

**Sports and the Politics of Identity and Memory:
The Case of Federal Indian Boarding Schools
During the 1930s**

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The federal government of the United States developed a complex system of boarding schools for Native Americans in the 19th century. This effort was generally insensitive and often brutal. In spite of such brutality many students managed to negotiate and create new understandings of traditions and cultural autonomy while in such schools. Now, however, some former students remember their lives as students with mixed emotions. Drawing on oral history interviews and public official documents, the author examines the recreational and athletic life at the boarding schools and finds that students were, nevertheless, able to experience pleasure and pride in creating new ways of expressing their identities as Native Americans. During the late 19th century, the federal government of the United States developed a complex system of boarding schools for Native Americans. The schools were created as part of a crusade by a coalition of reformers who aimed to assimilate indigenous Americans into dominant Anglo-Protestant society. With a fervor that was partly evangelical and partly militaristic the creators of the boarding school system hoped that through education they could bring about a mass cultural conversion by waging a war upon Native American identities and cultural memories.

The federal effort to educate Native Americans was so total in vision and scope and so often brutal in its enforcement that it is sometimes difficult to imagine how students survived

such an experience that could be profoundly dehumanizing. Recent scholarship, however, has explored oral histories and documents generated from boarding school students. Work by Brenda Child, Sally Hyer, Alice Littlefield, Tsianina Lomawaima, and Sally McBeth has shown that students not only survived their experiences, but in doing so reimagined their ethnic identities in ways that were creative, inventive, and in dialogue with the historical contexts that indigenous people have faced in North America during the twentieth century.ⁱ Much of this scholarship has also argued that the 1930s were a particularly important time when economic depression and federal reform created a new terrain over which struggles for Native American identity and memory took place. In spite of the brutality that they often faced, many students managed to negotiate and create new understandings of tradition and cultural autonomy while at school and frequently remember their lives as students with a complex set of emotions. The popular culture, athletic teams, and sporting activities that students experienced at boarding schools comprised one of the most important regions of this terrain where the federal government, educators, and students themselves negotiated the meanings of American Indian identities and memories.

The existence of relatively autonomous cultures among students at boarding schools constitutes one of the most significant findings by new scholars of Indian boarding school history. Lomawaima and Child, for example, explore how students at Haskell in Lawrence, Kansas, and at Chilocco in northern Oklahoma organized their own cultural lives around pranks, gangs, and the breaking of rules. Their research reveals insidious folklore among female students, male gangs that dominated peer relations, students fermenting and drinking their own alcohol, and even outright student rebellion.ⁱⁱ Sports comprise a little studied but concrete site at boarding schools where students negotiated these cultures within the boundaries of their institutionalized lives. From a very early date in the history of the federal Indian boarding school program, physical education was a core part of the curriculum at many schools. Educators hoped that calisthenics literally could foster moral and intellectual progress by altering the body types of students. Just before the turn of the century institu-

tions like Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania and Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, began high profile athletic programs. Each fielded football teams that competed successfully against the best college squads in the country, and they trained some of the greatest athletes of the early 20th century, including Jim Thorpe, Hall of Fame baseball pitcher Charles Albert “Chief” Bender, football star Jon Levi, and distance runner Louis Tewanima.ⁱⁱⁱ Other schools also competed successfully in sports such as track, girls basketball, and lacrosse. Unlike physical education or recreation, these athletic programs were created to provide schools with a valuable source of public relations, providing “proof” that Native American children could be assimilated and taught to compete with grace and sportsmanship.

Sports, however, were not only an important part of the scheme that some had for blending indigenous cultures into the melting pot. Although the high profile athletic programs at Carlisle and Haskell did not last, sports ended up becoming institutionalized into the very fabric of daily life at boarding schools, and became a part of the culture that students created for themselves at these institutions. Alice Littlefield, in her oral history of students who attended the Mt. Pleasant Indian School in Michigan, argues that the historical position that American Indian students faced in boarding school made sports an important source of pride, one that ran counter to federal assimilationist ideologies. Through interviews, Littlefield found that former students, particularly male ones, had vivid memories of Mt. Pleasant competing successfully on the high school level in football and basketball, particularly of times when they beat non-Indian opponents. “Given the assimilationist aims of the BIA educational system, athletic prowess became a symbol of Indian identity and Indian pride.”^{iv}

Littlefield’s conclusions suggest that sports were a complex part of boarding school life, one that posed specific possibilities for Native American students to creatively reimagine their cultural memories, traditions, and identities. At the same time Littlefield’s observations about sports being a site for expressions of resistance are unique for they tend to conflict with what other scholars have observed about the relationship of school sports to youth and social reproduction. For example

cultural analysts like Stanley Aronowitz and Douglas Foley also have studied the relationship of school sponsored athletics to the cultural construction of youth in the United States for over a century.^v Their work has shown how athletic competition fosters conservative values and behavioral norms. In his exploration of contemporary working class culture, for example, Stanley Aronowitz argues that school operates as an institution of socialization for young people in capitalist societies and that officially sponsored sports are part of a process in which play becomes serious competition, and more voluntary forms of recreation, like intramurals, “are denigrated.”^{vi} He argues that officially sponsored high school sports teams alienate most people from participation in the game, and that the majority experience a high school game as passive spectators.^{vii}

Like Aronowitz, Douglas Foley has carefully examined school sports as an important cultural form in which young people “learn capitalist culture.” Foley interprets a local high school football team that he examines as an ethnographer as engaged in a community ritual that ultimately reinforces patriarchal norms, race and class hierarchies, and militaristic values. By focusing on the event at that level Foley exposes the limitations of sports as a vehicle for cultural resistance and instead reveals “the durability of the politically unprogressive cultural traditions that ‘the people’ find pleasurable and self-serving.”^{viii} Foley’s research details how local businesses, Anglo community leaders, local boosters, and male citizens all invest heavily in making the football game a symbolic centerpiece of local life. Foley understands that as a cultural site for the expressions and emotions of young people sports are more of a rehearsal for proscribed adult roles than an imaginative vehicle through which alternatives are explored.

If, indeed, one acknowledges the conservative cultural codes and social functions that sports tend to provide, then how is it possible for Native American students to have expressed themselves in any but the most limiting ways through the athletic competition that took place at boarding schools? Littlefield’s oral histories reveal an irony: former students expressed anti-assimilation sentiments through cultural forms like football that contain meanings and codes which support assimilation. Yet, if we understand ethnicity as a constant

process that, in the words of Michael Fischer, emerges out of struggle, such an irony is not necessarily something that we would want to explain away. April Schultz, in her work on ethnic identity and creation, has argued that cultural experiences that might on the surface seem to provide evidence of assimilation often, when examined more closely, convey a range of meanings.^{ix} Writing about the complex history of assimilation among Norwegian immigrants, Schultz concludes that ethnic identities are a “process of identification at a particular moment to cope with historical realities” rather than fixed items that are either maintained or lost.^x Ethnicity is a constant process in which historical and cultural memory is rendered meaningful in dialogue with the social and cultural contexts presented at any historical moment.

Patricia Albers and William James also have argued in their study of the Santee (Sioux) that ethnic identity is actually part of a dialectic process in which people “differentiate and label themselves in relation to others” within the “concrete circumstances and dynamics of social relationships” that are present at a moment in history and that help define how groups are differentiated from one another.^{xi} Popular culture is a location where this kind of dialectic process often takes place. George Lipsitz suggests that popular culture forms, which can include popular sports activities and events, are contradictory and multi-layered and can be understood as vehicles for recalling alternative memories from the past that exist in dialogue with the concrete conditions and possibilities that subjugated people face at any historic moment.^{xii}

The 1930s presented a unique cultural moment for Native Americans who attended federally operated boarding schools. Early in the history of these institutions many Native American parents actively resisted sending their children away. By the 1930s, however, economic depression led many American Indian families to send their children to boarding schools as a way of obtaining relief. Ironically those who did end up attending boarding school discovered a set of circumstances and possibilities for autonomous youth cultures that were freer than any others that had existed before at these institutions. In part this had to do with reforms taking place within federal Indian educational policy.

In 1928 the Meriam Commission investigated life at boarding schools and issued a scathing report that expressed dismay over their conditions and curriculum. The report cited malnutrition due to lack of funds for food and criticized the military routine, lack of time for free play and recreation, and the uniform curriculum that defined boarding school life. With the appointment of W. Carson Ryan as BIA Director of Education in 1930 and John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933 the Agency initiated many of the changes recommended by the report. Among other things Ryan advocated more respect for Native American cultures, more time for free recreation at schools, the outlawing of corporal punishment, and less emphasis on discipline. Ultimately Collier focused the attention of federal Indian education policy upon building day schools located on reservations, and he hoped to eventually phase out the boarding school system altogether.^{xiii}

Sports were an important institution that the Collier administration set out to reform within the system of off-reservation boarding schools. After the Meriam report, the Bureau of Indian Affairs had begun to discourage boarding schools from using sports as a source of public relations, in large part because accusations of professionalism and corruption had created embarrassments for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.^{xi} In 1932, on the eve of Collier's reign over the BIA, officials in Washington had begun to draw a stark contrast between a collegiate level athletic system they saw as costly and exploitative and a high school level athletic system that they saw as more in line with the goals of federal Indian educational policy. In a report to the Office of Indian Affairs on athletics at the Albuquerque Indian School Harold Bentley used the occasion to contrast what he saw as a favorable high school system at Albuquerque with a more corrupt system that existed at Haskell.^{xv} Collier went even further, discouraging school sports teams altogether in favor of more participatory recreational activities. The 1941 *Manual for the Indian School Service*, for example, states that "Intramural athletics and games in which everybody has a chance to play shall be encouraged, rather than formal gymnastics or calisthenics or interscholastic athletic competition."^{xvi}

The reforms initiated by the Collier administration as

well as the changes in boarding schools brought about because of the Meriam Report seem to have had an effect on football programs, football being perhaps the most successful and highly visible boarding school sport between 1890 and 1930. Institutional changes, for example, that lowered the average age of boarding school students severely undercut the ability of highly visible teams to win against college competition. This transformation most dramatically affected the football team at Haskell, which went from being ranked number four among college teams by the Associated Press in 1927 to being dropped from the schedules of its most respected opponents by the mid-1930s. Haskell eventually eliminated competition against college teams altogether by March of 1939, a move applauded by education officials at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

While these policies would seem on the surface to embrace a form of athletics that Aronowitz might identify as less alienating and more playful and participatory, Haskell alumni were most vocal in their opposition to the elimination of a college schedule for the football team. In 1935, for example, George Shawnee, Secretary of the Haskell Alumni Association, wrote to the Acting Superintendent of Haskell expressing concern over the football team's recent lack of success. The letter vaguely refers to "rumors" that the school might veer away from high profile college athletics. Shawnee expresses concern over such a move, arguing that the football team had been an important, publicly visible symbol for Native American people around the United States, referring to the massive fundraising effort in the mid-1920s that helped to build Haskell's 10,000 seat stadium with money entirely generated from indigenous people.

We know it could not have been accomplished without the splendid showing of the football team during those years and the widely accepted belief among the Indians that it was worthy of this extraordinary recognition. They believed the public looked upon the team as representing not only Haskell but the Indian race, and they wished to give to the school any equipment which might enable it to maintain its proud place in college athletics.^{xvii}

Shawnee expresses a sense of pan-Indian pride that historians like Littlefield, Hyer, and McBeth have cited as emanating from the specific contexts of boarding school experiences. Littlefield and Hyer single out sports as a particularly important cultural location for such expressions.

One might understand the Bureau's approach to sports during the 1930s as a response to the exploitation of boarding school athletes that had taken place in earlier decades. However, Shawnee's letter suggests that the rationale and implications of this policy were far more complex. For example, Bureau of Indian Affairs officials who advocated recreational athletics over interscholastic sports were often concerned with more general reforms undertaken at boarding schools during the 1930s which gave students a great deal more time to themselves than they had ever had. This free time created possibilities for autonomous cultures, mischief, and other actions by students outside the direct supervision of teachers and administrators.

Evidence shows that federal policy makers and educators at boarding schools were particularly concerned that this time be used "productively." Throughout the 1930s, for example, the student run newspaper at Chilocco Indian School contained numerous articles advising students on how to behave during their leisure time. An article from January of 1939, for example, advises that "leisure time is your own time to do anything you wish," and goes on to assert that "your leisure time would be spent in doing something that will help you some day."^{xviii} Another article from November of 1937 advises students on how to select a good movie, and another from 1938 advises students to be quiet when watching a movie or a play.^{xix} A blurb in a December, 1937 edition warns students about the "evil effect" that a "lazy person" has upon a workplace.^{xx}

Although these articles were presumably written by students, they, at least, indicate moral lessons that students were learning in the classroom, projecting in a campus publication. Many teachers, administrators, and policy makers saw intramural and recreational sports as a way to keep students occupied and provide supervised moral character training at the same time. A letter from F.W. McDonald, Director of Athletics

at Haskell, to the school's superintendent in 1931 explicitly links the creation of a girls' intramural program with social control. Several years ago, when a spirit of unrest was prevalent among the girl students, I organized tournaments in various sports, in which the girls took a great deal of interest, and I am positive did much to afford them recreation and exercise.^{xxi} It is not clear what the "spirit of unrest" is to which McDonald is referring. However, Brenda Child, in her work on the history of Haskell, discovered that there was a rebellion among students attending the school in October of 1919 in which five girls and four boys were expelled for taking part.^{xxii} The Haskell Institute course bulletin in 1940 expressed a similar theme associating intramural, participatory sports with moral character training under a section describing the sports programs for boys at the school.

Haskell provides a varied athletic program of intramural and interscholastic competition. This is done with a keen realization that clean sport affords students opportunity for personal development in health and character. Every phase of athletic activity is used as a means of guiding students to true manliness...The program is sufficiently varied to assure every student an opportunity for participation in his favorite sport....This activity will contribute to the development of his health, character, and personality in such a way as to further him to the road of successful living.^{xxiii}

In the minds of federal officials, interscholastic sports were opposed not only because they were exploitative but also because they ultimately did not bring about social progress. Intramural athletics were preferred not only because they were more playful but also because they built character and promoted "constructive and worthwhile" behavior. When Shawnee discusses Native American pride in his letter about Haskell football, he expresses a different priority from that which was being promoted by federal policy makers, one not centered on ideologies of national integration and progress but on the public interests and pleasures of indigenous people.

The policy changes initiated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, however, did not eliminate interscholastic sports. In

fact they provided an institutional context for another, more controversial sport to rise during the 1930s: boxing. From its beginnings boarding school boxing teams enjoyed unusual success in the southwest and Midwest. Because the sport required far fewer resources than football, it provided a vehicle for school superintendents, faculty, and students to achieve local and even national notoriety. Yet it also drew the ire of federal officials who associated boxing with corruption and vulgarity.

Chilocco had perhaps the best known team of any boarding school. Its squad was established in 1932 when a sports promoter from Wichita, Kansas persuaded Superintendent Correll to field a team from Chilocco for an American Legion Tournament. Chilocco's team performed well even though it had been hastily trained. Only one year later boxers from the school traveled to amateur tournaments as far away as Boston and were celebrated on the pages of the magazine, *Ring*.^{xiv}

Boxing was not only popular at Chilocco that undoubtedly had the best and most famous team but at other Indian boarding schools where popular boxing teams developed during the 1930s. Teams from Albuquerque, Haskell, Phoenix, and Santa Fe were quite successful, sending boxers to regional and national Amateur Athletic Union tournaments. Boarding schools fought against one another but also competed with local colleges, high schools, and amateur boxing clubs.

In a relatively short amount of time, one that coincided with a decline in the status of football at schools like Haskell, boxing emerged during the 1930s as one of the most important sports on Indian school campuses and a prominent aspect of boarding school life. Institutional changes partly explain why such a sport would grow in stature, but they offer an incomplete explanation. Boxing was also a sport that resonated with the lives of boarding school students. Changes in federal policy, school funding, and economic climate were all important to introducing boxing to boarding schools, but students developed and made meaning of the sport as an important part of their cultural lives. For example, Lomawaima writes that violent play, fights, and gangs were common at Chilocco among the male students. She argues that such behavior was, in fact, an expression of a more pervasively violent culture of discipline

and authority that existed at boarding schools.

Fighting to settle differences was common, an accepted method of working things out. Not surprisingly, the boxers were foremost among Chilocco's athletic teams. They won Golden Glove status and traveled to fights in Chicago and Madison Square Garden.^{xv}

Male students readily took to boxing as it was introduced into the boarding school athletic curriculum. The symbols and structures of amateur boxing during the 1930s helped to shape the kind of cultural expressions students would make through the sport. As Lomawaima indicates in her discussion of Chilocco's boxing team, boarding school fighters often competed at national amateur tournaments sponsored by the Amateur Athletic Union. In oral history interviews, former fighters and boarding school students often highlighted these events even more than they did boxing matches that took place between boarding schools. Amateur Athletic Union tournaments usually took place in big cities, beginning with elimination matches in places such as Albuquerque or Wichita with winners advancing to a more general set of regional bouts in Kansas City or Denver, and ultimately to a national gathering in Chicago, New York, or Boston. The results of these fights received national attention in newspapers. This particular structure of amateur boxing in the U.S. during the 1930s made the sport a particularly meaningful one, for it offered fighters an opportunity to get off campuses on which many former students often report feeling isolated. Fighters I interviewed told of the excitement they experienced performing upon a public stage at AAU tournaments.

Just as Shawnee discussed in his letter regarding big time college football at Haskell, national boxing tournaments provided a forum in which students could express a strong sense of pride, and within the sport of amateur boxing this pride was often understood in terms of race. The urban contexts of AAU boxing tournaments during the 1930s tended to blur together distinctions within groups, and fighters were often categorized within broadly defined terms of national identity. For example a Navajo man who fought for the Santa Fe Indian School during the 1930s responded to a question I asked about ethnic groups against whom he fought, saying, "The

majority I think were black, with here and there Caucasians and very few Spanish.” A different Navajo man who also fought for the Santa Fe Indian School during the 1930s expressed a sense of racial combat more explicitly. When I asked him why he was a successful fighter, he replied,

I fought many a different people, like Anglo people, black people, you know, and boy I'm telling you, you put me in the . . . put my gloves on, I know for what I'm doing. You got the pride . . . if there's any race that's speaking different languages you got the pride to demonstrate that you going to be in there fighting...because you're an Indian, you going to show what an Indian can do. So that was always my intention, 'cause when I fought against a black, man, well...I fought.^{xxvi}

Both Elliott Gorn and Jeffrey Sammons have written about the important symbolism that national and racial pride has had within the field of professional prize fighting. The idea that a fighter is a representative of one's race comprises a deep thread within the history of boxing in the United States.^{xxvii} Such ideas were also a part of the amateur boxing culture of the 1930s and early 1940s. One particularly ironic example appeared in the February 13, 1941, edition of the *Santa Fe New Mexican* which reported that a “negro from Denver” and an “O’jibway Indian” would meet for the ‘white hope’ trophy offered the heavyweight champion in the Rocky Mountain AAU Regional boxing tournament.^{xxviii}

Although amateur boxing during the 1930s provided a stage upon which racial identities could become appropriated by boarding school students as a source of pride, it did not necessarily erase cultural differences between students. As Lomawaima points out, students at Chilocco were very conscious of their tribal languages and identities. In addition they divided themselves along a variety of other lines, including race (all students, she writes, were aware of those who had African lineage), geographical origin, gender, religion, age, vocation, and even athletic skill.^{xxix} In fact a Navajo man whom I interviewed who was on the boxing team at Santa Fe Indian School associated prowess in different sports with particular tribal identities. He drifted into this discussion during our interview

after I asked if he was ever allowed to speak his native language at school.

Different tribes of Indians came to school here, and any number of, say like over twenty different languages are spoken here that represent different parts of the United States. So that's what they were. Some are interested in playing basketball . . . they travel different places you know. And they play good teams . . . And then again there are these track teams. Some of those Indians, ooh my. They get some of the fastest runners.^{xxx}

Historian Joe Sando, a Santa Fe Indian School graduate, echoed this relationship between athletic skill and tribal origin during an interview I conducted with him. He told me, "I guess some of the basketball players came from South Dakota because they were taller and there were mixed breeds."^{xxxi} These testimonials suggest that boxing provided a context for the prideful expression of pan-Indian identities among boarding school students that were made possible because of the particular circumstances that surrounded amateur fighting during the 1930s. However it also suggests that such expressions coexisted alongside a continued awareness of diversity among students and did not necessarily represent a stage within a linear process of assimilation.

In addition not all students experienced the sport of boxing at Indian schools primarily as a vehicle through which they expressed racial pride. The pleasures associated with boxing matches as social events are also important for understanding their significance to students, administrators, and government officials. Students who were not boxers recall how fights were exciting, fun-filled events that people looked forward to each week. Importantly, they were events that girls and boys could attend together and at which they could intermingle and express excitement.

This type of social event was particularly important to students, in part because sexuality was highly regulated at boarding schools. Females and males were often segregated at meal times, in their curriculum, and in class rooms, and dating was often carefully monitored. During the 1930s schools tended to allow more time for free interaction between boys and

girls, but still important gender boundaries surrounded occupational and moral training that remained in place.

In oral history interviews I have conducted, both female and male former students often have discussed regulations placed on the behavior of female students. They also report how they engaged in mischievous behavior that surrounded dating or the breaking of rules related to the regulation of sexuality. Weekly boxing matches on campus were an opportunity for the interaction between girls and boys during their leisure time. They were events that involved excitement and intense emotional expression. A woman who attended the Santa Fe Indian School during the 1930s, interviewed for the documentary *Santa Fe Indian School: A Remembrance*, remembered the boxing team fondly.

These boys were very good. Our boys were very good. And I never thought I'd like boxing, but I really enjoyed it then. The whole school attended.^{xxxii}

This woman's seemingly contradictory sentiments over boxing parallels tensions that Kathy Peiss describes as emerging for working class women who increasingly participated in urban popular culture forms during the turn of the century. She notes how amusement parks and movie theaters helped to carve out appropriate spaces for women in public culture. The Victorian family model of the 19th century allowed for very little public interaction between men and women, relegating public space to a male "homosocial" arena and private space of the home as predominantly female homosocial locations. Commercial popular culture forms, however, allowed women to gain access to public space, although they usually found that such access was dependent upon male companionship for both safety and commerce.^{xxxiii}

For both male and female students boxing matches were public events. Even when they took place on campus, they sometimes attracted fans from surrounding communities. This was perhaps most true at Chilocco. A man who attended Chilocco during the 1930s and later went on to coach there remembered.

At Chilocco, the people would come from miles around for that boxing. There's something about it, about boxing. It's kind of like gambling I guess,

people were crazy about it! Boy, they just packed that gym. Just packed it up . . . , It was just those ranchers from over around Powhuska, and people from Wichita, Kansas, and people from Tulsa would come up for it. That's a hundred miles, you know. Back then, that was about a three or four hour drive. But they'd come up there and just pack that gym.^{xxxiv}

At other schools where mostly students and faculty were in the stands, they were no less enthusiastic in their support for their team. The crowd, however, was not only something that created pleasure for students and townspeople and undoubtedly revenue for promoters and school administrators, it was a source of concern for federal officials throughout the history of boxing at Indian boarding schools.

The BIA long opposed boxing as a sport for boarding schools and eventually banned it as a form of athletic activity in 1948. Their rationale included a discussion of the crowd. In an article published in *Indian Education* announcing the ban, BIA Director of Health, Fred Foard, and the agency Director of Education, Willard W. Beatty, wrote,

There is still an animal-like ferocity in many of us, which accounts for attendance at prize fights, wrestling matches, midget auto races and other spectacles where life is endangered or where sadistic punishment is inflicted.^{xxxv}

The authors of this statement importantly align boxing with a range of working class amusements popular during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Such a concern is appropriate, for the educational curriculum at boarding schools trained students for working class occupations. The concern that the BIA expressed over boxing suggests that some federal officials considered the kind of pleasure gained at boxing matches a misuse of leisure time that, at best, was unproductive, and, at worst, evoked images of savagery. Certainly, officials in Washington were concerned about their liability with regard to the health of students. However, the institutional rhetoric against boxing suggests that BIA officials were very concerned with controlling and making “productive” the culture that students generated during their leisure time. Ultimately, what this

reflects is a discomfort with the way that a sport like boxing provided students with a forum for cultural expression that was their own.

As M. Ann Hall has argued, play, games, and sports are “real social practices”, not “idealist abstractions with no connection to the making and remaking of ourselves as human agents, nor are they simple products of material conditions.”^{xxxvi} Sports are cultural formations that are dynamic, that change over time, and that provide some concrete sites in which people have struggled to recreate ethnic identities that draw from the past but that also critically speak to and reflect upon the present. For adult Native Americans today who lived through boarding school experiences, sports constitute an important ethnic marker, one that positions their ethnicity in dialogue with the particular historical circumstances that they have experienced. Within oral histories, former students reveal how sports constituted a complex cultural practice where Native Americans could not only respond to an educational system that was often insensitive but through which they could also experience pride, mischief, or pleasure, and create new ways of expressing their identities as Native Americans.

NOTES

i See Brenda Child, “A Bitter Lesson: Native Americans and the Government Boarding School Experience, 1890-1940” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1993); Sally Hyer, *One House, One Voice, One Heart: Native American Education at the Santa Fe Indian School* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1990); Alice Littlefield, “The BIA Boarding School: Theories of Resistance and Social Reproduction,” *Humanity and Society* 14(1989), 428-441; Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Sally McBeth, *Ethnic Identity and the Boarding School Experience of West-Central Oklahoma American Indians* (New York: University of America Press, 1984).

ii See Child, Lomawaima.

- iii Joseph Oxendine, *American Indian Sports Heritage* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Press, 1988).
- iv Littlefield, 438.
- v Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973); Douglas Foley, *Learning Capitalist Culture: Deep in the Heart of Tejas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990).
- vi Aronowitz, 76.
- vii Aronowitz, 62-67.
- viii Foley, 28-62, 200.
- ix April Schultz, "The Pride of the Race Had Been Touched': The 1925 Norse-American Immigration Centennial and Ethnic Identity," *Journal of American History* 77(1989), 1265-1295.
- x Schultz, 1267.
- xi Patricia C. Albers and W.R. James, "On the Dialectics of Ethnicity: To Be or Not To Be Santee (Sioux)." *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 4(1986), 12.
- xii George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990). Lipsitz understands rock and roll music during the early post-World War II era as an example of popular culture dialogic possibilities, a historic moment. Rock and roll became a cultural forum through which a new, multi-ethnic youth culture emerged. It certainly spoke to the alienation that many white, middle-class youths experienced in newly built suburbs, but it also was made possible because of historic conditions of poorer and non-white Americans: migrations of American-Americans and Latinos to urban areas in the

U.S. who infused their music and cultural expressions into popular music; the rapid growth of a consumer economy, an expanding recording industry aided by new technologies; and the increasingly central position of commercial broadcasting through television and radio in the daily lives of young people. These conditions not only allowed white, middle-class youths to enjoy a new form of entertainment, they created a diverse alternative to mainstream culture in the United States that was in dialogue with the textured experiences and histories of African-Americans, Latinos, and other under represented groups.

xiii Margaret Connell Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination Since 1928* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977). It is important to note that Collier was not successful at ending boarding school; in fact, some remain open today. The BIA was successful during this time period, however, in shifting the emphasis of Indian education toward on-reservation day schools.

xiv John Bloom, "Show What an Indian Can Do': Sports, Memory, and Identity at Federal Indian Boarding Schools," *Journal of American Indian Education* 33(1996), 33-38.

xv Harold Bentley, "Report to the Office of Indian Affairs on Athletics at the Albuquerque Indian School, 1932," National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Record Group 75, Decimal Classification 750 for Albuquerque.

xvi Bureau of Indian Affairs, *Manual for the Indian School Service* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941).

xvii George Shawnee, Letter to Haskell Indian School, 1935. NARA Record group 75, Decimal Classification 750 for Haskell.

xviii *Indian School Journal*, 6 January 1939, 5.

xix *Indian School Journal*, 11 November 1938, 4.; *Indian School Journal*, 5 November 1937, 6.

xx *Indian School Journal*, 3 December 1937, 8.

xxi F.W. McDonald, Letter to the Office of Indian Affairs, 1931. NARA Record Group 75, Decimal Classification 750 for Haskell.

xxii Child, 275.

xxiii *Information Bulletin for Haskell Institute*, 1940-1941 (Archived at the Kansas Collection), 27.

xxiv Larry Bradfield, "A History of Chilocco Indian School," (Masters thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1963), 122-3.

xxv Lomawaima, 125.

xxvi Oral history interview by the author.

xxvii Elliott Gorn, *The Manly Art: Bare Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); Jeffrey Sammons, *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

xxviii "Indian Meets Denver Negro," *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, 13 February 1941.

xxix Lomawaima, 125.

xxx Oral history interview by the author.

xxxi Joe Sando, interview by the author, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 10 January 1995.

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xxxii D. Reyna, *Santa Fe Indian School: A Remembrance*, video. (Santa Fe, NM: Santa Fe Indian School, 1990).

xxxiii Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

xxxiv Oral history interview by the author.

xxxv F. Foard and W. Beatty, "Boxing not an Approved Sport," *Indian Education* 15 (1948), 171.

xxxvi M. Ann Hall, "The Discourse of Gender and Sport: From Femininity to Feminism," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 5 (1988), 331-340.

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