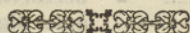


The Founding of the First Large Indian School And the Beginning of the Outing System




IN 1875, Lieutenant Richard H. Pratt was detailed by the War Department to take seventy-two Indian prisoners of war from Fort Sill, Indian Territory, to St. Augustine, Florida, where they were placed in confinement in the old Spanish fort, San Marco, built by the Spaniards in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Indians were taken in chains and Lieutenant Pratt remained in charge of them. Feeling that they were secure in the old fort, and that the great distance from their homes convinced them of the impossibility of escape, he removed their irons and found work for them. Benevolent women, some of them skilled school teachers, undertook their education and the younger men and a number of the older ones were placed under scholastic instruction in the casements of the old fort, fitted up crudely as schoolrooms. Here they learned to speak English and many of them to write creditable letters.

In 1878, these prisoners were released and all who desired to go were permitted to return to their western homes. However, twenty-two of the younger men expressed a desire to remain in the East and go to school. Their wish was granted and Lieutenant Pratt was detailed to take them to Hampton Institute, Virginia, where arrangements were made to admit them to that institution, then under the management of General Armstrong, and to remain there with them. The following year, in 1879, the Carlisle Indian School was founded by Lieutenant Pratt and for many years Carlisle was known as the great example school of the Indian Service. It was discontinued soon after the United States entered the World War and was turned back to the War Department for use in connection with the care of our wounded soldiers.

THE OUTING SYSTEM

A year after Carlisle was founded Lieutenant Pratt began the development of what he called

the "outing system." He believed that "the way to civilize the Indian is to get him into civilization, and the way to keep him civilized is to let him stay." To that end he undertook the bold task of placing Indian students out in the homes of industrious, cultured and well-to-do white families. In those days white people were afraid of Indians and it required great tact, diplomacy and perseverance to overcome their prejudice and suspicions. General Pratt, as he came to be called in the later years of his life, was a man of unbound energy and enthusiasm. He was resourceful and had great faith in the cause he so ably and so ardently espoused. He knew no such word as fail. He had groups of Indian boys and girls trained at the school and these he took on tours, visiting towns and cities, speaking in churches, before Sunday schools and various civic and religious organizations. At these gatherings he would have the Indian students tell their experiences and entertain the people with songs, legends and stories. At the close of the meetings he would introduce them personally and individually to as many of the interested white people as possible. Frequently these students would be invited to the homes of kindly disposed people or be entertained in groups at the churches or at hotels. The newspapers throughout the country were liberal in broadcasting General Pratt's views and gave much favorable editorial comment. In this way a great many people throughout the East became interested and expressed a desire and willingness to help. The Quakers, or "Friends," who since the earliest days of our country's history, have manifested a deep personal interest in the welfare and advancement of the Indians, were the first to respond to General Pratt's appeal and soon hundreds of Carlisle students were living in the homes of these good people where they were taught and treated as members of the family.

This feature of the school's activities grew and developed year by year and in the month of April, 1916, the number of outing students was 239 distributed as follows: