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AD-A024 390

RICHARD HENRY PRATT
THE RED MAN'S SOLOMON, AND HIS EXPERIMENT
IN INDIAN EDUCATION

ARMY WAR COLLEGE

1 DECEMBER 1975

ADA024390

STUDENT ESSAY

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BY

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) Richard Henry Pratt · The Red Man's Solomon, and His Experiment in Indian Education		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED Student Essay
		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s) LTC Clarence L. Reaser		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS US Army War College Carlisle Barracks, Pa. 17013		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS		12. REPORT DATE 1 Dec 75
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES 25
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report) Unclassified
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report) Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The central theme of the essay is a consideration of the factors in the life of Richard Henry Pratt which facilitated his development of a philosophy of Indian Education that sought the total integration of the American Indian into the American society, and the implementation of that philosophy in his Superintendency for 25 years of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Data was gathered from published literature and unpublished manuscripts, memoirs and personal		

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RICHARD HENRY PRATT: THE RED MAN'S SOLOMON,
AND HIS EXPERIMENT IN INDIAN EDUCATION

BY

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Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
1 December 1975

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Clarence L. Reaser, LTC, CH
TITLE: Richard Henry Pratt: The Red Man's Solomon, and
His Experiment in Indian Education
FORMAT: Essay
DATE: 1 December 1975 **PAGES:** 25

The central theme of the essay is a consideration of the factors in the life of Richard Henry Pratt which facilitated his development of a philosophy of Indian Education that sought the total integration of the American Indian into the American society, and the implementation of that philosophy in his Superintendency for 25 years of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Data was gathered from published literature and unpublished manuscripts, memoirs and personal correspondence provided by the Military History Research Collection at Carlisle Barracks, the Yale University Library where his personal papers are housed, and his granddaughter, Mrs S. Clark Seelye, living in Hingham, Mass. Mrs Seelye also permitted a personal interview the results of which are incorporated into this essay. General Pratt's major contribution is not in an educational system, which did not survive, but in his undying role as a champion seeking justice for an oppressed people.

RICHARD HENRY PRATT: THE RED MAN'S SOLOMON,
AND HIS EXPERIMENT IN INDIAN EDUCATION

A magnificent lion of a man was concluding his eloquent address in behalf of Indians at the 34th Annual Lake Mohunk Conference.

We have a great national seal on which is an Eagle and "E Pluribus Unum". I call your attention to the fact that the bird of freedom is passing; we have shot him to death and nearly destroyed his race.

Get the new nickel and look at the face on the Indian, and see just in front of his eyes the one great American word, "Liberty". Consider, read, investigate, get to the bottom of his case, and show me, if you can - where in all our history of our dealings with the Indian, we have given him liberty and any material help to develop into real civilized manhood and independent citizenship.¹

The times were right for a man like Richard H. Pratt; he was greatly needed. Wounded Knee was such a recent part of America's story that it still served as a symbol of a people's hatred and a banner for their resistance to efforts to help the "savage red man". One after another of the great western tribes was falling before the combined onslaught of railroads, buffalo hunters, settlers moving west, and the US Army.

Then the nation's attention began to shift from the problem of conquering the Indian to "rehabilitating" him after the conquest. During the 1870's, eastern humanitarian and philanthropic groups became increasingly active. By the close of the decade, the spirit of Indian reform had produced several powerful organizations dedicated to securing justice for the Indian. However, justice did not readily seem to include civilization with its necessary counterpart, education. Beaten in combat and confined to a reservation with its self-perpetuating

cycle of poverty and deprivation, the Indian had lost his ability to resist the programs his "Great White Father" conceived as best for him.

At the end of the decade, the challenges inherent in the changing complexion of the Indian problem had still not fully dawned upon the nation's policy makers. But one man did see the new opportunities in the changing milieu, a wise and dynamic leader, a Red Man's Solomon, who forced upon the nation's consciousness a new concept in Indian education.

Editorializing on the manner in which the United States had been altered by his influence, the Philadelphia North American said of him in his 76th year of life, "General R. H. Pratt, gallant soldier, educator, humanitarian, is the founder of the famous Indian School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Probably more than any other man in the history of the nation, General Pratt influenced public opinion to a humane and just consideration of the Indian problem."²

This paper will consider the life and contributions of this amazing man.

HIS LIFE

The life of Richard Henry Pratt was fascinating from the very beginning. Born of English ancestry in Rushford, New York, on 6 December 1840, his life (according to a short unpublished biography in the possession of Pratt's granddaughter) nearly ended before it was well begun. Young Richard developed a case of the small-pox. At the order of the doctor, the undertaker came to measure the sick child for his

coffin, in accordance with the custom of the times. His father, a fiery man of quick action, literally kicked the undertaker out of the house saying that there was no need of his services, the boy would live. ³ And live he did.

At the age of six, the family moved to Logansport, Indiana, where Richard's early youth was spent. At age 13, tragedy struck the Pratt family when his father, returning from a successful gold strike on the Feather River in California was robbed, then murdered, by a fellow prospector. This placed upon Richard a new responsibility for his mother and two younger brothers. He found whatever work he could to help support the family. Later, Pratt would tell nostalgically of his longing for a new pair of boots during those days of near-poverty. When he finally earned enough money to afford them, he slung ⁴ the boots proudly around his neck. They were much too valuable to wear.

For five years he worked as a printer's devil, supplementing his meager pay of a dollar-and-a-half a week by splitting rails. At 18 years of age, he engaged himself to a tinsmith and by the end of three years had mastered the craft well enough to teach it to Indians at Carlisle 20 years later.

The events at Fort Sumpter in April, 1861, lifted the young man from the tinner's bench and launched his Army career. Enlisting during the reverberations of "the shot heard around the world", he fought courageously for four years on the battlefields of Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia. He was mustered out on 29 May 1865, having risen to the rank of Captain. But the Army was still in his blood, and after an

unsuccessful two year stint in the hardware business, he applied for a Regular Army Commission and was appointed second lieutenant in the Tenth United States Cavalry. With his arrival at Fort Arbuckle in Indian Territory in the spring of 1867, carrying his brevet rank of Captain awarded for bravery during the Civil War, Pratt began a lifetime of association with the American Indian, on the battlefield and in the classroom.

Religious Influences

Any adequate understanding of the man Richard Henry Pratt will necessarily consider some of the profound religious influences upon his life. So central to his philosophy of life was a firm confidence in God that it found expression in everything he did from boyhood onward. Possibly more than any other single influence, his faith produced the granite-like character which was necessary to move the mountains of apathy, resistance and hostility which took turns opposing him through the 50 years of his involvement with the American Indian.

The earliest religious influence upon his life came from his courageous and devout mother. Supported by her vital faith, she assumed the added burden upon the untimely death of her husband without complaint. Mary was known as a "singing Methodist". One of Pratt's granddaughters indicates that it was from her constant singing of the old heroic Methodist songs, and her frequent apt quotations from the Bible, and her devout prayers, that young Richard was influenced toward his robust, red-blooded Christianity.⁵

Early in his youth, Henry (as he was then called) became a Methodist,

following in his mother's footsteps. It became almost sacramental to him to open the church for prayer meetings and to ring the bell before church on Sundays. He was as conscious of obeying God in that service as he was when he sang the hymns of his church.⁶

A lady who knew him in those youthful days says that he loved to sing as he worked in the tinner's shop, shaping the shining metal with a vice and soldering-iron. One of his favorite hymns went like this:

Turn to the Lord and seek salvation,
Shout the praise of his dear name;
Glory, honor and salvation,
Christ the Lord has come to reign.⁷

That he carried his faith with him into battle is apparent from some excerpts from his unpublished War Dairies. With Company A of the 2d Cavalry, he described a bloody battle scene in which men from both North and South were dead and dying.

We began to see dead men laying around. Rebels and Federals, in strange confusion. The farther we advanced the more numerous became the dead bodies. I noticed a few appeared to have died in such agony, the face was winced into a frightful look. Others appeared to have died instantly, hardly knowing they had been struck. A great many were lying on their backs, their bodies straight, eyes open, looking upward, and hands clasped and raised toward heaven, evidently praying. My eyes filled with tears, as in my mind I heard them earnestly calling "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." We thought with what an earnest Spirit can a man call on God in such an hour and the admonition "Be ye also ready" came to mind. I uttered an inward prayer for a constant preparation.⁸

As an adult, Pratt became a practicing Presbyterian, apparently through the influence of his wife who was Presbyterian. He became very interested in the theological dimensions of his faith and enjoyed the times the Chaplain could be present in his unit not only to conduct

religious services but also to engage in serious discussion. Tersely he described one such visit.

Had quite a conversation with the Chaplain on Doctrines and Theology in the afternoon. His views on the Word, spirit, different dispensations. Calvinism, as used by Presbyterians, Americanism as used by Methodists pleased me very much (sic). In evening had a continuation of last eve's Bible Class. Examined the whole of the first Ephesians.⁹

His confidence in the Providence of God never waivered. Through the difficult struggle to gain approval for the Indian School and then to find enough money to run it, he always believed that God was with him. One of Pratt's daughters recalls the first thousand dollars given by a benefactor to the Carlisle Indian School.

Father opened the letter in our living room. Mother and some of us children were there. The tears came to his eyes, and he said: "Let us thank God." We all knelt down right there, and father poured out his thanks in a way that seemed to me strange. I was about twelve, and that thousand dollars looked very big. But he thanked God, not for the money, but that the Indians had found another friend.¹⁰

To say that he was a man of faith, however, is not to imply an unquestioning allegiance to every endeavor made in the name of religion. The longer he lived, the more bitterly he opposed Christian missions as well as other agencies when he thought them to be retarding the progress of the Indian toward full Americanization and first-class citizenship.

Pratt considered the influence of the churches a hindrance to his concepts of Indian progress and civilization on several grounds, all of which were probably justified. In a letter to Senator Dawes Pratt, he spelled out the problem as he saw it between the churches, education

and Indian policy.

American citizenship does not appear in the curriculum of any church work within my knowledge... The ruinous influence of vast sums of money to the different tribes has been secured under church and sentimental pressure... It is the constant policy of the churches to pull back onto the reservation, every progressive youth. Consequently they are in favor of home and tribal schools.¹¹

For me, the most fascinating observations about the dimensions of Pratt's religious life came from the discovery of his personal Bible, donated by his granddaughter, Mrs. S. Clark Seelye, to the Military History Research Collection at Carlisle Barracks, where Pratt founded the Indian School. His friendship with his benefactor Mr. John Wanamaker, and the famous evangelist D. L. Moody, are documented in the following note, written and signed in 1910 by his own hand, on the inside cover of the well-worn Bible.

The notations and comments in this book are largely from an old and worn Bible of Mr. John Wanamaker, loaned to me for a month. Mr. Wanamaker says many are Mr. Moody's as he and Mr. Moody were always swapping notes.¹²

In that Bible are more than four hundred pages of finely penned sermon outlines and notations including these, which apparently refer to his own leadership role at the Indian School.

It is a good rule never to see the face of man until we have seen the face of God each day.

It is fitting that he who opens the eyes of the slumberers should have time first to look up to the Father of Lights.¹³

There is evidence that Pratt used this Bible extensively in the "Saturday Night Meetings" which became so much a part of the routine

at the Indian School, and which were so formative in the lives of many of the students over the years. Howard Gansworth, a member of the Class of 1894, recalls Pratt at one of those meetings.

He opened the meeting with scripture reading and a short prayer. Then he read the reports from the various quarters giving names of pupils who had spoken Indian or used tobacco that week. It was scandalous to do either. Without comment he laid the reports on the reading desk beside him, slowly tucking them under the Bible. He appeared to be deep in thought-- about what he would say perhaps. Presently, as if he had hit upon an idea, he stepped to the edge of the platform.¹⁴

As we analyze the character of this fascinating man, we see a tenacious and complex individual empowered by his faith. He was an abstainer in an age which was not noted for its temperance. He was honest beyond any doubt, as verified by the Treasury Department's letter and voucher returning \$.20 from the audit of Indian School records for the 25 years of his Superintendency.¹⁵ He had the courage of his convictions in a political and public milieu of mediocrity and compromise. He was a faithful husband and kind father, not only to his own children, but also to the thousands of Indian boys and girls to whom he was "school father" at Carlisle.¹⁶ He was a man of tremendous personal drive, impatient to get things done, trying always to improve Carlisle, to increase its enrollment, to solve the whole Indian problem, not in a generation but in a day. It is perhaps in this personal intensity that we find the chief reason for the lack of tact which got him into so much trouble with those in the military and in government who disagreed with him.

Having looked at the man, let us now move to a consideration of

the profound contributions R. H. Pratt made to the cause of Indian education in America.

HIS CONTRIBUTIONS

The United States never officially accepted the dictum of a great general, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian", as a tenet of National policy. As a matter of practical philosophy, however, the Indian peoples were for many years treated as though it were a truism. Even before the unjustifiable treatment they were to receive on radio and TV shows of the 20th century, the 19th century inculcated prejudice against the Indians through Wild West shows which vilified their character, exaggerated their dress, and proclaimed their general irresponsibility. They were denounced as savage, lazy and shiftless, when they had little chance to become anything else.

And when the government finally acted, recognizing the need for education as a part of the civilizing process, that education, inadequately funded, took place largely in tribal masses. Even then it was available only for a small portion of the children. When boarding schools developed, they were still tribal, surrounded by the too-typical squalor and poverty of reservation life. The possibility that students would develop into useful American citizens in that context was limited indeed.

Some churches developed missions and mission schools among the Indians, but these, like the government agencies, were reluctant to lose their converts from tribal living into the wider opportunities of the society at large. So both state and church effectively cooperated to enforce a tribal, segregated system.

Richard Henry Pratt, with a sensitivity born out of years of contact with the Indian, and endowed with an unusual combination of tenacity and tenderness, recognized the inherent self-perpetuating inadequacy of the reservation system and eventually developed a philosophy of Indian education which resulted in the establishment of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.

He expressed his concern that the Indians were not able to break out of the defeating patterns of reservation life in an address at the Lake Mohunk Indian Conference on 16 October 1916:

The System and reservation are essentially coordinated in one great function to keep the Indian from merging into the national life, which merging would in itself have utilized and saved him... "Reservating" and segregating the Indian in tribal masses away from civilization not only continued his old life and kept him a burden, but it enabled his exploitation as a bugaboo, to the profit of notorious interests.¹⁷

Pratt's Educational Philosophy

General Pratt started with the premise that Indians were as intelligent and as capable of learning as anybody else in American society. Racial differences never caused him to qualify his advice to his students or his expectations of them.

An ethnologist from the Smithsonian Institution, Mr. Clark Mills, once came to Fort Marion to take plaster casts of the faces of the Indian prisoners Pratt was attending there. Mills wrote back to assure Pratt that science supported his view saying, "their brain power is fully equal if not superior to the whites."¹⁸ The General's complete

confidence in the truth of this estimate was sensed by his Indian students and repaid in turn by their unflinching loyalty to him.

Given that premise, his observation of the inherent difficulties of the reservation system, and his Christian concern for the Indians themselves, Pratt's philosophy of education was perhaps inevitable. He sought the total integration of the Indian into American Society. He put it succinctly in one of his most articulate addresses entitled "American Indians, Chained and Unchained", given before the Pennsylvania Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion at Philadelphia in October 1912:

I have long contended that all public money appropriated for the education of children in America, native or naturalized, should build them into individual independent citizens, thus securing for them the freedom of life and opportunity provided by our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. Race schools fail in these results through ignoring the individual as the unit and binding him in masses to race destiny. TO CIVILIZE THE INDIAN GET HIM INTO CIVILIZATION; TO KEEP HIM CIVILIZED, LET HIM STAY.¹⁹

To trace the development of that philosophy as Pratt articulated it, and to see its living expression in the eventual formation of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, it is necessary to go back to the year 1874 on the Southern Plains of Oklahoma and Texas where the warlike Kiowas, Comanches, Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes roamed.

Fort Marion

Buffalo hunters were destroying the herds upon which the plains Indians

depended for their survival. In this emergency, the tribes formed a temporary alliance and began attacking the settlement of buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls. Then they started to attack wagon trains and in general spread terror throughout the territory. Inevitably, the Army was called in to capture or destroy the hostile roving bands. After many were killed, hunger caused the rest to surrender. Trials were conducted and 72 Indians were found guilty of murder and rape, and sentenced to be confined in irons in St. Augustine's old Spanish Fort of San Marco, then known as Fort Marion.²⁰

The task of taking the 72 dangerous and desperate red men across half a continent by wagon and rail to their prison in Florida, and guarding them during their imprisonment there, was assigned to 1st Lt Richard H. Pratt, 10th U.S. Cavalry. This heavy responsibility for one so young apparently resulted from his reputation for successful dealing with the red man, developed during eight years of intimate contact with him as Commander of Indian Scouts. It was probably in this role that the first spark of his educational concept began to glow. He saw the Indians as equals. And his free, open mind accepted what they had to say just as completely as though they had been white men. His leadership was always judicious, fair, patient and understanding.²¹

After a difficult and depressing trip in which one of the prisoners tried to commit suicide then knifed a guard, and another was killed trying to escape from the prison train, the heavy gate at Fort Marion clanged shut, separating the Indians from the outside world.

But if those prisoners expected their world to end, they were wrong; it was only beginning. Pratt immediately removed their chains and found

work for them - polishing 10,000 sea beans for curio dealers. For that, the Indian prisoners were paid \$1,000. Later, those who proved themselves trustworthy were placed out to work in and around the City of St. Augustine. Regular religious services were established at the Fort and eventually all who wanted to were permitted to go to church services in town. Some "benevolent ladies" were convinced to teach English and Writing to those who wanted to learn.

Summarizing the profound changes this program accomplished Pratt said, "the daily contact with our kindly people brought amazing results in transforming them into capable civilized men."²² In Pratt's manner there was no trace of condescension, no hint of superiority. He was the friend of the Indians as well as their jailor. His sympathetic understanding of their plight and his obvious desire to help them quickly won for him their confidence and trust.

During the Fort Marion experience his philosophy of Indian Education began to develop. Specifically it may have been sparked by the words of the Old Kiowa Chief, Mah Mante, who spoke for the prisoners three weeks after their arrival.

We want to learn the ways of the white men. First we want our wives and children and then we will go any place and settle down and learn to support ourselves as white men do... We want to learn how to make corn and work the ground so we can make our living and we want to live in a house just as a white man.²³

At the end of three years imprisonment, the War Department, over the protests of Pratt and the requests of the Indians, decided to send them back to their reservations hoping that they would carry to their

tribemen the lessons they had learned in Florida. Twenty-two of the younger men categorically refused to go back. So in early 1878, taking advantage of the situation, Pratt asked that he be allowed to retain these men in his charge and to continue their education at a more favorable site with funds provided by the

24
government.

Hampton Institute

After permission was granted, all the tenacity that was becoming so characteristic of the young officer was needed to find a place for his Indians to go. After many failures, he was finally able to persuade General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, founder and head of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, to provide a place for his charges. The 22 Indians, no longer prisoners but aspiring young students, arrived at Hampton Roads in April 1878 to begin their formal schooling. Thus the Indian Department of Hampton Institute was established.

25

The Hampton interlude was not a happy one for Lt Pratt. The first tenet of his developing philosophy was to bring the red men into direct contact with whites, and in that interchange to alleviate prejudice on both sides. At Hampton, a Negro Institution, Pratt felt that this aim could not be achieved. Inevitably, the Indian would become identified with the Negro and find himself subject to the same racial prejudice. These views inevitably led to clashes with Armstrong, and Pratt finally asked to be relieved from his assignment. With Armstrong's consent, Pratt went to Washington in

the spring of 1879 on no less ambitious a project than to persuade the government to support his plan to establish a school for Indians.

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School

Indian Affairs was the responsibility of the Department of the Interior. The Secretary in 1879 was Carl Schurz, an emigrant from Germany. Lt Pratt came to him with the proposal that he secure permission from the Secretary of War to "use Carlisle Barracks, then unoccupied, located in the rich Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, whose industrious people would be examples for the pupils." At first, Schurz was lukewarm to the idea; but Pratt was not dissuaded. He boldly reminded the Secretary that he was a recipient of generous American concern for those in need.

You yourself, sir, are one of the best examples of what we ought to do for the Indians. You immigrated to America as an individual. You came into the fullest freedom here in association with the best of our people. Indians need these same chances of participation, and they will as easily become useful citizens.²⁷

The combination of Pratt's irrefutable logic and his charismatic personality soon won Secretary Schurz who as long as he was in office was one of Pratt's ardent supporters.

The crusader's enthusiasm knew no bounds. Estatically, he wrote from Washington on August 19, 1879: "My own dear loving wife. I embrace you! I send you a thousand kisses! Carlisle is ours and fairly won!"²⁸

At last Pratt had his school, but he had no funds and no students. Secretary Schurz provided the first money from the "Civilization Fund", money received from the sale of Indian lands in Kansas. Friends contri-

buted other money but the financial prospects were still dismal indeed.

Getting students proved in some respects to be the most difficult task of all. Pratt was sent to the powerful and discontented Sioux for students. Defeated in battle and robbed of their beloved Black Hills, the Sioux now lived in Dakota, at the Rosebud and Pine Hill Agencies. There they nursed their grievances, watched the white man take gold out of the hills that had been their former homes, and dreamed of their past glory. No people ever had less reason to trust the US Government.

At the Rosebud Agency, Pratt carefully explained his plan to forty of the Sioux Chiefs including the famed Spotted Tail. When Pratt finished, Spotted Tail rose to his feet. "The White people," he said, "are all thieves and liars; we do not want our children to learn such things." Bitterly he reminded Pratt of the land that had been stolen from his people and of the gold that should have been theirs but for white treachery. "We are not going to give our children to learn such ways," he declared as he sat down.²⁹

To Pratt, it was clear that the success of his expedition rested on the Sioux Chief's decision. "Spotted Tail," he said, "you are a remarkable man. You are such an able man that you are the chief of those thousands of people. But, Spotted Tail, you cannot read or write. You cannot speak the language of this country. You have no education."

He pointed out that the Sioux had to rely on interpreters and others to tell them the contents of the treaties they had signed. Perhaps they would be digging gold in the Black Hills themselves had their chiefs been educated, he suggested. If they would permit their children to be educated

in the ways of the white man, their youth would be better able to avoid the mistakes of their elders and to stand up for their rights as the white man did. "As your friend," Pratt concluded, "I urge you, Spotted Tail, to send your children with me to this Carlisle School and I will do everything I can to advance them in intelligence and industry in order that they may come back and help you."³⁰

Then the Lieutenant left the council and permitted Spotted Tail and the other chiefs to discuss the issue. Soon, the Indian Chief approached Pratt who had been waiting nervously for the meeting to end. Spotted Tail said, "It is all right. We are going to give you all the children you want."³¹

That was the breakthrough that was needed and Pratt took with him some 60 children from the tribes of the Indian Chief^s Spotted Tail, Milk, and American Horse. The elderly White Thunder offered his grandson, the only child of school age he had. Authorized by the government to take a total of 120 students, Pratt selected the remainder from the Pine Ridge Agency where Red Cloud lived with his people, and from the tribes in the Indian Territory.

By now it must have seemed that nothing was impossible to the enterprising young man with a burden for the welfare of the Indian and a vision of how to educate him. Pratt knew what he wanted to do, and he knew why. He described the purpose of his new school as being

....to teach English and give a primary education and knowledge of some common and practical industry, or means of self-support among civilized people. To this end mechanic shops and farms [are] provided where the principal mechanical arts and farming [are] taught the boys, and the girls [are] taught cooking, sewing, laundry and housework.³²

Before that lofty goal could be achieved, however, there were still many complex problems to be solved. Final Congressional approval of the Carlisle school had to be gained, funding both from government and philanthropic sources had to be secured. Food, clothing, fuel and equipment were needed. A staff had to be hired. Taken together, the concatenation of administrative problems to be solved just to get the school started would have baffled the minds of ordinary men.

The thrilling story is too lengthy to recount here of the way the young crusader went about solving them. Suffice it to say that in due time all these problems were resolved and the school was put on a firm basis. The run-down buildings of the old barracks were renovated and new structures were added. The school farming area was increased from 27 to 303 acres. And the annual student enrollment expanded from the initial 120 until it reached over a thousand young Indian men and women representing virtually every one of the more than 80 tribes in the United States. Additionally, it became the prototype and served as a model for the development of no less than 25 other nonreservation Indian Schools across the nation.

No consideration of Pratt's administrative genius would be complete without a mention of the "Outing System" he perfected at the Carlisle School. Essentially the Outing System was an apprenticeship for civilization. Pratt believed that as a part of the solution of the "Indian problem", Indian boys and girls should have an opportunity to live for a time in private homes in order to gain practical experience in self-support, and to learn the ways of the civilized living. He carefully selected homes where the students would be welcome, he painstakingly selected pupils who could

profit by the experience, he diligently sought student work opportunities (of which the northeast had an abundance), and he assiduously supervised the progress of the students by means of interviews and questionnaires to the patrons. Pupils were required to save at least half of their earnings and forward them to Carlisle where the money was banked for them and placed on interest at 6% until they left the school.

By the time Pratt left the Army in the retired grade of Brigadier General, after 25 years as Superintendent and guiding spirit, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School had become a national institution of international renown. The young Lieutenant's dream had become a reality. From the frontier wars on the Southern Plains and the old Spanish prison in St. Augustine had come a school in the East and a new approach to Indian education.

EVALUATION

If a single word were selected to characterize Pratt's work for the Indians it would probably be the word "uncompromising". His goal was total American citizenship for the American Indian. And he flung himself at that goal with all the force of his vigorous, combative nature. Evaluating his work soon after the founding of Carlisle, an observer said, "We do not expect to see the fortress of ignorance and prejudice give way at once; but it is inspiring to hear the Captain confidently demand an unconditional surrender."

33

Unassailed by self-doubt, Pratt remained utterly convinced of the rightness both of his cause and of his method to the end. As he was

dying in February 1924, he wept. He was leaving this earth and still there did not seem to be any hope for the red man.

"Father", said his daughter trying to comfort him, "Maybe God has another and a better plan."

"There is no better plan", he said as he turned his face to the wall. Those were the last words he ever spoke.

If the life of a man can be measured by the tributes of those who have been influenced by him, R. H. Pratt was a giant indeed. The glowing tributes are almost endless. Martha Napawat Thomas, a full-blooded Kiowa, and a member of the Class of 1894 said, "You have done more good for the Indian race than any man alive." Writing to him on the occasion of his 80th birthday, Samuel W. Bushard of the Class of 1903 wrote, "I can hardly write as my throat fills up when I think of you and what you have done for my kind of people." And Chauncey Yellow Robe, a full-blooded Sioux who graduated from Carlisle in 1894, and who later held responsible positions in government and education, said in a letter to a friend, "I live my life as a monument to that great man."

General Pratt probed deeply the moral issues that were to disturb the nation for generations to come. Equal opportunity for the Indian became the great crusade of his life. His true significance in history, however, lies not in his fight for a goal that, in terms of present ethnic understandings are questionable. Modern social anthropologists would quickly point out the unfortunate cultural implications in his philosophy. But it took us a Black Revolution and another hundred years since Pratt's time to come to those understandings ourselves

as a nation. To criticize him for not understanding the cultural flaws in his philosophy would be like faulting Sir Isaac Newton for his failure to understand the Theory of Relativity. Pratt could not have seen the need for ethnic integrity in the world of Wounded Knee and the society would not have accepted it if he had.

The nonreservation education system did not endure in American society, but Pratt cannot be faulted for failure on that score either. The formidable opposition from agencies both of church and state make it remarkable that the system lasted as long as it did.

Rather than in the educational system he developed, Pratt's lasting significance lies in his role as a determined, courageous, tenacious, selfless worker in behalf of justice to a people suffering from more than two centuries of oppression by the dominant culture. Robert Utley who edited Pratt's Memoires analyses that contribution in these eloquent words:

He saw in the Indian another human being, and in his long crusade he made countless of his countrymen see the Indian through the same lenses. He convinced them that different skin color and different cultural background did not automatically produce an inferior being. He dramatized the plight of the red men as few others did, and he mobilized public opinion behind attempts, no matter how misguided by the standards of another age, to sweep aside the odious wreckage of more than a century of Federal mismanagement of the Indians.³⁶

He was a single-minded, visionary, dynamic, righteous man who fought a good fight. And for that, this nation owes him unending gratitude.

He was a man who eloquently insisted upon glorious impossibilities. His stature is not diminished by the impossibility of his dream.



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FOOTNOTES

1. Richard H. Pratt, "Our Forlorn Indians," p.9.
2. Pratt, "Our Forlorn Indians," p.8.
3. Unpublished biography of Richard H. Pratt, p.1.
4. Unpublished biography, p.2.
5. Elaine Goodale Eastman, Pratt the Red Man's Moses, p.14.
6. Unpublished biography, p.5.
7. Unpublished biography, p.5.
8. Unpublished War Diaries of Richard H. Pratt, 6 April 1862.
9. Unpublished War Diaries of Richard H. Pratt, 22 March 1862.
10. Eastman, pp.87-88
11. Letter, Pratt to Senator Dawes, February 26, 1890.
12. The Pratt Bible, Military History Research Collection, Carlisle Barracks, PA.
13. The Pratt Bible.
14. Unpublished manuscript of Howard Gansworth.
15. Among Pratt's papers in the Military History Research Collection at Carlisle Barracks, is a letter from the Treasury Department, Washington, D.C., dated Jan 20, 1905, which records the result of a government audit of his accounts: "Your cash accounts as Superintendent, Indian School, Carlisle, from Nov 1, 1879 to June 30 1904, have been re-adjusted in this office in connection with explanation filed, and a balance of twenty cents (\$0.20) found due you. A warrent in your favor for the above balance has been requested, and when issued, the Treasurer of the US will forward it to you, in care of the Military Secretary, War Department, this city."
16. The wisdom and sensitivity with which he carried out his role as "father" is seen in an incident which occurred during a visit to the Indian School by a group which included several Senators and the Secretary of the Interior. Edgar Fire Thunder, a bright, interesting boy, was making a welcoming speech describing his life at the school. Suddenly stage-fright overtook him and he was unable to continue. Pratt waited for a short time to see whether the boy would recover his presence, and when he did not, his friendly voice boomed out,

"Edgar works in the blacksmith's shop. Now if he will go to the shop, and put on his working suit, the Secretary, Senators and party will meet him there to see him weld an axle in one heat." Margaret Sidney, one of the persons present said, "I never saw such a kindly thing more delicately done, and I know I express the feelings of the company, when I say, that to us it was a spontaneous proof of the spirit of Carlisle School."

17. Richard H. Pratt, "Why most of our Indians are Dependent and Non-Citizens", p. 2.
18. Letter, Clark Mills to Pratt, December 16, 1879.
19. Richard H. Pratt, "American Indians, Chained and Unchained", p. 14.
20. Louis Morton, "How the Indians Came to Carlisle", Pennsylvania History, January 1962, pp. 54-56.
21. Lt Col Thomas G. Tousey, Military History of Carlisle and Carlisle Barracks, p. 278.
22. Richard H. Pratt, "American Indians, Chained and Unchained", p. 6.
23. Letter, Pratt to the Adjutant General, 11 June 1879
24. Morton, p. 63.
25. An account of the experience at Hampton can be found in Eastman, Pratt, Chapter 6; and Brunhouse, History of the Carlisle Indian School, pp. 8-9.
26. Tousey, p. 289.
27. Eastman, p. 77.
28. Eastman, p. 78.
29. Quoted from Pratt's autobiography in Brunhouse, History of the Carlisle Indian School, p. 14.
30. Brunhouse, p. 15.
31. Brunhouse, p. 15.
32. Lt Paul E. Zuver, A Short History of Carlisle Barracks, p. 129.
33. Elaine Goodale, "Captain Pratt and His Work for Indian Education", p. 8.
34. Eastman, pp. 271-272.
35. Eastman, p. 244.
36. Pratt, Battlefield and Classroom, p. xvii.

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(This individually published article is the best available treatment of the Carlisle Outing System which was a keystone of Pratt's education program).
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(Gives unpublished anecdotal material from the vantage of a member of General Pratt's family).
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17. Pratt, Richard Henry: War Diaries. Unpublished, 1913.
18. Pratt, Richard Henry: Why Most of Our Indians are Dependent and Non-citizen. Lecture. Lake Mohunk: Thirty-second Annual Indian Conference, 16 October 1914.
19. Sidney, Margaret. "Carlisle School for Indian Pupils." No publisher given, no date.
20. Tousey, Thomas G., LTC. Military History of Carlisle and Carlisle Barracks. Richmond: Dietz Press, 1939.
21. Zuver, Paul E., LT. A Short History of Carlisle Barracks. No publisher given. 1934.