. The white American imaginary perceived Indians as having an abundance of land but lacking civilization. Whites believed themselves to be civilized but in need of land. It was upon this construction of Indian-white relations that Indian Policy emerged. Policies constantly evolved but the catalyst of land consistently influenced the decisions.  

5 In 1830, President Andrew Jackson pushed a piece of legislation entitled the “Indian Removal Act”. The act enabled Jackson to negotiate removal treaties with tribes living east

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of the Mississippi. Indian Removal was an extremely violent government appropriation of land. One of the most heinous acts of the removal policy, known as the “Trail of Tears,” was the Cherokee nation’s forced relinquishment of their land and relocation to present day Oklahoma. Government officials ignored starvation, disease and exhaustion as they lead this death march. More than 4,000 of the 15,000 Cherokees died. Removal to reservations became the Indian Policy that paralleled the establishment of Hampton. The growing constriction of Indians’ freedom to move came with the end of the Civil War. In the thirty years that followed, conflict and bloody warfare ensued because the federal government removed natives from their land. But regardless of the policy’s title, Indians always met the appropriation of their land with resistance and the result yielded war and violence. One by one, Indian tribes fell under the modernization of the United States warfare. In 1871, just six years before Hampton admitted it’s first Indian students, Congress officially deemed Indians a colonized people. The 1871 colonization of Indians and their movement to reservations meant a certain process. Chiefs and male elders became incarcerated and their children,

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8 Following the Civil War, the coming of the railroad, the innovation of the telegraph, and the upspring of military forts were further means of boundary constrictions for Native Amerians. Following these hurtles, homesteaders, cattlemen, and sheepmen were close on the heels of these previous constrictors. Adams, *Education for Extinction*, 7.
depending on age were either immediately forced into government regulated boarding schools or were imprisoned during the limbo between their removal and boarding schools.\(^{10}\)

Amidst the turmoil of Reconstruction and Indian removal, Union general Samuel Chapman Armstrong, pursued opening an educational institution for the uplift of African Americans he led as troops and freed during the war.\(^{11}\) Armstrong modeled his educational institution for African Americans after schools created by missionaries to colonize through education, a method Armstrong learned from his father, Richard Armstrong, a Presbyterian missionary in Hawaii. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1840 moved Richard Armstrong from Maui to Honolulu to take charge of the largest native church on the islands.\(^{12}\) Richard oversaw the construction of the new church, “Kawaihaoo,” and led a congregation of three thousand. This new opportunity for Richard also provided him a seat in government and pitted him against rival missionaries on the island. With a new position of authority, Richard wished to implement what he believed to be “the key to Hawaiian


Reconstruction was prompted by: the end of the Civil War, and such acts as Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 that freed African Americans in Confederate states and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1865.

Christianization and survival,” Richard’s direct intervention in Hawaiian’s secular and religious lives.\(^\text{13}\)

Richard’s intervention in the life of Hawaiians became clear as he made his first major effort while in government, acting as a member of the Privy Council as “Counselor to the King.”\(^\text{14}\) Richard supported an act, “Great Mahele,” a land reform act that divided the islands into thirds, with only one third given to Hawaiian commoners. Bringing his own westernized view of how people should best use land, he worried that “savage” native peoples would be unable to tend to the land in a “proper” fashion. During this time, American missionaries appropriated not only governmental control, as demonstrated by Richard, but cultural outlets as well. With the exception of one newspaper, American missionaries influenced or controlled all of the Hawaiian newspapers, with Richard controlling *Ka Hae Hawaii*.\(^\text{15}\) Missionary control in the government and over print media allowed for the colonizing reach of missionaries to expand and impact traditional Hawaiian culture.\(^\text{16}\) Richard’s colonial concern inspired him to develop a curriculum of manual labor

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\(^{14}\) Richard Armstrong acted as counselor to the reigning king, Kamehameha, until the king’s passing. King Kamehameha wrote of Armstrong’s role in Hawaiian government: “Doctor Armstrong has been spoken of as Minister of Public Instruction and subsequently President of the Board of Education, but we have only partly described the important offices which he filled. He was a member of the House of Nobles and of the King’s Privy Council, Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Oahu College, Trustee of the Queen’s Hospital, executive officer of the Bible and Tract Society, and deeply interested in developing the agricultural resources of the kingdom.” Talbot, 13; See Also, Engs, 8-11.


\(^{16}\) Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 82-83.
integrated into education, which he refined over twenty years. His son Samuel Armstrong became privy to the evolution of Richard’s curriculum and acquainted himself with its implementation and success in reshaping the culture of the indigenous people of Hawaii.

In 1847, Richard became minister of public instruction. As minister he did not agree with the separation of church and state in the territory. Richard set the precedent of a far-reaching mission as he created over five hundred schools on the Hawaiian Islands. The schools taught his missionary curriculum all the while he gained funding and support from the government. When examining the way the Hampton model spread across the United States and internationally to Africa, it can be said that Samuel internalized and echoed his father’s model of effectiveness through an expansive “empirical” educational system and emulated his father’s role as the colonizing missionary. His father’s work in Hawaii can be attributed to why Armstrong and Hampton remain unlike any educational institution for blacks at the time.

Samuel Armstrong began working for the Freedmen’s Bureau after serving in the Union Army for three years leading the 9th Regiment of the United States Colored Troops. In October of 1867, while working for the Freedmen’s Bureau, Armstrong embarked on his lifelong mission to help solve the negro problem via education. The American Missionary Association funded the opening of a new school and Armstrong received a nod to run the

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18 Employing the manual labor educational model, Richard Armstrong oversaw Lahainaluna Seminary and Hilo Boarding School. The students of these schools engaged in traditional studies, but also worked on the school farm, learned the principles of agriculture, produced most of their own food, and a surplus to help finance their education; Engs, *Educating the Disenfranchised and Disinherited* 11; Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 54.
19 Talbot; Engs, *Educating the Disenfranchised and Disinherited*, 46.
normal school being built in Hampton, Virginia. Beginning as a school for freedmen, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute opened its doors to fifteen black students in April of 1868.\textsuperscript{20} Just ten years after the opening of Hampton, the projected track of the school changed. Working with General Richard Henry Pratt and the United States Department of the Interior, Armstrong created the Hampton Indian Program in 1878 and admitted the school’s first seventeen Indian students.\textsuperscript{21} The creation of the program came out of Armstrong and Hampton’s continual thirst for funding from Northern donors and the United States government. General Armstrong was known to say, of the Indian students he agreed to admit, that there was money in them.\textsuperscript{22}


Hampton, VA was chosen as the site for the school to accommodate the large, free black, refugee camp that had been erected nearby. The school was opened by the Freedmen’s Bureau but funded significantly by the American Missionary Association (AMA).

\textsuperscript{21} Richard Henry Pratt was born in 1840 in Rushford, New York. His father, a land prospector, died when Pratt was nine years old and is devout Methodist mother raised him in Indiana. He only received two years of education before he began working to aid his mother as she tried to support the family. During the Civil War, Pratt served as a corporal and by 1864 he ranked as lieutenant. He left the army for one year and rejoined in 1867 and the army stationed him at Fort Arbuckle, Indian Territory. While at Fort Arbuckle he served as second lieutenant of the Tenth Calvary and in 1873 he became captain. The Tenth Calvary was the first black calvary regiment and the unit included freemen and Indian scouts. Pratt’s stance on racial politics varied. He publically supported the fourteenth and fifteenth amendment and black voting rights. Pratt did believe Indians could be civilized, but enthusiastically supported the removal of Indian populations. He believed in the potential to civilize Indians and he wished to incorporate assimilationist methods into the education of Indians. He resented the Office of Indian Affairs and all organizations interested in preserving, in any way, Indianness, including the Reservation. Pratt wished to eliminate race pride and hoped to usher in a smooth transition from Indianness to whiteness. Donal F. Lindsey, \textit{Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923} (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 22-26.

\textsuperscript{22} Jeremy B. Taylor, “‘There’s Money in Them’: General S. C. Armstrong’s Marketing Plan for the Hampton Indian Program,” \textit{The Ozark Historical Review} 37 (Spring 2008),
Hampton’s pedagogical platform was one of manual and industrial education, a common form of education used around the world. Armstrong gravitated toward this form of education quickly because it mimicked the educational style his missionary father used in Hawaii. However, administrators at Hampton developed an educational model unique to the school that blended manual, industrial, and religious education to uplift black and Indian students.

Armstrong developed the Hampton Model, also known as “Education for Life,” by envisioning a program to train, “the head, the hand and the heart.” Students received teachings in academics, manual training, and Christian education; “The discovery [of the Hampton model]…was the discovery that a judicious training of the hand is at the same time a discipline of the mind and will; that industrial efficiency has moral consequences. This high doctrine of the spiritual significance of physical work has been taught with reiterated emphasis in many Reports of the school.” Armstrong and the school administration hoped students would take what they learned and act as teachers and leaders of accommodationism throughout the south.

Admission to Hampton required students to agree to become a teacher and remain enrolled until they completed their training, the aims of Hampton succeeded in eighty-four

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23 For more information on Industrial Education, please see; Charles A. Bennett, History of Manual and Industrial Education Up to 1870 (Peoria, IL; Charles A, Bennett Co., 1926), 23-27.
percent of the first twenty graduating classes. The training of teachers consisted of manual labor and the ideology of “self-help.” Armstrong expected that students would intensely labor and the prospective teachers, after working under extreme conditions, would be able to teach the ethic of working long and hard hours. Historian James D. Anderson suggests, “[After teachers learned the “dignity of labor”] Then, and only then, believed Armstrong could his normal school graduates develop the appropriate values and character to teach the children of the South’s distinctive black laboring class.”

Booker T. Washington, Hampton’s star student and valued teacher, declared his philosophy of accommodationism at the Atlanta Compromise Address. Even when practicing accommodationism, self-determination still existed, which is exemplified through Washington’s Tuskegee Machine. In an all black school with an all black faculty- Tuskegee taught self-determinism, at a time when most schools, like Hampton, were overseen by white administration. Like Hampton, the curriculum of Tuskegee helped students garner economic independence through the teaching of a normal education and trades.

The Hampton model aimed to remove the individuality and identities students brought with them to the school. Surveillance and tight control of the daily lives of students were a major part of Hampton’s education model. The ringing of bells, which signaled the next activity for the pupil, directed the lives of Hampton students. Moreover, the staff ability

to go through personal items at any time left the students in a constant state of alert. Accommodation and assimilation were doctrine and blatant resistance to administrators’ enforcement of the Hampton model resulted in traumas ranging from physical abuse, to isolation, or the refusal of administration to permit students to graduate. Because the administration subjected students to such punishments, from a passing glance at the Institute, it appeared students conformed and even embraced the Hampton model. Although some students never provided indications that they resisted or adapted to the model, others defied the model and refused to abandon their identities.

The traumas inflicted on students by the administration, including the attempted removal of individuality (for example: removal of hair length and style and forcing all students to practice Christianity and wear a uniform), identity, and punishments were not the only anguish students endured. Many of the students who arrived at Hampton suffered from displacement of either family, land, or home. The unrest across the country from Reconstruction to Indian Removal left black and Indian populations displaced. Hampton housed many removed from their land, yet the trauma of displacement did not divide students. Instead, students worked to make connections amongst themselves and rebuild the social and even familial connections decimated by displacement. The students’ quest to reconnect and re-establish a community provided opportunities for students to remake their identities.30

30 For further reading regarding displacement and the trauma surrounding displacement, also referred to as “root shock” see: Mindy Thompson Fullilove, M.D., Root Shock: How Tearing
Reconstruction and the Indian Removal project occurring concurrently in the United States facilitated displacement and the chaos potentially benefited Hampton’s administration for the purposes of the Hampton model; when people are removed or uprooted from their families and homes, language and culture suffers. Although students suffered innumerable traumas, black and Indian students made connections with each other and maintained agency, strength, and resilience. Using student folklore, letters, illustrations, and photography this thesis argues that students retained, incorporated, and remade their identity at Hampton Institute, despite administrations’ desires for accommodation and assimilation.

This thesis is particularly important because it explores aspect within various historiographies including race, folklore, education, and photography that have not been explored extensively regarding Hampton. Chapter One examines African American student identity through the folklore published in the school’s monthly, *The Southern Workman*. Folklore is used to highlight and reinforce a collective identity within the student body through the numerous stories published. The published narratives demonstrate the students’ resilience in the fight to retain aspects of themselves and their identities outside of the world of Hampton. To conceive of the significance of the folklore collected and published by students, explorations into ethnography, race, and folklore as categories of historical inquiry must be assessed. Ethnography and folklore emerged as fields that promoted the study of people as subjects, not as collaborators, and those subjects lacked agency.  A movement in

*Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About It* (New York: One World Books, 2005). For specific information regarding the quest to reconnect, see: Fullilove, Root *Shock*, 4-5.
the study folklore away from the study of a subject to the active collaboration with a participant, shifted the historiography of the field.

Robert A Georges & Michael Owen Jones, *Folkloristics: An Introduction* serves as a significant work in the field. *Folkloristics* now acts as the defining introductory handbook to the study of folklore.31 Georges and Jones’ work (re)defines the field and includes sections such as the importance of story-telling and folklore to those people suffering from trauma. *Folkloristics* examines the utility of the practice of folklore to promote identity and agency.

Published nearly one decade prior to *Folkloristics* was Donald Waters, *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams: Afro American Folklore from the Hampton Institute.*32 Waters’ work is imperative to the study of black folklore at Hampton because it serves as a guide and assessment of the meaning of the folklore coming out of Hampton Institute. Although *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams* remains the most comprehensive collection of all of the folklore published at Hampton, it suffers from the focus on ethnocentricity and was published on the cusp of the turn in the field of folklore. Waters removes agency from students by discounting student participation in the collection of folklore as esoteric. Rather, my study of the student collection of folklore and such participation demonstrates student engagement and agency. Chapter one identifies the agency often overlooked in the literature surrounding African American folklore at Hampton. It examines the field of folklore as a means for students to claim control over identity and overcome trauma.

Chapter Two interrogates the folklore, student letters, and illustrations found in *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students*, locating student agency as Indian students reimagined and formed their identities. Indian student identity does not equate to Indian identity. Indian identity, equated with “Indianness,” is Native American culture, cultural values, beliefs, and practices concerning the nation, tribe, family and spiritual connections—an identity that does not completely remain intact. Indian student identity is used in this thesis to describe the formation of a complicated identity, born out of a boarding school experience. Indian student identity, as argued in this chapter, encompasses a mixture of: tribal identity, inter-tribal relationships which over time form a pan-Indian identity, and popular American culture which helped to reinforce “Indianness” but additionally shows that students could incorporate aspects of American culture into their lives. Though Indian student identity may not be uniquely Indian, it is the identity evident among a number of students at Hampton Institute.

Explorations of race and identity as categories of historical analyses have contributed to a shift in the historiography of Native Americans, away from the works that illustrate them as impressionable and having no agency. Of the works pertinent in the fields of Indian identity, community and race, and Native American students at Hampton, David Wallace Adams, Malinda Maynor Lowery, and Donal Lindsey have made significant interventions. All three historians explore Native American educational institutions during Reconstruction, but each vary in their specificity of focus.

David Wallace Adams’ *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience* explores the federal education policy leading to the development and
evolution of the off-reservation boarding school and delves into the students’ lives at the schools. Wallace argues for students’ creating sense of self outside of their traditional identity and beyond the acculturation imposed by the schools. He states that Indian communities could expand because of the boarding school experience, making larger, intertribal networks of friendship and community possible. Adams describes the creation of a pan-Indian identity; noting “one of the chief consequences for students attending an off-reservation facility was an enlarged sense of identity as ‘Indians.’ At schools like Carlisle and Haskell, Sioux children were regularly thrown into intimate association with Comanche and Navajo.”³³ Students learned quickly there was no room for tribal distinctions. At these institutions, “designed to extinguish Indian identity,” such arrangements “may have in fact contributed to its very persistence in the form of twentieth-century pan-Indian consciousness.”³⁴ Although Adams does well to describe the rise of a particular notion of identity out of the boarding school system, he neglects to discuss thoroughly an understanding of Indian identity before the students reached the boarding school, which is necessary to understanding fully the way students viewed themselves.

Malinda Maynor Lowery’s work fills in the gap in *Education for Extinction*. Central to Lowery’s *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation*, is the theme of identity. Lowery contends that people now known as Lumbees previously defined themselves in numerous other ways and that these variations of association or identifiers correlate Indian identity not with names but with something much

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greater. Indian identity is defined by conversations between each other and select outsiders. Lowery argues for the development of an insider and outsider framework. Kinship provides access to becoming an insider, but even when the status of insider is met, variations of opinion can make one an outsider, even on the inside. Lowery contends that though many variations of identity markers exist, a few run through all nations and can be used to correlate with a singular distinction of Indian identity. Enduring foundations of Indian identity that Lowery highlights include kinship, land, and community. Lowery suggests the three are linked and that place, most of all, resonates with all Indians.35 “For example, when an Indian asks ‘Where do you stay at?’” she observes “he or she means where on the land are you living. The answer conjures up a whole host of associations, based on knowledge that had been passed down for generations.”36 The “place” links associations of kinship and community. Here, Lowery clearly fills in Adams’ gap of what native students brought with them to the boarding schools, providing a more expansive understanding of the students and their formations of pan-Indian connections.

In terms of racial complexities, Lowery discusses Lumbee willingness to segregate themselves in schools from blacks in order to gain recognition by the federal or state government outside of distinction as “colored.” Lowery’s work interrogates primarily Lumbee encounters and negotiations with race. Adams’ work, by contrast, does not grapple thoroughly with black and Indian students’ being educated together and what this meant for the students. Biracial educations have unique implications on all parties involved. Histories

on Indian education usually briefly touch on African Americans, and vice versa. The discrepancy between black and Indian students is not uncommon because, as aforementioned, Hampton stood as an interracial anomaly of the normal, manual and industrial schools. Therefore, a study of Hampton and its students sheds new light on these intersections.\footnote{Lowery, \textit{Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South}, 1-54.}

Critical to the literature of Indian schooling and Hampton is Donal Lindsey’s 1995 \textit{Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923}. Among Lindsey’s numerous conclusions lies an overarching theme that Hampton cannot be understood completely as long as there is a split image portrayed. Rather than separating red from black, Lindsey argues they must be analyzed together because if the administration thought about a solution to one minority, they did so in a relational context for the other. Lindsey approaches Hampton student history much like a comparative and intersectional work, arguing strongly for the necessity of putting black, white, and red in conversation with each other. Lindsey does not isolate the groups, but neglects to discuss intertribal connections and often places Indian voices aside in order to engage with the voice of Hampton principal, Samuel Chapman Armstrong.

Lindsey also deals more with Indian resistance and interactions with African Americans rather than discussing the way Indian students viewed themselves in relation to other students at the school. Lindsey’s work, like many, remains comfortable not venturing beyond the immediate actions and the results of those actions on the students attending.
Also, because Lindsey focuses primarily on student action, he tends to subscribe to the common historical binary of either accommodating or resisting in Indian education.\textsuperscript{38}

This work integrates numerous aspects from each of these studies on Indian education and identity to provide a richer image of Indian students in a boarding school experience and at Hampton. The historiography creates binaries between Indian, white, or black, and evaluates traditional Indian culture outside of the boarding school system’s impact on formations of identity. The literature thereby overlooks the complexity of the impact of the boarding school environment on Indian identity. Rather than diminish Indian students’ agency to formulate their own identities the boarding school experience, steeped in violence and heinous acts against “Indianness,” ironically fostered an environment for students to formulate and depict a complex “self.”

Chapter three analyzes the way black and Indian students used photography as a mechanism to claim agency over their image and identities. Explorations of photography, race, and identity as categories of historical analyses have contributed to a shift in the historiography of black and Indian photography, away from analyses attributing such subjects as impressionable, void of culture, and having no agency. Of the works most pertinent in the field of photography, race, and identity, Susan Sontag, Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith, and Alfred L. Bush and Lee Clark Mitchell have made significant interventions. All of these intellectuals explore photography and representation, but they vary in their specificity of focus.

\textsuperscript{38} Donal Lindsey, \textit{Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923} (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995).
Susan Sontag’s 1978 *On Photography*, a collection of six essays, first published in the *New York Review of Books*, explores the relationship of images to reality and art. Sontag’s essays written in the 1970s reflect the culture of photography of the time. But, her theory remains applicable to photographic analyses contemporarily; especially in the ways those who followed utilized her thoughts and theory.

Sontag’s collective analysis of photography highlights the cultural problem of accepting photographs as factual images of reality, which, in turn, actually reveals something about the viewer’s perceptions of reality. Moreover, Sontag comments on the visual illiteracy imposed on a photograph by both the photographer and viewer. Many assign meaning to a photograph assuming the photo is simply the product of a meeting between a photographer and subject, she contends. Yet “A photograph is not just the result of an encounter between an event and a photographer; picture-taking is an event in itself, and one with ever more peremptory rights- to interfere with, to invade, or to ignore whatever is going on.” Sontag attributes the illiteracy, misperceptions, and photographic fragmentation of reality to a moral and ethical world view within the photographer and viewer.

One of the most important aspects of Sontag’s work lies in her assertion of the unique “powers” of photography. By that she means that photography’s reach extends beyond the photographer and does not depend on the intentions of the image-maker alone. Sontag’s arguments about the power of photography echoes the promise discussed by Frederick Douglass, a promise that photography can foster self-evaluation and in-turn, social change.

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nearly 100 years earlier and facilitates any analysis of the photographs taken within Hampton.

Maurice O. Wallace’s and Shawn Michelle Smith’s collection of essays, *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, incorporates theoretical analyses of photography from Susan Sontag, but expands her and other theorists’ works to encompass a discussion of photography, race, and identity. Like Sontag proposed, *Pictures and Progress* continues the historiographical shift within photographic analysis away from the photographer, expanding photographic evaluation to “the subject as performer and the viewer and collector as interpreters of photographic meaning.”

Most imperative, *Pictures and Progress* draws together essays spanning time and place to produce the most comprehensive assessment of African American identity in photography. Ray Sapirstein’s “Out from Behind the Mask: Paul Laurence Dunbar, the Hampton Institute Camera Club, and Photographic Performance of Identity” analyzes the collection of photos taken by the Hampton Camera Club for six of Paul Laurence Dunbar’s books of poetry. Sapirstein argues that Dunbar’s poetry did not explicitly critique racial and cultural disparities, but did implicitly state the problems buried for his African American readers to recognize within the common established form of poetry. Therefore, the Hampton Camera Club worked to accurately illustrate, through photography, Dunbar’s poetry. The photographs of the Camera Club voiced opposition to racial hierarchies and, as Sapirstein

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discusses, utilized the photograph as a political landscape for African Americans to “wear the mask” and perform, and reclaim, identity.\textsuperscript{41}

Shawn Michelle Smith’s “ ‘Looking at One’s Self through the Eyes of Others’: W.E.B. Du Bois’s Photographs for the Paris Exposition of 1900,” explores Du Bois’s photographic display at the Paris Exposition and argues that the images and their arrangement aimed to disrupt the authority of the white viewer, and bring any viewer a new cultural closeness with the African American subject. Smith’s work facilitates discussions of the strength and power photography provided to African Americans and how it disrupted white middle-class culture and assumptions. Moreover, Smith’s essay emphasizes the importance of analyzing the significance and impact of a photograph from all gazes including the photographer, the subject, and particularly, the viewer.\textsuperscript{42}

\textit{Pictures and Progress} makes significant claims about how African Americans produced photographic meaning and practiced photography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{43} Much of the photography and race theory employed in it serves as

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\textsuperscript{43} “Practicing Photography” refers to African Americans engaging in photography, not simply as photographers, but engaging in the visual culture. Photography not only offered the opportunity for self-representation, but African Americans also operated within the realm of photography to “make claims to legal, political, and socially recognized American Identities.” Practicing Photography meant to engage in a movement, a collective action to
equally helpful in the analysis of photographs produced by other minority groups as well. Alfred L. Bush and Lee Clark Mitchell’s *The Photograph and the American Indian* grapples with the problematic relationship between photography and Native Americans. With regard to how Native Americans share a more contentious relationship to photography than other groups Mitchell comments, “Occasionally, someone will regret that the camera came too late for Native American life... Yet upon more considered reflection, regret seems an inappropriate, even illogical response, since it is clear that the sophisticated technology which led to the camera resulted from the very forces imperiling tribal life.”  

Although the relationship between photography and Native Americans remains problematic and difficult at times to follow, Mitchell traces the history of the two from the 1830s to the 1990s. He argues that although many white Americans utilized photography as an exploitative tool, Native Americans who appear in such photography many times over defied the stereotypes early photographers intended to depict. Therefore, a history of cultural exchange more accurately captures photography of Native Americans from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.  

Many of the photographs analyzed by Mitchell are taken from Off-Reservation Indian boarding schools, therefore providing context in which to analyze photography of and for Indian students at Hampton, the pioneer of the boarding school system.  

This work integrates numerous aspects from each of these studies on photography, race, and identity to provide a richer image of black and Indian identity found within

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photography and, particularly, the photos of Hampton Institute. The historiography provides the building blocks to recover identity and locate agency within photography, but each study remains racially separate. The existing literature thereby misses the complexity of photography and multi-racial identities in conversation with each other. Proponents of assimilation relied on photography naively perceived in the nineteenth century as real and only depicting “the thing itself” or the image taken, with no additional intervention, mediation, or artifice- to convey the “uncivilized” and “newly civilized” but neglected to recognize the power of the photograph itself.46 Contrary to assimilationist desires, African Americans and Native Americans at Hampton Institute across the country utilized the photograph as a landscape to foster, formulate and depict a complex “self.”

The historiography highlights the importance of continuing the study of Hampton. Hampton emerged as a Freedmen’s School, yet it existed at the forefront of the off reservation boarding school system, and the intersection of black and Indian students. This is a particularly fascinating project because student agency must be assessed through looking, primarily, at hidden actions and performance. Because of surveillance and punishments, students adhered to toeing a line between practicing school policies and maintaining identity. Hampton also warrants investigation because beyond the uncommon school demographics, Hampton also operated its own press, museum, and folklore society. The press provides another outlet in which students could express their thoughts, even with oversight of the Hampton administration. Newspapers from schools such as Hampton are often discounted because of administrative oversight, but those are wasted opportunities to find student

identity and expression. The museum and folklore society also create an interesting dynamic because Armstrong and the administration encouraged students to collect material culture and deliver it to the museum. The collections of items at Hampton provide copious amounts of material for investigation into student identity.
CHAPTER 1

“...I often ask myself who am I”
Black Student Identity at Hampton Institute

On April 11, 1903 the New York Times published an article entitled, “The Southern Workman.” The article highlighted the importance of the Hampton Institute publication of the same name and stated, “[the Southern Workman is] one of the most interesting of the swarm of periodicals in our country.” The column credited the Workman, a monthly publication, with serving a special purpose by creating a “picturesqueness” representation of Hampton Institute and its students. The monthly, the Times claimed, provided readers the opportunity to engage with the culture and talent produced within the confines of the school.

The Workman, which ran from 1872-1939 was one amongst ninety-five publications produced by Hampton. Used as promotional material for the school, these publications garnered recognition nationwide for the work the Institute accomplished to reeducate and assimilate black and Indian students. The acknowledgment from the Times indicates the

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47 This quote is taken from an interview with an African American student, Lorenzo Ivy, where he recalls his life in bondage and his surprise that he now attends the Hampton Institute; Mary Frances Armstrong and Helen Ludlow, Hampton and Its Students By Tow of Its Teachers Mrs. M. F. Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow. With Fifty Cabin and Plantation Songs, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1874), UNC Chapel Hill Documenting the American South, 78.
49 Ruth Tolson, Hampton Institute Press Publications: A Bibliography, (Hampton, VA: Hampton Institute, 1959), 1-6
50 Principal of Hampton Institute, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, often called black and Indian students of the Institute “Two despised races,” a brief phrase that encompasses the general white sentiment thought about blacks and Indians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in America; Christine Bold, The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Vol.6 (1860-1920), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 421.
success of Hampton’s investment in the use of the Institute’s publications to captivate the nation’s attention. As evidenced in the article, the culture and talent of the students were most intriguing to the *Workman*’s readers and were intended to promote the Hampton model, often called “Education for Life.”

Although the culture featured in the *Southern Workman* and presented by the Institute in its publications aimed to promote the Hampton model, this chapter argues that the *Workman* and especially folklore features collected by the Hampton Folklore Society (HFS) were a sign of student agency, strength, and resilience despite successive administrations’ desires to instill racial accommodationism. Through the *Workman* students incorporated and remade their culture, contrary to Hampton’s intent to remove student agency from the formation of identity.51

The survival of Hampton Institute depended on Northern donors. Armstrong recognized that the school’s success relied on public sentiment, therefore he utilized the school’s publications to garner attention. Hampton operated its own press and used it to publicize the school’s achievements and needs. The press produced pamphlets and newspapers, which included the *Workman*, published by both administrators and students.52

The *Workman* aimed to link together the Institute, national policy makers, donors and Hampton students and alumni across the country. The *Workman* circulated amongst white

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51 *Folklore* “denotes expressive forms, processes, and behaviors (1) that we customarily learn, teach, and utilize or display during face-to-face interactions, and (2) that we judge to be traditional (a) because they are based on known precedents or models, and (b) because they serve as evidence of continuities and consistencies through time and space in human knowledge, thought, belief, and feeling.”; Robert A Georges & Michael Owen Jones, *Folkloristics: An Introduction*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 1.

audiences, but the administration intended the monthly to be devoted to the interests of the “underdeveloped races,” thus circulation of the publication predominantly went to freedmen and students. Armstrong stated that readers would be enlightened by imagining themselves as white men. He hoped to disseminate the work of Hampton to all who read the *Workman* and wished to “uplift” blacks. Amongst the many features in the *Workman*, one of the most popular was the column entitled “Folk-lore and Ethnology.”

Beginning in 1893, black folklore became a regular feature in the monthly because of the HFS and the legacy of the Hampton Institute museum. In 1869 Hampton Institute’s museum opened at the request of Armstrong and featured cultural artifacts of “down trodden” races. Armstrong wished for the museum to preserve the memory of the cultures of races destined for erasure. Armstrong made statements calling Negro spirituals a “priceless legacy” and believed black music to be the only American music and Indian art to be the only American art. He envisioned them as the most “authentic” American works and believed the school must preserve them. For the first decade, the museum only featured Hawaiian artifacts. In 1878, however, Armstrong shifted his interest to folklore. Although Armstrong saw verbal forms of ignorance embodied in oral traditions, such as folklore, he desired its collection so it could be preserved as an artifact and used as a barometer to measure the progress of students. In December 1893, Hampton’s growing wealth of

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54 Waters, *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams*, 41.
material culture allowed for the establishment of a branch of the American Folklore Society, the HFS which aimed to focus on the collection of African American folklore.\footnote{Donal Lindsey, \textit{Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923} (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995). 176-179.}

Alice Bacon, a white teacher at Hampton Institute, founded the society as she said, to “collect and preserve all traditions and customs peculiar to the Negroes.”\footnote{Alice Bacon, \textit{Southern Workman}, 22 (1893): 150-151} She stated in her call for participants that she desired blacks to be the collectors of the folklore because whites simply could not adequately perform the work of the society. She further defined what black participants she wished to recruit, stating “[it] must be done by the intelligent and educated colored people who are at work all through the South among the more ignorant of their own race.”\footnote{Alice Bacon, \textit{Southern Workman}, 22 (1893): 150-151} She found her first twenty participants within the Hampton community including teachers, students, and graduates of the school.\footnote{Waters, \textit{Strange Ways and Sweet}, 8.}

Bacon’s call provided an opportunity for students to embrace their identity and culture openly, but with limits. Faculty and staff participating in the collection of folklore trying to “capture” the African American experience were inclined to represent students realistically, but for a white audience. The fixation on the “real” student by the administration indicated interest in student representation, through a white gaze.\footnote{White Gaze is defined as the collective white American perception, including all assumptions and stereotypes, of African Americans in the late 19th and early 20th century.} Although many staff and faculty harbored a white gaze, this fact does not diminish the importance of a new opportunity for various black students to express self-representation and identity.\footnote{White Gaze is defined as the collective white American perception, including all assumptions and stereotypes, of African Americans in the late 19th and early 20th century.} The folklore collected by the HFS cannot be analyzed as a unanimous representation of all
students at Hampton; rather it demonstrates a normative for a majority group, “a model of reality,” for those telling the stories, those documenting (since students and graduates often collected and documented the folklore), and those students reading the tales and rhymes.\textsuperscript{60}

Questions surround the reasoning as to why black students and recent graduates of Hampton Institute would wish to organize with Alice Bacon and several white colleagues to collect black folklore. Anthropologist Donald Waters, editor of a volume of Hampton Institute folklore suggested, “it is unclear how such an esoteric subject as folklore managed to capture even a flicker of interest in the Hampton community.”\textsuperscript{61} However, Waters’ explanation is oversimplified. Black students at Hampton entered into new circumstances and culture and they wished to maintain connections to the culture they left behind. Therefore, student participation in collecting folklore was not merely esoteric. Students evidenced interest in collecting folklore through their participation. Alumni participation is particularly telling, as alumni had no reason to engage in the activities of the school if they did not want to; therefore, their gathering of folklore demonstrates black interest. Although Waters claims black folklore at Hampton an esoteric subject, looking at folklore, the stories and lyrics collected, the act of and recollection of relatable stories captivated the interests of students and graduates. Additional factors contributed to the popularity and prosperity of the folklore tradition at Hampton.

The environment at Hampton potentially contributed to the appeal of collecting tales and rhymes for the students of the Institute. The school often housed more students than it

\textsuperscript{60} Georges and Jones, \textit{Folkloristics}, 32-33.
\textsuperscript{61} Waters, \textit{Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams}, 8-9.
could afford to handle. Booker T. Washington recalled his time at Hampton between the years of 1872 and 1881, stating, “While I was a student at Hampton, the dormitories became so crowded that it was impossible to find room for all who wanted to be admitted. In order to help remedy the difficulty, the General [Armstrong] conceived of the plan of putting up tents to be used as rooms…The winter that we spent in those tents was an intensely cold one, and we suffered severely.”

Though the collection of folklore did not begin until 1893, problems with housing and poor living conditions persisted through the turn of the century. In 1909, Elizabeth Hyde, the Dean of Women, remarked on the overcrowding of what she called the colored girls’ dorms. The climate of anxiety and fear about demonstrating individuality outside of the Hampton ideal, and an environment where students were densely concentrated and segregated from the rest of the population potentially triggered desires to recall and discuss beliefs, practices, and stories learned earlier. Therefore it is probable students

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62 This excerpt taken from Booker T. Washington’s Up From Slavery was written to praise the work of General Armstrong. Washington states that Armstrong, so dedicated to his work on the “Negro” would never turn students away. But reading this in conjunction with Armstrong’s various letters and documents indicates an intention by Armstrong to garner as much funding as possible, funding many students provided through their tuition to attend the institute. Washington also indicates further on in his discussion of sleeping in the tent that students woke feeling despondent, but Armstrong’s cheery demeanor would erase such feelings. I find Washington’s admission of living in tents and feelings of sadness to be telling of the poor conditions under which many students lived at Hampton; Washington, Up From Slavery, 25-26.; The persistent problems with overcrowding were also mentioned in the “Hampton Students’ Own” section of Southern Workman, Vol. X, January 1881, 11.

63 Lindsey, Indians at Hampton Institute, 131.

64 Georges and Jones discuss Japanese-Americans interned at Tule Lake, California, during World War II and observe folklore as a means of survival and folklore’s continuity and revival amongst groups of people isolated from home and culture. While Internees did not willing go to Tule Lake, it can be argued that conditions and circumstances at Hampton mirror an internment camp. Students often feared physical punishments and lived in sub-par conditions at Hampton; Georges and Jones, Folkloristics, 70-73.
desired the opportunity to converse with others and recall stories of an identity frowned upon by the administration.

The publication of folklore in the Workman served numerous purposes for the students at Hampton because folklore is essential and integral to daily life. Practicing folklore acted as resistance to administrators’ assumptions about students at the school. The act of publishing African American folktales in the Workman served as a mass media production, and enhanced students’ creation and promotion of awareness of black culture. The publication of folktales each month reinforced the traditions of courtship, superstitions, conjuring and magic, and reiterated the importance of rhymes and tales to tell a uniquely African American story; “with time and repetition, some examples of human expression become pervasive and commonplace,” therefore becoming common knowledge within the students’ consciousness. The pervasive nature of folklore reiterated important life cycles and events that students experienced in bondage, learned from family members coming out of bondage, or applied to experiences at Hampton.

Armstrong, believed black students entering the Institute were morally debilitated. He claimed blacks were both morally and socially deficient, but through proper training, could improve their morality. Armstrong framed Hampton’s goals around the achievement of morals stating that a lack of proper “training” allows for ignorance, a lack of common

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65 Georges and Jones, Folkloristics, 1.
66 Waters, Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams, 3 ; Georges and Jones, Folkloristics, 1.
67 Georges and Jones, Folkloristics, 1-2.
sense, moral standards, or understanding of the world. Armstrong’s focus on correcting the lack of black morality as one of the primary purposes for Hampton’s existence highlights his knowledge of what white Northern donors held dear. Moral deficiency struck a chord with Northern whites and missionaries and attracted such groups to funding the institute.

Although Armstrong founded Hampton to train morally upright people, folklore collected by the HFS showed sets of morals already in place in black communities. The long history of African Americans’ desire for education sheds light on why students attended a school that assumed they had deficiency of character. Most students wanted an education so they were willing to live with the judgment of their morally weak condition; they believed this judgment from outsiders did not define them or their character. For example, courtship folktales reveal the behavioral normatives and moralistic structure embedded within the tales and rooted in black life both inside and outside of the confines of Hampton. Of the thematic strands of folktales collected by the HFS, courtship folktales serve as an exemplar of the behavioral normatives and moralistic structure embedded within the tales and rooted in black life before and through a life at Hampton.

Folktales about courtship published in the Workman covered a wide variety of potential courting situations. The tales often did not recall actual events, but more commonly alluded to potential life events. The allusive nature of folktales, with morals and behavioral

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68 The term training indicates Armstrong’s educational model of training the head (rudimentary elementary education), the hand (labor) and the heart (Christianity). Waters, *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams*, 13-16.
70 For more information on African Americans and education see: Anderson; Waters, *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams*, 20.
codes often embedded in metaphors transcended a specific time, space, place, or class; As Donald Waters has observed, “Folktales are composed of metaphors, and other figures of speech that fall into different classes, one common dimension of which is their moral tone; at the highest level of contrast, many figures of speech refer to behavior either as decent and restrained or as ignorant and ill-mannered. Because of this moralizing structure, a folktale is general and allusive in the sense that it depicts some aspect of behavior in terms of an ethical norm…”

Published in the *Southern Workman* in 1894, the tale of Brer Rabbit and Brer Elephant depicts a courtship rivalry in which Brer Rabbit tricks Brer Elephant into becoming his horse to ride. Rabbit and Elephant were courting two women and Rabbit told the women that Elephant was not to be a candidate for interest because Elephant was simply Rabbit’s riding horse. On the day the two have a joint engagement with the women, Rabbit tricks Elephant into letting him ride him to their meet-up. On a second outing, Rabbit tricks Elephant into being his horse, but then Elephant discovers he is being tricked as Rabbit laughs about his deceitful ways. Elephant vows to gain revenge and his plan for revenge is foiled, yet again, by Rabbit.

The animals in this story, as in many of the folktales published substitute animals for men, which was part of a larger corpus of “Afro-American” tales in which animals appear. In this tale, Rabbit is the hero and trickster, proving that cunning can undermine any strength.

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71 Waters, *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams*, 60.
72 *Southern Workman* (1894) 192-194.
73 *Southern Workman* (1894) 192-194.
For Rabbit, Elephant has significantly more physical strength, but Rabbit employs his cunning to manipulate Elephant’s gullibility. Beyond the trickery, the aim of the story is to “symbolically pose and dramatically develop and resolve the behavior between rivals in pursuit of women, and do so in distinctly moral terms.” The rivalry is defined by presenting the conditions under which the two men, Rabbit and Elephant, court. Rabbit and Elephant are both dating at the same time, two different women, but since the women always appear in the tale together, it is assumed the women are of kin or share a close friendship. The close relationship of the women projects a “relationship of social proximity upon the suitors who may or may not even like one another.” Therefore, the rivalry ensues. The development of the problem of courtship rivalry is established, but the aim of the folktale is to convey to the reader how to deal appropriately and morally with such a rivalry, an often-encountered social problem.

The tale teaches that Rabbit and Elephant must respectfully find space between each other. The close rivalry between the two characters results in Rabbit being thrown into a brier patch, from which he was born. Thereafter both Rabbit and Elephant attempt to separate themselves from each other. The moral of the folktale published in 1894 indicates the moral standards and social norms long established in black communities and dispels the assumptions of the Hampton model that black people are immoral because a code of conduct is evident in the tales. Whether the administration understood the tales and moral codes embedded within said tales is not of necessity. The folktales such as this one about courtship

75 Waters, Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams, 62.
76 Waters, Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams, 63.
77 Waters, Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams, 63.
reinforced for students a consciousness of morality and reinforced within the students an understanding that they do not lack moral judgments or consciousness. Therefore, simply the publications of the tales defy the Hampton model.

Folktales also served the purpose of enabling black culture to become pervasive and commonplace in student consciousness, two folklore themes commonly featured included superstitions and conjuring and magic.\textsuperscript{78} The folklore on conjuring and healing provide insight into the beliefs and practices of students and African Americans throughout the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries. In various tales published by the HFS, traditional practices of healing such as homegrown remedies are listed. For example, the cure for chills and fevers: “Take one grasshopper, pull of his legs, ‘wrop him up into a piece of dough,’ shut your eyes then swallow him. Sure cure.”\textsuperscript{79} The folk healing evident in the lore collected and published in the \textit{Workman} facilitated the reiteration of a folk healing tradition practiced by students.\textsuperscript{80} The lack of contextualization of the folklore, by simply listing the remedies, reinforced for the administration what they wished northern donors and missionaries to see, a public image of “black people as ignorant or perhaps childlike.” But this image did not resonate for the

\textsuperscript{78} African American folk healing cannot be encompassed in these two categories. Rather there are a range of names including conjure, conjuration, superstition, hoodoo, and juju that encompass some and not even all forms of folk healing. Bacon’s assumption that these two categories encompass black folk healing indicate her lack of knowledge and understanding of black folk traditions.; Stephanie Y. Mitchem, \textit{African American Folk Healing}, (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 15.

\textsuperscript{79} This folklore was collected by Hampton graduate J.W. Bedenbaugh, of Bradley, South Carolina, a regular contributor to the collection of folklore. “Folk-lore and Ethnology,” \textit{Southern Workman}, 23, no. 12 (December 1894), 209-210.

\textsuperscript{80} This folklore was collected by Hampton graduate J.W. Bedenbaugh, of Bradley, South Carolina, a regular contributor to the collection of folklore. “Folk-lore and Ethnology,” \textit{Southern Workman}, 23, no. 12 (December 1894), 209-210.
freedmen reading the *Workman* or for the students at Hampton. The folk healing evident in the lore collected and published in the *Workman* facilitated the reiteration of a folk healing tradition.

Folk healing has long been placed under the umbrella of folklore, “Folklore means folk learning; it comprehends all knowledge,” writes Stephanie Mitchem, Professor of African American Spirituality, and “all crafts and techniques that are learned by imitation or example as well as products of these crafts…Folklore includes folk art, custom, belief, medicine, [and] music, as well as those verbal forms of expression which have been called folk literature but which are better described as verbal art.” All of these categories contribute to the daily lives of an individual and a lived community in which these categories or values are shared.

Even though folk stories on conjuring, medicine, and superstitions related to health appeared out of context for white consumers of the *Workman*, for students and many black readers, their memories and knowledge of folktales provided the context. The publication of out of context stories or listings of traditional remedies still served to continue the memory,
and perhaps practice, of folk healing at Hampton through what is known as folk cultural association.  

In “A Contribution From South Carolina,” Hampton graduate, Bedenbaugh (Class of ’90), collected folklore notes from black communities in South Carolina. They described various remedies for ailments of the body and ways in which African Americans could protect themselves from being sold or from future whippings by their masters, during times of slavery, “Slavery time—fortune teller had a phial for a Jack, filled with roots and water, also sulphur. Had a string tied around the neck of the phial. You want to tell if you are going to get whipping, You go to him…Swearing his Jack, then he says to his ‘Jack don’t tell me no lie, if massa gwine whip John or Jane, now tell me Jack.’ If Jack turns to right massa Was’n’ gwine whip John or Jane, if he turns to the left you sure whipped.”  

This tale of Jack taps into the folk healing tradition. Jack’s concern with seeing if he will be beaten is not solely a concern of his physical health, there is a psychological component. Jack’s concern illuminates the focus on “wellness” in African American communities and an emphasis on a state of being. 

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83 “Folk cultural associations… are indigenous and autonomous groups, free to create their own social world. They are spontaneously generated by their members rather than consciously shaped and directed by an outside force… They draw on culturally derived innovations and an aesthetic fluidity based on African American folk cultural traditions. Moreover, the folk cultural equation and, to an extent, also the popular, ensures the persistent of African- based cultural adaptations.”; Jerrilyn M. McGregor, “There Are Other Ways to Get Happy” African American Urban Folklore (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 200; found in Mitchem, African American Folk Healing, 25.

84 Southern Workman, 23, no.3 (March 1894): 46-47. In Waters, Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams, 163-165.

85 Mitchem, African American Folk Healing, 29.
Another component of performance in folklore as part of the folk healing process is also part of the tale of Jack: “If massa hadn’t fully made up his mind what he would do, Jack would stand and quiver. If the fortune teller got angry with jack and cursed him, Jack would jump up and down, then he would tell them to come back in the morning and jack should tell all about it. He would give them some roots to chew and spit around the house door to cool the master’s angry passions. That would leave John and Jane satisfied.” In this excerpt, the tradition of African American folk healing is upheld. African American folk healing depends on performance and in this tale, the performance of Jack, the reaction of the fortune teller, and the actions of John and Jane are detailed; “…Jack would jump up and down, then he would tell them to come back in the morning…He would give them some roots to chew and spit around the house door to cool the master’s angry passions.” The story tells of the process involved to grant healing and therefore translates to the community “the operations of the universe, human relationships, and therefore, healing” while disseminating the healing information to generations who may not know the process or the tale.

The African American folk healing published in the Workman falls under what is known as “an alternate form of knowledge” contributing to a resistance culture. Resistance culture is defined in contrast to popular culture, popular culture being represented by the Hampton model and administration. “[Resistance culture] maintains a separate way of knowing in order to avoid dehumanization,” such as the dehumanization imposed on students.

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86 Southern Workman, 23, no.3 (March 1894): 46-47. In Waters, Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams, 163-165.
87 Mitchem, African American Folk Healing, 26.
by the Hampton model and the assumptions underpinning the work of the Institute. The reproduction of conjuring or magic folklore reinforced a resistance culture amongst the students who understood and aligned themselves and their beliefs with African American folk healing. The reproduction of conjuring or magic folklore reinforced a resistance culture amongst the students who understood and aligned themselves and their beliefs with African American folk healing.

Student responses to black folklore illuminate a complex student identity, which incorporated both aspects of African American culture and the administration’s expectations. Students desired to maintain black culture, but at the same time, many students for purposes of progress and survival at the Institute had to incorporate, a dual cultural identity. Armstrong collected and published in the Workman papers written by Hampton students, that detailed their thoughts of black traditions, most notably conjuring and superstition found in folkloric tales. Armstrong required students writing the papers to describe in detail the tales, so the folklore may be exposed for what it was, which in Armstrong’s opinion was ignorance and a sign of weakness and ill moral character.

The student responses varied, with both positive and negative reactions to black traditions and tales. A wide range of articulation by the subordinate groups toward dominant groups in political space would be a common trend for students at Hampton; therefore,

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89 Armstrong collected the letters beginning in 1878; Waters, *Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams*, 42.
students gave varied responses.\(^90\) Armstrong’s response to the positive papers on folklore informs the outpouring of students denouncing folklore. For student “R.” who wrote, “I now will close by saying that I believe in the conjure Drs. and all this that I have written I can vouch for myself.” Armstrong responded in the publication of the letters that another two years of “reorientation” should fix the student.\(^91\) Similarly, for students to graduate from the school, they evidently needed to toe a line between the identity expected by the administration and the identity folklore helped to reinforce. The response by many students about folk traditions and their hopes for it be “rooted out,” shows the duality students were forced to perform. Armstrong’s “reorientation” statement politicized the space surrounding folktales at Hampton Institute; therefore, students who articulated their understanding of black folktales as being archaic or antiquated used concealment to subvert their actual thought. Of course, many students may have believed folktales represented a backward black culture. But the politicized space in which students thought and wrote made positive responses to folktales extremely hard to make publicly. Also indicating the masking of the collective student thought were comments in the student papers about many students believing in the folktales and the belief systems the folktales recalled, as one student wrote, “I am glad that I haven’t had the chance to know as much of the Conjuring Doctors as many of the students, for it seems to have enchanted them to some extent.”\(^92\)


Folklore published in the *Workman* served numerous purposes for black students at Hampton. It dispelled assumptions cast onto students by the school’s model and the administration and served as an outlet for student representation and identity. Though students reading and collecting the folklore often wrote of their disassociation with the stories, this disapproval, in contrast with student engagement with the stories, provides a window through which to gaze into the performance imposed on students if they wished to complete their time at Hampton. Student performance indicates the incorporation of white popular cultural beliefs, which was utilized to subvert white suspicions of black culture resonating within students. All the while, many students continued to believe and embrace black culture, evident in folklore.
CHAPTER 2.
Incorporated Identity:
Indian Student Identity at Hampton Institute

On November 18, 1887, the school administration, at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, received a letter from a Dakota prison written by a former Indian student.\textsuperscript{93} A note from a supervisor at the United States penitentiary accompanied the letter. It relayed the crimes of the prisoner, “stealing whiskey and selling it to Indians,” and provided words of comfort to Hampton’s administration, acknowledging the hard work of the institution regardless of the former students failure: “While some have ‘gone back’ they are not as they were before and never can be.”\textsuperscript{94} The statement underscores a widespread sentiment of the school’s positive influence, which coexisted alongside negativity toward Indians, and reflects the kinds of attitudes Native American students encountered at Hampton Institute and other off reservation Indian boarding schools.

Hampton Institute is generally not considered an off-reservation boarding school. However, in 1878 it pioneered the experiment of completely removing Native Americans from their homes and isolating them in educational institutions. From the work of Hampton, off-reservation boarding schools became popularized and the staples of government-funded Indian education. Although students from Indian boarding schools across the country tell similar stories of acculturation and civilization, the experience of students at Hampton

\textsuperscript{93} The term “Indian” is employed instead of Native American because Indian was the descriptor for indigenous people in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. This also applies to the use of “tribe.”

\textsuperscript{94} Hampton Institute, \textit{Ten Years Work for Indians at the Hampton Institute} (Hampton, VA: Hampton Institute Press, 1888), 76.
remains distinct because it was not clearly defined as one singular institution—either Indian boarding school or black normal school. As the only multiracial off-reservation boarding school in the 1880s, Hampton’s eclectic environment impacted Indian students and their conceptions of identity and community. Hampton exposed Indian students to whites, Indians from other tribes, and black students, complicating student identities and the way students represented themselves beyond the tribal affiliations brought from home.

Even though Hampton is not usually considered an off-reservation boarding school, it operated as one by enforcing school policies denying Indian students choice in the matter of what they wished to become or how they wished to represent themselves. Hampton intended to separate the men and women attending from all they knew—family, tribes, languages, traditions, and in short, their identities. The school attempted to keep Native students confined to a singular, one-dimensional experience that only changed when the student finally abandoned “Indianness” for civilization.

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95 Indian student identity does not equate to Indian identity. Indian identity, equated with “Indianness,” is Native American culture, cultural values, beliefs, and practices concerning the nation, tribe, family and spiritual connections—an identity that does not completely remain intact. Indian student identity is used in this paper to describe the formation of a complicated identity, born out of a boarding school experience. Indian student identity, as argued in this paper, encompasses a mixture of: tribal identity, inter-tribal relationships which over time form a pan-Indian identity, and popular American culture which helped to reinforce “Indianness” but additionally shows that students could incorporate aspects of American culture into their lives. Though Indian student identity may not be uniquely Indian, it is the identity evident among a number of students at Hampton Institute.


97 Indianness encompasses Native American culture, cultural values, beliefs, and practices concerning the nation, tribe, family and spiritual connections.
Yet students, enabled by the unique multi-racial environment of Hampton, did not limit their conception and depiction of their identity to the confines of Hampton. Indian student identity shifted at Hampton; although students continued to reinforce their tribal affiliations, they also engaged with students from other tribes, developing the foundation for a pan-Indian identity, and incorporating certain aspects of popular American culture into their lives.  

Students exercised control over their identities and practiced the same management in regard to representation of that identity. This chapter examines the articles, illustrations, language, and sports as presented in *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students* for what they reveal about Indian agency in identity formation. Although the administration implemented policies to stifle “Indianness” and student agency over the development of identity, the Hampton example demonstrates that Indian students, despite administrative pressures and violence, asserted control of the formation and representation of their identities.

The Hampton Indian program commenced with the admittance of seventeen students in April 1878.  

Conceived in the minds of Hampton principal Samuel Chapman Armstrong and Army General Richard Henry Pratt, the Indian program at Hampton began as a second attempt by Pratt to “educate” Indian prisoners taken from Indian territory in Oklahoma after the Red River War. Pratt envisioned uplifting Indian masses, but he recognized his success

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would be minimal at best if he attempted uplift on reservations. Pratt looked to a model for uplift and identified successful minority (black) uplift occurred only after forced separation of blacks from tribes in Africa and southern plantations.\textsuperscript{100} Although the forced separation of Africans from tribes in Africa stands as a pro-slavery argument, in the postbellum era amongst white Americans, the effectiveness of oppressing blacks through the separation process continued to exist as a widely shared assumption. Pratt’s investment in forced separation is indicative of the continuity of the treatment of blacks from antebellum to the postbellum, but also represents the change and widening of the white focus from beyond the black body and on to the Indian body. Unable to provide the type of experience he desired for the Indian prisoners located in Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida, Pratt turned to the “architect” of educating the “down-trodden” black race-Samuel Chapman Armstrong.\textsuperscript{101} Together the two men envisioned a program of “civilizing” Indians through a manual and industrial education.

The development of the Indian project at Hampton spoke to the expectations of Indians in the non-Indian imaginary. Leaders of the United States perpetuated such preconceived notions of Indians, such as Thomas Jefferson, who harbored the belief in a “noble savage.” In a letter to the Choctaw Nation, Thomas Jefferson demonstrates his belief in the noble savage through paternalistic language. Jefferson stated “[he is] glad to take you by the hand… and [to] not listen to wicked men.”\textsuperscript{102} He continued on telling the Choctaw Nation of his pride for them because the nation supported their families, “by raising stock

\textsuperscript{100} Lindsey, \textit{Indians at Hampton Institute}, 25.
\textsuperscript{101} Adams, \textit{Education for Extinction}, 35-37.
\textsuperscript{102} “Thomas Jefferson to the Choctaw Nation,” 17 December 1803.
and bread.”\textsuperscript{103} Although Jefferson feigned support of Indian populations in letters, during his presidency, he laid the groundwork for Indian Removal.\textsuperscript{104} In a letter to then Governor William Henry Harrison, Jefferson wrote, “our settlements will gradually circumscribe and approach the Indians and they will either have to incorporate with us as citizens of the United States or remove beyond the Mississippi.”\textsuperscript{105} Here Jefferson influenced the government approach to dealing with Indian populations. Jefferson outlines an ultimatum; either Indians were with the government or against it.

By the turn-of-the-century, most American Cultural narratives incorporated the stereotypes of Indians in the American imaginary and envisioned Indians as isolated and lacking modernization. Literature such as James Fenimore Cooper’s 1826 novel, The Last of the Mohicans popularized the image of the stoic and noble “savage,” untouched by modernization, linked with nature and consequently disappearing. Other American literature such as captivity narratives, an American literary tradition, popular beginning in the colonial era with Mary Rowlandson and through the nineteenth century as symbols of American national heritage, described Indians as brutal savages. Fanny Kelly’s Narrative of my captivity among the Sioux Indians, recounts an encounter by her family with the Sioux, “The Indians quickly sprang into our wagons, tearing off covers, breaking, crushing, and smashing all hindrances to plunder…distributing or destroying our goods with great rapidity…which

\textsuperscript{103} “Thomas Jefferson to the Choctaw Nation.”  
\textsuperscript{105} “Thomas Jefferson to Governor William Henry Harrison,” February 27, 1803.
they split up in savage recklessness.” Out of works such as these, came the stereotype that all Indians shared one distinct trait—savagery. The process of Indian removal perpetuated the “savage” stereotype because of the significant resistance the federal government encountered when attempting to take control of Indian land. Indian wars raged on throughout the west as the federal government oversaw the sale of land to railroad industrialists, mining companies and farmers. Therefore, the Hampton Indian program served to placate the fears and anxieties underlying common turn-of-the-century stereotypes by “civilizing” the Indian.

In the early years of its program, to gain popularity and support from the government, philanthropists, and the public, Hampton regularly published pamphlets and reports reinforcing American ideas of Indians. The school characterized Indian students as lazy, undisciplined, and incapable of adherence to the modern educational system. The school’s 1888 report described students as poor producers of labor and agricultural cultivation. Other popular publications, such as Ten Years Work at Hampton Institute, proclaimed that Indian students desperately need to “have [their] ambitions awakened and motivation

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stirred.”¹¹⁰ These depictions of Indians helped to reinforce the Indian stereotypes. At the same time, however, they gave purpose to the institution and its work, and provided a baseline against which Hampton’s success could be measured.

The utilization of stereotypes when discussing Indians enabled the administration, in the popular media, to compartmentalize students in a binary of either “savage” or “civilized.” School leaders called Indian students “the rudest savages,” “uneducated,” and “essentially raw material.”¹¹¹ By describing students as “raw material,” administrators not only reinforced the image of “savage,” but also made claims on the students’ identities. The school insinuated the students were to become whatever the school impressed on them and nothing more. Moreover, Hampton used stereotypes of ignorance to explain problems at the school, by placing the blame on Indian students when a lag in agricultural production occurred, for example. Administrators claimed Indians’ as “victimized by ignorance of business methods,” when the students did not perform agricultural labor efficiently.¹¹² If not relying on “savage” stereotypes, Hampton employed those of achieving full “civilization.” Administrators deemed students performing to the school’s standard in labor and the “civilizing model,” “real men.”¹¹³ For Hampton, labor begat civilization and civilization, begat men. The binary between “savage” and “civilized,” therefore, intended to remove students’ agency to complicate their identities beyond Indian or white.

¹¹⁰ Hampton Institute, Ten Years Work, 69.
¹¹² Samuel Chapman Armstrong, Ideas on Education. UNC Chapel Hill Southern Pamphlet Collection, text-fiche, p. 28, reel 8, The Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1908.
In just a few years time, Hampton leaders transitioned from emphasizing students as “savages,” to promoting the school’s excellence in exorcising the “Indianness” from students. Stories of civilization reinforced the presumption that Hampton improved Indian student identity and controlled the representation or depiction of that identity. To legitimize the civilizing process, Hampton often published pamphlets relaying updates on the progress of the courses intended to “civilize” the Indians: “At the end of three years of [rigorous course work] the [students] are now ‘civilizers’.”

Classes, known as “Civilization Class” cap-stoned the Indian experience at Hampton. The administrators at Hampton described Civilization Class as progressive educationally and socially and the best answer to the Indian “problem.” The course instructed Indian youth in the bylaws of citizenship to which they must abide according to the 1887 Dawes Act and how to progress forward with the abandonment of “Indianness.”

Between 1898 and 1906 the Dawes Act allotted sixteen million acres to individual Native Americans throughout Indian Country. Indians who accepted the allotment were

115 In 1884, the Supreme Court ruled in *Elk v. Wilkins* that an Indian could only be made a citizen through an act of Congress. Reformers fought for the inclusion of absolute citizenship for Indians in the 1887 Dawes General Allotment Act, but to no avail. The Dawes Act instead, “granted only gradual and conditional citizenship, enfranchising those Indians who would receive an allotment of land or who had already received one through previous treaty, and those who had separated from their tribes and lived as whites.” The importance placed on the Dawes Act in Civilization Class highlights the joining of federal legislation with boarding school curriculum to “civilize.” See Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*, 77-78.
automatically given citizenship by the United States government.\textsuperscript{117} In a sense, the allotment system continued a history of Indian removal because the Act gave “surplus” land to settlers.\textsuperscript{118} Moreover, the allotment to settlers fractured land for Indians making the consolidation of land for autonomy difficult. The Dawes Act served as an example of government defining citizenship onto the Native body, even when Indian peoples did not want citizenship, but sovereignty from the United States.

The teachers at Hampton proclaimed that Indians did not just learn civilization, but actually became something other than Indian.\textsuperscript{119} The administration also described students as eager to leave behind the cultures from which they came noting, “The students love the class so passionately that they beg to go back to the reservation immediately following class so not to delay spreading what they have learned.”\textsuperscript{120} The school reveled in its monopoly of the press to describe students in any way it wished.

Those students who blatantly refused Hampton’s advances on their identities often suffered violence, such as physical and mental abuses, as punishment. In public, Principal Samuel Chapman Armstrong made numerous claims in school publications and in newspaper articles that physical punishment was never necessary for managing Indians. Privately, contrary to Armstrong’s statements, he allowed a teacher at the school, Jacobina Koch, to “inflict corporal punishment.”\textsuperscript{121} Outside of the classroom, Koch employed black officers to

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\item \textsuperscript{117} Olson and Wilson, \textit{Native Americans in the Twentieth Century}, 73.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Olson and Wilson, \textit{Native Americans in the Twentieth Century}, 73.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Hampton, \textit{Annual Report 1888}, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Hampton, \textit{Annual Report 1888}, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{121} “Minutes of the Indian Teachers Faculty” (meeting, Indian Teacher Faculty, Hampton, VA, March 3, 1883) in Hampton University Archives, \textit{Discipline Files 1885}, 143, 243.
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beat Indian students for infractions. Though physical abuses were not the standard form of punishment at Hampton, they occurred when Indian students did not adhere to the “white-man’s” way. For instance, a school official “whipped” Omaha Garry Myers as punishment on January 12, 1885, while younger Indian students stood by and watched. Myers’ whipping served as an example for students to behave and quietly obey.122 Other instances of student abuses include that of Cassie McCoy. School officials handcuffed and shackled McCoy while they administered ‘quieting medicines’ because she caused a stir after being detained in her room for “impudence.”123 Such physical abuses serve as evidence of the school’s determination to quash student agency when resisting the “civilization project.” Hampton’s deliberate efforts highlights the aim of the school to keep students from maintaining any choice in the formation of their new “educated” identities.

Although the school depicted an image of its ability to control students, in reality students maintained agency over who they became. Various student notes, letters, and photos, underlined students’ continual resistance to the administrative imposition on their identity. Therefore, a comprehensive view to see the intersection of all forms of defiance of the school administration’s effort proves most useful. The Indian student publication, *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students*, provides a clear lens to see the intersection of connections made and utilized by the Indian students of Hampton as they navigated the reformation of their identities and representations of “self.”

122“Minutes of the Indian Teachers Faculty,” 143, 243.
123 Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*, 161.
*Talks and Thoughts*, because of its category as a standard Indian student newspaper, is often overlooked as a tool for analyzing the students at Hampton. Scholars usually approach student newspapers with extreme caution because of the reality of administrative censorship. While most student-run newspapers did feed the ego of the institution, the fact remains that students still made genuine contributions to the papers. Therefore, ignoring the publications as a useful tool for insight and analysis is shortsighted.\(^{124}\) Actually, the commonness of *Talks and Thoughts* speaks to the ability to reach Indian students at other boarding schools in the same way and does not diminish its usefulness as a tool to view Indian student identity, both in formation and representation.

*Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students* debuted in 1886, nearly a decade after the arrival of the first Indian students at Hampton. The monthly, which ran to 1907, produced twenty-one volumes and functioned as a line of communication between current students and alumni, reminding all of the school’s continuing work. The paper often published letters from returned students who had made the “cultural transition” and those letters urged alumni and current students to continue with the boarding school way.\(^{125}\) The publication also gained a more expansive readership, attracting school administrators and non-Indian reformers wishing to gain insight into Indian educational policy.\(^{126}\)

School administrators at various Indian boarding schools often utilized student run papers as propaganda for the institutions- using student stories and writings as motivation for

\(^{125}\) *Talks and Thoughts* often reprinted stories from the student publication at Carlisle, the *Indian Helper*. See Katanski, "Learning to Write ‘Indian,’” 16; and Jacqueline Emery, “Writing Against Erasure,” 178.
other students or alumni to emulate. Many featured columns including traditional stories, tales of the reservation, and tips on etiquette and morals. Most writings in these publications, done in essay or letterform, praised the school for working to improve the Indian race.  

_Talks and Thoughts_ a standard Indian produced student newspaper with regular monthly columns like the “News from Mary Charley.” Charley’s letter to Hampton describes the happiness of returning home paralleled with a deep yearning for Hampton and its work on the mind of the Indian: “We are sorry to leave Hampton … [w]e are also happy to go back home … [w]e were sorry to leave parents when we were starting Hampton, and now we feel the same way to leave Hampton … [w]e will be very lonesome for it after getting back home, but our minds will be at Hampton, if ourselves are not.”

The description of Charley’s body residing at the reservation, but her mind remaining at Hampton highlights the way the school wished to be perceived. With Charley’s mind at Hampton, and the reservation lacking education, readers came to understand that while students were to serve as “disciples” of Hampton’s education on the reservation, the only true place to expand the mind of Indians and elevate the race, was at Hampton.

Although _Talks and Thoughts_ published letters like Charley’s, conveying a desire by students to return to the school, the monthly, in contrast, more often published student submissions that told a different story. Student contributions, both written and illustrated,

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128 Mary Charley, _Talks and Thoughts_ 6, no. 4 (September 1891): 2-3.
relayed a story not of yearning for the school, but for home. *Talks and Thoughts* regularly featured folklore and illustrations. Both image and written word offer evidence of students’ reinforcing tribal identities. These contributions to *Talks and Thoughts* highlight students’ desire to recall their culture from home and reinforce, in every publication, their dedication to their heritage.

When Hampton’s museum opened per the request of the school’s principal Samuel Chapman Armstrong, it featured cultural artifacts of “down trodden” races and Armstrong wished for the museum to preserve the memory of the cultures of races destined for erasure. For the first thirteen years, the museum only featured Hawaiian artifacts. In 1881, however, Armstrong received his first Indian artifact and by the turn-of-the-century, the collection had grown exponentially. In December 1893, Hampton’s wealth of material culture allowed for the establishment of a branch of the American Folklore Society. In 1902, Hampton Institute created a campaign calling for Indian students to collect and publish tribal folklore because of the school’s expanding American Folklore Society. However, long before the 1902 call, Indian students had published their tribal lore and tales. The self-initiated sharing of tales in *Talks and Thoughts*, highlight not a desire of students to underscore the cultivation of a new Indian identity by the school, but a praise of tribal identity by students wishing to demonstrate pride in their heritage. Folklore and trickster tales reiterated the lasting bonds between students and their tribal affiliations. When students such as the Sioux, Oneida or

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130 Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*, 178-179.
Tuscarora published familiar lore from home, they reinforced a sense of kinship to their people and the students and alumni returned to the reservation.

The tribal affiliation of those students contributing the most to *Talks and Thoughts* is also of particular importance. In the forty-five years the Indian Program existed, nearly 1,388 Indian students from sixty-five tribes across the country attended Hampton. Of those sixty-five tribes, the Sioux and Oneida were the two largest groups, with 473 Sioux and 194 Oneida attending. Since Sioux and Oneida students contributed significantly to the monthly, their contributions to *Talks and Thoughts* had significant power because the stories and lore were relatable to the majority of the Indian student population.\(^{131}\)

Sioux student Harry Hand regularly contributed trickster tales to the newspaper. Trickster tales performed a unique role in the survival of traditional Indian written narratives. The stories, often featuring animals as the primary characters, could be both sacred and secular. The double-layered nature of trickster tales, such as the ones Hand published for the public, allowed the author to speak on an intimate level with those students familiar with the tale, relaying to them a sacred myth.\(^{132}\) Therefore, Hand’s contribution “A Fox and A Wolf” was reprinted multiple times, once by Hand in 1891 then again by Sioux student Joseph DuBray in 1892. The sacred myth embedded within “A Fox and A Wolf” was never

\(^{131}\) Additional tribal numbers include: Seneca, 112; Omaha, 64; Winnebago, 63; Cherokee, 61; and Chippewa, 51. All other tribes were represented by less than 50 students with many students being the only representative for their tribe; Paulette Fairbanks Molin, “‘Training the Hand the Head and the Heart’: Indian Education at Hampton Institute,” *Minnesota History*, vol. 51, No.3, (Fall 1988), 84.

explicitly mentioned, but the reproduction of the story indicates its importance to the students.\textsuperscript{133}

The tale, though told with variations in each story, chronicles the influence of a fox on a wolf. The fox consistently persuades the wolf to do dangerous things for him and the wolf always suffers the ramifications, resulting in the death of the wolf, while the sly fox reaps the benefits and gets away. The moral of the story is “never think yourself better than others and never put your confidence in a person because he is polite to you and smiles before your face. They are happy when trouble comes to you.”\textsuperscript{134} The moral relates well to the situation of the Indian students at Hampton: when the students do everything the administration asks of them, it results in the death of their culture and identity. Therefore, this story provides an excellent example of a demonstration of kinship to home, the continuity and embrace for specific aspects of traditional culture, defiance against administrative authority, and the stories and morals that are manifestations of that culture.\textsuperscript{135}

The folktales of Hand, and other students, often provoked heated and intense white responses because the administration either did not understand what the tales meant or the tales angered the administration because it picked up on their nuances of defiance. According to anthropologist Ed Burner, “narratives are not only structures of meaning, but

\textsuperscript{133} For further information on the insider and outsider relationship refer to Lowery, \textit{Lumbee Indians}; Harry Hand, “A Fox and A Wolf,” \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 6, no. 2 (July 1891): 1-4; and Joseph DuBray “A Fox and A Wolf” \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 7, no. 4 (Sept 1892): 1-4.
\textsuperscript{134} DuBray “A Fox and A Wolf” \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 7, no. 4 (Sept 1892): 1-4.
\textsuperscript{135} Katanski, ”Learning to Write ‘Indian,’” 129.
structures of power as well.” Administrators perhaps aired frustration with the stories at times because of the school’s persistent struggle to remove power from Indian students, and the stories they told because of the ways the narratives reinforced strength and pride in a traditional “Indianness” from which the students had come. Indeed, the stories constructed a sense of self for Indians and those structures constituted an identity that remained ominous when interpreted by outsiders—by suggesting that identity for Indian students was untainted by the school. Such folklore from students reinforced cultural continuity, creativity, and a resistive force, especially the story of the Fox and Wolf by Hand.

In addition to folklore, illustrations drawn by students, featured on the cover of Talks and Thoughts also reinforced tribal identity. The drawings depicted images of reservation life and spoke to the common places students had lived before removal. Beyond what the image actually portrayed, the artistic style of the drawings also reinforced tribal ties.

The illustration “The Story Teller” maintains and embraces the “Plains pictorial tradition” because the image abides by its stylistic rules (See Appendix A). The tradition dictates that no horizons appear beyond the foreground image: “the blank space of the buffalo hide, tepee cover, shield or page should contain no horizon or ‘setting’ beyond what is necessary to the story.” Other echoes of the Plains illustrative tradition lie in the

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imagery of the teepee and tribal garments but also the action of the storyteller. Note the arms raised in the air as this represents the oral narrative form often depicted in Plains drawings.\textsuperscript{139}

The Plains pictorial tradition is also evident in the illustration, “A Buffalo Hunt” (See Appendix B).\textsuperscript{140} Visual stories of hunting buffalo were long part of Plains Indian pictorial tradition. Plains men represented accomplishments in hunting or battle using “pictographic art.” The art portrayed successful hunters and warriors brandishing weapons and striking.\textsuperscript{141} Like the hunters in the traditional pictographic art, the men in the foreground of “A Buffalo Hunt” ride atop horses and are captured in action as they strike the buffalo.

Like “The Story Teller,” “A Buffalo Hunt” also includes no images beyond what is necessary to the story depicting two families at camp as they journey to hunt buffalo. The imagery of tribal garments and teepees signify a staple of the tradition and these images work in conjunction to pull the viewers eye across the illustration from the left to right as the use of detail transitions to a heavy reliance on negative space. Again, an image of a figure sitting by a campfire with arms raised in the air, represents the oral narrative form.\textsuperscript{142} Unlike “The

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\item \textsuperscript{139} Harry Hand, \textit{Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students} 7, no. 10 (March 1893): 1; Emery, “Writing Against Erasure,” 189-190.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Harry Hand, “A Buffalo Hunt,” 1892.
\item \textsuperscript{141} “Pictographic Art,” was a reductive figurative art form employing the use of abbreviated stick figures and simple line structures. This art form was common of the Plains artistic tradition until the 1830s. While “A Buffalo Hunt” is not drawn in the pictographic style, thematically “A Buffalo Hunt” carries on the Plains tradition. Stylistically, Hand’s illustration is drawn in the “Ledger book” art style that evolved out of the pictographic style. More complex in line detail and narrative, “Ledger book” art became a staple within Plains art around 1850 when many Plains men transitioned to the use of pencil, ink, or paint on paper or in ledger books. See David Penney and George C. Longfish, \textit{Native American Art} (Hong Kong: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1994), 81-86.
\item \textsuperscript{142} \textit{Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students} 6, no.11 (April 1892): 1; Emery, “Writing Against Erasure,” 189-190.
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Story Teller,” “A Buffalo Hunt” features the imagery of horses. Placed in both the foreground and background, the horses represent the plains way of life that was intrinsically linked to the animal. Horses enabled Plains people greater accessibility to buffalo herds by providing a means of faster and more productive hunting. Therefore horses were conceived of as facilitators of growth and prosperity within communities, and here represent the prosperity of the Sioux.143

Both illustrations depict “ceremonial practice, social and political events, and even cultural reminiscence reaching back to an earlier way of life…[before] the reservation period.” “The Story Teller” and “A Buffalo Hunt” helped to insure the preservation of tradition. For those students separated from home, illustrations like Hand’s drawings regenerated cultural values and served as markers of kinship amongst those students at Hampton and those returned to the reservation.144

In addition to reinforcement of tribal identity, often prominently featured on the front page of Talks and Thoughts, indications of the formation of inter-tribal relationships that facilitated a pan-Indian identity made their way into the front cover and in-between the pages of the periodical. At Hampton, students engaged in new opportunities to interact with members of other tribes and find common interests and identify shared experiences. As early

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143 Penney, Native American Art, 81-82.
144 On page two of the April 1892 issue of Talks and Thoughts, a note describes the image on the front cover; “The cut which we give on the first page was made from a sketch by Harry Hand to illustrate his story.” This quote highlights the importance of the paper, to the individual, because it is a space in which the individual student’s story can be learned. Hand’s story is also a familiar and collective story that is relatable for many of the Indian students at Hampton.; Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students 6, no. 11 (March 1892): 2; Penney, Native American Art, 85.
as 1882, student run clubs arose on campus including the Minnehaha Glee Club and The King’s Daughters Society, although the King’s Daughters Society was not distinctly Indian. These clubs did not determine membership based on tribal affiliation, rather, gender determined inclusion. Coed clubs such as the Christian Endeavor Society fostered pan-Indian leadership “when a Sac and Fox boy became president, a Winnebago girl vice president, an Omaha boy treasurer, and a Sioux girl secretary.”

This educational environment has been termed, “an ethnic melting pot” because “it mixed students from many tribes, producing an alloy of tribal, regional, and ‘supratribal’ identifications, adding a layer of ‘Indian’ identity into the Native American ethnic amalgam.”

Even though acculturation remained Hampton’s goal, the school ironically provided a space for mixed tribal or pan-Indian heritage that could actually strengthen the Indian identity. Explicit discussions, or conscious confessions, of developing a “pan-Indian” identity are not evident in the writings of Indian students. However, the actions of the students’ creating inter-tribal connections display either an unconscious or conscious situational response. Such indicate the beginnings of a pan-Indian identity and were reflected by the transition of *Talks and Thoughts* from various tribal languages to the use of English only.

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145 Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*, 134.
146 “Intertribal” is used to discuss shared tribal interests and concerns- individuals are representing their tribe. “Supratribal” focuses on shared Indian interests- individuals represent themselves and a larger Indian concern; Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 116, 143.
148 The evolution of Indian students’ identity formed what is now categorized historically as “pan-Indianism.”
Indian students did not initiate the use of English. Boarding schools emphasized English to diminish Indian identity by destroying the perpetuation of tribal language. Like the government boarding schools it inspired, Hampton enforced a strict no tribal language policy, attempting to squash “Indianness.” If students did speak the languages of the families they had left behind, the administration inflicted harsh punishments, with students often enduring beatings, being locked in small jail cells, or having their mouths washed out with lye.\textsuperscript{149} Although English carried with it negative connotations of acculturation and loss of Indian identity, students found a way to use English to develop connections with students they had previously been disconnected from due to the barrier of language.\textsuperscript{150}

When the first newspaper came off the press, \textit{Talks and Thoughts} included as a header a motto, which changed for the first time, in January of 1892. Before 1892, the motto had read, “Tahenan upi qu ounkiya biye, - \textit{Come over and help us}” (See Appendix C).\textsuperscript{151} The new motto, once the transition to English only occurred, read, “What’s brave, what’s noble, Let’s do it. – Shakespeare.”\textsuperscript{152} The editors of the paper provided two reasons for the change. One cited a simple desire to alter the quote and on the day of the change, another wrote the paper would only be published in the English language for the purpose of helping Indian students strengthen their grasp of the language. By having all Indians read and

\textsuperscript{149} Child, \textit{Boarding School Seasons}, 28.
\textsuperscript{150} Child, \textit{Boarding School Seasons}, 28.
\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 6, no. 1 (June 1891): 1.
\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 6, no. 8 (January 1892): 1.
express their thoughts in English, the editorial indicated that English was a struggle for Indians to master. 153

The explanation of the change to English aimed to reinforce the fiction of a deficiency in Indians to acquire a taste for English. One can assume that the latter explanation of the change highlighted the awareness of the administration preferences in the publication. Although students did not explicitly state that the transition to English offered a means of unifying inter-tribally through communication, comments made by students in following issues revealed excitement at the prospect of a common language. Students wrote on the usefulness of English, highlighting a new found voice in which to communicate with their peers. 154 Students’ masking the transition under the guise of “civilization” and quoting Shakespeare in their new motto, allowed for students to expand communication with their peers from other tribes without alarming the school.

English also allowed for a hidden counternarrative to assimilation, as its use provided a means of solidarity across tribal linguistic divides. English created a space for inter-tribal relations to manifest into organizations and pan-Indian identification and activism that emerged more fully later in the twentieth century. It allowed current students and alumni to share tribal affiliations and identifications, while opening up and sharing their experience those who may otherwise remain isolated due to a language barrier. Communication and

153 Talks and Thoughts 6, no. 8 (January 1892): 1.
154 The November 1892 issue features an article about the formation of a Literary Society by the Indian women, from various tribal affiliations, attending Hampton. The article states the society, provided the opportunity for women to, “think and talk.” Since the society only communicated in English, this article highlights the excitement of the female student population to communicate through a common language; “It will help the girls to speak more freely and express their thoughts.”, Talks and Thoughts 7, no. 6 (November 1892): 2-3.
interconnected relationships also allowed for students to claim power on the basis of strength in numbers.155

In addition to the transition to English only, other contributions in Talks and Thoughts point to Hampton’s fostering the development of inter-tribal relationships. The paper regularly featured wedding announcements on page two in the column entitled “Local News.” Although the wedding announcements did not often divulge tribal affiliation of the man or woman, looking at the record of alumni reveals that many of the weddings between students were inter-tribal, such as the wedding of John Pattee and Lottie Smith in 1891. In June 1891, the paper announced: “It is with great pleasure that we announce the marriage of John P. Pattee and Lottie Smith, which took place… in Cherokee, S.C., June 3rd. The following Monday the happy couple left for their new home in Crow Creek, S.D.”156 The announcement clearly displays the inter-tribal connections being forged between students, as a man from South Dakota married a woman from South Carolina. Lottie Smith’s hailing from Crow Creek would presumably bring with her aspects of her Cherokee heritage and incorporated them into Cheyenne tradition, making a pan-Indian identity. The announcement in the school newspaper suggests that the environment of Hampton was responsible.157 The wedding of Pattee and Smith was not an anomaly. Couples like Pattee and Smith, and the marriage of Juanita Espinosa, Piegan, and Henry Ketosh, Oneida, amongst others indicate the

156 Talks and Thoughts 6, no. 1 (June 1891): 2.  
157 Hampton Institute, Twenty-Two Years Work for Indians at the Hampton Institute (Hampton, VA: Hampton Institute Press), 477-481.
expansion of the connections.\textsuperscript{158} Indian student wedding announcements from different tribal affiliations appeared regularly in the twenty-one volumes of \textit{Talks and Thoughts}.

While wedding and marriage announcements provide insight into the meshing of students from various tribes, these announcements also serve to highlight the ways that students continued to hold on to their tribal heritage and affiliations. The majority of marriage announcements were actually between students coming from the same tribe. In February 1897, the paper announced the wedding of Richard Somers and Miss Electa House, both Oneida, and the November 1902 edition of \textit{Talks and Thoughts} proclaimed the marriage of Dora Poodry and James Jonathan, both Seneca coming from Tonawanda, New York.\textsuperscript{159}

Thus, these marriage announcements are important for what they reveal about tribal resilience over time. Despite a five-year difference between the two, students continued to choose partners from the same tribe, underlining the power of tribal kinship. Such contributions to \textit{Talks and Thoughts} indicate the strength of tribal identity and the desire to maintain and reinforce, through marriage, a sense of kinship to the home from which students came. Either way, students may not have intentionally chosen partners based on tribal affiliation or changed their identities, with the latter reflecting an early embrace of a movement toward pan-Indian communication and relations. Regardless of cognizance, a

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 16, no. 1 (June 1902): 2.; Jon L. Brudvig Ed., “Female Students Names A to F” in Hampton University Archives, Hampton University Library, Hampton, VA \textit{American Indian Student Files}, 1994.
\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 12, no. 9 (February 1897): 5.; \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 16, no. 1 (June 1902): 2; Jon L. Brudvig Ed., “Female Students Names M to Y” in Hampton University Archives, Hampton University Library, Hampton, VA, \textit{American Indian Student Files}, 1994.
complicated student identity composed of tribal affiliation and inter-tribal connections developed at Hampton.

Complications of Indian student identity continued with incorporations of American popular culture such as, the great American pasttime, Baseball. The beginnings of *Talks and Thoughts* parallels a pinnacle moment for sports and Indians. Starting in 1892, every issue of the monthly featured at least a small column dedicated to baseball. The reoccurrence highlights the importance of baseball and incorporation of an American pastime into the lives of Indian students at Hampton.

Sports functioned as a complicated nexus between Indian and Euro-American cultures. All the struggles of centuries of cultural collision were displayed at baseball parks as Indian and non-Indian athletes celebrated the advent of modern sports culture. Indian athletes did share cultural references, rules, and regulations with non-Indians, but something distinctly Indian came out of the shared games. Indian baseball players drew various meanings from athletic competition and wove ideas about race, religion, culture, and family into the successes of Indian players on the baseball field. Although race, culture, and the like, commonly intersected with the game for all players, including non-Indians, this intersection differed for Indian players. Indian players instead engaged in a performance, much like many other Indian performers, incorporating their distinct tribal affiliations, histories, and general Indian histories making their experiences unique.

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The idea of playing a sport was not new for Indian students. Indians played lacrosse, “Indian football,” and raced horses for centuries and colonists even wrote about it. Much like “American sports,” Indian sports had rules, regulations, and a distinct culture.\textsuperscript{162} Indians’ engaging in sport with non-Indians probably started in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Foot racing began the Indian and non-Indian competitions, but sporting practices such as lacrosse and other team games continued on the reservation and were tribally exclusive. During the mid-to-late nineteenth century, American sports, such as football and baseball, found popularity amongst non-Indian and Indians alike. Indians easily incorporated these sports into their pre-existing cultural traditions, both on the reservation and in the boarding schools. By the late nineteenth century, reservation teams competed with each other and boarding schools became hubs of Indian athletics.\textsuperscript{163}

Hampton Institute’s Indian baseball team played their first game against the “Hamptons” on August 5, 1892.\textsuperscript{164} The next month, \textit{Talks and Thoughts} dedicated a significant column to baseball and sports. Featured most often on the second page, the column highlighted scores, key players, and achievements. Notably, baseball, for Hampton students, was “a refigured warrior tradition… a chance to beat whites at their own games, an opportunity to get an education, and, even at its most serious, an occasion for fun and sociality.” Hampton Indian students embraced this refigured tradition.\textsuperscript{165} Headlines that read, “Victors in three successive games” called attention to the accomplishments of Indians over

\textsuperscript{162} Deloria, \textit{Indians in Unexpected Places}, 115.  
\textsuperscript{163} Deloria, \textit{Indians in Unexpected Places}, 116.  
\textsuperscript{164} Southern Workman, (September 1892): 143.  
\textsuperscript{165} Deloria, \textit{Indians in Unexpected Places}, 116.
whites. For games between non-white competitors, the write-ups were often smaller and not as evidently prideful. One read, “There were several games of baseball during the holidays one was between the colored boys and the Indians, the score was 6 to 10 in favor of the Indians.”

The pride felt by students participating in the sport was not limited to tribal or team affiliations. Rather, the students of Hampton felt a pride for all Indian students playing the game. As one commentator observed, “There is a second team of Indian boys who have bestowed upon themselves the name of ‘Stars.’ They deserve it because their playing is so good that they are real baseball stars.”

Using the term “baseball stars” is particularly interesting because it prospectively serves as a sign of the incorporation of “white” norms. Collectively facing the drudgeries of attending a boarding school, Indian students found happiness while playing the game, “We Indian boys…are going to make things here lively with baseball if nothing else.”

The shared pride and happiness felt under the umbrella of baseball transcended tribal, team, and even gender divides.

Hampton Institute often described Indian women using the same kinds of stereotypes that they did for men. Indian women became known as “dominated drudges.” The school’s image of women pigeon-holed them as either domestic workers or craft makers. Such stereotypes also reinforced white gender divides by isolating Indian women from working or participating in activities with men. But even in a sport associated specifically with men in American culture, Indian baseball players refigured the rules to include women.

166 *Talks and Thoughts* 12, no. 1&2 (June & July 1896): 5.
167 *Talks and Thoughts* 6, no. 8 (January 1892): 2.
168 *Talks and Thoughts* 13, no. 11 (April 1898): 2.
169 *Talks and Thoughts* 6, no. 2 (1891): 2.
During the holidays, the Hampton Indian Nine went to the women’s quarters and grounds, known as the Winona, to play games. One writer testified that “The Indian Nine played two games of baseball…After the games we were invited to Winona until half past five in the evening. We played some games with the girls.”\textsuperscript{171} The ability for Indian students to transcend gender in a very male-oriented game in American culture demonstrates Indian students incorporating and reimagining the game on their own terms. It also speaks to a unified embracement, not for tribal ties, but simply the ties of being Indian.

Ties made by Indian students were not racially segregated and extended to the black student population as well, contrasting Hampton’s claims of separatism. The school portrayed the image of a racially polarized campus. Administrators testified that Indian and black students did not commonly intermingle because dorms, workshops, and meals were kept separated and at most only forty Indians sat alongside blacks for normal courses.\textsuperscript{172} Despite administrators’ attempts to keep the races separated, Indian and black students mingled on the campus and their cultures and cultural tools met and blended. The cultural exchange between Indian and black students is most commonly associated with music. Indian students incorporated the Negro spirituals they heard at Hampton into native musical tradition. Plantation hymns learned at the school were found translated into Navajo religious services and Wisconsin Oneida singers continue to sing gospel songs learned at Hampton.\textsuperscript{173} Like the blending of student musical traditions, whether intentional or situational, Indian and

\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Talks and Thoughts} 6, no. 8 (January 1892): 2.
\textsuperscript{172} Hampton Institute, \textit{Ten Years Work}, 4.
\textsuperscript{173} Lindsey, \textit{Indians at Hampton Institute}, 268.
black students similarly utilized photography to make claims over the depiction of their identities.

Any transition in Indian practices had various interpretations. Assimilationists viewed change as a movement toward the end goal of Indian erasure. Those who believed in defined racial distinctions refused to acknowledge change and deemed it an unlikely occurrence. The opposing sides only remained willing to see similarities in actions, assigning Indian practices to a binary of either erasure or reinforcement of a singular tribal identity. There were also those who viewed the change in Native cultural practices as an overall decline and inevitable death of tribally affiliated identity. But then there were those who embraced culture as a constant evolution. They emphasized the fact that no one way exists to define any culture and the inability to assign a permanent enduring component provides evidence of culture as continually reinventing itself.

Cultural change is an inevitable and natural occurrence and when various groups of people unite in one institution, change itself is unavoidable. Identity issues encountered by boarding school students are not simple to dissect, especially because the Native American understanding of self and identity varies from what are too often Western-imposed assumptions of understanding Indianness. Indians typically associated identity with a collective, making it even more difficult to find a collective consensus of an experience. This is why Talks and Thoughts, operating as a community forum, provides insight into the larger student body of Hampton.

\[174\] Deloria, Indians in Unexpected Places, 113.
In the use of stories, illustrations, language, and *Talks and Thoughts* as a whole, Indian students became agents of their own identity. They moved between identities, and sometimes operated in multiple identities at the same time, according to what they needed. The intersection of multiple “selves” deconstructs the traditional binary of Indian versus white, or black and allowed Native American boarding school students to reclaim their agency. This interrogation, facilitated through the Hampton example also undermines the inconsistency and fictitious depiction of Native Americans by Hampton Institute. Native Americans have never been static and unchanging; instead they are dynamic and incorporate diverse cultural encounters into their being. As evident in Hampton Indian students’ use of visual and written contributions to the monthly, *Talks and Thoughts* provides a unique diversity of material which historians may interrogate, and tells a unique story amongst the narratives on Indian boarding schools. Identity for Indian students at Hampton, and other boarding schools alike, was neither a negotiation nor an accommodation; identity was an incorporation.

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175 Katanski. "Learning to Write ‘Indian,”” 133.
CHAPTER 3.

“When you are the camera and the camera is you”
Photography, Identity, & Hampton Institute

In his 1865 essay, “Pictures and Progress,” Frederick Douglass wrote, “The humblest servant girl may now possess a picture of herself such as the wealth of kings could not purchase fifty years ago…The smallest town now has its picture gallery…The farmer boy can get a picture for himself and a shoe for his horse at the same time, and for the same price.” Douglass recognized the democratic impulse in photography; that it leveled social hierarchies painted portraiture had long imposed and offered to ordinary people an easily attainable and universal tool of self-representation. Beyond these possibilities, he identified photographic images as retaining the capacity to facilitate social change within the country. Douglass supported his claims about the importance of photography by arguing that the ability to create and appreciate photography separated man from animals, “as picture making uniquely defined human nature, so did it also serve as the impetus for all progress.” He argued, “Where there is no criticism there is no progress– for the want of progress is not felt where such want is not made visible by criticism.” Therefore, Douglass’s essay asserts

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179 Douglass, “Pictures and Progress,” 12.
that the ability for a person to view themselves within a photograph enables self-evaluation and assessment, which both foster improvement and social change.\textsuperscript{180}

Although optimistic, Douglass recognized the continual struggle over representation within American popular culture, from which photography was not exempt. In his “Lecture on Pictures,” Douglass asserted, “This picture making faculty is flung out into the world- like all others subject to contradicting interests and forces. It is a mighty power.”\textsuperscript{181} Prior to Douglass’s claims about the promise of photography for African Americans and minority groups like Native Americans, white America dominated the “picture-making faculty.” African Americans and Native Americans continued to be subject to the interpretations of those whose interest did not align with the progress of African Americans or Native Americans in the country.\textsuperscript{182}

At Hampton, self-representation and student control over identity remained a daily struggle and photography became contested ground. At the turn-of-the-century, Hampton Principal, Holland B. Frisell, commissioned photographer Francis Benjamin Johnston to take propaganda photos, highlighting the work Hampton accomplished uplifting the black and Indian races. Johnston’s work served as the master photographic narrative of Hampton for decades, but a counter-photographic narrative arose from the Institute as well. I argue that

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\textsuperscript{180} O. Wallace and Smith, \textit{Pictures and Progress}, 7.
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\textsuperscript{181} Frederick Douglass, “Lecture on Pictures,” Frederick Douglass Papers, Library of Congress: Speech, Article, and Book file, 12.
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\textsuperscript{182} Photography first appeared in 1839 and as it rose to popularity in the United States, everything that could be photographed was. In its early uses, photography was used for “studying” African Americans and Native Americans. Supporting pseudo science and anthropological endeavors, African Americans and Native Americans were simply subjects to be studied in their representation within the picture. See Sontag, \textit{On Photography}; Bush and Mitchell, \textit{The Photograph and the American Indian}.
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photography, contrary to administrative intentions, provides a unique opportunity to analyze student strength and resilience. Photographs connected to the Institute, taken by the Hampton Camera Club, student James Van DerZee, and photos featured in *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students*, serve as evidence of students, male and female, black and Indian, collectively speaking back to the white-controlled Hampton model. Although the only photos, in this chapter, taken by a student are Van DerZee’s photos, students, although not photographers, deploy their status as “objects” in photographs to contrast subjectivity—as in their dress and posture. Students utilized the political landscape of photography to defy, resist, incorporate and remake their culture, contrary to Hampton’s intent to remove student agency from the formation of both the individual’s and the school’s identity.

The majority of popular photos associated with Hampton Institute from the turn-of-the-century are images taken by northern white photojournalist Frances Benjamin Johnston as promotional material for the school. Her photography depicts the common master narrative of student representation within photographs at Hampton Institute. From 1899-1907, Hampton worked exclusively with Johnston, renowned for her portrait work and

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183 I analyze and identify student self-representation and identity within photography using the photographic theory of intersecting gazes. Analysis of photography has gradually moved away from photographic images being analyzed from the gaze of the photographer alone. Photography is most commonly analyzed through an array of gazes, three of which I will use most commonly, include: the photographer, the subject, and the viewer to draw out the importance of the photograph in the lives of Hampton Institute students. ; Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, “The Photograph as an intersection of gazes” in *The Photography Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 354-375. See also, O. Wallace and Smith, *Pictures and Progress*. 
“honest” documentary style. School leaders hailed Johnston’s photos for their accuracy and insight and for “[showing] new life among the Negroes and Indians with the old, and then [showing] how Hampton has helped to produce the change.” Hampton administrators praised Johnston’s accuracy in capturing the “real” student.

The lasting importance of Johnston’s photographs within photographic studies can be largely attributed to her status and gender in the United States at the turn-of-the-century. Many deemed Johnston the “greatest woman photographer in the world.” Johnston photographed such iconic American figures as Mark Twain and Theodore Roosevelt during a career that spanned over sixty years. Johnston’s own iconography facilitated and inspired engagement with her photography of Hampton and its students.

Hired by Hampton’s second principal Frisell, Johnston began photographing black and Indian students for the Exhibit of American Negroes at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris. Frissell desired to spread the image of the Hampton model and wished for Johnston’s photos to serve as propaganda for the Institute, as “she was asked to provide a record of the student body, and implicitly document ‘the progress’ of education under the institute’s influence.”

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187 The Hampton mission read, “Education for Life.” First principal and co-founder Samuel Chapman Armstrong envisioned a program within the walls of Hampton Institute to train “the head, the hand and the heart.” Students received teachings in academics, manual training, and Christian education in hopes the students would take what they learned at
Analyses of her photographs most often center on Johnston’s gaze. Early viewers hailed Johnston’s accuracy and some scholars continue to argue that Johnston’s photos were simply taken in a journalistic fashion, or that because of her open rebellion against Victorian conventions, Johnston may have brought nothing more than an ambivalent approach to Hampton. Other scholars contend that Johnston worked diligently to stage and depict peaceful and orderly images, showing the Hampton model as beneficial to students. Among contemporary scholars, the consensus remains that Johnston harbored a biased gaze, and depicted the assimilation of black and Indian students. 188

In Johnston’s Hampton Album, students appear as homogeneous characters, all righteous, hard-working, and candidates for citizenship. The images convey black and Indian students as standard replicas of the last student photographed. All became iconic exemplars in front of the lens, therefore limiting the humanity of the person being photographed. As framed by Johnston, students represented “their race as a whole, specifying little individuality, personality, or self-determination whatsoever.” 189

Many of the group photos such as “A Class in Dress-making” (1900), “Class in American History” (1900), and “Literature-lesson on Whittier. Middle Class 1899” reveal a pattern of linear or pyramid like arrangements. “Literature-lesson on Whittier. Middle Class. 1899” (See Appendix D), demonstrates Johnston’s use of a linear arrangement as a tool to

188 For more information on Johnston and the scholarly debate surrounding her photography, see: Laura Wexler, Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in the Age of U.S. Imperialism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 127-166, and Patterson, Carrie Mae Weems, 28-29, 64-66.

avoid the eyes of the subject. Averting the eyes of the students from the viewer served two purposes. Students not looking directly into the camera cannot challenge the viewer or reveal any individuality, expression or humanity, found within their eyes. “Challenging the viewer,” means the lack of eye contact between black and native men in photos do not challenge the social etiquette of Jim Crow society. Black men averted their eyes from white women. Many viewers of the photos were white women and men; therefore, the lack of a “colored” gaze does not challenge white social hierarchy or the underpinnings of a Jim Crow society. Additionally, advertizing the eyes of the students draws attention away from them and to the central focal point, the classroom. The lack of eye contact with the viewer fosters the fiction of students as simply passive malleable subjects, for viewers themselves to observe and study.

Like many of Johnston’s photos, the material culture within the photograph plays an integral role removing individual student identity and promoting the work of Hampton. The students in “Literature-lesson” also wear uniforms so as not to convey individuality or personality through their clothing. The students sit within a classroom, void of even a desk, without any material items that may be of personal significance. The classroom displays images of “great white men” students should strive to liken themselves to, such as George

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191 Patterson, Carrie Mae Weems, 64.
Washington. Their body position, especially students with crossed arms are the only thing that suggests individuality.

Notably, Johnston’s photography of white women, outside of her work for Hampton, evidenced a concern and interest for their role within American society. Women often appeared in her prints and portraits participating in social activities. Her images conveyed white female self-expression and the photos served as encouragement and inspiration for women to find representation and expression through photography. Although Johnston claimed a vocation to represent women, her images of female students at Hampton Institute do not reflect her interest in their similar self-expression.

“A Class in dress-making” (see Appendix E) evidences the same methodical removal of identity through the staging of subjects in “Literature-lesson.” The female students’ eyes are cast down, away from the viewer. Their downward gaze suggests submission. The black female student at the center of the frame also looks downward, reinforcing overwhelming her passivity as subject.

“A Class in dress-making” uses material culture in the same manner as “Literature-lesson.” The women’s clothing, though varying slightly in style, still depicts uniformed and un-individualized subjects. The women stand in a classroom, void of personal affects or any sign of personal identity. The only role for which these women prepare is to become skilled

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192 For further explanation of the importance of material culture to photography see, Ray Sapirstein, “Picturing Dunbar’s Lyrics,” African American Review 41, no.2 (2007): 328-334.
laborers of a particular trade, a message reinforced by the surrounding sewing machines, hemming, and freshly altered dresses to the left of the frame.

In addition to analyzing the photographer and the subjects in the Hampton photographs, the intended viewer plays an integral role in the perceived representation of students and their identity. Looking through the gaze of the intended viewer reveals further why student identity could not be found within the photography commissioned by the administrators of the Institute. Within Johnston’s photos, black and Indian students exist as mere constructs; figures intended to inspire excitement and garner support from white viewers.

Frederick Douglass wrote on the importance of African Americans’ seeing themselves in photographs. He stated how the self-reflection promoted by an image could raise the spirits of African Americans and minorities, and thereby facilitate progress.\(^\text{195}\) Johnson and the Hampton administration never intended black and Indian students to act as viewers of the photographs. The lack of student viewership of Johnston’s photos removes the potential for representation and reaffirmation of power and identity within the photographic landscape.

Johnston’s photos, for the Exposition in Paris, successfully captivated white middle and upper-class viewers. Abroad, the photographs “reassured an international community that the United States had its ‘Negro problem’ and [Indian problem] firmly in hand.”\(^\text{196}\) The photos assured white viewers that blacks and Indians remained submissive, although free,

\(^{195}\) Douglass, “Pictures and Progress.”
and would take their appropriate place within American society, most likely working within the agricultural economy. Johnston’s photos deliberately aimed to demonstrate America’s control over black and Indian populations because the 1900 Exhibit occurred as American Imperialism emerged around the world. For America to conquer it needed to demonstrate, to outsiders looking in, that America controlled racial tensions.

Numerous counternarratives found within groups of photographs taken at Hampton for and by students contrast dramatically with Johnston’s master narrative. These include those taken by the Hampton Institute Camera Club and a student from the Institute. His photos serve as evidence of power, strength, and pride for the students of Hampton.

Because of the popularity of Johnston’s work at the turn-of-the-century, one may easily assume that student identity cannot be found in photographs taken by far-removed, northern white photographers. In 1893, however, a group of primarily white faculty and staff members formed the Hampton Institute Camera Club. The Club, composed mostly of those hailing from New England and various areas of the Northeast, operated from 1893-1926 as a recreational organization. Only seven identifiable African American members, according to existing evidence, participated in club activities. Even so, “no students of either race were [official] members.”

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197 Sapirstein, “Picturing Dunbar’s Lyrics,” 328. Sapirstein underlines the difficulty of attempting to determine racial identity in both the textual documents and many of the photos, stating textual documents [are] fraught with uncertainty and many others may yet be identified. Considering he Camera Club’s account and minutes books, these sources are what indicate the lack of student participation in the club.
Although African American and Native American students did not directly participate in the Club, the photographic works produced by club members portray strong, self-aware African American subjects, embodying individuality and self-representation. The unique gaze of the photographers warrants brief meditation even though their potentially biased perspective does not intrude on the photos.\textsuperscript{198} The photographs of the Camera Club provided such spaces for Hampton student self-representation and resistance to the aims of the Hampton model.\textsuperscript{199}

Throughout the Club’s history, members produced photos of African American students at Hampton for various publications including the \textit{Southern Workman}, but most popularly, they are known for their work featured in Paul Laurence Dunbar’s books of poetry. From 1899 to 1906, the Camera Club took images for Paul Lawrence Dunbar’s: \textit{Poems of Cabin and Field} (1899), \textit{Candle Lightin’ time} (1901), \textit{When Malindy Sings} (1903), \textit{L’il Gal} (1904), \textit{Howdy, Honey, Howdy} (1905), and \textit{Joggin’ Erlong} (1906). The photos aimed to illustrate poems intended for African American viewers, including those at Hampton.

The majority of the images produced by the Club in various publications convey aspects of African American domestic life and material culture. To illustrate Dunbar’s

\textsuperscript{198} The photographers’ gaze is unique because during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many photographs were taken by white Americans, like Johnston, and removed humanity from African Americans or “others.” Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, “The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes,” 358-359.

\textsuperscript{199} “Citing the Germanic art photography and the historic Pamunkey Indian name for the peninsula on which the school was located, the club was known internally, and presumably satirically, as the “Kiquotan Kamera Klub.”” See Ray Sapirstein, “Picturing Dunbar’s Lyrics,” 328.
poetry, some subjects, including students from Hampton and those from the surrounding area, “were evidently costumed to correspond with descriptions in Dunbar’s text, many rural subjects were photographed in their own homes and clothes, and appear to be reliable historical documents of the post-Reconstruction era in which they were made.” In spite of their posed nature, many of the images also offer fair approximations of material conditions and rural African American life of antebellum slave culture but should be regarded critically when they seem to transparently depict ‘life on the old plantation.’

In Poems of Cabin and Field, an image of three generations of black men, sit at the thresholds of two open doors (See Appendix F). The man to the left of the frame sits in tattered clothing and a little boy wears an oversized shirt and no shoes. The two men and one youth congregate outside a house with worn wood, sitting on a dirt floor or on a turned over wooden carton. Dunbar’s vernacular prose works in tandem with the photograph to harken back to the Antebellum South. To an outsider, the image appears as an “accurate” depiction of African American rural life.

Contrary to assumptions rooted in stereotypical imagery of African Americans in the nineteenth century, the men in the photo, as in other photos taken by the Camera Club perform in a “theatrical play.” The men illustrate Dunbar’s text by adopting identities of men “Tinkering ‘Round.” According to Sapirstein, “[They] enact fictional narratives, and serially in motion in time, suggest their autonomous existence and potential beyond the pages of the

201 Sapirstein, “Picturing Dunbar’s Lyrics,” 329.
book, mediating both sentimental imagery and evidentiary documentation sought to characterize [them] and an entire collectivity of people into a singular identity." The men’s performance indicates their control of self-representation and serves as evidence of how black students utilized “masking” at Hampton Institute. Masking means reading Dunbar’s “We Wear the Mask,” and looking at the photos of Hampton students and town residents taken by the Camera Club, “suggests not only photography’s role as a medium conveying fictions but demonstrates subjects’ self-invention and self-representation within the photographs and ultimately their complicity in the content of an image.”

In addition to the subjects, the surrounding environ adds meaning to the performance. Important to note within the image of the men “Tinkering ‘Round” is the centrality of the doorways within the photo. The doorways, or thresholds, common in many of the photos taken by the Club, represent a symbolic domestic space. The doorways signifying, for the reader, that Dunbar’s books will be gateways through which readers may obtain access to black life, character, and the black experience. The photographs accompanying the books also serve as avenues in which the reader or viewer may gain access to seeing black performance of identity.

The photos function as imperative documents, facilitating and reinforcing student resilience and self-constructed identity because students composed the primary viewers of

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204 The term “masking” comes for Paul Laurence Dunbar’s “We wear the mask.” The term indicates that African Americans often performed identities, wearing a “mask” in white society and removing the “mask” in their homes or communities.
the Camera Club photos. Even for those who did not appear as subjects of the Camera Club’s photos, the ability to view students and people like themselves allowed for the recognition of power and control. Other students demonstrated their self-representation within a photograph by fostering a feeling of community and solidarity amongst students constantly in defense of their identities. Students viewing the photos also witnessed the potential to undermine existing caricature and pictorial conventions claiming to represent the “real” black racial character, as Johnston depicted, without risking punishment from select administration for overtly defying the aims of Hampton.  

In addition to the photos taken at Hampton by the Camera Club, which subverted the master narrative of the Institute, a black student photographer named James Van DerZee took photos of students at Hampton Institute depicting students as individuals and in-control of their identities. Van DerZee served as Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association’s official photographer beginning in 1924 and prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance sat in Van DerZee’s studio throughout the 1920s. Not until after the 1969 *Harlem on My Mind* exhibit did Van DerZee receive recognition as the photographer of the Renaissance. While briefly attending Hampton Institute’s night school for art and music from 1907-1908, Van DerZee served as a photographer for the Institute.  

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208 Deborah Willis-Braithwaite, *VanDerZee, Photographer* (New York: Abrams, 1975), 8, 33-34.
stint at Hampton was brief, Van DerZee maintained a commitment to producing photography that was true “to all of my people.” 209

In a 1969 interview, Van DerZee recalled when he first fell in love with photography. “I became interested in photography way back… In fact, all my people were artists and musicians…We used to paint a good deal…but after I found out there was such a thing as a camera and that you could put people in position and just press the button and you had the picture, I didn’t do so much drawing and painting.” 210 After obtaining his first camera from a mail order advertisement, Van DerZee traveled widely, taking photographs at schools and of prominent figures such as the Vanderbilts, the Morgans, and the Westinghouses. In 1907 he journeyed with his first wife to Newport News, Virginia. 211

While in Virginia, Van DerZee worked at the Hotel Chamberlin, attended Hampton’s evening school for music and art, and did photography on the side for supplementary income. During his residency at Hampton, he seized the opportunity to take photos for the Institute. Many of his photos capture black teachers from the Whittier School, a preparatory school at Hampton, and students. Of his experience taking those photos, Van DerZee noted “They had costume plays, and I made pictures of them in the schoolhouse and in the classroom. I did a

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209 Quotes such as this one are from interviews in the 1960s or later, following Van DerZee’s fame. The quotes reveal his “Black is Beautiful” politics—a perspective in line with what’s happening in 1969, but also what Garveyism preached in the 19-teens/20s. Although, the photos assessed date back to 1908, at the turn-of-the-century, this was the beginnings of the “Black is Beautiful” movement, a politic that would become more concrete over the course of Van DerZee’s life. James Van DerZee, “Dedication,” The World of James Van DerZee: A Visual Record of Black Americans, in Reginald McGhee ed., (New York: Grove Press, 1969).


211 Van DerZee, “Interview with James Van DerZee.” 2-3,7.
great deal of work on the side down there… I made most of the pictures on my own initiative.”

Van DerZee never attended school to learn photography formally; rather his art relied on an experience based form. He often experimented with retouching pictures, by cleaning up the face of the subject to “make them look better than the actual people.”

While some argue that such alterations to photography are problematic, the edits do not negate the importance and overall narrative of his photography. As Van DerZee announced, “I put my heart and soul into them [the photos at Hampton] and tried to see that every picture was better looking than the person- if it wasn’t better looking than the person I was taking, then I wasn’t satisfied.” Van DerZee desired to reveal the black beauty of each subject, a beauty sometimes hidden under wrinkles and lines or behind shadows within the subjects’ face. He worked arduously to ensure that he photographed his subjects at an angle with complimentary lighting, which would reveal their expression and character. He often posed his subjects according to their character and personality, therefore restoring and promoting the humanity, dignity, and individuality of his subjects.

An “Untitled” photo (See Appendix G), taken of the Whittier School (the preparatory school for Hampton) teachers, many who were graduates and students from Hampton, serves as an excellent example of the African American student representation and identity evident in Van DerZee’s photography. Unlike the photos produced by Johnston, all but two of the subjects stare directly into the camera, some with smiles on their faces. Their eyes lock with

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212 Van DerZee, “Interview with James Van DerZee.” 7.
213 Van DerZee, “Interview with James Van DerZee.” 11.
214 Van DerZee, “Interview with James Van DerZee” 8-11, 13.
the viewer, evoking a sense of pride and self-confidence, and place the viewer not as an observer but as participant and equal of the subject. Their smiles indicate a sense of ease and comfort with the photographer, the viewer, and themselves. Closely examining the faces in “untitled,” not a line or mark appears. Van DerZee did not simply retouch photos for the sake of beauty; rather, he removed evidence of poor health or worn-clothing to challenge the popular cultural myths about African Americans in the American imaginary and at Hampton Institute.215

Unlike Johnston’s portraits depicting a homogenous student identity and seen in the material culture on or surrounding the subjects, the men and women in “Untitled” are different from each other. Though they don similar clothing in which they teach, some chose to add bow-ties or neck-ties and button their coats tightly. Others chose a more casual appearance, lacking a tie and leaving their jacket open, while still looking respectable due to their posture. Analyzing the clothing in this way reveals the options that the subjects maintained over their own representation. Moreover, Van DerZee relies on the individuality of each subject in “Untitled” to show a sense of community amongst individuals. This photo encompasses a large group of people engaged in” a mutual pursuit which suggests shared values, aspirations, and goals” amongst the students and graduates themselves and not in relation to the Institute.216

Van DerZee’s choice of setting is also of importance. The photograph, taken outside, humanizes the subjects and speaks to their ability to obtain recreation time. Moreover, the

215 Braithwaite, VanDerZee, Photographer, 13.
216 Willis-Braithwaite, VanDerZee, Photographer, 24.
“recreational” or “leisure” time is classed, only folks who have money and extra time can partake in leisure activities or can enjoy such settings like the group featured in the photo.

Taken the same year as “Untitled,” in 1908, Van DerZee photographed “Whittier Preparatory Academy class, Phoebus, Virginia” (See appendix H) at the Whittier Preparatory academy, where he took music courses as a student attending Hampton. The photograph is posed because of the necessity of a long exposure time, yet provides an honesty that cannot be found in Johnston’s posed photos. In “Whittier Preparatory,” the viewer’s gaze is immediately attracted to the subjects. The subjects engage the viewer and return the stare, similar to “Untitled.” All subjects lock eyes with the viewer, including the instructor, therefore making the subjects and viewer equal. Because the instructor, located in the foreground, engages the viewer, the viewer is welcomed in to the classroom. As the viewer enters the classroom, it is evident that the photo emphasizes the importance of education, with chalkboards covered in writing bordering the students who hold up their books, the viewer is a participant in the classroom setting.

The angle from which Van DerZee photographed the students and instructor sheds complimentary lighting on all of the subjects. The light actually serves as a guide for the eye, drawing the eye from the brightest highlights on the left to the subtle illumination of the instructor’s face on the right. The photo displays aspects of Van DerZee’s photography for which he is famous, the lighting not only guides the viewer’s eye, but it also falls on the faces of the subjects in such a way that the expressions of each subject is visible, the ability to

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217 Willis-Braithwaite, VanDerZee, Photographer, 34.
218 Willis-Braithwaite, VanDerZee, Photographer, 35.
engage with the subjects in such a way that the viewer can see expression, see individuality, therefore restores and promotes the humanity, dignity, and individuality of the subjects in “Whittier Preparatory.”

Van DerZee’s photographs do not show, “the common images of black Americans-downtrodden rural citizens. Instead [he depicts] people of great pride and fascinating beauty.”219 The beauty and positive message from his photos actually reveal the tenacity and resilience of his black subjects. It also speaks to the liveliness of a community and its ability to rejuvenate and reimage itself, all of which contrasted starkly with images for promotion of Hampton’s model or those hidden “behind the mask” in other photographic documents.220

Unlike the excitement and promise of photography expressed by black intellectuals such as Douglass, Indian students arrived at Hampton with little to no desire to engage with its emerging technology. For an extensive time, Indians had associated the camera with exploitation as photographers profited from their image, sold as exotica within a white economy and used to reaffirm beliefs of “otherness” and savagery in the American imaginary.221 Although Indian students presumably rejected photography due to their negative cultural associations with it, some eventually brought cameras with them to Hampton from their homes. Like African Americans, Indian students utilized photography as a tool to control representation of “self.”

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220 Willis-Braithwaite, VanDerZee, Photographer, 25.
221 Bush and Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian, xv.
Contributors to Hampton’s Indian student newspaper, *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students* relied heavily on photography beginning in 1893, switching from illustrations to more contemporary “American” ways of representing themselves. Although American culture popularized photography, the embrace of this medium did not demonstrate any loss or compromise of Indian student identity. Rather, photos highlight Indian students adapting to and consuming the surrounding culture and using its tools to operate within that culture as well as incorporating technology as a means to control their self-representation.

Two groups of photos commonly appear within *Talks and Thoughts* those of students “performing identity” and those of students intended to show an “authentic” Indianness. Both groups of photos, and presumably any uncredited photo featured in the newspaper, may have been taken by a white photographer. Many photographers at the Institute were white teachers and administrators with only a few being black or Indian. The Camera Club may have participated in taking some of the photographs featured in *Talks and Thoughts*. Until more is known about each photo, the photographers for nearly all of the photos remain unidentifiable. Even so, if the photographer cannot be identified, the lasting impact of the photos on the subjects and viewers can.

Contrasting the photography of Johnston, who depicted Indian students as homogenous, submissive, and lacking agency are many students across the color line who participated in “theatrical play” as a way to reclaim their self-representation. For Indian students, “performing” couched and reconciled Indian cultural forms within dominant
middle-class domestic ideals and behavioral norms. Photography became a medium that conveyed fictions but allowed Indian students space to invent themselves, determine their own representation, and claim agency within a photo. Native students performed fictional narratives, while still “suggesting the subjects’ autonomous existence and potential beyond the pages of the books, mediating both sentimental imagery and evidentiary documentation that sought to characterize an entire collectivity of people into a singular, essential taxonomic identity.” The photos had a cinematic and fictional quality, and were largely unself-conscious.

By placing notions of performance and photography together in conversation with Indian students’ attempts for self-representation it becomes evident that the subjects of the photo are not the subordinates; rather, the photographer has no power over the representation of the subject being photographed. Similar to the masking and performance evident in the photos of black students at Hampton, Indian students utilized photography as a space to gain control over their own representation. In “Indian Young Men in Graduating Class, and Commissioned Officers of the Indian Company 1895” (See Appendix I), the young men featured do not appear in traditional garb, or what the school previously printed in photos as Indians in “tribal wear.” The men fill the roles of graduates “civilized” by the Hampton model, and are commissioned officers in the U.S. military. To the white viewer, the Indian

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225 *Talks and Thoughts* 10, no. 2 (July 1895): 4.
men in the photo appear civilized and represent yet another success for Hampton, but the image represents far more for Indian students viewing the photo.

Dressed in suits and uniforms, the men bear many of the social markers of a middle-class status. The image functions as a political text with the men “uplifting the race by positing [Indians] as humble men with the potential to be citizens given the necessary intervention of civilization and education [and militarism].” For white middle-class viewers and Hampton administration, the men inhabit the role of the “reformed savage.” Although for white viewers, like those at the Paris Exposition of 1900, the photo depicts uplift, for Indian students the photo serves to subtly reject and challenge the notion of white dominance within the middle class because the graduating men share the social marker of middle class status clothing.

The title of the photo is particularly telling of the importance of the image to Indian viewers. The young men are commissioned officers, therefore they served in a position of authority, unlike filling a common role such as a cadet. Native American officers were few until the turn-of-the-twentieth century in the United States Military. Though crucial to the United State Governments’ westward expansion, the United States military rarely viewed Indians as anything more than a scout- or just an employee. In 1891, the War Department authorized the creation of Indian companies within the regular army infantry and cavalry. The order stated that Company I of Infantry Regiments and Company L of Cavalry Regiments would allow space for Native American officers- except those regiments created

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for black soldiers. The order was not received well by the Army. The order allowed for 1,484 Indian soldiers, but the number of recruits never made it past 780. From this order, the only Indians to serve out their entire enlistments were from Company L of the 7th Regiments.

To be a commissioned officer means one will be armed, therefore these young Indian men, serving as commissioned officers, were armed. In the Indian gaze, the men serving in the military and being armed makes absolute sense in their world-view. The men in the photo most likely came to Hampton in the way many Indian students arrived, as prisoners of war, meaning these men were warriors and fighters prior to Hampton. As warriors the men were armed before being taken captive and their removal of arms served as a form of emasculation by the United State government. The men being reinstated with arms is symbolic for Indian viewers because of the Indian nations disarmed during removal. The appointment of commissioned officer serves as a reinstatement of arms and masculinity.

The names and tribal affiliations of the students listed also demonstrate the importance of this photo to Indian student viewers. The tribal associations such as, Omaha, Onondaga, and Santee highlight that while some of the officers are from the west, not all are. Yet men coming from tribes that would never have previously interacted, now serve together. The officers and their tribal affiliations illuminates for students, the ability to form a pan-Indian identity.

Significance additionally lies in the number of times this image ran in *Talks and Thoughts*. Within three separate issues, *Talks and Thoughts* featured “Indian Young Men in Graduating Class.” The students chose to publish this photo numerous times, helping to

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228 Plante, “Researc... U.S. Army Indian Scouts.”
indicate the importance of the photo to the students publishing the newspaper as well as the viewers reading it. The photo and the men serving as officers, or leaders in the military, make sense within the Indian student world-view.

“Exotica” photos commonly ran on the cover of Talks and Thoughts. Often deemed ethnocentric, these photos proved convenient at the time for Hampton because of the Folklore Society’s desire to capture “real” Indianness within the frame of a single picture. The ethnocentric impulse emerges most within photos depicting such items as costumes, artifacts, and ceremonies.229 Many of these photos ran on the covers of Talks and Thoughts, but served numerous purposes, especially helping Indian students to reinforce “tribal identity” and affiliations with other students.

“The Pappoose” (See Appendix J) featured on the cover of the December 1896 edition of Talks and Thoughts accompanies a song entitled “Lullaby of the Iroquois.” The image is of an Indian child apparently swaddled in an Iroquoian cradle and nested amongst traditional textiles. The photo reveals the emblematic desire of Hampton to document the “authentic” Indian. Taken by the school’s hired photographer, Johnston, the portrait is evidently anthropological in nature. The baby would not have been by itself; it would have been with its mother if the photo captured a candid image. “The Pappoose” falls under one of three categories of Indian portraiture of the nineteenth century: exotica, candid, and Victorian.230 This exotica image stands at odds with the aims of the Hampton model.

229 Bush and Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian, xx.
Administration often used such images as a means to inspire students to continue their pursuit toward civilization. The administration of Hampton often ran photos of a “time past” for Indian students to inspire the desire to reject what students saw within the photos, and suggest that the opposite could occur.

For the Indian students who chose to use the image of the Iroquoian baby in the newspaper, this “exotica,” particularly of an infant, “comprise[d] a visual testimony to how much was lost in the shearing of their hair, the donning of man made suits, and the schooling in book-lined classrooms.” Reflecting on images of home, or of a likeness to it, Indian students constructed a sense of self. The photos, though often staged, helped to insure the preservation of memory of what they had nearly lost at the school and what they would regain after leaving and resettling in their community.

For Indian viewers of the photograph, the anthropological aspect can be overlooked by the humanity evident in the photo. The baby is humanized by it’s gaze and evident joy. The image evokes comfort and this could very well explain the use of the photo on the front page of Talks and Thoughts. The image of “The Pappoose” presents an uncommon gaze of contentment, but it also is uncommon because the image transcends the viewer divide of white and Indian. Unlike most of the images produced by Hampton, this photo features a baby, a symbol of innocence, universally, and is relatable to all viewers. The ability for the photo to transcend the viewer divide also facilitates the ability for students viewing the

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231 Bush and Mitchell, The Photograph and the American Indian, xix.
233 David Penney and George C. Longfish, Native American Art (Hong Kong: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1994), 85.
image to connect on a most basic human level, while still being able, for some viewers, to meditate on lost aspects of culture.

Booker T. Washington exquisitely encapsulated the student experience of living the Hampton model in *Up From Slavery*, “…no white American ever thinks that any other race is wholly civilized until he wears the white man’s clothes, eats the white man’s food, speaks the white man’s language, and professes the white man’s religion.”

Returning to Frances Benjamin Johnston’s photography, Washington’s rumination in *Up From Slavery* is clearly reflected in her photo, “About 400 Students in Memorial Chapel” (See Appendix K). “About 400 Students” depicts on film, the crossroads at which Hampton Institute and black and Indian students intersected.

Like Johnston’s other photos featured at the 1900 Paris Exposition, “About 400 Students” defined itself as a true representation of Hampton and aimed to convince viewers of its accuracy in the depiction of student life at the institute. The photography coming out of Hampton, particularly those produced by Frances Benjamin Johnston, “…served as an example of American innovation. Hampton was an example of growth beyond dealing with ‘darker races’ with brute force such as incidents as Wounded Knee and lynch mobs.”

But, Johnston’s images deceived. As “About 400 Students” depicts, students allowed themselves to be photographed for the Institute, to imply they had learned the “white man’s

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In this image, the students’ dress is to represent the most blatant signal of students embracing white culture. All of Johnston’s photos are not subtle in their motivations—like the goals of the Hampton administration, Johnston’s photos suggested that: “with a Hampton education, Native Americans [and African Americans] are respectable, self-supporting citizens; without one, they are squalid, destitute...” The folklore, letters, and photography from *The Southern Workman, Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students*, and various photographers contradict Johnston’s images.

The crux of the matter revolves around how photography activates its meanings. “Photographs have the kind of authority over imagination today, which the printed word had yesterday, and the spoken word before that. They seem utterly real.” Photography offers an avenue to access the lives of students at Hampton Institute from a multitude of perspectives not available in other documentation. Analyzing a photo from the intersecting perspectives of the photographer, subject, and viewer gives depth to student identities by showing them subtly and intricately using photography to gain agency by using their subjectivity or their serving as “objects” to assert a subjectivity. But since photography “seems utterly real,” many perceive photographs to depict “just the thing,” within the frame and do not take in to account for alternative gazes.

Photography remains an incredibly difficult and contested text, “Photographs have only one language and is destined potentially for all,” writes Sontag. Deciphering the

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238 Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* 25.
language indeed proves the most difficult aspect. But once the language is deciphered, photography provides avenues, unlike any other source, to the “being” of a person and remains a primary means to recall memories of times past. Photography works much like human memory, freezing frames to produce a “simple” image. Photographs, at face value, provide a quick way of obtaining a seemingly small amount of information. Too often, those small images reflected in one frame are erroneously used as representing one whole truth. Analyzing student identity and photography at Hampton illuminates the complexity of one small image, such as that of a baby or students sitting in a classroom.

Since photos require a living context and continue to “live,” instead of being arrested within a moment, it becomes necessary for viewers to understand the historical context of both the visible and non-visible. Memory interacts with the historical narrative, which, in turn, poses a challenge to the numerous individual narratives inhabiting one photograph. Johnston’s photos remain contested within the scholarly discourse. Yet the discussion of her photos and the research invested in them keeps the photos and the memories associated with those photos alive. Adding the student experience for both black and Indian students is essential for any discourse on Hampton photography to make the shift away from Johnston’s photos as the master photographic narrative. Interrogating student identity within the context of student writings and photography enables the photos and the memory of students with

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239 Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others, 20.
240 Sontag, Regarding the Pain of Others, 22.
241 Often it is forgotten that a photograph is just a snippet of a larger occurrence. What is framed within a photograph is at the same time, excluding.
242 Leigh Raiford, “‘Come Let Us Build a New World Together’: SNCC and Photography of the Civil Rigths Movement,” American Quarterly (December, 2007), 1151.
agency to become visible and to inform the collective memory of the Hampton student experience.
CONCLUSION

Hampton Institute is most often remembered for its star student Booker T. Washington and policies of accommodationism that he made popular in the age of Jim Crow. However, this thesis reminds us that we must also remember Hampton for the role it played in colonization and re-education of native populations. In fact, these simultaneous projects better illuminate the complexities of the Hampton Institute model in the years 1870-1920.

The projects of Reconstruction and Removal intersected at Hampton. Fueled by the assumptions of white supremacy, Hampton’s black and native students were subjected to an education that sought to remake them into peoples who would be more easily subjugated in this post-war landscape. On campus, students were forced to live lives of rigidity and surveillance; they were closely and carefully watched. In this climate of surveillance that forced black and native students to outwardly signify the values of the Hampton administration, it is important to search for resistance in their expressions of culture and community. Black and Indian students needed the education at Hampton, but also knew they had to keep Armstrong and administration at bay to preserve their own identities. Folklore, trickster tales, and the photographic political landscape are all deceptive in nature. All three play dual roles, revealing insider truths to the reader or viewer, only if the reader or viewer is in the know. The continual publication of folklore, tales, illustrations, and photography contributed to a social education of double consciousness for the students. The folklore, letters, illustrations, and photography highlighted students’ abilities to retain, incorporate and

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reimagine their identities. It illuminates the dissent and resilience of the black and Indian students at Hampton Institute.
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Appendix A

“A Buffalo Hunt,” *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students* 6, no.11, April 1892.
Appendix C

Motto, *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students* 6, no.1, June 1891.
Appendix D

“Literature- lesson on Whittier. Middle Class. 1899,” Francis Benjamin Johnston.
“A Class in dress-making,” Francis Benjamin Johnston.
Appendix F

Appendix G

“Untitled,” James Van Der Zee, 1908.
Appendix H

“Whittier Preparatory Academy class, Phoebus, Virginia,” James Van Der Zee, 1908.
“Indian Young Men in Graduating Class and Commissioned Officers of the Indian Company 1895,” Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students 10, no.2, 1895.
Appendix J

“About 400 Students in Memorial Chapel,” Frances Benjamin Johnston, The Hampton Album, 1900.