

Weekly Chemawa American

VOL. IX.

MAY 18, 1906

No. 9

An Indian for Military Career

From the carpenter's bench to West Point, with every prospect of a brilliant military career, is the startling and inspiring story of Paul Knapp, a half breed Pottawatomie Indian, who has suddenly sprung into prominence through the president's appointment. It was not a political appointment. No influence other than that of the boy's frank personal letter to Indian Commissioner Francis E. Leupp was behind the appointment. Mr. Leupp had never heard of young Knapp until his letter was received.

Knapp had heard of the Indian Commissioner's plan to make soldiers of the Indians, so he wrote the letter, stating his qualifications and ambitions. The missive struck a harmonious chord and aroused the enthusiasm of Mr. Leupp. After a thorough investigation it was ascertained that the youthful Pottawatomie's record was as clear as anybody's could be and that everywhere he had gone a trail of good impressions had been left behind.

This was all Commissioner Leupp desired. He at once laid the matter before President Roosevelt and made a plea that Knapp be given a chance at West

Point and incidentally demonstrate that an Indian is capable of making a first-class soldier, criticism to the contrary notwithstanding. Mr. Leupp's enthusiasm communicated itself to the chief executive and the appointment was made.

Out in a little Michigan town, where he had been working faithfully at his trade, not too proud by reason of a fair education to use his hands, Paul Knapp was soon made the happiest of all the Pottawatomes.

One of the policies announced by Mr. Leupp since his appointment as Indian Commissioner is to train young Indians for military service. He would have the Carlisle school pay first attention to the development of things military, thus preparing the government's wards for service in the army, either as officers or men in the ranks. In conjunction with the Superintendent of Carlisle Mr. Leupp is now perfecting a plan with this end in view.

So the letter of young Knapp was opportune. He is the pioneer and both President Roosevelt and Commissioner Leupp expect splendid reports from him, and the Pottawatomes is a good subject