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## An American Heart of Darkness: The 1913 Expedition for American Indian Citizenship

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# AN AMERICAN HEART OF DARKNESS

## THE 1913 EXPEDITION FOR AMERICAN INDIAN CITIZENSHIP

RUSSEL LAWRENCE BARSH

In his pungent essay on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Chinua Achebe explores Europeans' literary use of African stereotypes to work out their own psycho-social dilemmas.<sup>1</sup> The journey into Africa was in reality a journey inside the confused souls of explorers and missionaries who sometimes found salvation there but never saw, heard, or found the Africans. The Africans they imagined were only a dark reflection of themselves.

Eighty years ago, Joseph Kossuth Dixon, his son Rollin Dixon, New York photographer John Scott, and a technician from Eastman Kodak set off in the specially equipped private railway

car *Signet* on a 20,000-mile journey that would take them to eighty-nine Indian reservations in a little more than six months. Everywhere the *Signet* stopped, Indian leaders were gathered to listen to recorded messages from the president of the United States and the commissioner of Indian affairs, to hoist a large American flag to their own drums, and to sign a vellum "Declaration of Allegiance of the North American Indian." When the *Signet* returned at last to Philadelphia, just before Christmas, a weary Dixon jubilantly proclaimed "a new epoch" in American Indian history. The "new epoch," of course, existed solely in Dixon's mind.

The 1913 "Rodman Wanamaker Expedition of Citizenship to the North American Indian" was a distinctively American *Heart of Darkness*, in which a single troubled and mysterious man was able, through his connections with the inner circles of American wealth, to impose his romantic fantasies on every Indian tribe in the United States. An echo of his illusions can still be heard today in the flag songs that open every Indian pow-wow. Like one of Conrad's protagonists, he was thrust deeper into his ambivalence by his own apparent triumph, as he slowly realized that he had become just one

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more deceiver and victimizer of the people he had intended to save.

#### THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Expedition for Citizenship enjoyed a cast of thousands. At least nine hundred tribal leaders participated in reservation ceremonies. A "Committee of One Hundred" wealthy Americans, including John D. Rockefeller and William Randolph Hearst, helped back the expedition. Presidents Taft and Wilson endorsed it. James McLaughlin, author of *My Friend the Indian*, played a critical supporting role, and Thomas Alva Edison provided the sound. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and artist Frederic Remington made cameo appearances, and a young Franklin Delano Roosevelt was invited to the opening. No other event in modern Indian history has involved private American enterprise and aristocracy to the same extent. The key to this is Rodman Wanamaker, one of the wealthiest "merchant princes" of his age, and his employee Dixon, a clergyman, photographer, and self-styled expert on Indian life. If the expedition had been a Hollywood film, it might have been subtitled "the prince and the showman."

Wanamaker was eulogized by the *New York Times* as "the most heavily insured individual in the world," and by President Coolidge as "a merchant of high ideals." His father, John Wanamaker, a descendant of eighteenth-century settlers in New Jersey, built the Wanamaker department stores in Philadelphia and New York and amassed a considerable family fortune. Rodman graduated from Princeton in 1886, joined his father's company two years later, and spent the next decade as its Paris buyer, helping introduce Americans to French art and fashions. On his return to the United States, he became a partner with his father and by 1911 was manager of both the Philadelphia and New York stores. His abiding passions included the fine arts, with which he filled his homes in New York, Atlantic City, Newport, Tuxedo, Philadelphia, London, and Paris, and commercial aviation. Rodman helped finance

Glenn Curtiss' pioneer flying-boats and Commander Byrd's transatlantic flights in the belief that businessmen would someday travel routinely by air. He served for many years as New York City's official host and, as an early advocate of corporate social responsibility, filled his stores with educational exhibits and concerts. Rodman and his father actively backed the Taft presidency, socialized with the "Robber Barons," and were intimate with the British royal family.<sup>2</sup>

In an interview shortly before his death, Rodman admitted that he had been "interested in the Indian" since childhood. "I can remember reading the tales of Fenimore Cooper long after I should have been asleep, and then, when the lights went out covering my head with the bedclothes." He was a great admirer of "Buffalo Bill" Cody, whom he praised in 1909 as "typifying American manhood" and, of central importance to this story, installed Dixon in the "Educational Bureau" of the Wanamaker Company for twenty years, so that he could pursue his "research" on Indian life.<sup>3</sup>

Comparatively little remains of the life of Dixon. He frequently granted interviews, promoting himself aggressively in the press and on the lecture circuit, but rarely volunteered anything about his past or his personal life. He was born in Germantown, Pennsylvania, probably of German and Polish ancestors. He studied at William Jewell College, a Baptist school in Liberty, Missouri, and then attended the Rochester Theological Seminary, another Baptist institution, where he presumably earned a B.D. degree. The next thirty years of his life are shrouded in mystery. He married and had a son, Rollin Lester, but in his glory days with the Wanamaker Company never publicly discussed this period, when he may have been a missionary or pastor in the West and made his first Indian contacts. In 1908 he suddenly resurfaced in his new *persona* as a famous "author, explorer, ethnologist and authority on the American Indian" and began his career with Rodman Wanamaker. Even then, his personal life remained a closed book. When his first wife died in 1925, he married his secretary, Edith Reid,

and died himself exactly one year later of unreported causes.<sup>4</sup>

Dixon is the Rasputin of this tale. How he first came to Rodman Wanamaker's Philadelphia office is unrecorded, but once connected with the Wanamaker fortune, he made a career of it until his death. Unlike "Buffalo Bill," who built his circus personality on the foundations of real, albeit exaggerated exploits as a young man, Dixon simply created his credentials and authoritative demeanor from thin air. Indeed, the pathos of his life lay in the fact that, once his "Expedition" brought him into sustained contact with real Indians, his fantasies abandoned him and he struggled, too late and unsuccessfully, to become a genuine "Friend of the Indian."

There is, in some sense, yet another principal character in this story: the American mind in the decade following the Spanish-American War. The first years of the new century witnessed a great outpouring of American smugness and sentimentality, the self-confidence and self-congratulation of a young imperial power. Rodman Wanamaker was hardly unusual in his conviction that America was "the strongest civilization that the world has ever seen" although it was still predominantly agricultural, and dwarfed by the great powers of Europe in military and industrial terms.<sup>5</sup> Americans *expected* to dominate the world, and looked forward eagerly to the new order of things. At the same time, this made Americans very conscious of their recent self-creation as a people. They worried lest some blot be found on their escutcheon, some flaw in their genealogy. They knew their destruction of the aboriginal inhabitants of the continent had not only been cruel but remained indecisive. If only the Indians had formally surrendered, and melted happily into the mass of American life! As of 1900, they had not.

This produced a need for national redemption and legitimacy, a need for Native Americans to capitulate gratefully to the nation so Americans could declare, "we have triumphed, but in triumphing we are just." This need was reflected in popular literature, as well as the

official policy of "assimilating" Indians into white society.<sup>6</sup> In the "Expedition for Citizenship," the same emotions crystallized into a physical journey to every tribe in the United States, to convince them to acknowledge white victory and white justice.

#### THE FIRST AND SECOND EXPEDITIONS

The 1913 Expedition for Citizenship was actually the third Dixon-Wanamaker collaboration. Two earlier "expeditions" had been organized to produce a cinematographic record of traditional Indian life before it disappeared. Dixon succeeded in collecting 34,000 feet of motion-picture film and 4600 stills. In contrast with contemporaneous work done by the Bureau of American Ethnology or pioneering anthropologists such as Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, and George Bird Grinnell, however, Dixon's work was maudlin, romanticized, and commercial. He had learned his trade from "Buffalo Bill."

The first expedition took Dixon and his camera crew to Crow Agency, Montana, in 1908 where, with the blessings of the Indian Office, they made a silent film of Longfellow's *Hiawatha* with Crow Indians in the leading roles. (The idea was not original: it had been done with Iroquois actors in New York a few years earlier.) Camped "60 miles from civilization," as he later described it, Dixon "examined 21 Indian maidens before I got a Minnehaha that would exactly fit the part," auditioned "hundreds" of Indians for the other parts, and "sent four expeditions of Indians to the Big Horn Range of mountains 40 miles away to get a deer, so that when *Hiawatha* came to lay the deer at Minnehaha's feet he might have a real deer." Rodman Wanamaker was so pleased with the results that he arranged for Dixon to deliver illustrated lectures on *Hiawatha* 311 times in Philadelphia and New York, where he was heard by more than 400,000 people.<sup>7</sup>

The following year Dixon returned to Crow Agency and staged "the Last Great Indian Council" on the site of the Custer battle. A short walk from the town of Crow Agency,

the battlefield was used again in 1969 for the filming of *Little Big Man*. It was surrounded in 1909, as it is today, by Indian farms and ranches—scarcely the remote and uncivilized wilderness Dixon made it out to be. His aim was supposedly to document Indians' "superior oratory" and traditional forms of government, which offered "the secret of their great power in resisting the aggressions of civilization." With the aid of the Indian Office, Dixon chose twenty-one "chiefs" from eleven western tribes, who he claimed, with his characteristic flourish, represented "nearly every Indian tribe in the United States." Gathered in camp, they were instructed to tell their life stories, bid farewell to each other, then ride off into the sunset—literally—for the cameras.<sup>8</sup>

Dixon exaggerated the value of his photography by emphasizing the imminent and tragic extinction of the Indian race. The Indian "would not yield. He died. He would not receive his salvation by surrender; rather would he choose oblivion, unknown darkness—the melting fires of extermination."

Dixon's aim in assembling the remnants of this doomed people had been not only scientific but humanitarian. "This last great council of the chiefs had for its dominant idea the welfare of the Indian, that he should live at peace with his fellows and all men," hence "the council became not only a place of historic record but a school for the inculcation of the highest ideals of peace" in the final hours before his subjects entered "the grave of their race."<sup>9</sup> In just a few days, Dixon singlehandedly settled centuries of inter-tribal warfare and brought peace to all Indians—a triumph of personal power and white superiority.

"For one splendid moment they were once again really Indians," he added, wistfully. In fact, many of these "old-time warriors" were far more assimilated than their portraits suggested. Runs-the-Enemy was a tribal policeman ("whatever they told me, I did"), and White Horse was the Yankton Sioux Agency's Head Farmer and a missionary ("I have since done all I could to bring the other Indians into the Church"). One of the "chiefs" told how he had been appointed

to that post by the Indian Agent, and fretted about getting his hay put up before the fall rains.<sup>10</sup>

The artificial nature of Dixon's posing did not detract from the commercial success of his photographs when he returned east, however. His silent film of the council was privately screened for President Taft, and the stills were published in his book, *The Vanishing Race*, that is still in print today. The *New York Times* was unimpressed, however, observing that the value of Dixon's volume "lies rather in its spectacular features than its data of Indian life."<sup>11</sup>

#### THE AMERICAN INDIAN MEMORIAL

Dixon had just returned from this "Second Expedition" when Rodman Wanamaker organized a testimonial dinner at Sherry's in New York City for "Buffalo Bill," who was playing the Hippodrome with his Wild West Show. Among the more than a hundred guests were General Nelson Miles, the acclaimed "Indian fighter," artist Frederic Remington, and Chief Ironshell and his son Henry Ironshell, representing the Sioux Indians touring with Cody. Early in the evening, Cody broached an idea that Rodman had suggested to him privately: building a monumental statue of an Indian in New York harbor, "as large as the Goddess of Liberty," for the purpose of forever "welcoming everyone to this shore." The guests were enchanted and spoke of little else as the festivities continued. Many veterans of western warfare extolled Indians' virtues. Miles was "gratified that there is now a feeling of generosity and respect towards the departing race," and General Leonard Wood agreed that "our American Indians are perhaps the best of the brown races."<sup>12</sup>

For most of the guests, the idea of building an Indian memorial was not an admission of national guilt but a celebration of victory. One of the journalists present aptly described the affair at Sherry's as a farewell dinner for an entire race that was "swiftly passing from the world's stage." This view was subsequently echoed on the *North American* editorial page. "Even admitting that such racial extinctions are stern necessities



FIG. 1. Thomas Hasting's design for the National American Indian Memorial in New York City, from the printed program for the 1913 groundbreaking ceremonies. Courtesy of William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana University.

does not lessen the poignancy of the tragedy," the editors noted and while the Indians had many vices, "a dignity always attaches to the coming of death." Rodman Wanamaker himself expressed similar sentiments when he praised Cody's Wild West Shows for "teach[ing], in a manner never to be forgotten, the world's great story of man's conquest over nature and hostile tribes, impressing youth and maturity with the labors, dangers and victories of the pioneers on this continent."<sup>13</sup>

Some regarded the memorial as a kind of title deed, "a constant reminder of the vanishing race to whom we are indebted for the great, free gift of a continent." Still others conceived it as a lasting beacon of American ideals, for the Indian had been

the first man on this continent to express the ideal of Liberty, this nomad who coursed at will, who drank from every stream, whose sense of loyalty and devotion belittles our

modern notions of patriotism, who was unopposed by trusts, who was no slave to consolidated wealth, and who yielded only and unselfishly to tribal law.<sup>14</sup>

Ironically it was "Buffalo Bill's" manager, Major John Burke, who told the press that America owed Indians "at least an apology for the exigencies of civilized man and his cupidity in appropriating the red man's land." In a separate interview a few days later, however, Cody himself was quick to add that "of course, it was all done in the name of progress, and God had foreordained that it should be so, but let us build this monument as a lasting tribute to a dying race and to the genius of the man who suggested it."<sup>15</sup> He had just arrived in Philadelphia with his Wild West Show, promising audiences "a thrilling attack" on a stage-coach by Chief Ironshell and his Sioux Indians.

As Dixon worked tirelessly over the next few years to promote the memorial, he also began to enlarge its purpose. Its base "ought to be so ample, so dignified, so wild in its architectural aspect," he wrote to Wanamaker, "as to represent some storm swept Mesa of the plains, and through wild passageways the visitor would find his way into a vast museum." This was not all. "I would have it overmaster anything in the world as a museum," Dixon stressed, taking careful aim at Wanamaker's vanity, "as great in conception and execution as the biggest brained architect and the most daring sculptor in America can make it," securing its stature as "another WORLD-WONDER." Only this would adequately "preserve and perpetuate for the inspiration of coming generations the nobility and intrepidity, the heroism and exalted qualities of Indian character."<sup>16</sup>

As for the monumental statue itself, it would be a sixty-foot bronze figure, not of a "circus Indian," but of "an Indian in a striking and characteristic pose that reveals the soul of the Indian himself," that would forever act "as a witness of the passing race to all the nations of the world as they come to our shores."

The bow and arrow, with the left hand hanging entirely at full length, indicates that he is through with his war weaponry; the uplifted hand, with the two fingers extended toward the open sea, is the universal peace sign of the Indian. Thus he gives, in bronze, a perpetual welcome to the nations of the world, as he gave welcome to the white man when he first came to these shores.

It would be "a lonely, lofty figure, where the sea will forever moan a dirge for a vanished race."<sup>17</sup>

To sell the memorial idea, Dixon appealed not only to the vanity of Rodman Wanamaker but also to the vanity and self-esteem of the nation. "Posterity will applaud the honor we do ourselves in gathering up the life story of this virile and picturesque race," he emphasized in his promotional publications, "while yet the rays of the setting sun fall upon their departing footsteps." This generous token of respect by the victors for the vanquished would make America a greater civilization; indeed, it was necessary to build the Indian memorial "for our own self-respect in the history of the nations of the world." Even the Indians themselves would appreciate this magnificent gesture, and accordingly find it easier to relinquish the continent to their conquerors, "finding exaltation as they become extinct."<sup>18</sup>

Sioux leaders later did commend Dixon for choosing a Sioux Indian as his model for the monumental statue, and asked Dixon to ensure that they would be able to participate in the groundbreaking. Three Indians were on Dixon's mailing lists: Dr. Carlos Montezuma, Reginald Oshkosh, and Henry Roe Cloud. Dixon did not involve any Indians in the planning, however. Instead, he enlisted the "heartly support" of the Improved Order of Red Men. The Improved Order used Indian motifs and was organized in various "tribes" nationwide, but was neither comprised of Indians nor associated with any Indian tribal groups. It was often consulted by Congress and the Administration in the formulation of Indian policy—often to the exclusion of actual Indian organizations. This group prom-

ised to help raise funds for construction and was given seats on the board of the “Memorial Association” established to supervise the project. Dixon also organized a “Committee of One Hundred” to give the memorial credibility and attract funding; its members included Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Cornelius Vanderbilt, J.P. Morgan, Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, William Randolph Hearst, Henry Frick and Ralph Pulitzer.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this dazzling display of support, it took Dixon two years to persuade Congress to authorize the use of public land, provided the memorial was built at no expense to the federal treasury. Part of the problem, a capitol lobbyist confided to Wanamaker, was that “a few may think it somewhat of an advertising scheme.” “Buffalo Bill” had offered a \$250 prize for the best design for the Memorial in 1910, with New York newspaper artists to serve as judges, but nothing appears to have come of it. Designs for the project also ran afoul of ethics rules. Dixon originally sought help from Burnham & Company of Chicago, builders of the two Wanamaker stores, but they directed him instead to Thomas Hastings, designer of the New York Public Library and Metropolitan Opera House, and Daniel Chester French, sculptor of the Concord Minuteman and the Lincoln Memorial. Dixon later claimed that the choice of Hastings and French had been Taft’s from the start. Both men agreed at once, enthusiastically. Both were members of the Federal Fine Arts Commission, however, which was charged by law with approving the design for the memorial. Dixon arranged for President Taft to give his written assurance that this would not raise any question of impropriety, since “competition would be disastrous.” Hastings and French were criticized by many of their colleagues nonetheless, and withdrew from the scheme after their “temporary” models were approved. Hastings’ design for the Memorial was reproduced on most subsequent Wanamaker Company promotional literature, and might best be described as a Maya temple atop the New York Public Library—with two bison, instead of lions, flanking the entryway. What French might have

done with the statue may be guessed from the Indian figure in his “Continents” group at the New York City Custom House, pictured in *Century* in 1906.<sup>20</sup>

An official groundbreaking was finally scheduled for Washington’s Birthday 1913, at the site selected by the Fine Arts Commission: old Fort Tompkins, a promontory on Staten Island overlooking the Narrows, still part of the Fort Wadsworth military reservation, which Thomas Hastings had declared “marvelous” when he had first seen it.<sup>21</sup>

#### THE MEMORIAL GROUNDBREAKING

To give the groundbreaking ceremonies at Fort Wadsworth the best possible publicity, Dixon not only arranged for President Taft himself to handle the spade but promised to bring “thirty of the most famous Chiefs from the Indian Reservations” to participate. The choice of “Chiefs” was left to the Indian Office, which paid for their travel from Indian trust funds. Reportedly, “great care was exercised to have the delegation made up of the most commanding specimens of the race. Only those of striking and typical appearance were chosen, to give the true reproduction of the American Indian of the frontier days.” Dixon moreover advised the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

I can not impress upon you to [sic] strongly the importance of having all the Indians invited bring their War Bonnet, War shirts, Leggins, Moccasins and entire paraphernalia. I want them to dress as though they were at a ceremonial or War Dance. Of course they will bring their blankets as it may be cold—also their bows and arrows and tom-toms.

He also requested “that you have some Indian bring on a thigh bone of a Buffalo, or some other primitive implement used by the Indians for digging.”<sup>22</sup>

Many of the Indians chosen for the ceremonies had played roles in Dixon’s “Last Great Indian Council.” Others were wealthy ranchers

or elected tribal officers. Dixon, however, sensationalized them all as "warriors who have participated in hundreds of battles," the "very Indians" who had slain Custer although in fact only one of them, the Cheyenne Two Moons, had actually fought Custer on that day. While they numbered but thirty and came from only seven Indian reservations, Dixon told the press they were "representing nearly every tribe in the nation."<sup>23</sup>

The Indian entourage first gathered in Washington, D.C., to visit with Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs F.H. Abbott and Inspector James McLaughlin, whom Abbott had detailed to supervise their journey. Abbott explained that the groundbreaking ceremony would signify "their allegiance to the United States," and mark "the union of the primitive life of this country with the civilization for which the flag stands." He suggested that they compose their own oath of allegiance to the United States and arranged to meet them at their New York hotel on the eve of the festivities. They produced three drafts for Abbott's review. One had been typed on Cosmopolitan Hotel stationery and was marked "Sioux Indians":

In the name of our fellow aborigines, we renew our allegiance of declaration to the glorious flag of this great United States. We hereby offer our humble hearts and soul to your service. We greatly appreciated the honor and privilege extended by our white brothers who recognized and esteem the character of the red man to participate in their honorable doings. The Indian is fast losing his identity by the great waves of the Caucasian [sic] civilization extending to the four winds of the United States, by the paternal arm of the government.

The Sioux contingent included Red Cloud, Jr., Red Hawk, and Edward Swan, chairman of the Black Hills Council.<sup>24</sup>

A second draft was handwritten on Herald Square Hotel stationery, and marked "Flathead Indians," although Angus MacDonald, a

rancher, was the only Flathead Indian in the group:

Though a conquered race with my right hand extended to the white race in brotherly love, in my left hand the pipe of peace I herewith bury all past ill feelings for the great honor you have done the Indians in planning the building of this monument.<sup>25</sup>

Finally there was a typed document signed by Plenty Coups, Robert Yellowtail, and other Crow Indians, apparently prepared while still in Washington, D.C.:

We, . . . Proclaim abroad to all the nations of the world the reassurance of our firm allegiance to this nation and to the stars and strips [sic], that henceforth and forever, we are in all walks of life and endeavor brothers striving hand in hand.

Abbott "consolidated what he thought best in each" of these three documents and retyped it for Dixon, who hand-lettered it onto vellum while onboard the Navy launch to Staten Island.<sup>26</sup> (See Appendix.)

The day was marked by "dismal skies and drizzling rain." Hundreds of distinguished guests had been invited to the ceremony, including the cabinet, diplomatic corps, New York society figures, and several anthropologists, but only one Indian, Omaha attorney Thomas Sloan. The "Chiefs" were taken to the site by a specially equipped Navy tug, accompanied by a boisterous crowd of reporters, who were fascinated with the spectacle of Indians in New York and the "irony of their invitation to the inauguration of their memorial as a race." Still another irony was the appearance of so many educated and articulate Indians "in the gaudy paraphernalia of the primitive savage." "You must think I look quite aboriginal tricked out in this outfit," remarked Reginald Oshkosh, a Menominee Carlisle graduate, to an astonished journalist. "Many of them were well educated and spoke English as well as white men," observed George

Kunz, a gemologist at Tiffany's who had agreed to serve on Dixon's "Memorial Association." "Many of those in Indian garb ordinarily wore civilized clothing when at home and some confessed to feeling uncomfortable in the aboriginal costume put on for the occasion."<sup>27</sup>

Taft was a lame-duck president, with less than a week left in the White House and a busy social calendar. His staff warned Dixon that he could not spend more than an hour on Staten Island, since he was due that afternoon to share the podium with Helen Keller at an opening for the new Lighthouse for the Blind. Arriving at Fort Wadsworth to the roar of a twenty-one gun artillery salute, Taft struggled on foot up the steep hillside to where a temporary flagpole and grandstand had been erected, stopping often to catch his breath and doff his hat to cheering crowds. Taking a silver spade from Rodman Wanamaker, the president spoke briefly. He observed that, although most Indian tribes showed "very little advance from the lowest human type," some achieved a "degree of civilization" that made them worthy of study. In Taft's view,

this monument to the red man, recalling his noble qualities, of which he had many, and perpetuating the memory of the succession from the red to the white race of the ownership and control of the Western Hemisphere . . . tells the story of the march of empire westward and the progress of Christian civilization.<sup>28</sup>

Taft continued digging with an Indian stone axe discovered on the site, then one of the Indians took over, using the buffalo thigh-bone Dixon had requisitioned. The "Chiefs" then raised an American flag, using halyards hung like a maypole, while a military band played what the program described as Dr. Irving Morgan's "original Indian music, 'The Indian's Requiem,' typifying the 'Vanishing Race.'" After they had all signed or thumb-marked their vellum "declaration of allegiance," Red Hawk spoke in Lakota. "I was the ruler at that time

when you first crossed the ocean and I thought you had merely come as a visitor," he said. "From that time to this day you have improved our country. . . . You have had me uplift the flag of the glorious United States today and I will consider myself from now on a member of the country." The ceremony ended with the distribution of hundreds of "Indian Head" nickels, issued for the first time. Neither the news accounts of the ceremony nor Dixon's own papers are consistent as to how many Indians actually participated, or which tribes they represented. The number was between 27 and 33. Newspaper versions also confused Indians' names and tribal affiliations, so that, for example, Red Hawk was variously identified as Sioux or Cheyenne. Red Hawk had been chosen at the last minute to replace John Grass, who could not come, and Hollow Horn Bear, who was ill that day. There are two different versions of his remarks. The one in the *New York Herald* agrees with an unpublished report on the ceremony and has been used here. Another, more polished version, came from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.<sup>29</sup>

The Indian delegation devoted the next day to sightseeing. "They enjoyed every minute of the day, and so did a considerable part of the youth of Manhattan and the Bronx, for wherever the warriors wandered through the city they were followed by a jostling but respectful crowd." Traveling by the subway and elevated, they toured the American Museum of Natural History, the Bronx Zoo, the Aquarium, Grand Central Station, the Woolworth Building, and the Statue of Liberty.<sup>30</sup> From New York they went to Philadelphia to call on Rodman Wanamaker and his father John, then returned to Washington, D. C., for a last meeting with Abbott and Dixon before returning home.

At Abbott's office, Dixon emphasized the importance of the signed declaration, which he called "this treaty of allegiance to the United States Government, your own composition, the heart throbs of your own best impulses toward the Government, your race, and the future." Abbott added that they should "encourage

among their tribes a new loyalty to the Government, a new initiative in industry." For the Crows, Plenty Coups answered, the declaration of allegiance meant that "It is friendship from now on."

Don't wrong [the Indians] in any way or form, but see and try to do the best you can, and at home we are going to make a start to comply with your wishes to be among our people as the white people, so that we all eventually combine into one nation.

"They are going to raise the monument to the North American Indians, which we will recognize as our protection," Mountain Chief (Blackfoot) agreed. "We now feel that we are a part of this great country." They accepted an invitation to ride in Woodrow Wilson's inaugural parade the next day.<sup>31</sup>

#### LAUNCHING THE THIRD EXPEDITION

Scarcely had the Indian entourage left the nation's capitol when Dixon submitted a new proposal to Rodman Wanamaker. Dixon emphasized that the Indians at the groundbreaking ceremony "expressed themselves with great earnestness as having had born within them a new feeling of loyalty to the Flag and a new desire for citizenship under that Flag," for the first time "affording the white man an open door to the Indian heart," and thus a unique opportunity "for the unification of this great original race of people, to the principles of the Government of the United States."

It is proposed that an expedition of citizenship, of fealty to the flag be sent to every reservation in the United States and there meet in council the most eminent Indians of the tribe, at which time the story of the Memorial will be told them and they will be asked to raise the same flag, lifted by their brothers as Fort Wadsworth, using the same ropes and thus join with the 11 tribes who

have already participated, in one common act.

"It is a high, imperative call," Dixon added, a final act of humanity, "before the last of this great race shall succumb to the iconoclasm of civilization."<sup>32</sup>

With characteristic exaggeration, Dixon claimed that "No eye has ever yet beheld the stars and stripes floating on any single foot of land belonging to the Indian." The "Chiefs" at Fort Wadsworth had nonetheless been deeply moved. "If these grizzled warriors, heroes of the battle plain and the chase, men who have never owned a flag and knew nothing about the flag, felt such a thrill of patriotism because their hands had lifted the Stars and Stripes to the winds, then every tribe of Indians and all the Red Men must have the opportunity to become a part of our country," he argued. Dixon proposed that each tribe be given its own flag as "a prophecy, let us hope, of their coming citizenship and uttermost blending with the civilization that crowns the age." In this way, Wanamaker himself agreed, the Memorial would "strengthen in their hearts the feeling of allegiance and friendship for their country... to be eternally sealed as a covenant in the Indian Memorial [as] a token to all the world of the one and indivisible citizenship of these United States."<sup>33</sup>

Dixon then secured the official endorsement of new Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, explaining that the expedition would not only "help to unify the entire Indian population and link all the Indian tribes with the Memorial," but inspire them with patriotism and "inspire in their minds a sense of new ideals and that the white man wants something from them beside their land, namely, *their allegiance and an obedience to the constructive work of the Indian Office.*"

The Indians have never had a flag. This permits us to approach the Indian from the flag side, rather than from the land side, as I propose to present each tribe with a United



FIG. 2. Joseph K. Dixon (left) and his assistants on the 1913 expedition prepare to depart in their specially-equipped railroad car, Signet. Courtesy of Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History.

States flag, to be left floating, the property of the tribe in each reservation . . . as an incentive to translate their patriotism into better homes, better farms, and better schools. It seems to me that the sentiment thus aroused in the minds of a race hitherto in many instances antagonistic to this flag will help to mellow the soil for the reaping of just such a harvest as you have in your thought.<sup>34</sup>

Lane suggested that President Wilson be asked to record a message to all the tribes. Dixon was ecstatic. The impact would be enormous,

since the Indian “in almost all cases has no telegraph, no postoffice, no newspaper, no telephone; he knows only his pony and dog, the great wide stretches of the prairie and wider sweep of the sky and the Great White Father in Washington.” Thomas Alva Edison was also delighted with the plan and donated the equipment and technicians for a recording at the White House on 23 May 1913.<sup>35</sup>

Wilson’s message was conciliatory but scarcely apologetic:

There are some dark pages in the history of the white man’s dealings with the Indian,

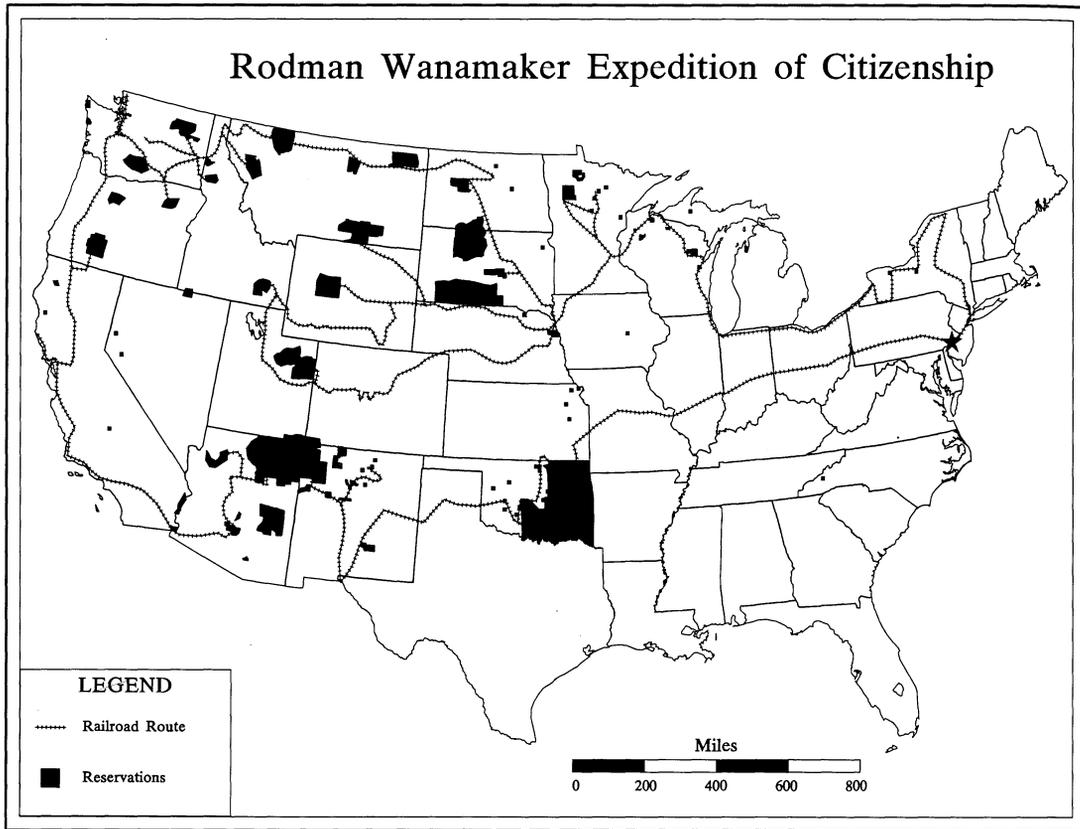


FIG. 3. The route followed by the 1913 Expedition of Citizenship circled the entire country in a clockwise direction, covering more than 20,000 miles. Map by Brad A. Bays after the Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1909.

and many parts of the record are stained with the greed and avarice of those who have thought only of their own profit; but it is also true that the purposes and motives of this great Government and of our nation as a whole toward the red man have been wise, just and beneficent.

The Great White Father now calls you his "brothers," not his "children." Because you have shown in your education and in your settled ways of life stanch, manly, worthy qualities of sound character, the nation is about to give you distinguished recognition through the erection of a monument in honor of the Indian people, in the harbor of New York. The erection of that monument

will usher in that day which Thomas Jefferson said he would rejoice to see, "when the Red Men become truly one people with us, enjoying all the rights and privileges we do, and living in peace and plenty." I rejoice to foresee the day.<sup>36</sup>

Brief messages from Lane, Abbott, and Rodman Wanamaker were also recorded. Lane explained that it was his job "to sit up and watch, to keep the wolves as far away from you as I can," while Abbott appealed to Indians to be guided by the ideals of "lofty patriotism and useful citizenship." Rodman urged his listeners to repeat the following words, as they raised the flag:

Under the blessing of God, who has made the Red Man and the White Man one and alike in heart, and under the great dome of blue, where the White Man looks for his Heaven and the Red Man looks for his Happy Hunting Ground, we are assembled in solemn council this day to attest anew, in common brotherhood, our love for the Great Mystery, for Man, and for our Country.<sup>37</sup>

At each reservation, “eminent Indians” in full regalia would be assembled at a temporary flagpole. Dixon would explain the ceremony, then play the phonograph recordings of Wilson, Lane, Abbott, and Wanamaker. The Fort Wadsworth flag would be hoisted by the Indians to Indian music followed by the “Star Spangled Banner.” McLaughlin would “speak to the Indians as their friend and counselor,” stressing the “meaning of [the] flag and how [the] Indian may translate his patriotism in home, farm, and school.” After Dixon and McLaughlin presented the tribe with its own flag, there would be a “response by some Indian orator pledging loyalty for his tribe,” and all the Indians present would sign the declaration of allegiance.<sup>38</sup>

Abbott gave instructions to reservation superintendents to assist Dixon fully. “It is important that as many of the Indians within your jurisdiction as possible should be encouraged to be present,” adding that “it is highly desirable for historical purposes that Indians who may care to do so should appear dressed in their native regalia.” The declaration was particularly important. “So beautiful and patriotic is the sentiment contained in this declaration that its influence cannot fail to be helpful to all who may read or hear it.” Abbott sent similar letters to tribal leaders, to whom he promised that Dixon’s visit would bring “real constructive benefit to the Indians on your reservation, by increasing their self-respect, inspiring in them higher ideals and broadening their views.”<sup>39</sup> Thus on 7 June 1913, the “Rodman Wanamaker Expedition of Citizenship” set out on its 20,000 mile odyssey around the country.

#### “A NEW EPOCH FOR THE RACE”

Dixon was predicting enormous success even before the *Signet* left its berth in Philadelphia, and his assessments during and immediately after the journey were jubilant and egotistical. His reports from the field emphasized the great hardships he was suffering for the cause of justice. From Oregon he wrote:

This far-sighted and patriotic expedition to the North American Indian is an exposition of altruism and an exponent of patriotism. It is unique in the annals of history. Nothing comparable to it has happened in the dealings of one race with another.

[T]his has meant in many instances hardships that would be difficult to conceive. It is safe to say that no red man would undergo the stress of the terrific heat and the delirium of thirst in the desert and the hard mountain climbing for five hundred miles over the mountains in northern California, to carry a new ideal to the white man. But this the expedition was called upon to do to carry the flag to the red man.<sup>40</sup>

As he saw it, Dixon had overcome the Indians’ initial reticence by playing the patient father to their child-like innocence.

At first the Indian could not understand why the white man should come to him and give him something without asking something in return. It seemed a message out of the blue that the white man should come to him from the flag side rather than the land side.

Attending the ceremonies at first with stolidity and reserve, suspicion and prejudice forced to the front, when once convinced of the brotherly love of the white man they said: “If it is true that the white man is our brother, and we feel now since you have come to us with the flag that it is true, we are



FIG. 4. *Flag-raising ceremony at Fort Apache on 19 July 1913. Dixon, at left, invites leaders of the Jicarilla Apache to take the halyards of the Fort Wadsworth flag.* Courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History.

happy because a brighter day is coming.” Then the clouds of suspicion melted into blue sky.

According to an “acute observer,” Dixon was able to achieve this miracle in six months because “his kindly, sympathetic nature wins the confidence of the Indians. They appear to know instinctively that he is their friend.”<sup>41</sup>

In Dixon’s estimation, the results were nothing short of epochal. In addition to collecting a great deal of ethnographic data that had “never

been available to the Government hitherto,” the expedition had helped Indians “feel that somehow or other they have assumed a larger measure of responsibility, that they have been honored and advanced a step toward a new order of things.”

The influence of the flag has prepared the Red Man to unite with the White Man in a common purpose, common aims, common aspirations. He realizes now, for the first time, that he is part of the great country



FIG. 5. Sitting Bear (Arikara) places his thumb-print on the Declaration of Allegiance as Inspector James McLaughlin (left) and Dixon look on. Fort Berthold, North Dakota, 29 September 1913. Courtesy Department of Library Services, American Museum of Natural History.

which once was his own, but was taken away from him. He realizes now, for the first time, that he must do something for himself. He realizes now, for the first time, that the white man is sincere in his friendship and spirit of brotherhood, and thus the Expedition has changed the destiny of a whole race of people.<sup>42</sup>

Dixon was indeed able to assemble an impressive file of positive statements from Indian Office field staff. Reuben Perry, in charge of the

Albuquerque Indian School, felt that the expedition had “resulted in much good by instilling in the Indians a feeling of patriotism and causing them to consider our country and flag as their country and flag.” At Otoe Agency the expedition had caused the Indians “to feel more than anything heretofore that they are a component part of our citizenship and as such should aspire to live up to the ideals thereof,” and at Fort Hall Agency, “the ownership of a flag wholly their own” had helped the Indian school focus its classes on citizenship, and attracted

more interest in the school's daily flag ceremony. Jicarilla Apaches were so "enthusiastic over the new responsibilities they feel they are to assume," that there was a "jealous dispute as to who is to take care of the 'Flag' which they consider very precious, and there are numerous aspirants for the honor." A clerk at Hoopa Valley Agency was so impressed that he suggested the flag-raising ceremony be reenacted annually on every reservation. The older Indians at Hoopa Valley understood the ceremony to mean: "Welcome, my White Brother—Here is my hand and your Red brother will be your brother evermore," while the younger Indians just said it was "All right."

As the expedition drew to a close, Dixon and his staff met Abbott and George Vaux, Jr., chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, at Fort Wadsworth. Also present was one Indian—Henry Roe Cloud, a young Winnebago missionary who had recently graduated from Yale. Dixon once more raised the flag he had carried around the country, with Roe Cloud alone assisting him. As the flag rose to the sky, Abbott declared the "citizenship epoch" in American Indian policy, and Dixon intoned, with true Biblical solemnity:

It is fitting that a full blood Indian should aid me in hoisting this flag—the flag that is a symbol of the conquering power of our Anglo-Saxon civilization. It has demonstrated its power over the primitive Indian mind, and that civilization has been crowned in an Indian life, for you, my brother, are a graduate of Yale university. Thus the flag reaches its triumph over the life of the Indian. Let me gather its sacred folds about the two of us together. The red in the stripes shall symbolize the red of your race—that white in the stripes shall symbolize the white in my race.<sup>44</sup>

It was anticlimactic. Again, it rained. But gone were the triumphant crowds, the military band, and the glory. Most of the papers that had given extensive coverage to the ground-

breaking eleven months earlier chose not to cover it.

#### THE ILLUSION AND THE REALITY

Even before the expedition set out, McLaughlin warned Dixon that he should not expect "clear sailing" on the reservations. In particular it would be "difficult to overcome the inherent distrust of the average Indian to signing any paper, fearing that it represents the cession of land or the relinquishment of certain other rights." The special Indian agent for western New York likewise cautioned Dixon that he would "probably find many of the Senecas averse to taking any steps which might be construed as having a tendency towards citizenship." The resistance was in fact much wider and was reportedly strongest among the Pueblos, Hopis, and Navajos, who did not want to acknowledge the flag until their land rights were secured.<sup>45</sup>

Fortunately, a transcript of the expedition's stopover at Isleta Pueblo has survived, offering some idea of the reality that lay behind Dixon's triumphal self-appraisals. As we join the action, Dixon has just handed the halcyards to the governors of Acoma, Isleta, Laguna, and Sandia Pueblos. They are about to raise the flag.

PABLO ABEITA [Governor of Isleta]: I feel personally that I cannot sign this allegiance, because I feel that my people have not been treated right by the United States Government's people. . .

When such men as you gentlemen come and talk friendship to us, it reminds us of the tricks that were played on us.

I do not mean to say that this is another of the tricks. But until our rights are settled to the satisfaction of the Indians as well as of the Indian Office, I dare not sign. When all is settled as above said, you can get me to walk clear to New York to sign the name of Pablo Abeita.

DR. DIXON: . . . you have hold of my hand; it is an honest hand and it represents an honest heart and honest speech, and whatever the other people may have done in the way of tricks, this is no trick. And I want to tell you that the new spirit in the White House is going to bring about just what you want: true justice and fair play.

PABLO ABEITA: Fair play and true justice is all we ask. We have always been under the American flag, and have honored and respected it, and will always honor and respect it, and it seems to me that my heart is not in signing this. . . .

DR. DIXON: If you sign this allegiance today, what is the Government going to say? They are going to say, "Pueblos are loyal to the flag, and we are going to help them." You be the first man to put your name down there. . . .

You are simply putting your name in the records of this great memorial in New York Harbor.

PABLO ABEITA: When I consider myself and my people,—my people first, and then the flag.

DR. DIXON: That is right; that is right. We are here today in your interest; we are here today to help you. I want you wonderful men of the Pueblos to be linked to that great monument in New York Harbor, which will tell the story of your Indian life and Indian character, years and years after you are dead and gone. Now if you will just put down the names of the different pueblos—

PABLO ABEITA: What do you advise, Mr. Lonergan?

SUPT. LONERGAN [Agency Superintendent]: Sign.

MAJOR MCLAUGHLIN: I would be very sorry to leave here without having the

Pueblos sign, because it would leave a gap. Pablo, your speech was fine.

[THEY ALL SIGN.]

DR. DIXON: I want to assure you that you have conquered yourselves today, and in conquering yourselves you will help conquer the Government. I pledge to you by every fold in that flag, and every red stripe, and white stripe, and the white stars in the blue field that the next time that I come to the Isleta pueblo, you will say, "We are glad you came the first time."

Abeita remained on friendly terms with Dixon, writing him a few days later to wish him "success and all kinds of good luck," adding teasingly, "I hope Major McLaughlin won't let the 'bad Indians' take your scalp off."<sup>46</sup>

This exchange is rich in clues as to why Indian tribes went along with Dixon's romantic charade. They were deceived, cajoled, and in the end given no choice. They were promised their rights but threatened by the Indian Office officials who still controlled their daily lives. Some believed that their participation would incline the Indian Office in their favor. Others simply hoped that, if they humored them, Dixon and his allies would soon be satisfied and go away, like so many white idealists and reformers before them.

The most negative assessments of Dixon's work came from educated Indians who had freed themselves from the power of the Indian Office, and resented Dixon's ignorant and presumptuous advocacy of citizenship and Indian rights. The Society of American Indians (SAI), founded in 1911, boasted several hundred Indian members, most of them professionals. At its first annual conference in 1912, Omaha lawyer Hiram Chase led a lively discussion on the status of Indian treaties under international law. Arguing that treaties guaranteed the right to tribal self-government, Chase emphasized that:

[T]he Indian's rights do not depend upon his citizenship, but upon the fact that he is a

man, endowed by God with the same instincts, the same love of life, the same hopes and aspirations as any other man. . . . *We do not need to be citizens.*

As the discussion continued, Charles Eastman drew applause for saying, "there is no Christian civilization," and accusing American society of being materially brilliant but spiritually empty. Only Indians could teach white Americans to regain their spiritual footing, Eastman contended.<sup>47</sup>

That was just months prior to the Expedition of Citizenship. The expedition was making its way through the Great Lakes when SAI adopted its 1913 political platform, advocating a precise legal definition of Indian status, access to the Court of Claims to resolve land matters, and a "complete reorganization of the Indian school system." There was no mention of Americanism or citizenship, but rather a call for all Indians "to serve not only their own race as the conditions of the day permit, but to serve all mankind."<sup>48</sup>

This inconsistency between the political aims of educated Indians and Dixon's worldview is neatly captured in a scathing letter directed to Interior Secretary Lane by Arthur C. Parker, then Secretary of SAI, and curator of the New York State Museum. Dixon's photos were posed and lacked any ethnographic value, Parker observed, and his "Last Great Indian Council" had merely been a "theatrical affair." "The very name smacks of jingoism and impresses one with the expressions of a circus manager." He wondered, then, whether the government recognized the declaration of allegiance "as legally binding and as expressing absolutely the wishes and ideas of the tribes," and whether the government believed that, before Dixon arrived, "Indians had not been loyal to the United States," nor seen a flag. The expedition had been marked by "sensationalism, personal exaltation and even fakery" from the beginning. "Mr. Dixon has overestimated the value of his labors," Parker concluded, and "his continual reiteration that the Indian Office and the Government are backing his work does not react with credit upon these high authorities."<sup>49</sup>

Dixon never coordinated his work with SAI, although its meetings were certainly more representative of Indian politics nationwide than his "Last Great Indian Council." Dixon focussed on the "old warriors" because he could romanticize and patronize them. They were powerless, in turn, to resist his courtship, at least as long as he commanded the support of the Indian Office. Dixon's thinking appears in his efforts to insist that Indians were a "vanishing race":

You will see bulletins ever and again in the papers, notices that the Indian is increasing. He is not. The old-time Indian is vanishing, and we are just now in a transition period between the old and the new. The old-time warrior and the modern Indian are two absolutely distinct types.<sup>50</sup>

For Dixon, plainly, the members of SAI were not really Indians at all. His self-appointed mission was to redeem the "old" type, who might be grateful for his ministrations, rather than the "new," who had no wish to surrender to the myth of white conquest and superiority.

#### PATHOS: DIXON'S LATER CRUSADES

The Expedition of Citizenship strengthened Dixon's ambitions, and he continued to exploit Rodman Wanamaker's name and his employment in the Wanamaker Company to maintain credibility for another thirteen years. He never returned to Indian country, however, and what he had seen and heard in 1913 gradually made him more of a realist. As Dixon began to publicize the social and health conditions on reservations and later to advocate unconditional Indian suffrage, he not only suffered a bitter falling-out with the Indian Office, including McLaughlin, but growing difficulty in keeping Rodman Wanamaker's personal interest.

Plans for the Indian Memorial rapidly fell apart. Dixon went to San Francisco in 1915 to display his photography at the Panama Pacific Exposition, and thus "create the sentiment of a Nation-wide movement" for the Memorial

project. Rodman proudly described it as Dixon's "expedition to the White Man," and it brought him a gold medal and grand prize from the Exposition jury. Lecturing several times daily for months on end to an estimated million visitors, Dixon returned with numerous expressions of public sympathy but no financial commitments. Undeterred, Dixon prepared an ambitious plan to mobilize American youth by establishing an "Order of the North American Indian" for school children. He also proposed publishing an Indian magazine which "could become a mighty power in moulding public sentiment [and] would afford an opportunity for the Indian to take a hand in his own development." He was apparently unaware of—or chose to ignore—the *American Indian Magazine* which was already in circulation. Dixon even suggested establishing an "Indian Valhalla" at Fort Wadsworth, beginning with the burial of Two Moons, who died in the summer of 1916. Two Moons' relatives would not agree, so this idea was also shelved. Not another penny was ever raised. The Memorial Association's account remained at a mere \$143.10.<sup>51</sup>

The national psyche had moved beyond the need to confirm and legitimize white dominance. Dixon himself was no longer satisfied to celebrate the past and ignore the present. He began writing to his government colleagues about the starvation, disease, and poverty he had seen during the Third Expedition, but with little effect. At first he blamed this on public apathy. "The Indian problem is NOT the administration of Indian Affairs," he confided to Rodman, "BUT the education of the American people to a rational interest in the North American Indian." Finally, he admitted that the problem was the Indian Office, with which he had worked so closely since 1908.

The reservation is without mitigation a system of slavery, despair, and vagabondage. The Indian may not leave the boundary of his prison acreage without a passport. The will of the reservation superintendent is law, and he alone is responsible to the one power above him. All requests, however small or personal,

must pass through his office. A Christian civilization should regenerate. The reservation degenerates—it devastates, dethrones, destroys. Is it a mockery to call it civilization? Is it slavery? Have we freed one race and enslaved another?<sup>52</sup>

Dixon appealed desperately to Rodman's vanity. "Has it not fallen to Mr. Rodman Wanamaker to reverse these conditions?" "The sentiment has gained headway in the nation that Mr. Rodman Wanamaker is to be the emancipator of this race of people."<sup>53</sup> But Rodman had new priorities, such as his experiments with flying-boats.

Within another year, the Memorial project was overtaken by events in Europe, and as the United States prepared for war, Dixon struck off on another tack. Excitedly, he proposed to Rodman Wanamaker the idea of organizing all-Indian cavalry regiments, which he promised "the press will hail as an idea of startling proportions." Dixon explained that, "in gaining the aid of the North American Indian to help free the world from these unspeakable barbarities, we help to wipe from the escutcheon of the Nation, the tyranny we have imposed upon a whole race of people within the confines of our own land of boasted liberty." The nation should issue the Indian:

A call to COME FORTH—and in coming, find his manhood, find his self-independence. A call to COME FORTH and present himself a burnt offering on the altar of a nation that has shut him away from the joys of sharing in the triumphs of the country in which he lives, for—he is a "man without a country." A CALL OF WELCOME to leave the ranks of America's *slaves* to join the ranks of America's HEROES.<sup>54</sup>

Dixon argued that Indians possessed "all the qualities of the natural soldier" and suggested that Indian enlistment would "inspire the patriotism of the nation." The Indian Office and military authorities rejected the idea of segregated Indian units, but one in four Indian men

served in the war anyway, and the effect of public opinion was as Dixon had predicted.<sup>55</sup>

When the war ended, Dixon turned his attention to citizenship for Indian veterans. Always the promoter, he persuaded Rodman to send him on a tour of military hospitals and the battlefields of Europe, taking photographs of Indian soldiers and the places where they had fought or fallen. He then used this arsenal to launch his legislative campaign, indulging in the kind of romantic excesses that had always been his trademark. "The stories are thrilling" he told Congress, "scores of Indians have won the D.S.C.; hundreds of them have lost either an eye, a leg, or an arm." Dixon was disappointed with results, however. Congress directed the Interior Department to review individual veterans' eligibility for the franchise, and successful applicants were few.<sup>56</sup>

Dixon reconciled himself with the Society of American Indians and went on the lecture circuit with its new president, Thomas Sloan, with an appeal for unconditional citizenship. It was the same rhetorical Dixon, but with a new cause, blaming Indians' misery on the conspiracy of the Indian Office with "predatory wealth." He painted a vivid picture of Indian war veterans, "the flag fluttering about their heads, not a thread of which they could call their own, for they were not citizens," while Sloan condemned the "unlimited tyranny" of Indian Agents. Rodman was persuaded to join the fray by announcing, somewhat disingenuously, that the Memorial would not be built until Indians had been made citizens. He would not allow it to be a "tomb stone." Instead, it should celebrate "the emancipation of that race and would also attest the nation's sorrow for its treatment of a great race of people." Alarmed by a bill that would again have left individual citizenship decisions to the Interior Department, Dixon wrote in exasperation to a friend in the House: "Why not make a clean sweep of it? and simply make every Indian a citizen?"<sup>57</sup>

That is precisely what Congress did before adjourning, and Dixon tried to take all of the credit for it, antagonizing those Indians and Indian-rights groups that had also been directly

involved. "One must feel that the great financial backing of the organization of which you are the Secretary has momentarily intoxicated you unto the belief that [you have] such tremendous influence," one of his critics wrote. Dixon meanwhile tried to revive the Memorial, without success. Rodman seemed to have lost interest in its fate, although he continued to tell reporters that it had been called "the greatest single idea of the century." Even that was an exaggeration: The *New York Herald* had called it "the biggest single Idea . . . in many a year."<sup>58</sup>

Dixon devised some new schemes, hoping to revive his benefactor's enthusiasm. He proposed building a museum in Philadelphia in the form of a "Tribute Wigwam" surmounted by an Indian figure in uniform, rifle and flag in hand. It would contain a library, a gallery of Dixon's Indian photographs, a "Hall of Fame" containing war photographs and relics, an auditorium, and offices of a permanent Rodman Wanamaker Indian Foundation on Indian rights and education. Beneath it would be a "crypt" with an eternal flame, as "an emblem of the Indian's undying patriotism," guarded by wax figures of Indian soldiers. The building would serve as a "tribute to the Indian soldier dead," and a "place of welcome" for visiting Indians, especially students, a testament to the Indians' passage "from the wild poetic beauty of the vanished West to the triumphs of a larger civilization." Without a permanent edifice, Dixon warned Rodman Wanamaker, "all of your great Indian work would be made null and void."<sup>59</sup>

When this idea failed, Dixon embarked on a plan for reproducing a "Maya Temple" on Philadelphia's Fairmount Park Driveway, enlisting the support of a number of museums as well as the mayor of the city. The building's interior would be filled with dioramas of Indian life, famous chiefs, and war veterans, which Dixon promised Rodman would "visualize your entire Indian work," and stand as an everlasting "MONUMENT TO THE FOUNDER." Dixon went so far as to review some preliminary designs with a Mexican architect, Francisco Mujica, but Mujica grew weary of Rodman's indecisiveness and

tried to sell his elevations to the city. Dixon was enraged, and spent his last months trying to stop “the mad career of this Mexican pilferer.”<sup>60</sup> He died within a year, having built none of his castles.

#### EPITAPH: THE FLAG LEGACY

The flag that Dixon had carried to eighty-nine reservations disappeared a few years before his death. The original vellum Declaration of Allegiance went into private hands and was resold as recently as 1980. Dixon’s negatives and Edison cylinders were stockpiled in a warehouse after his death, since “Mr. Wanamaker is no longer interested in them,” and were finally donated to the American Museum of Natural History in 1938.<sup>61</sup> Fort Tompkins, where the National Indian Memorial was to stand, became the west footing of New York’s Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Scarcely any mention of Wanamaker or Dixon can be found in histories of American Indian policy.

The Expedition of Citizenship nonetheless left its mark on Indian country. It probably contributed to the level of Indian participation in the First World War, and returning soldiers played an important and distinct role in reservation Indian politics for the next thirty years. It may have mobilized greater support for citizenship at a time when Indian activists like Hiram Chase were trying to focus the Indian movement on treaty rights and self-determination. There is no doubt, however, about the impact of the 1913 expedition on everyday Indian life. Dixon reported that the Pueblos and Makahs had declared annual holidays to commemorate his visit, and a thousand Indians gathered at Neah Bay in 1924 to dance around the flag Dixon had brought there in 1913. American flags and flag songs have become a routine feature of Indian “pow-wows,” and the flag is generally displayed at tribal meetings, often accompanied by a flag song or flag salute.<sup>62</sup>

The 1913 expedition had great cultural importance because it did, in fact reach its audience at a personal and symbolic level. The

Makahs accepted their flag in the same spirit as the Six Nations used to exchange wampum: as a gift that sealed a covenant between peoples. It would be kept, they told Dixon, “as a pledge of freedom.”<sup>63</sup> A century and two centuries ago, tribal leaders took out and displayed their wampum and treaty medals as evidence of their good standing and brotherhood with European powers. Dixon’s flag was to be the treaty medal of the twentieth century, but its original meaning has now largely been forgotten.

Was the Declaration of Allegiance really a treaty? It certainly was a treaty in the minds of the Indians who first signed it at Fort Wadsworth, judging from their discussions with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Abbott a week later. The Indians who signed it later, during the expedition, could see the signature of one president on the document and hear the recorded voice of another president promising them equality and justice. The *New York Herald* called the declaration a treaty, and applauded Indians for meeting the government “more than half way.” It is a longstanding principle of U.S. law that Indian treaties are to be construed as the *Indians themselves understood them*, and by this standard the declaration may indeed be the nation’s last and most controversial broken promise. Indians *understood* their signatures to mean, in Abbott’s words, that their children would be made “more prosperous, better educated, happier and more useful,” and that, as Plenty Coups said, the government would “not wrong them in any way or form.”<sup>64</sup> It must have raised many hopes. But the Indian Office took it so lightly that they did not even make an effort to retain the original document. In this and many other matters, Dixon also felt sorely betrayed.

Dixon’s personal hold on Rodman Wanamaker, and Rodman’s power, and vulnerability, gave Dixon the opportunity to involve the entire Indian people in a melodramatic charade from which Indians gained nothing but empty promises—a charade fossilized in rituals of patriotism. As for Dixon and his associates, it was a journey into the darkness of their own hearts and the racism of their civilization.

APPENDIX

DECLARATION OF ALLEGIANCE  
TO THE  
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES  
BY THE  
NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN

Fort Wadsworth, New York, February 22, 1913

*We, the undersigned representatives of the various Indian tribes of the United States, through our presence and the part we have taken in the inauguration of this memorial to our people, renew our allegiance to the glorious flag of the United States, and offer our hearts to our country's service. We greatly appreciate the honor and privilege extended to us by our white brothers who have recognized us by inviting us to participate in the ceremonies on this historical occasion.*

*The Indian is fast losing his identity in the face of the great waves of Caucasian civilization which are extending to the four winds of this country, and we want fuller knowledge, in order that we may take our places in the civilization which surrounds us.*

*Though a conquered race, with our right hands extended in brotherly love, and our left hands holding the Pipe of Peace, we hereby bury all past ill feeling and proclaim abroad to all the nations of the world our firm allegiance to this nation and to the stars and stripes, and declare that henceforth and forever in all walks of life and in every field of endeavor we shall be as brothers, striving hand in hand, and will return to our people and tell them the story of this memorial, and urge upon them their continued allegiance to our common country.*

[Thirty-one signatures of the "Chiefs" including some with thumbprints.]

*I hereby attest that this document was inscribed by the Indians herein named, on the hilltop of Fort Wadsworth, the site of the National Indian Memorial, on the Twenty Second of February Nineteen thirteen.*

*President of the United States.*

*Wm H Taft*

*The text of the Declaration of Allegiance of the North American Indian, which was signed by President Taft and the "Chiefs" who participated in the groundbreaking ceremonies at Fort Wadsworth. We regret that we cannot print a photograph of the original historical document, belonging to the people of the United States, which is now in private hands.*

NOTES

The author appreciates the permission to use materials from the Wanamaker Collection at the William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana University. He thanks the staff of the Smithsonian Institution (National Anthropological Archives), American Museum of Natural History, John Wanamaker Inc. (Philadelphia), and the Jenkins Company (Austin, Texas) for their assistance and encouragement.

1. Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (London: Heinemann, 1988), pp. 1-20.

2. "R. Wanamaker Dies Suddenly at 65 in Atlantic City," *New York Times*, 10 March 1928, p. 1.

3. Typed transcript, interview with R. Wanamaker "on his Indian work" on occasion of his lecture to the National Press Club on "The Romance of the Vanishing Race," c. 1925, J. K. Dixon Papers, Accession 62-8, William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana University (DPHM); *The First American* (Philadelphia: Wanamaker Company, 1909), pp. 37-38.

4. Dixon appended "L.L.D." to his name in published work (Joseph K. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race: The Last Great Indian Council* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, 1913]), but Rochester only granted a B.D., hence Dixon's references to himself as "Doctor" were pure inventions. See "Miss Edith Reid Weds Dr. Joseph K. Dixon," *New York Times*, 27 August 1925, p. 19; "Dr. J.K. Dixon: Friend of the Indian," *New York Times*, 26 August 1926, p. 19.

5. *First American* (note 3 above), p. 38.

6. Russel Barsh, "Progressive-Era Bureaucrats and the Unity of Twentieth-Century Indian Policy," *American Indian Quarterly* 15 (1991): 1-17.

7. Henry Hale [Day Allen Willey], "Hiawatha Played by Real Indians," *The Critic* 47 (July 1905): 41-49; *Hearings before the Committee on the Library on H.R. 1671, A Bill to Provide a Suitable Memorial to the Memory of the North American Indian*, p. 4. House of Representatives, 62nd Congress, 1st Session.

8. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race* (note 4 above), p. 9.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 200-213.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 67, 94, 205.

11. *Hearings . . . H.R. 1671* (note 7 above), p. 4; "A Vanishing Race," *New York Times*, 25 January 1914, section 6, p. 35.

12. "Indians at Dinner to Cody," *New York Times*, 13 May 1909, p. 7; *First American* (note 3 above), p. 19-21.

13. "Huge Indian Statue to Welcome Ships at Gate of Nation," *Philadelphia North American*, 13 May 1909; "The Vanishing Race," *Philadelphia North American* 14 May 1909; *First American* (note 3 above), p. 38.

14. Beverly Page, "Lo, the Poor Indian: A National Memorial to the 'Vanishing Race,'" *Los Angeles Times*, 3 October 1910; "A Lasting Tribute to the Indian Race," *Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*, 21 May 1909.

15. "Indian Again Will Greet White Man at Nation's Portal," *Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*, 20

May 1909; "Buffalo Bill Lauds Indian Statue Idea," *Philadelphia North American*, 24 May 1909.

16. J.K. Dixon to R. Wanamaker, 7 July 1912 and marked proofs, "National American Indian Memorial Association," (c. 1913), DPHM.

17. Marked proofs (note 16 above) and printed program, Indian Memorial groundbreaking, 23 February 1913, DPHM; *Hearings . . . H.R. 1671* (note 7 above).

18. Printed program (note 17 above); *Hearings . . . H.R. 1671* (note 7 above); J.K. Dixon to Daniel Chester French, 24 July 1912, DPHM.

19. Percy Phillips (Promise, South Dakota) to Dixon, 19 February 1912, DPHM; *First American* (note 3 above), p. 34; Henry Kuss (Improved Order of Red Men, New York) to Dixon, 25 September 1911, and typed report, "The National American Indian Memorial," 8 March 1916, signed by Dixon, and membership list, New York Committee of One Hundred (c. 1913), DPHM.

20. C.W. Smith (New York) to R. Wanamaker, 9 January 1911 and E.R. Graham (D.H. Burnham & Co., Chicago) to J.K. Dixon, 7 September 1912, DPHM; marked proofs (note 16 above); Thomas Hastings to Dixon, 18 July 1912, and Hastings to R. Wanamaker, 6 December 1912, and Dixon to President William H. Taft, 12 July 1912, and Taft to Dixon, 14 July 1912, DPHM; "For an Indian Monument," *New York Times*, 21 April 1910, p. 11; Daniel Chester French to Dixon, 8 August 1914, DPHM; Charles DeKay, "French's Groups of the Continents," *Century* 71, no. 3 (1906): 419-31.

21. Hastings to Dixon (note 20 above).

22. Typed guest list and program, "The Inauguration of the National Memorial to the North American Indian" (December 1912) and F. H. Abbott, commissioner of Indian affairs, to J.K. Dixon, 13 February 1913, Individual Indian Monies authorization form for Superintendent, Tongue River Agency, 24 February 1913, National Archives and Record Service, R.G. 48, CCF 1-320 (NARS); "Indian Memorial Starts This Week," *New York Herald*, 17 February 1913; Dixon to Abbott, 7 February 1913, DPHM; typed fragment signed by Robert Yellowtail and others, 19 February 1913, DPHM.

23. "President Taft, Aided by Thirty Chieftains, Consecrates Hilltop to Memory of Red Man," *New York Herald*, 23 February 1913; "Indians See Taft Handle Spade," *New York Times*, 23 February 1913, p. 3; "Last of Great Indian Chiefs to Gather for Memorial," *New York Herald* 21 February 1913; printed program (note 17 above); "Indian Memorial Starts this Week" (note 22 above).

24. Typed notes on Declaration of Allegiance (22 February 1913) and typed draft on Cosmopolitan Hotel stationery, marked "Sioux Indians" (22 February 1913), DPHM.

25. Handwritten draft on Herald Square Hotel stationery, marked "Flathead Indians" (22 February 1913), DPHM; "President Taft, Aided by Thirty Chieftains" (note 23 above).

26. Robert Yellowtail and others (note 22 above), "Indians Vow Fealty on Site of Statue," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 23 February 1913.

27. "Indians See Taft" (note 23 above); typed guest list, Indian Memorial groundbreaking (23 February 1913), DPHM; "President Taft, Aided by Thirty Chieftains" (note 23 above); typed report of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, "National Indian Memorial" (March 1913), DPHM.

28. Itinerary, "Trip of the President to New York" (February 1913), DPHM; "Indians See Taft" (note 23 above); American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society (note 27 above); "President Taft, Aided by Thirty Chieftains" (note 23 above).

29. Printed program (note 17 above); American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society (note 27 above); "Indians See Taft" (note 23 above); "President Taft, Aided by Thirty Chieftains" (note 23 above); "Indians Vow Fealty" (note 26 above).

30. "Visiting Chiefs Go on Sightseeing Trip," *New York Times*, 24 February 1913, p. 16.

31. Typed transcript, "Council of Eleven Tribes," 3 March 1913, DPHM; "Forty Indians in Parade," *New York Times*, 4 March 1913, p. 3.

32. Typed proposal, "The Third Rodman Wanamaker Expedition to the North American Indian" (March 1913), and typed proposal, "Expedition of Citizenship" (March 1913), DPHM.

33. Wanamaker Company, *The Rodman Wanamaker Expedition of Citizenship to the North American Indian* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Railroad Co., 1913) p. 6; Wanamaker Company, *The Purpose and Achievements of the Rodman Wanamaker Expedition to the North American Indian* (Philadelphia: Wanamaker Co., 1913) n.p.; Wanamaker quoted in Dixon, *Vanishing Race* (note 4 above), pp. xv-xvi.

34. J.K. Dixon to Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior, 10 March 1913, emphasis supplied, and Dixon to Lane, 15 May 1913, DPHM.

35. Dixon to Lane 15 May 1913 (note 34 above); Dixon to Lane, 22 May 1913, NARS.

36. *The Rodman Wanamaker Expedition of Citizenship to the North American Indian: Address of the President and Other Messages* (Philadelphia: Wanamaker Company, 1913) pp. 3-4.

37. *Ibid.* p. 6.

38. Typed "Proposed Program for Rodman Wanamaker Expedition of Citizenship to the North American Indian" (April 1913), and typed "Program to Be Followed in the Field" (April 1913), NARS.

39. F.H. Abbott, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, to Edward J. Holden, Superintendent Hoopa Valley School, (April 1913), and Abbott to W.C. Rogers, Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation, 10 April 1913, DPHM.

40. Typed report, "The Rodman Wanamaker Expedition of Citizenship to the North American Indian Visits Oregon," (August 1913), DPHM.

41. Wanamaker Company, *Purpose and Achievements* (note 33 above) n.p.; "Wanamaker Expedition Visits Oregon" (note 40 above).

42. Wanamaker Company, *Purpose and Achievements* (note 33 above) n.p.

43. Reuben Perry, superintendent Albuquerque Indian School, to J. K. Dixon, 12 December 1913, and Ralph P. Stanion, superintendent Otoe Agency, to Dixon, 12 December 1913, and Evan W. Estep, superintendent Fort Hall Agency, to Dixon, 20 October 1913, and E.O. Greene, superintendent Jicarilla Agency, to Dixon, 28 October 1913, and Charles D. Rakestraw, clerk Hoopa Valley Agency, to Dixon, 7 December 1913, DPHM.

44. Typed report, "Expedition of Citizenship," 13 December 1913, DPHM; see also "Ends Peace Trip to the Indians," *New York Times*, 14 December 1913, Section 3, p. 13.

45. James McLaughlin to J.K. Dixon, 26 May 1913, and Thomas Murphy, special Indian agent in charge Salamanca, New York to Dixon, 10 November 1913, DPHM.

46. Typed transcript, Proceedings at Isleta Pueblo, 27 June 1913, and Pablo Abeita, governor Isleta Pueblo, to Dixon, 2 July 1913.

47. Society of American Indians, *Report of the Executive Council on the Proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Society of American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Society of American Indians, 1912), pp. 146 (emphasis supplied), 149.

48. "The Society of American Indians," *The Indian's Friend* 26, no.2 (1913): 41-49.

49. Arthur C. Parker, secretary of the Society of American Indians, to Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the Interior, dated 2 January 1913 [sic] but stamped received 5 January 1914.

50. *Hearings . . . H.R. 1671* (note 7 above), p. 5.

51. Typed report, "The National American Indian Memorial," 8 March 1916, signed by J.K. Dixon, and typed transcript, interview with R. Wanamaker "on his Indian work," (c. 1916); J. K. Dixon to R. Wanamaker, 26 June and 29 June 1916, and J. P. Morgan Co. to Dixon, 9 October 1922, DPHM.

52. Dixon to Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the Interior, 15 January 1914, and "National American Indian Memorial" (note 51 above); *Hearings before the House Committee on Military Affairs, North Ameri-*

can *Indian Cavalry*, 65th U.S. Congress, 1st Session, 1917, p. 7.

53. "National American Indian Memorial" (note 51 above).

54. J.K. Dixon to R. Wanamaker, 25 March 1917, DPHM.

55. Dixon to Wanamaker (note 54 above); *Hearings on Indian Cavalry* (note 52 above), pp. 13, 17; Russel Barsh, "American Indians in the Great War," *Ethnohistory* 38 (1991): 276-303.

56. *Granting Citizenship to Certain Indians*, Senate Report No. 222, 66th U.S. Congress, 1st Session, p. 2; J.K. Dixon to Rep. Clyde Kelly, 7 May 1924, DPHM.

57. Typed transcript, "The National Creed vs. the Nation Greed," Dixon lecture at Engineer's Club, 1 June 1920, and typed transcript, interview with R. Wanamaker "on his Indian work," (c. 1922), and typed transcript, interview with R. Wanamaker by Alice Lawton, *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 March 1921, and Dixon to Thomas Hastings, 19 October 1922, DPHM; Dixon to Kelly (note 56 above).

58. Joseph C. Latimer to J.K. Dixon, 4 August 1925, and typed draft "Statement" on the Indian Memorial, (c. 1924), DPHM; "Indian work" transcript (note 57 above); *First American* (note 3 above).

59. J. K. Dixon to R. Wanamaker, 12 May 1920, DPHM.

60. J.K. Dixon to R. Wanamaker, 17 April 1925, and Dixon to W.P. Wilson, Director, Commercial Museum of Philadelphia, 13 June 1925, DPHM.

61. Dixon to Peoples, New York City Wanamaker Store, 14 September 1925, DPHM; Dorothy Sloan, Jenkins Company, to author, 20 October 1980; Clark Wissler, Curator of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) to George H. Sherwood, director of the museum, 10 December 1927, accession files, AMNH, New York

62. Barsh, "American Indians and the Great War" (note 55 above); Wanamaker Company, *Purpose and Achievements* (note 33 above) n.p.; "1,000 Indians Dance Around American Flag," newspaper clipping, 27 August 1924, DPHM.

63. Wanamaker Company, *Address of the President* (note 36 above) pp. 10-11.

64. "Indian Chiefs Pay Honor to the Flag Again," *New York Herald*, 23 February 1913; Felix S. Cohen, *Felix S. Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law*, 1982 Edition (Charlottesville, Virginia: Mitchie Bobbs-Merrill, 1982) pp.220-225; Wanamaker Company, *Purpose and Achievements* (note 33 above) n.p.; "Council of Eleven Tribes" (note 31 above).