

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

Spring 2005

"Vanishing" Indians? Cultural Persistence On Display At The Omaha World's Fair Of 1898

Josh Clough
University of Oklahoma

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Clough, Josh, "'Vanishing" Indians? Cultural Persistence On Display At The Omaha World's Fair Of 1898" (2005). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 2472.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/2472>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

“VANISHING” INDIANS?

CULTURAL PERSISTENCE ON DISPLAY AT THE OMAHA WORLD’S FAIR OF 1898

JOSH CLOUGH

Nebraska’s Indian population exploded in the summer of 1898, but it was not due to natural increase. More than 500 Indians representing twenty-three tribes came to Omaha as part of the United States Indian Bureau’s exhibit at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. During their three-month stay at the world’s fair, Indians engaged in dancing, feasting, visiting, and earned money performing sham battles. In doing so they demonstrated not only the vibrancy and resilience of Native American cultures, but also the ineffectiveness of the government’s assimilation policy. The Indian Bureau spent \$40,000 for the Indian Congress (as this gathering of Native peoples came

to be known) to show the public how education was “civilizing” Native Americans. Instead, the Bureau sponsored an enormous intertribal powwow and Wild West show that directly contradicted its own policies. Three factors—bureaucratic error, Indian resistance, and Indian agent accommodation—combined to produce an exhibit at Omaha that left the Indian Bureau red-faced and Christian reformers seething.

In this essay I want to demonstrate that Indians not only negotiated the terms on which they came to Omaha but also played a major role in determining what activities they would participate in once they arrived.¹ Rather than view the Indian Congress as an example of the imperialist and racist tendencies of the United States at the turn of the century as have some scholars, I have chosen to adopt a less pessimistic view of the encampment.² Certainly exhibit organizers had their own colonialist ideas about how Native peoples should be portrayed to the American public at Omaha. However, Indians who attended the exposition created their own program of events that defied the notion that they were either subservient or assimilated.

Key Words: Grass dance, Omaha, Trans-Mississippi Exposition, U.S. Indian Bureau, Wild West Shows.

Josh Clough is a PhD student at the University of Oklahoma and is a supervisor at the Western History Collections in Norman, Oklahoma. He would like to thank Dr. David W. Levy and Dr. William W. Savage, Jr. for their editorial assistance with this essay and the Reverend Nick Birdshead for introducing him to the world of powwows and 49s.

[GPQ 25 (Spring 2005): 67-86]

The intertribal Grass dances that took place on the grounds throughout the summer, for instance, demonstrated that Indians were willing to compromise on decisions regarding where dances were held and who could participate in them in order to ensure their survival. Such concessions support historian Clyde Ellis's observation that the Grass dance, or Omaha dance, became more secular in form and meaning in the late nineteenth century as warrior societies waned in importance.³ And as Paige Raibmon suggests in her study of Kwakwaka'wakw Indian dances at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, such compromises represented not the "commercialized corruption of traditional practices" but rather cultural resilience in the face of the colonial policies of the federal government.⁴

Save for the size and scope of its Indian exhibit, the Omaha world's fair typified those that preceded it and those that would follow it in the twentieth century. The purposes of the exposition, to boost the local economy and establish the city as a regional power, were not new concepts, and the fair's structures, while imposing, were by no means innovative. It featured magnificent buildings filled with exhibits from national, state, and local governments and businesses; beautifully landscaped grounds with a central lagoon; and an entertainment-filled Midway section consisting of refreshment stands, wild animal exhibits, ethnic villages, and peep shows. The exposition attracted more than 2 million people during its five-month duration, which compared favorably with attendance figures at the smaller world's fairs of the 1890s.⁵ As is true of most fairs, all the buildings on the grounds were demolished shortly after the exposition concluded. Although the structures appeared permanent, they were in fact made of staff, a material similar to plaster of paris.

Monuments to progress and Anglo-Saxon achievement, Gilded Age expositions seem an unlikely place to find exhibits related to American Indians, much less American Indians themselves. However, every U.S. world's fair, from the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial

Exhibition to the 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition, featured some sort of Indian display. Most of these exhibits were organized either by anthropologists (many of whom worked for the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology) who sought to preserve vestiges of Native cultures before they disappeared, or by the U.S. Indian Bureau, which sought to destroy them. Such differences may have placed the two groups at loggerheads but did not prevent them from working together on fair exhibits. Reasons for this cooperation lay in the message each group wished to convey to the fairgoing public. Anthropologists, convinced that Native Americans were a vanishing race, hoped to give white Americans one final glimpse of Native culture through displays of Indian artifacts and actual Indians. The Indian Bureau, too, believed Native peoples were disappearing, not so much numerically as culturally. It hoped to convince fairgoers, with displays of Native children's schoolwork and examples of "civilized" Indians, that its educational system was responsible for erasing Native cultures. Thus, as counterpoints, anthropological and Indian Bureau exhibits could not have been more complementary to one another.⁶

The best example of complementary Indian Bureau and anthropological displays prior to the Omaha world's fair appeared at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition. There, the government erected a two-story model Indian school in which Native pupils recited lessons and demonstrated domestic and industrial skills to the public. Bureau head Thomas J. Morgan hoped the model school would offer fairgoers "a graphic and impressive showing of what the Government is trying to do in the way of education and civilization."⁷ As a dramatic contrast to the school, the Indian Bureau planned to establish an encampment of traditional Indians near the schoolhouse to live as they did on their reservations. The distinction between primitive and progressive Natives would therefore be made clear to visitors.

Morgan's hopes for an ethnological village dimmed when Congress slashed the Bureau's

exhibit appropriation, but he found a way around the problem by enlisting the help of Frederick Ward Putnam, an anthropologist at Harvard's Peabody Museum. Putnam, acting as director of the fair's Department of Ethnology and Archaeology, eagerly agreed to assemble an encampment of Indians for Morgan. His efforts to attract representatives of various tribes to the exposition proved highly successful as more than one hundred Navajo, Cree, Penobscot, and Iroquois Indians agreed to set up camp in the village just south of the model school building. The ethnological village and the model school proved popular with visitors, and both the Indian Bureau and anthropologists came away from Chicago feeling good about themselves.⁸

ORGANIZING THE OMAHA INDIAN CONGRESS

As originally conceived, the Omaha exposition's government Indian exhibit bore some semblance, at least ideologically, to that at Chicago. Edward Rosewater, editor and publisher of the *Omaha Bee* and chairman of the exposition's Bureau of Publicity and Promotion, first proposed the idea of a grand Indian encampment in August 1897.⁹ He envisioned bringing representatives of every tribe in North and South America to the fairgrounds to live in their Native abodes and perform dances and other ceremonies inside a structure he dubbed the "grand council wigwam." Indian artifacts from the collections of the Bureau of American Ethnology could be displayed along with a small group of Natives who had adopted the habits and dress of whites. Rosewater believed that this "Congress of Civilized Indians," though not as ambitious as the main Indian Congress, would prove to exposition visitors that at least some Native peoples possessed "intelligence and ability." The ethnology exhibit as a whole would no doubt be the last time so many of the "bronze sons of the forest and plains" could be brought together before they were "gathered to the happy hunting grounds."¹⁰

Although Rosewater's plan met with immediate approval from exposition officials, who saw the exhibit's potential to lure visitors to the fair, it proved financially unfeasible and had to be scaled back. Rosewater revamped the exhibit, working closely with James Mooney, an anthropologist for the Bureau of American Ethnology who happened to be in town preparing his own exhibit for the fair. The newspaperman scrapped the Civilized Congress, the artifact display, and the grand wigwam portions of the display but kept the core Indian village component, albeit without Indians from Canada or South America.¹¹ The leaner, more focused exhibit had the endorsement of one of the most famous anthropologists of the era, but would it meet with the approval of the Indian Bureau and the U.S. Congress? After all, without the sanction of the former there would be no Indians, and without the sanction of the latter there would be no money.

THE FIGHT FOR FUNDING

Fair managers chose to tackle the congressional appropriation problem first and solved the Bureau problem in the process. Sometime between October 1897, when Rosewater and Mooney finalized plans for the exhibit, and December 6, 1897, when the U.S. Congress convened, proponents of the Indian encampment convinced Nebraska congressmen David H. Mercer and William V. Allen to introduce a bill in Congress that would provide \$100,000 to carry out the project.¹² Although the bill died in committee in the House, it reached the conference stage in the Senate early in 1898—but not without significant changes. The amended bill authorized the commissioner of Indian Affairs to assemble a congress of American Indians at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition to illustrate the "past and present conditions" of the tribes. It further stated that the Native village was to include "members of every tribe, showing tribal customs and habits, ancient and modern, the progress made by education, and such other matters and things

as will fully illustrate Indian advancement in civilization."¹³

The final wording of this piece of legislation is revealing. It indicated that the Indian Bureau had not merely gotten behind the proposed Indian Congress but was in fact now in charge of the project. Secondly, it demonstrated the Bureau's desire to make the exhibit a comparative one in order to contrast the lifestyles of traditional and progressive Indians. Given the agency's past displays at world's fairs, neither development was terribly surprising. Secretary of the Interior Cornelius Bliss and officials in the Indian Bureau no doubt feared that Mooney and Rosewater's proposal for a congress of unassimilated Natives would directly challenge its own assertions that Indians were becoming civilized. By taking the reigns of the exhibit out of the hands of exposition officials, the Bureau assumed control of its ideological destiny at the fair. Visitors might see primitive Indians in droves, but this image would not go unchallenged. Educated Indians would be right there beside them to testify to the efficacy of the government's assimilation policy.

By March 1898 passage of the amended Indian Congress bill seemed a mere formality. The measure enjoyed broad support among people that counted, and the fact that Congress had already distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars for other exhibits at the fair augured well for its prospects of passage. Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones felt so confident the money would be forthcoming that he issued a circular to Indian agents on March 22 giving them the green light to begin preparing for the exhibit. With the fair set to open on June 1, this step was not an unreasonable one. However, it proved premature. On April 19 the United States declared war on Spain and might just as well have declared war on the Indian Congress bill itself. For legislative attention became so monopolized by war measures that the encampment bill never made it to a final vote.¹⁴ It wilted on the vine and died, a victim of its own insignificance.

Exasperated but not defeated, Indian Office bureaucrats and exposition managers decided to try an end run to obtain the necessary funding. They knew that the annual Indian appropriation bill would have to be voted on before Congress recessed for the summer. So, with the stroke of a pen, the Bureau attached a rider to this massive piece of legislation that replicated exactly the wording of the former Indian Congress bill. In conference, legislators slashed the appropriation for the encampment to \$40,000 but kept the amendment in place.¹⁵ The wheels of Congress turned slowly, though, and the Indian appropriation bill did not come up for a final vote until late in June—nearly a month after the Trans-Mississippi Exposition opened. When it finally passed on June 30, the Indian Congress finally became official.¹⁶ The Bureau had its money, now all it needed was a few hundred Indians.

Commissioner Jones wasted little time naming a director for the exhibit once the bill passed. On July 11 he placed Capt. William A. Mercer, acting superintendent at the Omaha and Winnebago Agency and a U.S. Army officer, in charge of the congress.¹⁷ Mercer's reputation as an effective administrator who followed regulations closely, coupled with the fact that he headed an Indian agency only sixty miles north of Omaha, made him a logical choice.¹⁸ Before he could begin recruiting Native peoples to the fair, Captain Mercer needed a plan of action. He decided to use Jones's March 22 circular as a blueprint because this document spelled out not only the purpose of the proposed encampment but also the types of Indians the Bureau desired and the items delegates were to bring with them. By relying on the circular, however, the captain unwittingly created an exhibit that neither Congress nor the Interior Department had originally intended. The fault lay not with Mercer—at least not initially—but rather with the commissioner. As a closer examination of the circular will show, Jones misinterpreted the objective of the Indian Congress from the beginning and by doing so left the Bureau open for criticism later on.



FIG. 1. Captain William A. Mercer and Goes To War (Zuy-A-Hiyaya), Chief of Sioux, 1898. Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

In the three-page directive to agents, Commissioner Jones stated that the intent of the encampment was to illustrate the "mode of life, Native industries, and ethnic traits" of Native Americans in "as thoroughly aboriginal" a manner as possible. Because most American Indians were rapidly "modifying their original habits and industries" by adopting those of white people, the congress would offer fairgoers the chance to see "primitive" Indians for perhaps the last time. Jones therefore asked agents to send only full-blooded Indians to Omaha, with the exception of one or two mixed-blood interpreters per delegation. Delegates were to live in their Native housing type while on the grounds and manufacture craft items for sale to visitors. The commissioner also encouraged Natives participating in the encampment to bring along "implements of warfare" and any other items of historical

interest they might own.¹⁹ All expenses would, of course, be paid by the government.

Notably absent from the circular was any reference to either "civilized" or "educated" Indians. Inexplicably, Jones had written progressive Natives completely out of the exhibit, directly contradicting the intent of the measure as passed by Congress. The reason for this omission is unclear, but it was probably the by-product of political patronage in the Indian Bureau. Jones might have brought a wealth of experience to the commissioner's post when he arrived in Washington in May 1897, but it was not in Indian affairs. A banker and co-owner of a zinc company in Wisconsin, his efforts on behalf of William McKinley's 1896 presidential campaign had earned him his Bureau position.²⁰ Jones's lack of familiarity with the Indian Bureau's past exposition displays and ignorance of government Indian policy in general no doubt caused him to overlook the necessity of having a counterpoint to traditional Indians at the fair.

ASSEMBLING INDIANS FOR THE EXPOSITION

Captain Mercer expected to have few problems attracting Native delegates to Omaha by August 4, the opening day of the encampment. After all, the congress offered Indians the chance to take a three-month paid vacation to see the splendors of a world's fair. Upon hearing news of the exhibit from their respective agents, however, few Indians dropped what they were doing to hop on the next train to Omaha. Instead, tribal members responded with a collective yawn. The fair was of no great importance to them; it represented not a vacation but a disruption to their daily lives at the busiest time of the year. Consequently, tribes across the West initially declined Mercer's invitation and went on about their business. The Captain's initial optimism vanished as he settled down for a long summer of negotiation and compromise. If there was to be an Indian Congress at all, it would be held largely on Native terms, not the government's.

Fortunately for the Bureau, it had placed the exhibit in the hands of a man who refused to take no for an answer. Captain Mercer, acting the part of Gilded Age diplomat, asked Indians what it would take to get them to come to Omaha. If the responses of the Pine Ridge Sioux, the Jicarilla Apaches, and the Santa Clara Pueblos are any indication, they first wanted money. W. H. Clapp, superintendent at the Pine Ridge Agency, blamed Indians' desire for compensation on the pernicious influence of Buffalo Bill Cody. Each year Cody paid Indians from Pine Ridge "substantial" sums to perform in his Wild West show, thus giving them "an idea of their commercial value as show men." As a result, when Clapp broached the subject of the congress to them, they asked how much money they would receive. "When told they are not to be paid," related the agent, "they want nothing to do with the project."²¹ Although Clapp promised to continue his recruiting efforts, he saw little hope for success.

On the Pueblo and Jicarilla Agency in New Mexico, the situation was much the same. The Pueblos had been paid to participate in celebrations at Santa Fe for years and annually sold pottery at the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo. Not surprisingly, they demanded ten dollars each if Mercer wanted them in Omaha by August 4, but were willing to accept less if they could arrive later in the summer.²² Their agent, N. S. Walpole, described them as "industrious, laboring people" who knew the value of money and expected to be compensated for their time.²³ While the Jicarilla Apaches did not expect to be paid outright for going to the exposition, they did want to look like Indians when they got there. Consequently they requested twenty dollars apiece to purchase "various articles necessary to make a complete Native costume."²⁴

In addition to money, Native peoples wanted to leave for Omaha when it was convenient for them rather than for Mercer. The rationale for this desire was simple: they needed to harvest their crops and hold harvest celebrations prior to leaving their reservations for

three months. The same Santa Clara Pueblos who requested ten dollars to travel to the fair also made it clear they would not leave home until after their August 12 feast day.²⁵ Kiowa farmers and stockmen in Oklahoma explained that they were too busy with harvesting and roundups to take time out for the congress.²⁶ Even Indians at the Omaha and Winnebago Agency under Captain Mercer insisted on harvesting their wheat and holding their annual powwow before heading south to Omaha.²⁷ Because the captain depended on 200 Omaha and Winnebago being present at the encampment on opening day, it seems likely the exhibit's August 4 kickoff date was not chosen arbitrarily.

Since Mercer could not pay delegates directly (the Bureau forbade it), he probably assured Indians hesitant to come to Omaha that there would be ample moneymaking opportunities at the fair. Not only would they be able to sell arts and crafts to visitors, they would be compensated for participating in "Special Features," which at this time had not yet been determined.²⁸ Mercer could and did compromise with delegations on arrival dates, which explains why only about half of the 500 Indians that would eventually make up the encampment took part in the opening ceremonies. Although the Blackfeet, Assiniboines, Chippewas, Iowa Sac and Fox, Jicarilla Apaches, Brule Sioux, and Cheyenne River Sioux were present on August 4, the aforementioned Pueblos and Kiowas did not join the congress until September.²⁹

LIFE ON THE OMAHA INDIAN CONGRESS GROUNDS

Upon arriving in Omaha, Native delegates were taken by wagon from the train station to the encampment grounds. Located on the periphery of the exposition complex, the four-acre tract of land had wooded areas, grassy meadows, and a dirt arena. There were two wooden structures on the grounds when the Indians arrived, a commissary building for storing food and a curio shop for selling Native

arts and crafts.³⁰ A high board fence enclosed the campground, which was bordered on the south and west by streets and on the north and east by various exposition buildings. While exhibitors located near the Indian Congress appreciated the number of visitors the Indians attracted to the remote northwest corner of the fairgrounds, one wonders if the Native groups who had to live there enjoyed the location quite as much. After all, on breezy summer days the odors that wafted into the encampment from the livestock and poultry exhibits next door would have been anything but pleasant.

Water for drinking, bathing, and laundering was piped into the Indian village through an underground plumbing system installed prior to the delegates' arrival. A pair of eighteen-by-thirty-foot tanks, each two feet deep, were placed on opposite ends of the camp and kept full of running water from Omaha's municipal water system for washing clothes. A three-foot-deep pool measuring twenty-five by thirty feet, with cement sides and bottom, served as the children's communal bathtub, while adults bathed in larger, deeper pools enclosed in bathhouses. Delegates received filtered water to drink, and for variety bought bottles of soda water on the Midway.³¹

Food distribution at the congress mirrored the way rations were distributed on the reservation. Each head of family received a card with their name and the number of their dependents on it. Every five days family heads walked to the commissary on the north end of the campground, presented their identification cards, and received their allotted rations. Foods such as beef, bread, beans, hominy, dried fruit, potatoes, rice, and onions were issued, as well as ground coffee and tea. A reporter for the *Bee* observed that delegates usually tossed the meat, vegetables, and fruit into a single kettle, allowed the ingredients to boil, and then served the gruel-like concoction. The American Indian, he explained, was "not a graduate of any cooking school" but could prepare a meal "as palatable to an Indian as though it had been cooked in the most fashionable French restaurant in the land."³²

Each tribe occupied a designated area on the grounds upon which they erected their Native housing type. In this sense at least, the encampment closely resembled what legislators and the Interior Department had envisioned. The tipi was by far the most common type of dwelling in the encampment, but there were a few variations on this theme. Sac and Fox delegates from Iowa constructed a rounded wigwam covered with mats made of woven rushes, while the Chippewas crafted a similar structure covered with tree bark. Fort Sill Apaches, classified as prisoners of war by the federal government, occupied regulation U.S. Army tents. Their distant cousins the Jicarilla Apaches, during their stay at the fair, found out the hard way that their cloth wickiups provided little protection from the rain. An early morning thunderstorm on the opening day of the congress drenched their bedding and clothing; as one observer noted, they might just as well have been "out of doors" for all the good their wickiups did them.³³

Fairgoers found the tipis and wigwams only mildly interesting, but the dwellings of the Wichitas and Pueblos proved magnets for attention. Besides being unique in appearance, the Wichita grass lodge and the Pueblo adobe house each took about a week to build, thus giving visitors the opportunity to witness every phase of their construction. Shortly after their arrival, the Pueblos ordered a load of straw and had it dumped in the northwest corner of the camp. Next, they dug a pit, filled it with water, and tossed in soft dirt and straw. After mixing the mud and straw together by "tramping" it "with their bare feet," the men scooped the gooey mixture into brick molds and left the bricks to dry in the sun.³⁴ This process was repeated for the next several days until the Pueblos had made approximately 2,000 of the mud bricks. They then constructed a sixteen-by-twenty-foot adobe house with a brush roof, mud fireplace and chimney, and holes for windows in the eighteen-inch-thick walls.³⁵ Because the Pueblo delegation consisted only of men, visitors immediately dubbed the house the "bachelor's quarters."³⁶



FIG. 2. *Pueblo adobe house*, 1898. Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

Resembling a “well-built haystack,” the Wichita grass house was the congress’s largest dwelling.³⁷ James Mooney purchased the lodge from its owner in Oklahoma, had it disassembled, and then shipped it to the exposition. A half-dozen Wichita women under the direction of their chief, Tawaconi Jim, spent a week reconstructing the lodge once it arrived.³⁸ The framework of the structure was made of trimmed cedar poles imbedded in the ground at the base and lashed together at the top, thereby forming a curved dome. Its outer covering consisted of bundles of dried grass tied securely to the frame. Fully assembled, the grass house measured twenty-five feet in diameter and thirty feet in height.³⁹ Fifteen Wichitas occupied the lodge during the congress, but at

least twice that number could be squeezed into the structure for dances and handgames. Members of the other tribes on the grounds frequented the grass house several nights a week to participate in these activities, making the place “resound with shout and song.”⁴⁰

Although exposition visitors were permitted to stroll around the Indian village from eight in the morning until nightfall, delegates employed various tactics to ensure themselves at least an occasional moment of privacy. Several Natives roped off their dwellings to prevent unexpected guests, while the Pueblos posted a “Keep Out” sign on their house.⁴¹ Others, finding the curiosity of fairgoers annoying, simply drew their tipi flaps shut.⁴² While many tribal members did not mind



FIG. 3. Wichita grass hut, second from left, 1898. Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

being photographed, a pair of visiting reporters from Maryland discovered that this was not always the case. When one of them attempted to snap a picture of an elderly Indian lady in camp, the Native woman picked up a stick and ran him off.⁴³ If some fairgoers perceived the congress as something of a human zoo, the Indians themselves certainly did not; as one delegate remarked, "We are not monkeys yet."⁴⁴

NATIVE INTERACTION AT THE FAIR

The presence of so many distinct tribes living in close proximity to one another, especially traditional enemies like the Crow and the Sioux, raises the question of how delegates

got along. On the whole, they seemed to interact remarkably well. The earliest groups to arrive made a point of greeting newcomers at the camp's entrance gate with a handshake, a calumet ceremony, or a song of welcome.⁴⁵ The Sioux, possibly because they were the first to arrive at the congress, often took the lead in these welcoming ceremonies, with other tribes following closely behind.⁴⁶ Evidence of intertribal goodwill permeated the encampment during its three-month duration, often at dances but in everyday life as well. When Goes-to-War (Sioux) needed a new tipi, for instance, his wife asked ladies from several Plains tribes for assistance. They agreed and completed the task in a few short hours. Afterward, Goes-to-War and his wife treated the women



FIG. 4. Omaha newborn, age 8 hours, 1898. Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

to a feast of beans and bacon, which was washed down with cups of steaming coffee.⁴⁷

Another example of the familial atmosphere in camp occurred after the wife of Spotted Back (Omaha) gave birth to a baby boy. According to newspaper accounts, as soon as the other Indians received word of the birth, they hastened to Spotted Back's tent. But they did not go empty-handed. After congratulating the parents, visitors handed them gifts of food, clothing, blankets, pipes, bows and arrows, calico, and red cloth. Several days later the Spotted Back family reciprocated by holding a feast and a dance.⁴⁸

Fittingly, the only fight recorded at the congress took place after one of the sham battles. The two combatants, Crow Ears (Flathead) and Hits-Them-All (Wichita), had bad blood between them, but just why is unclear. Following the sham battle on October 6,

Hits-Them-All pointed his rifle, still filled with blanks from the performance, at Crow Ears' feet and fired. The Flathead returned the compliment by aiming his gun at the Wichita's "bread basket" and pulling the trigger. At this point both men tossed their rifles aside and wrestled each other to the ground. "They writhed and tossed for a brief period and, breaking away, squared off for a fight. Crow Ears reached out with his right hand and landed heavily on Hits-Them-All's neck, who countered and gave Crow Ears a severe punch below the belt." This last cheap shot ended the fight when friends of the two men pulled them apart and led them away.⁴⁹

DANCING THE OMAHA AT OMAHA

The activity Indians indulged in most frequently at the exposition, the Grass dance,



FIG. 5. *Indians dancing, 1898.* Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

did not appear on any schedule of events for the congress when it began—and for good reason. For years the Indian Bureau had been trying to stamp out the practice on reservations across the country, with little success. Hostility toward the dance focused on its tendency to incite warlike passions among young men, to promote drinking and promiscuity, and to encourage intertribal visiting accompanied by the giving away of property. Agents of the Bureau deemed the war dance (as they called it) demoralizing to all involved and employed every method imaginable to stop it. Some chose to withhold rations and annuity payments from dancers in an attempt to starve them into submission. Others, like an agent for the Kiowas in 1889, threatened to use military force to prevent dances.⁵⁰ A few simply threw dancers in jail. Joseph T. Carter, superintendent at the Flathead Agency in Mon-

tana, had two Indians arrested in 1896 for “the repetition of the offense of participating in the forbidden war dance.”⁵¹

Despite these coercive measures, Native peoples across the Northern and Southern Plains continued to dance the Grass dance. They did so not only because it was important to them, but also because the Bureau had no legal grounds to abolish it. Agents as well as Indians knew this. As a result, the majority of superintendents, unable to stop the dance completely, tried to regulate it as best they could.⁵² That Captain Mercer took a similar pragmatic, accommodationist approach to Native dancing at the fair is thus not surprising. However, because the dancing at the exposition took place in front of thousands of people rather than on isolated reservations, it caught the eye of reformers quick to point out the blatant hypocrisy between the Indian

Bureau's stated policies and its actions at Omaha.

If Captain Mercer and Commissioner Jones had had their way, Indians at the congress would have participated in a daily program of foot races, wrestling matches, and ball games for the amusement of spectators. On the opening day of the exhibit, delegates did just that—and then refused to do so for the remainder of the exposition.⁵³ They cared little for European American sports and informed Mercer as much. The captain, who wanted to make the congress as interesting to visitors as possible and to keep the Indians happy, asked delegates if they would prefer dancing instead. He did not have to ask twice. Indians readily agreed to dance but would not commit to any set schedule Mercer drew up. Local newspapers lamented the fact that they would not be able to publish advance notice of dances but explained to readers that "Indians steadfastly decline to dance unless they feel like it."⁵⁴

Apparently delegates felt like dancing most of the time during the summer of 1898, because for the remainder of the fair this activity consumed much of their time. Almost every night, and sometimes during the afternoon as well, men from every tribe on the grounds painted their bodies, donned their regalia, and headed toward a roped-off circle in the middle of the encampment. In the center of the dance arena sat a drum group, already singing and beating the drum. This central drum group might be made up of Crows one day and Sioux the next, for it rotated between tribes. A master of ceremonies coordinated the event and helped determine the eligibility of a man to dance, while a dance leader, chosen ahead of time, led off the festivities by recounting his prowess as a warrior.⁵⁵ For the next several hours Omaha songs filled the air as dancers, carrying rifles, tomahawks, or coup sticks pantomimed exploits performed on the battlefield years before. Bells, sometimes worn about the ankles or hung in strips from the men's breechclouts, jingled in time to the rhythm of the drum.⁵⁶ Giveaways or feasts sometimes concluded the dance, but usually the tired

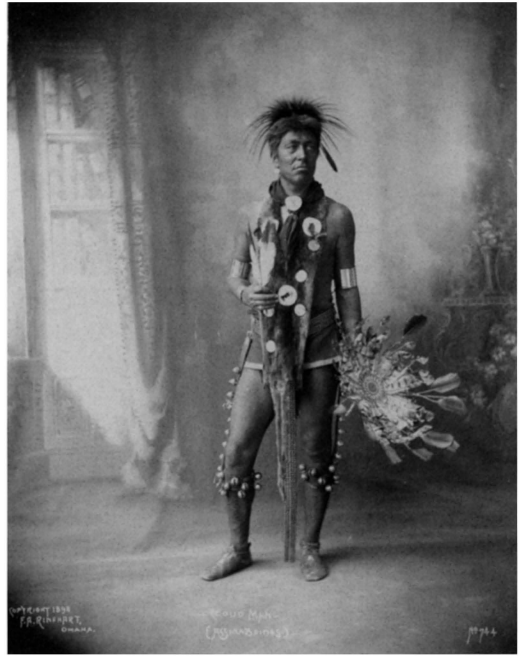


FIG. 6. *Cloud Man (Assinaboin) in dance regalia, 1898.* Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

dancers simply made their way back home to sleep.

To anyone familiar with modern intertribal powwows, the above description might just as well have been given in 1998 as 1898. All the key elements of present-day powwows were visible in the Grass dances at Omaha: a central drum group, a master of ceremonies, dancers from numerous tribes, a head man dancer, giveaways, and spectators. Although regalia has changed over the years, Indians at the encampment would no doubt still recognize the hair roaches, feather bustles, and sleigh bells worn by today's powwow dancers. Omaha songs, too, have changed, but this would not have surprised nineteenth-century adherents to the dance. After all, as tribes across the Plains adopted the dance between 1870 and 1900, they altered the songs to reflect their own war heroes and battles.⁵⁷ The assembly of Native peoples at the fair may have been called an Indian Congress, but it

could just as accurately be described as the longest sustained powwow in recorded history.

Reporters for Omaha's two daily newspapers, as well as eastern journalists, found the dances intensely interesting. They commented on every phase of these events, providing intimate details about the participants but at least as much about the whites who watched them. Although their observations were filled with ethnocentric sentiments and flawed analysis, they are nonetheless valuable for what they reveal about Native cultures at the end of the nineteenth century. For example, members of the press corps often noted the extremely young age of some of the dancers. A *Bee* reporter spotted a twelve-year-old boy "painted and bedecked like the warriors" at a Grass dance in August: "He sat with his little pipe stems of arms on his knees, puffing a cigarette with precisely the same stolid demeanor of the big men to the right and left of him. When the time came to dance, he danced and shouted (in his shrill, childish treble) just as they did."⁵⁸ A month later, Francis Stewart, a five-year-old Crow boy, stepped into the dance circle. Painted like a warrior, he wore only a breechclout "as big as your hand" and "strips of fur around his ankles." "As the little fellow pranced into the ring," related the journalist, "he not only amused the white people but the Indians as well."⁵⁹

As these two incidents demonstrate, whites found these youthful attempts to imitate adult dancers cute and almost comical. The Indian Bureau, missionaries, and reformers, however, would not have found them quite so innocent or amusing. Here, for all to see, was the next generation of American Indians, and they were not wearing school uniforms and singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." They were wearing very little at all, singing Omaha songs, and perpetuating the "sins" of their forefathers. The despair of the Bureau, though, was also the hope of Native elders. At least some of them must have felt a sense of peace as they watched youngsters enter the dance circle, knowing their traditions were being passed on to the next generation.

The stories told by Native men to justify their right to dance were another aspect of the Grass dances that frequently appeared in print. Men, before they could participate in a dance, stood up, related the number of enemy scalps they had taken, horses stolen, or other brave deeds they had done and were either granted or denied permission by popular consent. Back home on the reservations, agents pointed to this part of the event as one of its most objectionable features, claiming that it instilled a warlike mentality in young men.⁶⁰ While some Bureau officials believed the dance would eventually die out as Indians became educated and Christianized, they underestimated the flexibility of both the Grass dance and its adherents. One need only look at who was allowed to dance at the fair to see evidence of this adaptability. Reporters noticed that some young men who could make no claims to heroism in war were "let in just for fun," and others, like Little Head of the Poncas, danced so well that a "concession" was made for him to participate despite the fact that he had never proven himself in battle.⁶¹ That women and children were also permitted to take part in the Grass dance indicated a willingness to make the event as inclusive as possible, thereby ensuring its survival.

INDIAN DRAMATISTS

When Indians were not dancing, they could often be found rehearsing for or performing in sham battles. These outdoor dramas featured Indians, some on horseback and some on foot, reenacting scenes from frontier warfare. Delegates divided themselves into two groups, each numbering between 100 and 150 persons, then proceeded to shoot, scalp, and torture one another for an hour or more. Of course the rifles were filled with blank cartridges, the "scalps" actually animal fur, and the torture merely good acting. But audiences flocked to each performance as if it would be the last, praising the "striking reality" of the engagements.⁶² Indians enjoyed taking part in the performances as well, especially since they

received half the gate receipts. The fifteen-member Santa Clara Pueblo delegation, one of the smallest at the encampment, took home \$160 for its part in the thirteen sham battles given at the fair; total combined income for tribes at the congress probably exceeded \$3,000.⁶³

Such "mimic affrays" had been staples at Wild West shows and civic celebrations for at least two decades prior to the Omaha exposition, so their appearance there was not in itself unusual. Their presence at an Indian Bureau exhibit, with the active encouragement of a representative of the Bureau, however, bordered on the absurd. For as long as Wild West shows had existed, the Bureau had discouraged Indians from joining them. The shows, because they rewarded Natives for growing their hair long, dressing in traditional clothing, and acting like fierce warriors, undercut the government's assimilation efforts.⁶⁴ In addition, they gave the public the mistaken impression (in the Bureau's opinion) that Indians were not becoming civilized and were in fact incapable of it. Indians, ignoring Indian Bureau rhetoric and threats from their agents, continued to join shows because the government was powerless to stop them. An 1879 Supreme Court decision had given them the right to leave their reservations if they so desired, but it did not guarantee them protection from agent harassment.⁶⁵ Even so, the opportunity to earn money and travel across the country proved too great an inducement to keep most show Indians at home.

Contrary to what critics of the exhibit later claimed, sham battles quite unexpectedly became a regular feature at the fair. Shortly after the Indian Congress opened, members of a white fraternal society called the Improved Order of Red Men (IORM) approached Captain Mercer about staging a mock battle on August 10, Red Men's Day at the exposition.⁶⁶ The secret society, which was holding its annual lodge meeting in Omaha, hoped to pit several hundred of its men against an equal number of Indians from the encampment. Mercer, after consulting with tribal members

on the proposal, agreed to the engagement. On the morning of the battle, however, IORM chapters from Tennessee failed to arrive as scheduled; since they were to have made up the bulk of the organization's fighting force, a change of plans was necessary. Not wanting to let the public down, the captain borrowed guns from a local high school cadet corps, purchased a large quantity of blank ammunition, and rented as many horses as he could find. With these items he equipped a force of Indians and cowboys from a Wild West show on the fair's Midway to fight his congress delegates. Thus, the sham battle matched white men (IORM members who had shown up), cowboys, and "friendly" Natives from the Wild West show against "hostile" Indians from the encampment.⁶⁷ The coalition of whites and good Indians triumphed over the savage Natives, of course, and the popularity of the event convinced Mercer that this was the "special feature" he had been looking for. The sham battle was an event the public would pay to see and that Indians were willing to participate in. The captain realized that sham battles, by generating revenue for performers, ensured their happiness and continued presence at the fair and could only help in recruiting new delegations to Omaha. In the months ahead, additional sham battles would be given, all pitting Indians against Indians and all drawing enormous crowds.

No sham battle attracted more attention than the one held on October 12. It drew over 15,000 spectators, including President William McKinley, who afterward shook hands with the performers. While this particular engagement has received attention from the few historians who have studied the fair, none has mentioned the scene that was left out of the drama that I believe is of some significance.⁶⁸ Captain Mercer, hoping to add something special to the presidential sham battle, planned to recreate the murder of Sitting Bull. The Hunkpapa Sioux chief and Ghost Dance leader had been gunned down outside his log cabin in 1890 by Red Tomahawk, a Standing Rock Sioux policeman. In the struggle to



FIG. 7. *Sitting Bull's Cabin*, 1898. Photograph by F. A. Rinehart, Omaha, from the collections of the Omaha Public Library.

arrest Sitting Bull, eight of the chief's followers had been killed, along with six Indian police officers.⁶⁹ Whether Mercer hoped to carry out the tragic episode in all its brutal detail is uncertain, but at least two weeks prior to the October 12 battle, he expressed confidence that with "a few more rehearsals" he would be able to give fairgoers "an exhibition of just how the old Sioux war chief lost his life."⁷⁰

The captain doggedly pushed forward with the reenactment despite evidence that his actions had touched a raw nerve among the Sioux. They balked when asked to help build a replica of Sitting Bull's cabin, forcing Mercer to hire the Pueblos to do the job.⁷¹ Attempts to recruit the Standing Rock Agency Indian police also failed. They wanted noth-

ing to do with the project because to them "it was no play"; the chief's death had been a "sad and serious" event and Native lawmen were not about to "make a burlesque of it now."⁷² Given the reluctance of Sioux tribal members to participate in Mercer's scheme, one wonders who he tried to convince to participate in the drama. While this may never be known, we do know why the reenactment was called off. During rehearsals in early October, a group of Sioux delegates passing by the cabin noticed a light inside. Peering through the window, they were startled to see Sitting Bull warming himself beside a fire. Suddenly, a man appeared behind the chief and struck him on the head, after which the fire went out. Once news of this apparition spread throughout camp, delegates refused to go near the place.⁷³

At first glance Sioux resistance to the reenactment seems perfectly understandable. Here was a callous government Indian agent seeking to commodify and market a tragic event that had occurred just seven years before the fair. No doubt the Standing Rock Sioux at the congress, some of whom were probably related to Sitting Bull, waged an active campaign against the drama until the incident in the cabin settled the matter for good. While ideological and familial concerns may well have played a role in Lakota opposition to the event, their involvement in two previous world's fair displays leads one to believe that economics also factored into their decision. At Chicago in 1893, nine Sioux Indians, at least one of whom was Hunkpapa, performed for a Midway show called "Sitting Bull's Cabin."⁷⁴ Two years later at Atlanta, Lakota survivors of the Wounded Knee Massacre participated in a recreation of the event at an exhibit on the Midway Heights.⁷⁵ Because performers in both instances were paid a salary for their services, it is possible that Sioux delegates at Omaha refused to reenact the death of Sitting Bull for the simple reason that Mercer could not or would not pay them for doing so. If the whole idea of capitalizing on macabre historical events paints Indians in a pejorative light, it should be remembered that whites seemed quite willing to re-create for paying audiences the killing of George Armstrong Custer shortly after the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

DISSENT AND CRITICISM

The dances and sham battles that drew rave reviews from visitors and the press during the exposition continued to attract attention after the congress closed on October 31. But it was the kind of attention the Indian Bureau could have lived without. Indian policy reformers, missionaries, Indian school administrators, and even the Bureau's own employees excoriated the department for its complicity in the world's fair exhibit. Considering that these groups supported assimilation and therefore detested most aspects of Native cultures,

this chorus of dissent was to be expected. Opponents of the encampment, without exception, characterized it as a federally funded Wild West show and lamented the message such an exhibit sent not only to the public but also to the Native participants. Whites, believing that the Indians they saw at the fair were representative of all Native Americans, would assume that the government's efforts to educate and civilize them had been wasted. Meanwhile, Indians who were taught on the reservation to work their farms, cut their hair, and give up their old ways were essentially told at Omaha, "Wear your hair long, paint your face and body, and . . . don't forget the war-cry and the degrading dance."⁷⁶ Critics may have exaggerated the deleterious effects of dances and sham battles at the fair, but it must be remembered that these were the same arguments the Bureau itself had used for years to prevent Indians from participating in such activities.

Dissenters also accused Mercer and exposition officials of taking advantage of delegates by forcing them to dress up and perform as if they were part of a Midway sideshow. Especially reprehensible, critics claimed, was the fact that many of the Indians were of the "progressive class" who had been educated at federal boarding schools.⁷⁷ While at least nine of the delegates had attended Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, probably fewer than fifty of the 500 Indians at the congress had any sort of schooling.⁷⁸ And as indicated previously, few Natives needed to be coerced into participating in Grass dances or sham battles. Certainly actual conditions at the encampment bore scant resemblance to those described by Presbyterian missionary Alfred Riggs from the Santee Sioux Agency in Nebraska:

Those whom [Mercer] . . . can get to come are the half-bloods and young educated Indians. From them he strips off their civilized dress and makes them don the shameful toggery of former days. Returned students . . . are those made over into the semblance of aboriginal pagans. . . . [M]any whose civilized habits

and Christian ideals do not permit them to join in these pagan and savage dances at home have been compelled to take part in them at Omaha.⁷⁹

Pine Ridge agent W. H. Clapp reproached the Bureau for pandering to the "morbid curiosity" and "lowest passions" of fairgoers by exhibiting "naked painted Indians." The public, he claimed, wanted to see savage Natives "for quite the same reason as they do to see freaks" such as a "two headed girl or a six legged calf."⁸⁰ Both Clapp and Riggs cast Indians as helpless victims of a Bureau-exposition management plot to exploit their love of dance and warfare for the amusement of the public. In actuality, however, it was Indians themselves who made the decision to engage in Grass dances and sham battles at the exposition.

If the commissioner of Indian Affairs was unaware of the enormity of his blunder while the exposition was going on, critics made certain his ignorance did not continue thereafter. Clearly Jones had gotten the message by early 1899, for in a letter to Indian reformer Herbert Welsh, he expressed regret for not opposing the dances and sham battles at the fair. "In regard to the Indian Congress," the commissioner concluded, "it has had a very demoralizing effect on the Indians that . . . attended."⁸¹ Jones spent the next five years in office trying to atone for his sins at Omaha, distancing himself from past policy errors whenever possible. In 1899, for instance, he prohibited Indians from taking part in Grass dances at an exposition, and a year later refused to allow Buffalo Bill Cody onto reservations to recruit performers for his show.⁸² Admittedly, policy never quite translated into reality, but Jones's detractors soon became his biggest supporters as his views began to mesh with their own.

The Indian Congress at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, aside from its immediate impact on federal Indian policy, probably had few enduring consequences. However, the events that took place at the encampment were significant for a number of reasons. The prominence of dancing and sham battles demon-

strated the impotence of the Indian Bureau in curtailing these activities on the reservations and the failure of assimilation. The fact that delegates, despite their divergent tribal affiliations, knew how to dance the Grass dance and understood their roles in the mock battles indicated that they had participated in them before. This was so because agents back on the reservations lacked the legal authority to abolish these practices. Thus, they accommodated them but certainly did not encourage them as Captain Mercer did at the exposition. While the dances and sham battles themselves contradicted the notion that Native peoples were being assimilated into European American society, the presence of so many delegates wearing traditional clothing and speaking their Native languages revealed how little progress the Bureau had made in wiping out Native cultures.

The Grass dance also reflected the vibrancy and adaptability of Native cultures. By 1898 the opportunities for Native men to earn prestige in battle (against either whites or other tribes) had by and large passed away. As a result, warrior societies in many tribes became obsolete and began to disappear.⁸³ However, young men still needed a way to become "somebody" in their individual societies without having to count coup on an enemy or steal a horse. The Grass dance became the vehicle that made this generational transition possible without ignoring the past accomplishments of older tribal members but also without casting aspersions on youth who lacked military experience. Therefore, at the exposition, elders recounted war deeds and led the dances while younger men were allowed to participate and by their dancing ability prove they were worthy to be in the same dance arena as the veterans. Other innovations seen at Omaha, such as the incorporation of women and children into the dance, further widened its appeal and ensured its survival up to the present day.

Finally, the fact that white fairgoers so enthusiastically embraced the dances and sham battles suggests that although the Indian Bureau's exhibit might not have dovetailed

with stated Indian policy at the time, it did accurately reflect the tastes of the general public. Unlike missionaries, reformers, and the Bureau, many ordinary Americans wanted to see Indians who appeared untouched by civilization, as unrealistic as that expectation was in 1898. The enormous popularity of Wild West shows in the late nineteenth century, which featured Indian dancing and sham battles, clearly demonstrates this. Given the image of Native Americans in the popular mind during the Gilded Age, Commissioner Jones's March 22 circular advocating a "thoroughly aboriginal" spectacle makes a little more sense. Because he had been in office only a short time and had no prior experience with Native peoples, Jones wrote the document not as an Indian Office bureaucrat, but as a member of the general populace. As such, he probably excluded only those parts of the exhibit that to him seemed the least attractive and interesting. By doing so he created an Indian Congress that pleased the public but outraged assimilationists.

NOTES

1. For an example of how Indians at the 1904 St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition shaped how they were displayed, see Nancy J. Parezo and John W. Troutman, "The 'Shy' Cocopa Go to the Fair," in *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures*, ed. Carter Jones Meyer and Diana Royer (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 3-43.

2. See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 105-25; and Robert Bigart and Clarence Woodcock, "The Trans-Mississippi Exposition and the Flathead Delegation," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History* 29 (October 1979): 14-23. Although Bigart and Woodcock offer an excellent overview of the Indian Congress and correctly state that signs of "intertribal communication" and "resistance to cultural change" were visible at Omaha, they also conclude that the congress was of more historical significance as an example of white racism at the turn of the century than anything else.

3. Clyde Ellis, *A Dancing People: Powwow Culture on the Southern Plains* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), 19.

4. Paige Raibmon, "Theatres of Contact: The Kwakwaka'wakw Meet Colonialism in British Columbia and the Chicago World's Fair," *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 2 (June 2000): 160.

5. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 106-8.

6. Robert A. Trennert Jr., "Selling Indian Education at World's Fairs and Expositions, 1893-1904," *American Indian Quarterly* 13 (Summer 1987): 204-5.

7. *Ibid.*, 203.

8. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 55, 63; Trennert, "Selling Indian Education," 210-12.

9. Bigart and Woodcock, "Trans-Mississippi Exposition," 16.

10. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 16, 1898, p. 8, col. 3.

11. L. G. Moses, *The Indian Man: A Biography of James Mooney* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 114-15.

12. John A. Wakefield, *A History of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition* (Omaha: n.p., 1903), 628.

13. "A bill to provide . . .," undated typescript, Indian Rights Association Papers [hereafter IRA Papers], Reel 14, Philadelphia, PA: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

14. Wakefield, *Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition*, 628.

15. James Mooney, "The Indian Congress at Omaha," *American Anthropologist* 1 (January 1899): 128.

16. *New York Times*, July 8, 1898, p. 2, col. 2; *Omaha World-Herald*, July 1, 1898, p. 1, col. 3.

17. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* [hereafter ARCIA] (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1898), 28.

18. Bigart and Woodcock, "Trans-Mississippi Exposition," 16.

19. William A. Jones to Lee Patrick, March 22, 1898, Sac and Fox Agency Papers—Fair File, Reel 36, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.

20. W. David Baird, "William A. Jones (1897-1904)," in *Commissioners of Indian Affairs, 1824-1977*, ed. Robert M. Kvasnicka and Herman J. Viola (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 211.

21. W. H. Clapp to William A. Mercer, July 21, 1898, Miscellaneous Letters Sent by the Agents or Superintendents at the Pine Ridge Indian Agency, 1876-1914, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Microfilm [hereafter "M"] 1229, Reel 36, RG 75, National Archives & Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

22. W. P. Taber to N. S. Walpole, July 28, 1898, Records Created by Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Agencies Having Jurisdiction Over the Pueblo Indians, 1874-1900, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, M1304, Reel 7, RG 75, NARA.

23. N. S. Walpole to W. A. Mercer, July 23, 1898, M1304, Reel 7.

24. Charles L. Cooper to John L. Gaylord, April 18, 1898, M1304, Reel 6.
25. Taber to Walpole, July 28, 1898.
26. W. A. Mercer to W. T. Walker, August 6, 1898, Kiowa Agency Papers—Fair File, Reel 49, Oklahoma Historical Society.
27. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, July 22, 1898, p. 12, col. 3.
28. Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition File #4412-D#6, p. 1-2, Omaha Public Library, Omaha, NE.
29. *Omaha World-Herald*, evening edition, September 9, 1898, p. 3, col. 4-5; September 15, 1898, p. 3, col. 5.
30. *Omaha World-Herald*, July 1, 1898, p. 1, col. 3.
31. *Omaha Daily Bee*, August 6, 1898, p. 5, col. 4-7.
32. *Omaha Daily Bee*, September 21, 1898, p. 7, col. 4-6.
33. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 5, 1898, p. 5, col. 3, 5; August 13, 1898, p. 3, col. 3-4.
34. *Omaha Daily Bee*, September 21, 1898, p. 7, col. 5.
35. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, September 24, 1898, p. 1, col. 1.
36. *Omaha World-Herald*, October 8, 1898, p. 4, col. 6.
37. James Mooney, "Quivira and the Wichitas," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, June 1899, 135.
38. Mooney, "Indian Congress at Omaha," 131.
39. *Omaha Daily Bee*, September 17, 1898, p. 1, col. 2.
40. Mooney, "Quivira and the Wichitas," 135.
41. Bigart and Woodcock, "Trans-Mississippi Exposition," 22.
42. *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, August 5, 1898, p. 4, col. 3-5.
43. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, October 23, 1898, p. 19, col. 4-7.
44. "From the Indian Standpoint," *The Indian's Friend* 11 (December 1898): 6. See Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., & James W. Parins, *American Indian and Alaska Native Newspapers and Periodicals, 1826-1924* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 242-45. Published from 1888 to 1951, *The Indian's Friend* was the organ of the Women's National Indian Association, an organization that supported Christian missions among Indians.
45. *Omaha World-Herald*, evening edition, August 1, 1898, p. 5, col. 1.
46. Horace M. Rebok, *The Last of the Mus-Quakis and the Indian Congress* (Dayton, OH: W. R. Funk, 1900), 62; Bigart and Woodcock, "Trans-Mississippi Exposition," 16.
47. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, October 7, 1898, p. 5, col. 4.
48. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 9, 1898, p. 1, col. 2.
49. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, October 7, 1898, p. 5, col. 3-4.
50. ARCIA, 1889, 191.
51. ARCIA, 1896, 186.
52. See Ellis, *A Dancing People*, 18, 56; Benjamin R. Kracht, "Kiowa Powwows: Continuity in Ritual Practice," *American Indian Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 323.
53. *Omaha World-Herald*, August 5, 1898, p. 2, col. 1.
54. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 13, 1898, p. 3, col. 3; August 17, 1898, p. 1, col. 2; September 1, 1898, p. 5, col. 3; *Council Bluffs Daily Nonpareil*, September 2, 1898, p. 5, col. 1.
55. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, September 8, 1898, p. 4, col. 4.
56. Alice C. Fletcher, "Hae-thu-ska Society of the Omaha Tribe," *Journal of American Folklore* 5 (April-June 1892): 140; Michael Stephen Kennedy, ed., *The Assiniboines, From the Accounts of the Old Ones Told to First Boy (James Carpenter Long)* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 130.
57. Fletcher, "Hae-thu-ska Society," 141-43.
58. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 21, 1898, p. 15, col. 2-3.
59. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, September 22, 1898, p. 5, col. 5.
60. ARCIA, 1886, 99; 1888, 65; 1890, 62; 1893, 201-2; 1894, 192-93, 276; 1895, 204.
61. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, September 4, 1898, p. 4, col. 4-5; September 8, 1898, p. 4, col. 4.
62. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 11, 1898, p. 5, col. 3-4.
63. W. A. Mercer to N. S. Walpole, November 23, 1898, M1304, Reel 7.
64. L. G. Moses, "Wild West Shows, Reformers, and the Image of the American Indian, 1887-1914," *South Dakota History* 14 (1984): 199.
65. L. G. Moses, *Wild West Shows and the Images of American Indians, 1883-1933* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 63.
66. Founded in Baltimore around 1830, the IORM claimed to be the oldest fraternal benefit society native to the United States. Certainly one of the strangest, its chapters assumed the names of Indian tribes (e.g., Mohawk #5) and dressed in buckskin outfits patterned after those worn by actual Indians.
67. *Omaha World-Herald*, evening edition, August 11, 1898, p. 6, col. 1; *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, August 11, 1898, p. 5, col. 3-4.
68. See Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 121-23; Bigart and Woodcock, "Trans-Mississippi Exposition," 20-21.
69. Robert M. Utley, *The Last Days of the Sioux Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 162.
70. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, September 29, 1898, p. 4, col. 6.

71. *Omaha Daily Bee*, morning edition, October 7, 1898, p. 5, col. 6.

72. *The Word Carrier* 27 (August-September-October 1898): 1. See Littlefield & Parins, *American Indian and Alaska Native Newspapers and Periodicals* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 403-07. Edited by Presbyterian missionary Reverend Alfred L. Riggs, *The Word Carrier*, first published in 1884, contained religious news as well as details of activities at the Santee Normal Training School in Nebraska where it was published.

73. *Omaha Daily Bee*, October 21, 1898; John Wakefield Scrapbooks, p. 122, originals at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE, microfilm copy at University Library, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

74. Moses, *Wild West Shows*, 139. While Moses states that all nine Indians were Oglala Lakota, the government report on the exhibit indicates that Rain-in-the-Face, a Hunkpapa Lakota, was a member of the group. See ARCIA, 1893, 395.

75. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 95.

76. *City and State*, July 20, 1899, 7. *City and State*, a weekly newsmagazine edited and published by Herbert Welsh from 1895 to 1904, served to

promote causes of the Indian Rights Association. See Orlan J. Svingen, "The Case of Spotted Hawk and Little Whirlwind: An American Indian Dreyfus Affair," *Western Historical Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (July 1984): 283.

77. *Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* 27 (October 1898): 8. See Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., & James W. Parins, *American Indian and Alaska Native Newspapers and Periodicals, 1826-1924* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 356-58. The *Southern Workman* was the organ of the Hampton Institute, a boarding school for blacks & Indians founded in Hampton, VA shortly after the Civil War.

78. Richard H. Pratt, *The Indian Industrial School: Its Origins, Purposes, Progress and the Difficulties Surmounted*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania (Carlisle, PA: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1908), 40.

79. *The Word Carrier* 27 (November-December 1898): 30.

80. W. H. Clapp to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, July 9, 1899, Reel 14, IRA Papers.

81. W. A. Jones to Herbert Welsh, March 18, 1899, Reel 14, IRA Papers.

82. ARCIA, 1899, 39; 1900, 18-20.

83. Ellis, *A Dancing People*, 19, 54.