> The Indians as a people must be led to see the importance of developing the work they are so gifted in doing, and to help supply the market's demands; and thus take a long step in the direction of self-support; which, after all, is the end of all Indian Education.
> *Estelle Reel*

The White Man's Indian Art

TEACHING AESTHETICS AT THE INDIAN SCHOOLS

In 1904, the superintendent of Indian schools, Estelle Reel, visited the government boarding school in Albuquerque and discovered Navajo students so eager to weave that they had used the legs of upturned chairs to frame their looms.[1] Reel's encounter in Albuquerque made a deep impression. Shortly after her return, she recommended the hiring of Navajo women to teach weaving as part of the school's vocational training. Her welcoming attitude toward Native art was not limited to the curriculum at this school. As part of the *Uniform Course of Study* she had issued in 1901, Reel encouraged United States Indian school superintendents to implement courses in Native American artistic traditions at both day and boarding schools, using local Native craftspeople as teachers.[2] Indian service publications came to refer to this as the "Native industries" curriculum.

We can't see what Reel saw, but a photograph from the Phoenix Indian school in 1903 recalls this anecdote (see figure 16). It shows students working side by side on a makeshift loom frame fashioned from what appears to be a bedpost. Posed behind their work with their hands intertwined with the strings of the warp, the weavers seem to be comfortable, literally at one, with their work. The photograph

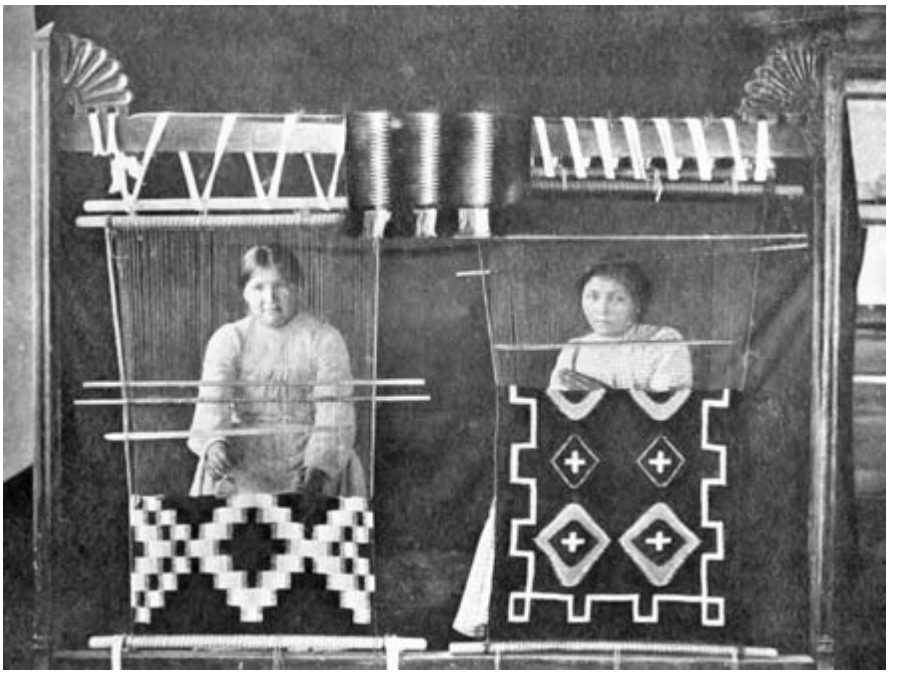

FIGURE 16 "Teaching Blanket Weaving, Phoenix Indian School, Arizona," from *The Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1903* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), facing 20.

suggests the aesthetic values ascribed to Native American art by the promoters discussed in chapter 1, for it suggests that art is a natural outflowing of Indian identity. It is hard to imagine a better illustration of William Morris's conception of the joyful artist. The straight, even lines of their blankets demonstrate the careful attention they've shown their craft, while the fact that they are working two very different designs expresses their independence and originality. Despite the fact that they are working in a "traditional" medium, these young women are making handicrafts that live up to modern ideals in both production and final product.

Viewers would have celebrated these young women for perpetuating what they saw as an ancient tradition. As explained in chapter 1, however, Navajo weaving can be better understood as a practice that developed continually, in response to changing historical circumstances. As such, we can best understand the textiles of the turn of the century as "modern" works. The rectilinear border on the textile to the right reinforces this, as this innovation developed to accommodate the European American market for

rugs (borders were inconsistent with the aesthetics of wearing blankets).[3] If James's "railroad blanket" (see figure 15) responds in part to the encroachment of European Americans and their products into the Navajo world, the textiles made at the government Indian schools reflect an even more radical displacement—the removal of young weavers to the world of the boarding school, where their production and their products would be evaluated primarily by teachers and other government employees.

This chapter examines the Native industries curriculum, which was in place for nearly a decade. Short-lived and never strongly supported by school administrators, these programs were hardly the focus of Indian education during these years. But Reel's reports and her private collection of clippings from 1901 to 1909 trace the spread of Native industries across the country. She records instruction in Indian handicrafts at thirty-five schools, and this number may be incomplete, as her reports often focus on only one part of a school's performance and because Reel was not able to inspect all schools regularly. Nevertheless, over 10 percent of government-funded day schools, on-reservation boarding schools, and off-reservation boarding schools participated in this program. Uneven implementation aside, the Native industries program was the aspect of Native education that received the most public attention in these years, in no small part because Reel held frequent exhibitions of student work.

In its own time, Native industries was praised as turning away from the traditional federal rejection of "traditional" Native culture. More recently, scholars have looked at this and similar programs in an attempt to categorize "good" and "bad" periods of Indian administration.[4] Such diagnoses are problematic, not only because Reel implemented policies that demanded the eradication of Native culture in other spheres, but also, and more importantly, because such assessments can unwittingly reinforce notions of cultural authenticity that obscure ways in which so-called traditional culture is historically shaped by both Native and non-Native forces.

As I will argue below, the significance of Reel's curriculum reaches beyond the history of Indian education; it is part of an overlap of aesthetic and social concerns that were brought to bear on American educational and reform programs directed at the working classes. As such, it illustrates the contradictory goals of educators and reformers of the time, which simultaneously sought to ameliorate the drudgery of industrial labor by developing

the workers' individuality but at the same time was focused on improving industrial labor. At the same time, the Native industries curriculum illustrates a problem peculiar to the Native sector of this workforce, which is the essentialist idea that Native American identity characterized the nature and quality of Indian work. The curriculum simultaneously supports two contradictory notions of ethnic identity: an older model in which racial characteristics might be transcended through the process of "civilization" and a new model emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century in the work of ethnologist Franz Boas and others, valuing cultural difference over cultural hierarchy.[5]

Robert Berkhofer's 1978 book *The White Man's Indian* argues that mainstream American representations of Indian people were always skewed by the intellectual trends affecting Euro-America.[6] This is certainly the case for the Native industries curriculum. Under the guise of preserving "traditional" art, Reel's programs borrowed heavily from mainstream efforts to ameliorate industrial work through handicrafts. As I show below, Reel was particularly indebted to two groups working with immigrants and other members of the urban working class: social reformers and progressive educators.

Reel's investment in indigenous "tradition" is thus deceptive. Close analysis of photographs and written accounts reveals that Native industries courses gave Indian school students a rigorous grounding in mainstream ideas about both art and cultural identity. Rather than seeing this experience as encouraging them to turn away from an authentic Native identity, I see it as part of the long-standing engagement of Indian people with their changing conditions. As for the reservation-based craftspeople supplying the demands of the Indian craze, Native industries' students faced the forces of modernity, often occurred in ways that were beyond their control. Like their counterparts on the reservation, however, they were also able to find ways to make their participation in the Indian craze meaningful.

INDIANS AND INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION

The interest in having Native students perpetuate tribal traditions, and to do so under the leadership of a local Indian teacher, seemed to contradict the historical goal of government-funded Indian education, which was focused on turning tribal people into American citizens. However, Reel's ideas were

less at odds with U.S. policy than may first appear. In order to understand her goals, it is useful to rehearse the evolution of that policy.

While non-Indians have run schools for Native Americans for centuries, Reel's career occurred during a period of increased governmental control over Native education. Ulysses S. Grant's "Peace Policy" delegated Indian education to missionaries based on reservations, but an experiment in rehabilitating Plains Indian prisoners through education at the military's Fort Marion in Saint Augustine, Florida, in the mid-1870s led to the establishment of government-funded off-reservation boarding schools. The first such program was established in 1878 at the Hampton Institute in Virginia, a school that had originally been founded for former slaves. In 1879, the Indian Industrial School opened in former army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Richard Henry Pratt, the army officer who had been in charge of the Fort Marion prisoners. Both schools attracted substantial attention from the mainstream press, Indian reformers, and government officials as demonstrating the potential role of education in solving the "Indian problem."[7]

The appointment of Thomas J. Morgan as commissioner of Indian affairs a decade later marked the first efforts to create a unified Indian educational policy. Morgan's administration called for increased centralization of the Indian school system. The schools also stepped up efforts for enrollment of all Indian children, often against their own or their families' will. In 1877 there were 48 Indian boarding schools and 102 day schools, with a total average attendance of 3,598 pupils. By 1900, 307 schools had charge of 21,568 pupils.[8] While enrollment numbers were inflated, and students frequently ran away, the 1900 number represented roughly half of the Indian youth living within the boundaries of the United States.

A year into his job, Morgan issued a brief circular titled *Indian Education*, which outlined his goals for the Indian school system. His primary focus was on the transformation of Indian character. Schools should focus on instilling qualities he associated with his own culture, including "the fear of God and respect for the rights of others; love of truth and fidelity to duty; personal purity, philanthropy, and patriotism."[9] He saw this as essential to the eventual integration of Indian people into mainstream society, and he promoted the breakdown of tribal identity by advocating tribally mixed schools in which children were required to speak English, wear Western

dress, and answer to new, Anglicized names. He also praised the Dawes Act of 1887, which called for the division and distribution of land held communally by tribes, a process known as allotment.

Morgan defined the chief problem inhibiting Native assimilation as the Indian's inherent aversion to work, a stereotype that had long been used to explain what might also be described as indigenous resistance to colonial control of their labor. He asked teachers to lead their pupils away from "indolence and indifference" into "habits of industry and love of learning."[10] Morgan's circular established an emphasis on industrial education that dominated government policy in the following decades. Morgan was also interested in applying mainstream educational principles in the Indian schools, something that became central to Reel's work.

The vocational training offered by the Carlisle school provided the first model of industrial training used in the Indian school system. Pratt's program split the day into two equal halves, one devoted to classroom work and the other to labor. Students learned trades by providing the domestic and agricultural services needed to keep the school running, and theoretically to prepare students to seek work off the reservation. Despite being made late in Pratt's career, Frances Benjamin Johnston's photograph of the tin shop at Carlisle illustrates his goals (see figure 17). The picture shows young men in Western dress and regimental haircuts in a spacious and well-stocked workshop. They do not look up from their work to address the photographer, but rather concentrate on the various tasks in which they are engaged: cutting, shaping, and assembling tin cups and pitchers. This steady work has obviously been productive: one boy carries two loads of pitchers across the center of the composition, and the walls at the back are filled with shelves more of pitchers and clusters of cups waiting to be taken to other destinations.

Student labor provided for many of the school's needs—producing and preparing food, sewing and laundering, and even making table wares, as Johnston's photograph suggests. Pratt also developed the "outing" system, whereby students were hired out as laborers for non-Indian families, particularly during school holidays. Pratt distinguished this work from pure manual wage labor by emphasizing the idea that living and working among non-Indians would contribute to the students' "Americanization."

K. Tsianina Lomawaima, a historian of Indian education, has suggested

FIGURE 17 Frances Benjamin Johnston, photograph of five boys making tin utensils, Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, ca. 1900. Inv. no. LC-USZ62–95795, Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

that manual training in the Indian schools was directed more toward the development of subservience than providing specific vocational goals, especially for women.[11] Luther Standing Bear, who learned tinsmithing at Carlisle, later described this training as a waste, as neither urban manufactures nor reservation life had much need for tinsmiths.[12] We can see these lessons also inculcating students with mainstream ideas about social organization. For example, the skills taught at Carlisle reflected the gendered division of labor of the time: boys were taught agricultural work, carpentry, harness making, and tinsmithing; girls studied cooking, sewing, laundering, and nursing.

Pratt famously argued that the job of the Indian schools was to "kill the Indian and save the Man inside," but many working with Native students had a more nuanced attitude toward the practicality if not the desirability of eradicating Native identity.[13] This situation had both practical and philosophical sources. One problem was the fact that few Indian school graduates actually integrated into mainstream society. Many Native pupils returned to

the reservation after their schooling because their mediocre education and the entrenched racism of American society posed barriers to finding employment and community in the city. Those Indian people who succeeded in finding work in urban milieux continuously confronted entrenched stereotypes about "primitive" Indians, which were regularly reinforced by *Wild West* shows, popular literature, and early film. Clearly, many students also felt a longing to rejoin home and family. Lomawaima has argued that Indian boarding schools sometimes strengthened tribal identities while attempting to break them down. Pointing out that they were overfilled with students and frequently understaffed, she suggests boarding schools produced a "culture that was created and sustained by students much more than by teachers or staff."[14] Under these circumstances, pupils found ways to maintain old forms of tribal identity and forge new ones despite the restrictive policies of the time.

Mainstream society continued to expect Native Americans to be Indians despite their education, and Indian people themselves were reluctant to relinquish their tribal heritages. This situation no doubt helped prompt Reel to seek out ways in which the Indian schools could nourish Native cultural expression in a way that didn't threaten the overarching goals of assimilating Native people to U.S. values and governmental control. Significantly, this experiment had already been begun by Reel's predecessor, William N. Hailmann. During Hailmann's administration, teachers began inviting students to write down tribal tales as an exercise in written English. Many of these were reprinted in school newspapers that circulated among bureaucrats and charitable supporters of Indian education. The tales not only demonstrated the students' growing mastery of their new language, they also appealed to the interest in "traditional" culture among readers of non-Indian newspapers. As David Wallace Adams has explained, Hailmann saw this as a way to reinforce the characteristics the schools sought to inculcate in them: if teachers would "seek to better understand the positive attributes of their students' native heritage" it would "'foster . . . these seeds of high character in the children intrusted to his care."[15] In his first year in office, Hailmann even speculated that the schools might benefit from adding courses in "local Indian industries, such as tanning and pottery among the Pueblos, blanket-weaving and silverwork among the Navajoes."[16] Hail-

mann's reports don't indicate if this directive was followed, but his ideas created a welcoming environment for Reel's reforms.

Reel assumed the position of superintendent of Indian schools in 1898, during the McKinley administration, and she was reappointed by Presidents Roosevelt and Taft, retiring when she got married, to a Washington rancher named Cort Meyer, in 1910. Reel had begun her educational career in Wyoming, serving first as a teacher and later as the state supervisor of public instruction. Her achievement of this prominent public office reflects the powerful role of women in western politics at the time, and some have attributed her appointment to the Indian school service to Republican Party politics.[17] Whether or not this is true, her successful retention of the position of superintendent of Indian schools reflects her ability to link Indian education with mainstream pedagogical trends and her talent for self-promotion.

Reel's position made her one of the highest-paid women in the country (she earned $3,000 a year and had a $1,500 travel allowance), which in turn made her something of a celebrity. Her personal papers include numerous newspaper articles, compiled by a clipping service, that record not only her evolving professional policies, but also discussions of her youth and charm and descriptions of her wild adventures while touring the country to inspect schools. Many clippings heralded the arrival of Reel's *Course of Study*, and several specifically noted the Native industries curriculum. These clippings give further insight into Reel's motivations, for they routinely identify basketmaking and other handicraft traditions as an "industry" with potential to make students "self-supporting."[18]

In focusing on a source of income that might be pursued on the reservation, the superintendent was responding to the changing conception of the Indian school system's goals. By the beginning of the twentieth century, both the Indian service and the mainstream public were questioning the feasibility and, in some cases, the desirability of assimilation. Racism prevented many Indian school graduates from finding work in mainstream communities and many either joined the Indian service or returned to their reservations. During Reel's administration the system gradually shifted emphasis away from the boarding schools in the East to boarding and day schools on the reservation, where education could be more tailored to preparing

for occupations suited to their postschool lives in local communities.[19] But Reel's work also brings the Indian schools into broader public debates about art and education. Of particular note is the introduction of art into the public school curriculum by aesthetic reformers dedicated to raising the taste, and thus both the character and the skill of the next generation of industrial workers. Before exploring this aesthetic form of manual training, however, it is necessary to describe Native industries' goals and accomplishments more fully.

THE SCOPE OF NATIVE INDUSTRIES

Discussions of the origins of formal art education in the government Indian school system often begin with Dorothy Dunn's establishment of the studio at the Santa Fe Indian school in 1932, an art program that built on the connections between Pueblo painters and avant-garde artists in the Southwest in the preceding fifteen years.[20] The hostility with which the Bureau of Indian Affairs met the drawing classes offered by Dunn's predecessor Elizabeth DeHuff, wife of the school's superintendent, in 1918, has been seen as evidence that the U.S. Indian administration would not tolerate art education earlier than that. More recently, however, scholars have acknowledged that Esther Hoyt encouraged her students at the San Ildefonso Day School to make watercolors as early as 1900.[21] While Hoyt's interest in Indian art is often thought of as an exception to the Indian service's emphasis on assimilation, her introduction of drawing in the classroom was far from unique. Drawing was part of the curriculum at Hampton and Carlisle, where it was understood as both an essential part of a liberal arts education and a mode of self-expression.[22] Hoyt's interest in art as a means of cultural expression fits Hailmann's interest in this subject and coincides with Reel's national effort to develop handicraft production in the Indian schools.

The introduction of Native industries first appeared in a chapter of Reel's 1901 *Course of Study*. Though this chapter is titled "Basketry and Caning," it quickly becomes clear that Reel's interests extend beyond those topics. The chapter begins with a letter addressed to reservation agents and Indian school superintendents: "It is desired by the Indian Bureau that basketry be taught in the Indian schools. Will you please furnish this office with the names of basket makers on your reservation, sending specimens of the work they can do, and giving all information concerning them that may

be of interest and use in the furtherance of this project."[23] Further down the page, Reel also suggests the desirability of hiring weavers, potters, and beadworkers at schools populated by pupils from tribes that excel in those techniques.

Subsequent annual reports from the superintendent's office reflect a variety of artistic traditions being taught. There seems to have been an attempt in many locations to follow local traditions, particularly beadwork in Great Lakes and Plains schools and weaving at southwestern schools with Navajo pupils. Cherokee students studied basketry and pottery, two long-standing local traditions, as well as beadwork. Schools with mixed population taught a variety of mediums.

The Native industries curriculum was not taken up in a systematic manner. Some schools integrated handicraft instruction into classroom work, while others lumped it with vocational training. At many Indian schools, such as the school in Grand Junction, Colorado, Native handicraft traditions were subsumed under "sewing" lessons. In some of these cases, handicrafts were not taught, but students who arrived with artistic training were allowed to continue their work. For example, the annual report of the superintendent of the Red Moon Boarding School on the Cheyenne/Arapaho reservation noted that girls' industrial training focused on sewing, but "when not otherwise employed they have been allowed to make moccasins and other bead work common to their tribe."[24] The matron in charge of the sewing room at the Indian school in Phoenix similarly reported in 1905 that four girls who had arrived with training were allowed to continue weaving.[25] Some of the schools Reel includes on her list of Native industries programs merely encouraged handicraft production during students' leisure time. Joseph C. Hart, superintendent of the Oneida Indian School, reported to Reel that the collection of beadwork he sent her was "filled from work done in spare hours which might otherwise have been spent in idleness or even less profitably."[26]

Basketry dominated the curriculum, even when it was not the best known local product. For example, the Apsáalooke (or Crow) peoples are more known for their beadwork than basketry. Women artists of this nation demonstrated design sensibility and mastery of materials that made their beadwork a coveted trade item across the Great Plains in the nineteenth century.[27] Reel's records indicate that both basketry and beadwork were

FIGURE 18 Students at the Crow boarding school, Crow Agency, Montana, n.d. (ca. 1903). Estelle Reel Collection, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, Washington.

taught at the Crow Agency school in Montana. However, a photograph suggests that this school did not use Native industries as a means of perpetuating tribal identity (see figure 18). The children pose in Euro-American ties and pinafores, holding coarsely woven wicker baskets with little "Native" character. Presumably instructors did not know or care that in preparing students to participate in mainstream handicraft production, they were discouraging the continuation of what had once been a thriving trade. But this overlay of older craft traditions with new ones was not an innovation of the Indian schools, nor was this interest in developing handicraft-based industries focused exclusively on Native communities.

THE SOURCES OF NATIVE INDUSTRIES

Reel's *Course of Study* proclaims: "The basketry as woven by Indians for generations past is fast becoming a lost art and must be revived by the children of the present generation." Immediately following, however, Reel identifies the value of Native handicrafts as their potential to compete in a global economy. Students must take up handicraft production, "[so] that they may take their rightful place among the leading basketmakers of the world and

supply the demands of the markets for such baskets" (54). Reel also argues that Native industries will stimulate what she calls "race pride," but she reveals that the students' responsibility is less to their own communities than to a national market.

Reel's use of the term "industries" to describe Native artistic traditions fits the Indian school service's historical emphasis on vocational training, but it has more specific sources that link this history to a broader American interrogation of the proper place of industrialism in modern life, and the plight of workers in industrialism. Reel drew on several strains of this inquiry. Her rhetoric draws extensively on that of social reformers who saw art making as noble labor that enhanced the laborer's self-worth while building ties between members of different classes and social groups. At the same time, as an education professional, she borrowed from the manual training movement, which sought to use education to better equip future laborers for their work. Both of these factions built on the ideas of the arts and crafts movement, with its emphasis on maintaining dignity in labor. As I argue below, however, each position was flawed, and the Native industries curriculum as implemented, perpetuated some of the drudgery and alienation of industrial work that it was designed to avoid.

ART AND SOCIAL REFORM

Missionaries and reformers working with Indian women had long used the term "industry" for their efforts to organize Native work along more mainstream lines, something undertaken to increase ties between their communities. An example of this work is Sybil Carter's Indian Lace Association. Carter began this work while serving as an Episcopalian missionary on the White Earth reservation of Anishinaabe in Minnesota in 1887. Her interest in teaching lace drew on her desire to give women an income-producing activity; like many women left without family support, Carter had turned to textile production as a source of money after the Civil War. Carter's "lace industry" quickly spread to other reservations in Minnesota and Wisconsin and eventually to southern California.[28] Her employees taught Indian women lace making, provided materials and patterns, and arranged sales of the finished products through religious and reform organizations on the East Coast. Promoters of their work emphasized the lace makers' ladylike appearance and their fine work (see figure 19).

FIGURE 19 "The Lace Makers of Minnesota, and Specimens of Their Handicraft," from *The Puritan*, April 1899, 32.

A speech made at a prominent meeting of Indian reformers, the annual gathering of the Friends of the Indian at Lake Mohonk, New York, in 1893 inspired other Indian reformers to organize the "Indian Industries League," initially a branch of the Woman's National Indian Association and then a freestanding organization. The league offered financial support to reservation-based handicraft projects organized by missionaries, U.S. government field matrons, and, on occasion, league employees, and marketed their products at meetings of reformers and through commercial venues.[29] League-supported projects include the Mohonk Lodge, a workshop established by Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Roe, missionaries, where Cheyenne and Arapaho women produced beaded moccasins and other leather items in Colony, Oklahoma; the work of Josephine Foard, a field matron, with potters at the Laguna Pueblo; and Mrs. Mary Eldredge's involvement with Navajo weaving in Jewett, New Mexico.

As the use of French and Italian models by Carter's lace associations indicates, Indian industries were not necessarily dedicated to the perpetuation of Native artistic traditions. However, many reformers chose to build on traditions in which Indian craftspeople were already skilled, attempting to

introduce "improvements" in these products to make them more marketable. For example, Carter encouraged Anishinaabe basket makers to produce beaded birchbark napkin rings, Foard introduced chemical glazes and kiln-firing to her Pueblo collaborators, and Eldredge encouraged Navajo women to conduct their work in her specially constructed "industrial room." These alterations were designed to exert an influence over Indian artistic production, "modernizing" and "Americanizing" it. As Frances Sparhawk, secretary of the Indian Industries League, wrote of Eldredge's project in 1893, "The room is not merely for the weaving of their old-time Navajo rugs, so justly famous, but its purpose is expressly to be a place of initiation for these women into work of many kinds, and into our ways of doing work; and to lead them up to modern methods of weaving; also, as far as possible, to teach them to exchange their present desultory methods of work for that regularity necessary to wage-earners."[30]

The Indian Industries League clearly influenced Reel's decision to promote Native industries. Reel had direct connections to the league: her papers include correspondence with the league secretary Doubleday and participation in Indian reform conferences. The curriculum was publicly praised by many supporters of the league's work, including Doubleday and the Californian Charles Lummis, author, editor, and museum founder. Shortly after issuing the *Course of Study*, Reel was invited to serve on the advisory board of Lummis's newly formed Sequoya League, an institution dedicated, in part, to "reviving, encouraging, and providing market for such of the aboriginal industries as can be made profitable."[31]

Sparhawk's words reveal the close ties that the Indian industries program had to industrial projects set up within other communities perceived as needing to learn modern work ethics at the time, including urban immigrants and the rural poor. The 1890s witnessed the establishment of countless handicraft projects at settlement houses and other social reform organizations designed to create viable alternatives to factory work among these populations. Both the environments and the focus on craft production were understood to positively influence the participants, facilitating their assimilation of mainstream "American" values.[32] Significantly, reformers working with non-Indian communities used the same media as the league members in their work, including pottery (produced by Boston's Saturday Evening Girls) and weaving (the focus of an industrial project set up by Helen Albee

in rural Maine), and even lace making (which was taught at settlement houses in New York and Boston)[33] (see plate 3). That urban reformers saw connections between their charges and Native Americans is illustrated at the best-known American settlement, Jane Addams's Hull House. Known for their commitment to arts and crafts principles, Addams and her colleague Ellen Gates Starr included a "Labor Museum" in the settlement, in which members of Chicago's immigrant communities could demonstrate and display traditional handicrafts. The room's displays included Navajo weaving and Pueblo pottery.

Observers of the time noted these similarities between the strategies of Indian reformers and urban activists working in immigrant communities, and tied the efforts of both to the goals of the arts and crafts movement. For example, in 1904 the U.S. Bureau of Labor issued a report by Max West titled "The Revival of Handicrafts in America" that listed handicraft industries around the country, including a majority of those mentioned above.[34] West explicitly linked Carter's, Roe's, and Doubleday's projects with Reel's work, including both in a section titled "Indian Work." More significantly, he referred to the potential of projects in both Indian and non-Indian communities to offer workers "a means of livelihood and a new interest in life" and providing consumers "increased pleasure in the things of daily household use and ornament."[35]

The actual work produced by Native industries students belies the optimism of West's statement. In general, the Indian industries programs encouraged students to produce small-scale, inexpensive items that would offer little help in resolving the economic and cultural challenges facing Indian people. The fate of Native industries was in many ways influenced by the same problems that hindered the success of the arts and crafts movement as a whole. As Eileen Boris has demonstrated, American art firms that strove to reform production through the implementation of the ideas of Morris and Ruskin were rarely successful at producing anything more than a cosmetic change, as the American arts and crafts movement was always indebted to industrial interests.[36] Some industrial teachers seem to have understood this problem. Lucy Hart, a teacher at Oneida Indian School who is discussed further below, acknowledged that the contribution her pupils could make was small, writing defensively that "the argument that such work has no value in itself and therefore should not be taught, has no force,

for a real part of the world's people live by making little articles that other people want and are willing to pay for."[37] Hart's comment reveals that, while Indian handicraft projects aspired to give craftswomen the satisfaction of reaping economic rewards for satisfying work, her actual goals were much smaller.

ART AND MANUAL TRAINING

If the Native industries curriculum reveals the overlapping strategies of Indian reformers and those pursuing social reform in non-Indian communities, Reel's curriculum also demonstrates the interconnectedness of Indian schools and public education at this time. This makes sense, as Reel came to the Indian service from a mainstream educational system. Reel demonstrated an interest in educational theory early on. The *Course of Study* she produced for the Wyoming public schools demonstrates Reel's engagement with educational theory. It begins with a list of reference books on pedagogy that incorporates both instruction books and the treatises of educational theorists such as Johann Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel. By 1900, Reel was particularly interested in manual training, a pedagogical movement developed to serve the need of outfitting students to work in modern industrial society. She invited leaders in the field to address the Indian department at National Educational Association meetings more than once and in 1903 held a joint meeting with the manual training department.

In its most narrow definition, the American manual training movement had its roots in European vocational education. A Russian display at the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia focusing on workshop-based education for engineers and machinists inspired the creation of similar project-based training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and led to the establishment of the Manual Training School (a high school) in Saint Louis in 1879. These early experiments combined exercises dedicated to mastering basic principles of design and construction with their practical application. Other proponents of manual training distanced their work from purely technical or vocational education, stressing instead the idea that training in aesthetics and craftsmanship would develop in pupils a sense of design and a knowledge of production that could be applicable to a wide number of trades. Finally, some educators promoted manual training because of its links to modern theories of individual development and social organization.

They argued that children learn through sensory stimulation and physical activity as much as through memorization and composition, and thus incorporated drawing and craftwork into mainstream curricula in an effort to develop children's mental and physical capacities. Following G. Stanley Hall (who lectured to Indian educators at the National Educational Association annual meeting in 1903), they believed children relived human evolution as they grew, progressing from a kind of "savagery" toward eventual "civilization."[38] This belief made manual training particularly well suited to populations—Native Americans, African Americans, and southern and eastern European laborers—whom many understood as less "evolved" than Americans whose origins were in western and northern Europe.

As Jackson Lears has demonstrated, turn-of-the-century reformers believed in education's ability to resolve social tensions caused by immigration, worker unrest, and "an incipient leisure class" going soft.[39] For example, Nicholas Murray Butler argued that manual training could help future laborers understand the dignity of their work.[40] Meaningful work was an antidote to the most dehumanizing and polarizing aspects of industrialization. In a series of articles on manual training published in *The Craftsman* in 1904, editor Gustav Stickley linked education and social transformation: "to impart manual skill is to multiply the resources of the individual not only as regards his power to accumulate wealth but also permanently to acquire happiness."[41]

Manual training was frequently incorporated into schools dealing with populations who were perceived as unprepared for, or poorly served by, a traditional academic education, particularly those directed at the working classes or communities of color. Societal prejudices generally barred these populations from the social mobility Stickley describes, but turn-of-the-century intellectuals linked manual training with liberation. Booker T. Washington, with whom Reel was sometimes compared, embraced the notion, writing in 1903: "I plead for industrial education and development for the Negro not because I want to cramp him, but because I want to free him. I want to see him enter the all-powerful business and commercial world."[42] Educators sought to create community through a shared respect for labor. In a piece titled "Manual Training and Citizenship," Stickley celebrated the endorsement by the Russian socialist prince Kropotkin of mixing mental work and manual work in a community that brought together people of

different nationalities and classes.[43] As another educator put it, "The arts make common ground on which the children of the native born and of the foreign born meet in happy, intelligent, and ceaseless activity."[44]

Reel's efforts make it clear that this common ground could also include American Indian people, who were frequently considered to be outsiders to modernity and civilization as much as the immigrant poor. Closer examination of her curricular goals helps explain how such an education could be geared not only to addressing the specific needs of Indian children but also to the larger project of integrating them into mainstream society. Reel frequently incorporated methods from the manual training in the Indian school curriculum. For example, her 1904 circular titled "Teaching Indian Pupils to Speak English" advocates the use of a sand table and miniature buildings and figurines as a means of engaging young pupils more actively in language acquisition.[45]

It is likely that Reel's decision to incorporate basketry into the Indian school curriculum was also influenced by the manual training movement, which had inspired the establishment of basketry courses in mainstream schools to familiarize students with ideas about materials and construction techniques. Significantly, the basketry curriculum Reel advocates has little Native character. She urges teachers to begin with Madagascar raffia, using lessons drawn from instruction books by Louise Walker, Annie Firth, and Mary White (see figure 20). While the 1901 editions of White's book included an essay on the value of Native basketry, written by Doubleday, these were not books designed to teach Indian traditions. Rather, they were texts in general use for mainstream elementary schools and hobbyists. Following these texts, a general classroom teacher would move from basic mats to small baskets and doll furniture and eventually begin caning the bottoms and backs of chairs. The illustrations of this section of Reel's curriculum are similarly deculturated, as can be seen in diagrams in which neither the maker nor the materials have a distinctive Native identity (see figure 21). The technique for starting a basket that is illustrated is a basic method used by many makers of twined baskets. The lack of distinctiveness is illustrated by the fact that Otis Mason used Mary White's work as the source of his own illustration of the technique.[46]

This association reveals that, as with the reformers' industrial projects, the promotion of "traditional" Native American art in the Indian schools

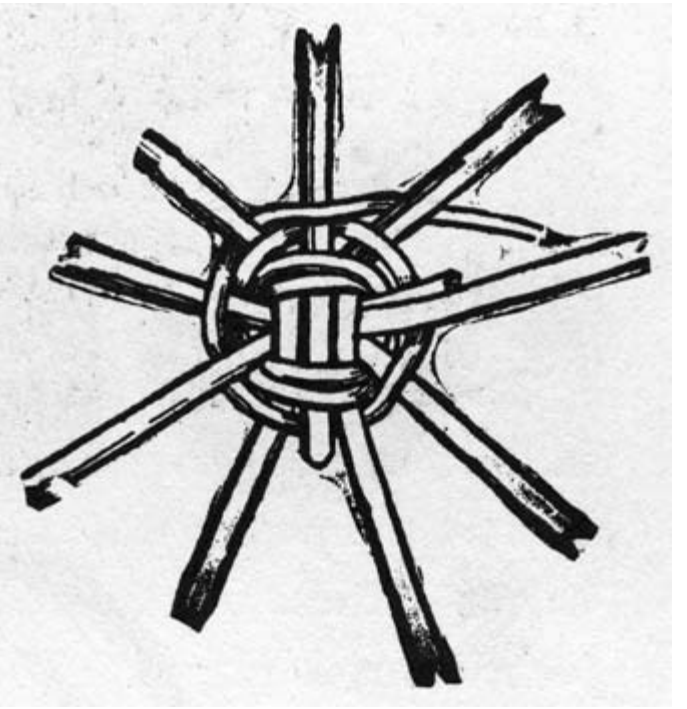

FIGURE 20
Illustration from Mary White, *How to Make Baskets* (New York: Doubleday, 1901), 22, fig. 10.

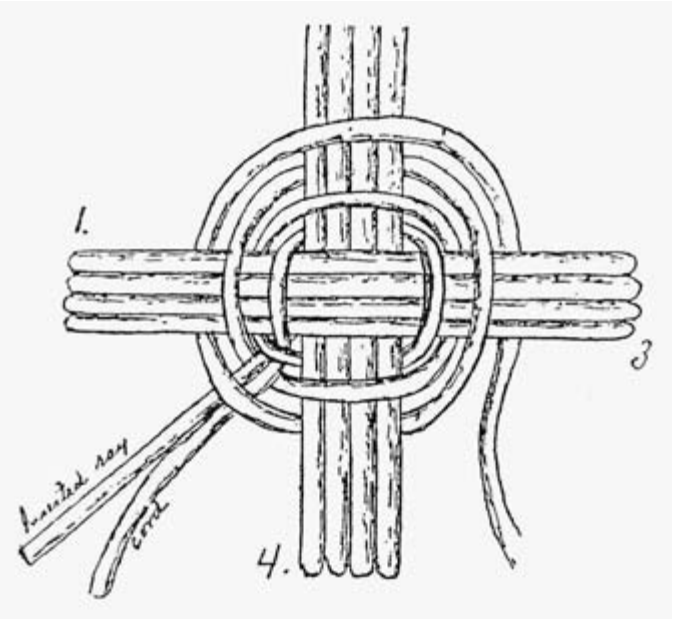

FIGURE 21
Basket-making lesson, from Estelle Reel, *A Course of Study for Indian Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 212.

was linked with new, mainstream ideas. The early twentieth-century manual training movement was particularly interested in challenging the perceived distinction between applied and fine art. Many of the speakers in the manual training department meetings at the National Educational Association promoted the idea that art was defined by the maker's attitude rather than the form of the finished project.[47] This idea is closely associated with the arts and crafts movement, but as I will explore more fully in my next chapter, it was explored throughout the American art world in the early 1900s, influencing trends in painting and sculpture, art education, and art criticism, as well as the decorative arts community. Through the Native industries curriculum, some of these ideas infiltrated the Indian schools.

Promoters of manual training no doubt welcomed an alliance with the Indian department. Advocates of a destruction of the barrier between fine and applied arts frequently used the celebration of the aesthetic qualities of Native American art to support their goals, and this occurred in talks in the manual training department of the National Educational Association such as Ruby Hodge's "The Relation of Primitive Handicraft to Present-Day Educational Problems."[48] The joint meeting between the manual training and Indian departments in 1903 included a speech by George Wharton James titled "Indian Basketry—Its Poetry and Symbolism," which emphasized the idea that handicrafts are an expression of the makers' character and personality.[49]

Along these lines, Native industries were described as a "natural" application of innate Native talent. The *Course of Study* makes this essentialist notion clear, arguing, among other things, that they have "great finger skill," which makes craft production "particularly agreeable to Indians."[50] Another photograph of a student weaver seemingly supports this stereotype (figure 22). Yet this student of the Fort Lewis School in Colorado is not nearly as comfortable in front of the camera as the girls in the Phoenix photograph, nor is her blanket as flawless as theirs. The photograph, which was also published in one of the superintendent's annual reports (for 1902), highlights the academic nature of the Native industries curriculum. Behind the weaver is a blackboard being used to teach English. Drawings of a cup, a cat, a hat, a flag, and a book are accompanied by their English names written in cursive. The lesson has been copied over twice, suggesting the rote

FIGURE 22 "Blanket Weaving in the Class Room as Suggested by the Course of Study, Fort Lewis School, Colorado," from *Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1902* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), facing 20.

learning that was typical of the turn-of-the-century pedagogy. Indian pupils were taught a new language and new values by hard immersion, with little attempt to draw analogies to reservation life. The words chosen for this lesson represent aspects of the European American culture the school wanted its pupils to absorb along with the rudiments of writing: the cup and the cat as attributes of domesticity, the hat standing for Western dress. The flag and the book were probably the most potent symbols of government education—the authority of the federal government over the pupils and its use of the printed word to assert that authority and distance them from their oral traditions.

A chart of geometric shapes behind the student to the left calls to mind Winslow Homer's *Blackboard* of 1877 (figure 23), a sentimental celebration of the virtuous American educator. But while Homer's teacher is one with her hyperdisciplined environment, to the point of mimicking its lines and

FIGURE 23 Winslow Homer, *Blackboard*, 1877. Watercolor on wove paper, 19 3/4 x 12 3/4 inches. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Gift (partial and promised) of Jo Ann and Julian Ganz Jr.

angles in the position of her body, the Indian girl chafes against her setting. Holding the pointer-like batten limply in front of her, she balances awkwardly on the outside of her left foot. The object with which the girl is supposed to be naturally comfortable seems to be the most out of place thing in the classroom.

Native industries were regularly praised as reversing the Indian schools' tendency to vilify everything Indian. The *Course of Study* claims, "The importance of preserving the Indian designs and shapes can not be overestimated. The object must be to weave the history and traditions of the tribe in all distinctively Indian work, thus making it historical, typical, and of value. . . . Race pride should stimulate them to effort in preserving the work of the past."[51] But as this photograph shows, the appropriation of these traditions to support mainstream educational goals, and even the relocation of these activities to the colonial space of the Indian school, changed these activities,

making them at best transcultural practices that partook of both Native and mainstream values and at worst, became another means of mainstream domination.

NATIVE INDUSTRIES AND ARTS AND CRAFTS AESTHETICS

In their varied locations within the school, Native industries seem to have been taken most seriously in those parts of the country that already had a thriving intercultural handicraft trade, especially the Southwest, but also the Great Lakes, California, and the Pacific Northwest. Indeed, Reel's emphasis on basketry in the curriculum no doubt reflected the primacy of basketry in the commercial market for Native American art. Schools with Navajo children were particularly welcoming to Native industries. This may be related to the fact that schools around the Navajo reservation had a great deal of trouble attracting students, particularly female students, and that their ability to continue practicing a trade of cultural value that could also contribute economically to family welfare may have eased some families' reluctance.[52] The weavers seen in these photographs may have sent their products home to be sold through a local trader; they may also have sold work through the school itself. For sales of student work were an important aspect of the Indian industries curriculum. Some schools had sales rooms and some even advertised for mail-order sales. The Chilocco Indian Agricultural School promoted its shop, The Curio, with an advertisement published regularly in *The Indian School Journal* that read:

> A great injustice has been done true Indian Art by dealers in fake Indian curios. Believing that palming off factory-made imitations is calculated to degrade Indian Art in the eyes of the innocent public, an Indian Curio Store has been established at the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, Chilocco, Okla. Blankets, Rugs, Moccasins, Baskets, Beaded Work and all manner of Indian hand-work are kept on hand. Indians on the reservation send these goods here to be sold, so you know that you are getting the "real article" when you buy Chilocco goods.[53]

Interestingly, the Indian schools also facilitated the sale of Native handicrafts through traders. Jonathan Batkin has noted that several traders took

out advertisements in the schools' newspapers, which circulated widely among supporters of Indian reform; J. B. Moore of Crystal, New Mexico, even used the Indian Print Shop at Chilocco to print his catalogues of Navajo rugs.[54]

Reel's reports do not offer specific information about the money earned through the sale of student handicrafts, but in some places it was significant. The Camp McDowell Day School, located on a Yavapai reservation, reported the sale of seventy baskets for a total of $2550.50 in 1904.[55] After an exhibition of their work in Washington, D.C,. in 1903, during which they presented beaded gifts to President and Mrs. Roosevelt, Oneida students received orders for $50 in beadwork.[56] A 1905 article in Chilocco's *Indian School Journal* also notes the successful marketing of beaded fan chains, lamp shades, purses, and collars by students from the Chilocco (Oklahoma), Bena (Minnesota), Cheyenne (Oklahoma), and Fort Hall (Idaho) schools.[57] None of these records indicate sales prices for individual pieces, nor do they reveal whether students received any of the income. At the beginning of the boarding school era, Fort Marion prisoners had made artwork for sale and had been allowed to keep the proceeds. Teachers felt this would encourage them to see the benefits of wage labor, but drawing may also have had the unintended consequence of providing the Plains warriors with a connection to their own cultural values.[58] The captives drew on the tradition of men's narrative painting, which celebrated the artist's accomplishments in war and hunting. They applied this tradition to drawings made with ink and colored pencil that captured their experiences of mainstream culture. The drawing of uniform-clad prisoners and their European American teachers at the Fort Marion school made by the Cheyenne captive Chief Killer captures the regimented atmosphere that persisted in Indian education under Reel a quarter-century later (see figure 24).

Sales of student work frequently occurred in the context of government exhibitions. The U.S. government had included exhibits on the Indian schools in the government buildings at World's Fairs since the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Reel continued this tradition but also sought out other venues; for example, she frequently created displays for the annual meetings of the National Educational Association. These exhibitions were responsible for a large number of positive press clippings in Reel's

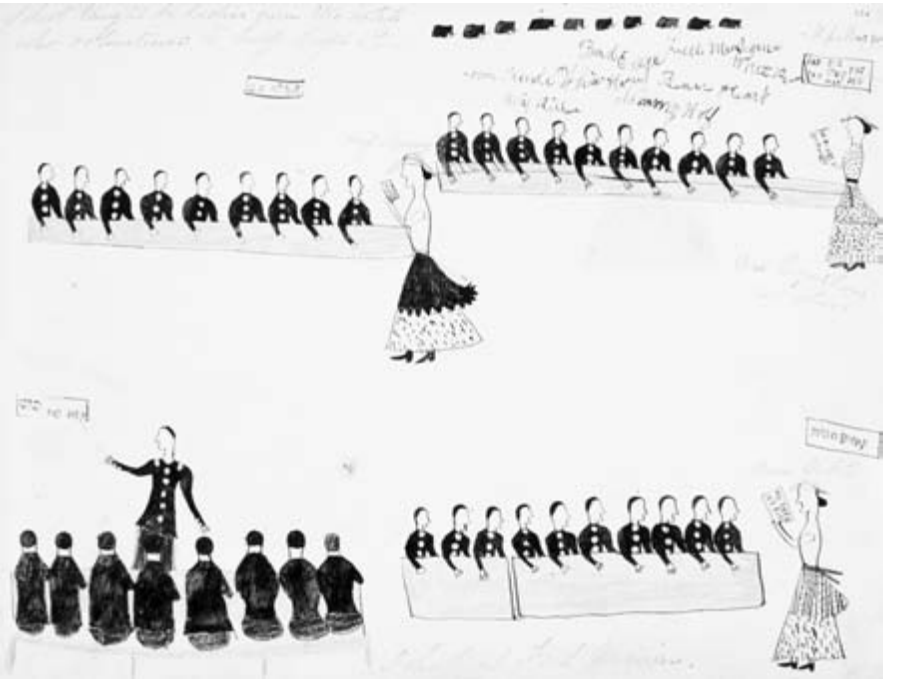

FIGURE 24 Chief Killer (Noh-Hu-Nah-Wih) (Cheyenne), *School at Fort Marion*, 1875–1878. Pen and ink and colored crayon with graphite inscriptions on paper, 8 5/8 × 11 1/4 inches. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. Purchased through the Robert J. Strasenburgh II 1942 Fund.

papers, demonstrating her familiarity with the nineteenth-century culture of display. As one writer put it, "Such exhibits do more to arouse interest in the Indian question than all the articles that could be written."[59]

Reel's exhibitions include examples of a variety of kinds of student work, including compositions, drawings, and photographs of agricultural projects, but handicrafts dominate in terms of both quantity and visual interest, turning these exhibitions into large-scale Indian corners and endowing them with all of the associations of those private collections. An exhibition of school work held in conjunction with the National Educational Association annual meeting in Boston in 1903, for example, incorporates a variety of objects popular with collectors, such as Pueblo pots, Navajo and Chilkat blankets, Apache baskets, and Navajo jewelry displayed against a backdrop of posters displaying student handicrafts and other work (see figure 25). Like the domestic arrangements discussed in chapter 1, this ensemble is situated in a corner, with objects arrayed so as to invite viewer interaction.

FIGURE 25 Indian schools exhibition, National Education Association annual meeting, Boston, 1903. Estelle Reel Collection, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, Washington.

Floor rugs reach out at diagonals. The pots and baskets are on receding tiers, drawing the viewer further in. Dangling necklaces and fringes all but demand tactile engagement. The handicrafts serve almost as a barker, attracting viewers close enough so that they can inspect the smaller displays on the posters that hang behind them. There is little doubt that Reel's evocation of the Indian corner was self-conscious. She was herself an early participant in the Indian craze. Her collection of Native American baskets was already publicly known in 1901, and she added to it during her travels and after her retirement to the Pacific Northwest. Upon her death, her large collection was donated to the Mary L. Goodrich Public Library in Toppenish, Washington.[60]

The spirit of the Indian craze was also upheld through comparisons between Native students and participants in the arts and crafts movement. One writer referred to the Chilocco school, which offered classes in lace making as well as beadwork, as the "home of the Indian Roycrofters," linking students with Elbert Hubbard's community of craftspeople in East Au-

rora, New York.[61] Another article praised the Arizona schools' handicraft curriculum as it was implemented in Arizona and suggested graduates form an Indian arts and crafts guild.[62]

The arts and crafts movement connection helps explain why Reel's exhibitions featured work by older craftspeople who were not students in the Indian schools. This juxtaposition helped to minimize any anxiety over the "authenticity" of the latter. Indian educators were well aware that the commercial value of Native art lay in its associations with preindustrial culture, and despite the innovations introduced in the venues, materials, and techniques used, they promoted student work as "traditional." The commissioner of Indian affairs demonstrated his understanding of the Indian craze when he cautioned:

> The native industry should not be developed so far that there is a destruction of the commercial value of the product when brought into competition with the machine-made articles of deft Yankee construction. There is an unknown value in the basket of the Indian squaw who month after month in a primitive tepee weaves her soul, her religion, her woes, and her joys into every graceful curve and color of her handiwork. Remove these beautiful, sentimental considerations from the basket and place it by the finished product of the white man's factory, and the idea that the native industry of the Indian can be developed into a successful one, by means of which to keep the wolf from the door, does not hold out much hope.[63]

Records show that the inclusion of work by older craftspeople was typical in Indian school exhibitions. For example, a circular asking for submissions of student work for exhibition at the Detroit National Educational Association conference and Buffalo Exposition in 1901, also requested "some of the native work done by the Indians of each tribe under your care."[64] The author of one article on the Boston exhibition attributes the success of the display to this feature and quotes one visitor saying, "Small wonder . . . that these Indian children do such fine work, for if these beautiful articles could be produced from almost nothing by hands taught only by the necessities of life, what results will come by careful instruction under improved surroundings!"[65]

This statement highlights the vexed status of "tradition" in the Indian

industries curriculum. On the one hand, the highly valued quality of authenticity depended on a direct connection between modern products and those of the past. At the same time, the schools also needed the public to recognize their accomplishments in integrating Native pupils into modern society if they wanted the public's continued support. Some in the Indian education community accused the exhibitions of pandering to mainstream primitivism. An article published in the Carlisle Indian Industrial School's newspaper *The Red Man and Helper* about an earlier exhibition criticized Reel for using "the flimflam methods of a Wild West show" to "catch the crowd of casual sightseers."

The article notes, "The Indian is a drawing card in any enterprise that thrives by novel methods of advertising, as Buffalo Bill shows, Kickapoo Medicine Guilds and Iroquois Curio Booths attest. The over-sanguine American public is easily pleased, easily deluded for a time into believing that things are just what they seem."[66] The author, who may or may not have been Native, identifies the exhibition as a sales ploy—one, moreover, that plays into mainstream stereotypes of savagery, arguing that the "hodge-podge of bead-work, embroidery, [and] basket-work" do little to illustrate the academic and industrial education offered in the schools. In fact, the exhibitions might actually be understood as an excellent example of the lessons offered by Indian schools at this time, though the lessons I refer to were not those laid out in Reel's curriculum. For the dramatic contrast between the vibrant, textured objects in the foreground and the flat, washed-out, miniature examples of student work on the posters behind seems to argue visually that the "modernization" of Indian students through education strips away the energy and beauty of Native culture.

ART AS INDUSTRIAL LABOR

The relocation of traditional practices to the Indian schools certainly changed them. The Indian schools altered the physical space in which art making occurred, from exterior and interior spaces on tribal lands to the inside of institutional buildings. Native children had frequently learned handicraft techniques by watching elders who practiced them as a regular part of family and community activities; Indian schools isolated the younger generation and broke the learning down into lessons. Similarly, for many Native craftspeople, the process of art making extends through seasonal

cycles of gathering and preparing materials and producing the final work; the schools focused only on this last step, providing students with materials ready for assembly.

Something of this can be seen in a photograph of the weaving room at the Navajo Boarding School in Fort Defiance, Arizona, which was repeatedly used to show the success of the Native industries curriculum. The photo, however, also illustrates the ease with which supposedly culturally fulfilling activities could take on the aspects of industrial drudgery (see figure 26).[67] The image at first seems to illustrate a harmonious and communal artistic endeavor. The students are not in a classroom—this space is given over entirely to weaving. Beautiful blankets cover the walls and floors and cushion the seats upon which the weavers sit. The looms are set close together, and girls of different ages work alongside one another. A teacher, perhaps the Navajo Mrs. Nelson German employed at the school as a weaver, bends over to help one of the smallest girls in the back, while the foremost pupil seems to be waiting to ask for assistance in the foreground.

The picture includes all the steps involved in making a blanket. The girls in the foreground are spinning the raw wool into skeins of coarse yarn. The blankets being woven seem to grow from left to right, showing the progress taken en route to producing the finished examples that hang above. The girls focus on their work alone, not on interacting. In the context of the Indian schools' ideology, the room takes on an assembly-line quality, as a comparison with a photograph of child factory labor brings out (see figure 27). Despite its social goals, manual training frequently embodied the very impersonal drudgery it set out to ameliorate. This is consistent with mainstream attempts to integrate arts and crafts ideals and industrial education. As Eileen Boris has noted: "American educators . . . attempted to appropriate art and the artist's joy in labor for the work ethic, but craftsmanship had little place in the new factory system, and in the existing society, child development occurred within capitalist social relations."[68]

Even when pursued during leisure time, Indian industries offered mixed messages. In another picture from the Phoenix Indian school (the same school as in figure 16) indigenous artwork is marginalized (see figure 28). Despite being titled "Teaching Native Industries," there is no teacher in sight. The students are clearly seated on the floor of a hallway, not a classroom or sewing room. This sense of marginalization is reinforced by the fact

that Phoenix didn't hire a Native weaving teacher until 1906, even though the school was located close to several Arizona tribes famous for their basketry skill. When Phoenix did hire a woman named Jennie Coartha, to serve as a Native industries teacher, it paid her ten dollars a month, sixty-two dollars less than a regular classroom teacher, indicating that this was a low-wage, part-time job.[69]

In fact, the tenuous nature of the Native industries programs was related to the schools' budget problems. Reel's reports show an ongoing struggle to deal with inadequate funds and substandard facilities. Outbreaks of contagious illnesses or fires in school buildings routinely ground operations to a halt. Often a significant portion of the school year was spent recruiting students, and for many of the reservation-based schools, classroom instruction was primarily devoted to teaching the English language. Many schools did not have the money to hire an extra instructor and delegated the work to a teacher or a matron. Sometimes the work was carried out by a reservation employee who was not on the school staff. At the Puyallup school in Washington, basketry was taught by Lida Quimby, a non-Indian field matron (an agency employee whose job was designed to instruct adult women in domestic affairs) who had support from the Indian Industries League.[70]

Yet the young women in the Phoenix photograph appear to be competent and comfortable with their work. Clearly, students who had studied handicraft traditions at home and understood the cultural and economic value they had for tribal communities would have reacted positively to the invitation to pursue them at school. Even those students who were not already accomplished may have welcomed the break from the otherwise intensely non-Indian curriculum. The benefits would have been particularly high when Native teachers were employed. As Lomawaima has shown, Native teachers served as role models and mentors for Indian school students, helping them negotiate the demands of school culture and reinforcing their tribal identities.[71]

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF "NATIVE INDUSTRIES"

First-hand accounts of the student responses to the Native industries curriculum are hard to find. Most appear in official Indian school sources and must thus be understood as being to some degree tailored to the schools' needs. Reading these documents closely may yield unintended information

FIGURE 26
"Weaving Room
at Navajo Boarding School,
Fort Defiance, Arizona," from
*The Report of the Superintendent
of Indian Schools to the Secretary of
the Interior for the year 1905* (Washington,
D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906), 17.

FIGURE 27 Lewis Hine, "Some of the Young Knitters in London Hosiery Mills. Photo During Working Hours. London, Tenn." Photographed for the National Child Labor Committee, 1908–1912. Record group 102 (102-LH-1884), National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Children's Bureau, Washington, D.C.

about the students' experiences, however. For example, In 1904, Indian industries students at the school in Chilocco, Oklahoma, pushed themselves to prepare an exhibit of their work for display at the upcoming World's Fair in Saint Louis. The Chilocco paper praised one pupil in particular for her industry. It informed readers that she had "spent all her work hours for *eight months* in making *one piece* of lace. It is exquisite in every way and *an Indian girl made it*" (emphasis in original).[72] The paper declared that she undertook the hard work to "prove her worth" to the fair's visitors. Students were clearly aware that when they submitted objects to Reel's exhibitions, their work would be judged. They understood that the reputation of Indians as a group would impact its reception and that their work could in turn influence how Natives were seen.

Clearly Indian girls invested more than their economic hopes in their ability to succeed at Native industries. This small chance to demonstrate the value of Indian culture was endowed with the power to legitimize the students in the eyes of European Americans. The message that perfect be-

FIGURE 28 "Teaching Native Industries, Phoenix Indian School, Arizona," from *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Indian Schools to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1903* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), facing 18.

havior, including hard work, was a necessary component of convincing non-Indians that Indian people were worthy of their attention and support was broadcast to pupils through the Indian industries curriculum and reinforced through Reel's public exhibitions.

A poster from one Indian school exhibition illustrates this point (see figure 29). It features work from the Oneida Boarding School in Wisconsin. The beadwork includes small bags, watch fobs, bracelets, and a net collar, above a row of beaded belts. Nestled among these crafts is a photograph of Oneida students producing the work on display (figure 30). The pupils, clad in crisp white dresses with hair in neat chignons, sit demurely at their desks focusing quietly on the rectangular frames in front of them. Three items spill off the foremost desk into view, a small purse decorated with a cross and two beaded strips that may be bookmarks.

Handicraft classes at Oneida were taught by Lucy P. Hart, a teacher and the wife of the school superintendant. In one essay, Hart described

[Duke University Press does not hold electronic rights to this image.
To view it, please refer to the print version of this title.]

FIGURE 29 Oneida display from the Indian schools exhibition, National Education Association annual meeting, Boston, 1903. Estelle Reel Collection, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, Washington.

FIGURE 30 "Oneida Students Making Bead Work," from *Chilocco Farmer* 3 (March 1903): 211.

FIGURE 31 Illustration from G. Pomeroy, "Bead Work," *Keramic Studio* 6.9 (January 1905): 207. Courtesy of Winterthur Library, Printed Book and Periodical Collection, Winterthur, Delaware.

her pupils' warm embrace of the addition of beadwork to the curriculum: "They are so often told that everything connected with their ancestors is bad, and should be strictly avoided, that they are glad to find something immediately connected with the home life of the older people that is appreciated by the white people as being really beautiful and, in a way, artistic."[73] But the students' work does not call up a distinctive "Indian" home life. While some of the beaded items on display show geometric designs that could be interpreted as "Indian," others, including the objects decorated with Christian crosses, are less securely culturally located. Indeed, a comparison with a photograph of loomed beadwork made by non-Indian women around the same time suggests a strong exchange of ideas across cultural borders (see figure 31). Contrary to Hart's claims, her pupils' work is less connected to ancestral practice than with that of recent generations who continued and adapted traditional practices in light of increasing mainstream domination.

Hart made it clear that students did not engage in this work solely for pleasure, but as classroom assignments that were evaluated by the teacher. In a 1903 report, she told Reel: "As in other years, basketry and beadwork have received some attention, but in these arts perfection rather than quantity has been the aim, and the work has been a test of neatness and thoroughness rather than a productive industry"[74] Confirming K. Tsianina Lomawaima's assessment of the importance of subservience in the schools, she continued: "All work done is carefully inspected before taken from the frames, and imperfect work pointed out and corrected, thus teaching accuracy and neatness."[75]

CONCLUSION

When Reel retired from her post in 1910 to marry a Washington rancher, the program was not continued and, indeed, it may have been dropped from many schools earlier than this. Only the Carlisle school, which housed a separate art program headed by the Winnebago artist Angel DeCora, the subject of the last chapter of this book, seems to have remained committed to training Native artists. Lomawaima has suggested that the failure to maintain the program may also have been due to a discomfort with the presence of Native teachers in the school system.[76] But the demise of the Indian industries curriculum can also be linked to the inherent problematic educational ideals, whose emphasis on finding joy in labor was profoundly out of sync with contemporary economic reality. Then as now, American consumers who could see the value of well-designed and well-made objects were also unwilling to pay higher prices for them.

But the Native industries program is important despite its failures and shortcomings. Student artwork of this generation can be seen as a document of both assimilationist pressure and native survivance. "Survivance" is a term coined by Gerald Vizenor, the Anishinaabe (Chippewa) Indian scholar and writer, to describe Native endurance and resistance in the face of dominant culture's fictional definitions of authentic Indianness.[77] Key components of survivance are the mastery of dominant codes and an understanding of the fragility of their authority. Like many artists on the reservation, turn-of-the-century Indian students found ways to make these "modern" practices their own.

Oneida beadwork illustrates this point. The use of handicrafts to teach

genteel feminine behavior was not Hart's innovation. The Oneida Boarding School curriculum focused on lace making and woven beadwork, two practices that had been introduced in the tribe by female missionaries. In 1894 Sybil Carter sent a teacher to Oneida, and women there began making and selling lace. The use of commercially distributed beadwork looms in Hart's classroom also represents a non-Indian intervention in the course of Oneida art. In 1898 the Episcopalian Sisters of the Holy Nativity had begun promoting the use of looms for beadwork, encouraging Oneida women to produce objects such as small bags, chains, and fobs, that they distributed to non-Indian audiences in a manner similar to Carter. J. K. Bloomfield traces the introduction of woven beadwork to the Oneidas to this project.[78] Much Six Nations beadwork is characterized by appliquéed floral designs on a cloth ground, allowing for fluid lines, and organic shapes that cannot be accomplished with loom weaving. A pair of moccasins made on the Oneida Reservation in Wisconsin in the 1890s demonstrates the vibrant colors and exuberant designs of this tradition (see plate 4).

Though this history is not documented, loomed beadwork may be the result of a more complex intercultural exchange. Woven beadwork was traditional to neighboring tribes with whom the Oneidas had extensive contact, including the Menominee and the Winnebago, and, indeed, it was not unknown to Iroquoians.[79] (For an illustration of Great Lakes beadwork using a loom, see figure 12.)

Regardless of the roots of the technique, the production of beaded articles for sale to non-Indians would have been a familiar idea for Oneida women. Their Iroquoian forebears had sold hand-crafted "curios" to European Americans for well over a century. Morever, they had routinely adopted new forms and techniques in their attempt to attract buyers. As Ruth Phillips has revealed, several types of souvenirs understood as traditional Woodlands work were actually developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Ursuline nuns hoping to raise funds from travelers and European patrons.[80] For example, the nuns adapted birchbark containers to produce small lidded boxes with applied designs in moosehair embroidery. Native artisans later took up this practice and added their own innovations.

The intercultural curio market did not offer all participants equal power; Native people and their work were assessed by mainstream ideas about race and gender. But it would be a mistake to see this work as less "Native"

than traditions less influenced by Euro-Americans, for to do so robs Indian people of their history. Phillips has argued that participation in intercultural art markets offered craftspeople diverse rewards. These range from the pleasures of pursuing the work—carrying on traditions that were related not only to subsistence but also to the sustaining of culture—to the importance of acquiring funds to support family and community survival and to the satisfaction of participating in modern culture and mastering its ideas about art and character.

As I have discussed above, Indian school officials often got tripped up by a commitment to a fallacious "authenticity." But it is likely that Oneida students were more comfortable mixing indigeneity and modernity. Their tribal history was characterized by an ongoing dialogue with European Americans. The nation descended from two groups who had left upstate New York in the 1820s to settle on land purchased from the Menomenee and Winnebago. Later joined by a small band of so-called pagans, most Wisconsin Oneida were Christians who had adopted many aspects of mainstream culture into their lives and continued to interact with the European Americans who began settling in Wisconsin around the same time as the Oneida migration.

The Oneida did not embrace all aspects of mainstream culture. The community was strongly divided about allotment. And while they initially welcomed the Oneida Boarding School for offering their children a chance to better themselves through education without having to leave the reservation, many pupils came to resent the school's emphasis on labor and discipline.[81] But tribal members understand both of the traditions taught in Hart's classroom as *Oneida* art forms that draw on older skills and on the traditional work of Iroquoian women. They have worked to continue and preserve them. In 1908 an Oneida woman, Josephine Hill Webster, took over the lace-making project, which she continued into the 1940s, long after Carter's organization dissolved.[82] Both traditions are featured today at Nation's Museum near Green Bay.