

“Object Lessons”: Domesticity and Display in Native American Assimilation

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In 1885, Philip and Minnie Stabler, both “thoroughly honest, trustworthy, and industrious persons” erected a modest frame house near Bancroft, Nebraska, in an effort to attain the domestic security paradigmatic of the American home-steading ideal. Having assured his creditors of the solidity of his character and motives, Philip secured a loan and proceeded to gather estimates from various lumber dealers near Bancroft. He modified his house plan to fit his budget and engaged a carpenter to help him erect the house; the two men completed the house in less than two weeks at a cost of less than \$400. Philip insured his home against the calamities of fire, lightning, and tornadoes which plagued Nebraska settlers, and went about working his farm in hopes of paying off the loan as quickly as possible.¹ In the meantime, Minnie Stabler received gifts of a cook stove and rocking chair and began the duties of a housewife in earnest.² She set aside the morning hours for her own education, and in the afternoon she worked at keeping house, cooking, washing, ironing, sewing, and cleaning. She owned a sewing machine and prided herself on her three-year-old son’s articulateness. On Sunday evenings, Minnie and Philip hosted prayer meetings at their home.³

The Stabler home’s simple architectural design—just two rooms upstairs and two rooms down—belies the complexity of its cultural design. Philip and Minnie were Omahas who had been educated at Hampton Institute in Virginia, an industrial school dedicated to educating Native American and black youths

by inculcating in them the middle-class virtues of industry, Christianity, and domesticity. Funds for the cottage were provided by the Connecticut branch of the Women's National Indian Association (WNIA), a benevolent organization that noted in a description of the cottage that just two years earlier, Philip had been "a 'wild, blanket Indian,' roaming over the prairies, sleeping in a tent and hunting buffalo for a livelihood."⁴ The white, middle-class women reformers of the WNIA believed that Philip's decision to give up his tent in favor of a permanent home signified his desire to revoke his "savage" ways and live "like white men." Just as important, however, was the WNIA's conviction that the home itself would function as an architectural catalyst for social progress on the Omaha reservation. In the second issue of its monthly journal, *The Indian's Friend*, the national leadership of the WNIA lauded "those civilized Christian Indians who now at various points are planting among their red brothers model Christian homes with the purpose of making the latter centers of civilization, object lessons of instruction and inspiration, and beacon-lights of hope to those more needy than themselves."⁵

Historian Gail Bederman has shown that racialized constructions of the male body helped whites to define the supremacy of Anglo-Saxon "civilization" during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Yet deeply racialized notions of the home also shaped white reformers' definitions of manhood and womanhood. Sara T. Kinney, head of the WNIA's Home Building and Loan committee that financed the Stablers' cottage, contended that the home, in addition to cultivating manliness among Native American men, would stimulate native women to participate in the economic and social relations that it symbolized.⁶ To illustrate the positive effects of the loan program, she described a native woman who refused to "live and dress more like white people" or to make "white woman's bread" as her husband desired. Kinney reported that the woman "did not like white people, nor their ways, and she would have none of them." For this woman, at least, refusing to adopt white ways amounted to a refusal to be "whitened" not just by the flour of white bread, but by the utter change in ways that adopting Anglo domesticity would produce.⁷ Yet a loan from the WNIA prompted a chain of events that Kinney regarded as (r)evolutionary. Kinney wrote that the woman's husband hoped that even if his wife would have none of the white woman's ways, she would enjoy some of the white woman's things. Accordingly, he applied for a loan from the WNIA for funds to enlarge his house in order to add a kitchen and buy a stove for his wife. Kinney related that the man constructed his home and then "watched for the effect" on his wife:

For a time the woman seemed perplexed by this unusual magnificence and scarcely knew how to regard the new condition of things. But the right influence had reached her at last. She soon began to feel disturbed because of grease spots on the

new pine floor, and a scrubbing brush was brought into requisition. Then, of course, she began to notice the difference between the clean floor and her own face, hands, and clothing. The scrubbing brush was again called for and worked wonders along those lines. By degrees she has lost many of her slovenly ways, and at last accounts she was learning to make "white woman's bread." Here, then, is an instance of one Indian woman who has been civilized through the medium of a pine floor and a scrubbing brush.⁸

Kinney envisioned the woman ascending a ladder that charted civilization in terms that marked progress through changes in the domestic environment and women's work. Appropriately, the ladder culminated in the woman's desire to make white bread.

Women reformers regarded "model homes" as object lessons that could exhibit the virtues of civilization to Native Americans at home on the reservation where, reformers believed, the need for instruction and example was greatest. In so doing, middle-class white women drew upon already potent beliefs in the power of a well-ordered home to influence individuals' moral character and upon women's crucial role in transforming architectural space into "home" through their industry, refinement, and taste. Anthropological models in place in the late-nineteenth century lent new force to such "civilized" domestic environments by displaying various domestic architectures as manifestations of a society's evolutionary status: an exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, for example, arranged an Iroquois longhouse, Apache tent, Winnebago rush hut that "looked . . . like the shelter of those who are too lazy, or incapable, to build anything better," and a settler's log cabin along an architectural trajectory from savagery to civilization that, according to the WNIA, illustrated "whole chapters of American history."⁹ In the last decades of the nineteenth century, reformers supported the erection of model homes on reservations in an effort to create architectural spaces in which "women's work" was visible as the work of civilization and thus of nation-building; such spaces were also designed to incorporate Native American women into the nation by defining their domestic work as the power behind evolutionary progress.

I

The middle decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the advent and wide acceptance of social evolution, which defined stages in human development according to increasing social complexity. Charles Darwin defined evolution in biological terms and emphasized organisms' adaptation to their various environments; however, European thinkers Herbert Spencer, Johann Jacob Bachofen, and Sir Henry Maine argued that evolution occurred not only as a result of individual biology, but also as a result of changes in a society's politi-

cal, economic, and social relations.¹⁰ Spencer, in particular, cast social changes such as the development of patriarchy and reverence for private property as positive advancements. He defined “progress” as a ladder which every society must ascend, advancing along the way to ever more sophisticated systems of economic exchange, political economy, gender-role differentiation, and familial relations. Social evolution allowed nineteenth-century scientists to explain the vast differences between cultures by placing the various races along this ladder of development. European and American scholars placed their own culture at the apex of “civilization,” marking their own cultures as the most socially, politically, biologically, and economically advanced.

The best-known American proponent of social evolution was Lewis Henry Morgan, an anthropologist who was also a lawyer, railroad investor, and New York politician. The author of *The League of the Iroquois* (1851) and *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871), Morgan argued that private property was an essential characteristic of a “civilized” race. A society’s increasing control over the sources of subsistence, he maintained, was the basic force that effected its social evolution. Morgan’s colossal work *Ancient Society* (1877), a sweeping history of the evolving complexity of political, economic, and domestic systems, divided past and present societies into one of three categories of social “progress”: savagery, barbarism, and civilization. Savage societies lived in a state of “communism in living” characterized by matrilineality and extensive kinship networks, while civilized society’s “passion over all other passions” for property explained its establishment of “political society on the basis of territory and of property.”¹¹

Frederick Hoxie points out that Morgan’s crucial contribution to social evolutionary theory was his belief that progress need not be a slow march to civilization, but that it could be stimulated by deliberate changes in property relations. To Americans worried about Native American tribes within the nation’s borders, Morgan “became an apostle of progress and hope,” offering what seemed like a rational, scientific solution to the “Indian problem.”¹² Reformers surmised that communal property ownership undergirded the extended kinship relations and nomadic lifeways of Native American cultures, and that breaking up tribal and reservation lands would destroy tribal identity and foster economic individualism and nuclear family life. Though Morgan himself did not espouse Native American assimilation through property ownership, his identification of private property as the key to evolutionary advancement suggested that both the government and individuals might intervene to step up the evolutionary process.

In 1881, anthropologist and activist Alice Cunningham Fletcher decided to put the transformative potential of Morgan’s social evolutionary model to the test. A visit to the Omahas in Nebraska to study their culture and assess possibilities for improving their conditions convinced her that evolutionary improvement-by-design could work, and Fletcher went to Washington to lobby for the allotment of reservation lands as individual homesteads. She advised Americanizing Indians through a land policy that would enact a new form of property and

domestic relations among them, erasing communal ownership of property and vesting individual ownership in the heads of nuclear families. The plan would break down kinship ties and subsistence systems and pressure Native Americans to conform to U.S. ideals of economic relations in the marketplace and in the home. In 1881 and 1882, she lobbied vigorously in Washington, D.C., for an act that would assign homesteads to individual Omahas. Her petitions, information gathering, and calls upon politicians eventually resulted in the Omaha Severalty Act, which arranged for the sale of 50,000 acres of communally held Omaha reservation lands in exchange for funds to help the native people there develop their own homesteads and begin life as individual property owners.¹³ Fletcher herself was assigned the position of federal agent in charge of allotment, and between 1882 and 1884 she worked assiduously to assign homestead tracts to each head of family on the reservation and to explain to the Omahas that conforming to Euro-American habits of industry and domesticity was their only hope for survival.

Fletcher, along with a group of eastern reformers who billed themselves as “The Friends of the Indian,” continued to lobby for an act that would enforce allotment nationally. In 1887, the Dawes Severalty Act (or General Allotment Act) established as official government assimilation policy the dissolution of collective tribal land ownership and its replacement with individual, private property ownership. The Dawes Act meant to destroy both native cultural patterns and the previously government-implemented reservation system by allotting 160 acres to each Indian head of family, 80 to each single person over 18, 80 to each orphan under 18, and 40 to each child under 18. The allotments were to be selected by heads of families after reservations had been surveyed; allotments and individuals would be duly registered and, after a period of 25 years’ severalty, Native Americans would own their lands outright, with freedom to sell or lease those lands. Native Americans would become citizens at the time of allotment, but would remain under the protection of U.S. government agencies during the period of severalty. Alice Fletcher echoed the belief of many reformers when she announced that “Allotment means for the Indian pioneering,” arguing that like the pioneer, the Native American must work the land or die. Fletcher also justified the Dawes Act’s provision that lands left over after allotment had been completed would be purchased by the federal government and opened for settlement by non-Indian homesteaders, explaining that their white neighbors’ “object lessons of working and farming expedients will be of untold advantage. The Indian must have the air of civilization all about him if he is to become a useful citizen and fulfill his own manhood.”¹⁴ The Dawes Act passed in part due to a political and social climate that Patricia Nelson Limerick has characterized as the intersection of “reformer idealism” with “settler practicality; liberated Indians also meant liberated land.”¹⁵

A crucial part of the act’s plan to “set [natives] coveting Christian homes instead of a tent,” was to send children to schools where they would learn “the

trades and employments of civilized life, and then send them back to their homes. . . . In ten years, the parents would have passed away,—the greater part of them,—and a new race would come up.”¹⁶ Educators had stressed the importance of homes as models as early as 1761, when Eleazar Wheelock opened the doors of Moor’s Indian Charity School in Lebanon, New Hampshire, to female students.¹⁷ Because Wheelock was not able to instruct girls in the domestic arts at his school, he hired white women in the area to teach the girls through the example of their homes and their industry. The idea behind this practice, which became known as “outing,” was that Anglo homes would function as examples for Indian girls with no experience in domestic economy. Both the Hampton Institute in Virginia, begun in 1868 as an industrial school for freedmen and women that also began admitting native students in 1877, and the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, begun in 1880, sent students out to work in nearby communities during the summer, hoping that the students would learn industry and housekeeping through exposure to Anglo American homes and habits.

Though it contained no explicit provisions for education, the Dawes Act relied upon mission, agency, and off-reservation boarding schools to strip young Native Americans of their heritage and culture and to inculcate in them virtues of industry, Christianity, and morality. Educators believed that ritualized learning, routinized labor, and close monitoring of behavior were the best methods for ridding students of their old ways. Students were forbidden to speak their native languages or engage in traditional religious practices. While schools like Hampton and Carlisle claimed to create a “homelike” environment which would replace the homes from which the students came, scholars such as Robert Trennert, Donal F. Lindsey, David Wallace Adams, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima have shown that the schools were intent not only on upholding a social order that valorized Anglo American ways of life, but also on regarding work as the best way to train native students. Students spent half the day in school and half the day working at industries such as carpentry, cooking, sewing, agriculture, and laundry—labor which kept the schools running. While schools’ offer of literacy and economic power to Native Americans promised their incorporation into American society as equals, many students were channeled into trades and domestic industries that were not only economically devalued but also difficult to find in depressed reservation economies.¹⁸

II

The government’s attempt to enforce assimilation through industrial education and property ownership could not help but cast into relief questions about the status of women in the late-nineteenth century. Lewis Henry Morgan had surmised that progress came at the cost of women’s freedom, as “savage” matriarchy gave way before the consolidation of property and social and political power under male heads of families. Progress, for women, was marked by seclusion in the home and powerlessness in the political society that was the “prize”

of civilization, and Morgan conceded that women’s weakness and dependence in civilized culture was one of its greatest flaws. Alice Fletcher realized that native women, as the primary agriculturists in many native cultures, would suffer great losses as Native Americans were assimilated through private property ownership that concentrated economic and productive power in the hands of men. Along with other women reformers, Fletcher meant to assure native women as well as herself that “civilization” could be beneficial to all women.¹⁹

Concerned that native women not be forgotten in the social construction of newly minted domestic subjects, white women reformers attempted to exert some control over allotment property and over native women’s education by stressing the importance of “home” in both Native American allotment and education policy. Ironically, Morgan himself offered this solution, for while he conceded that “civilization” was detrimental to women, his theories also offered justification for nineteenth-century domestic ideology’s construction of home as the apotheosis of civilized life. Morgan proposed that domestic architecture indicated a culture’s social, economic, and political organization; so important was domestic architecture that Morgan developed what was to be the final section of *Ancient Society* into a tome of its own—*Houses and House-Life of the American Aborigines* (1881). He argued that the growth of civilization “can be traced from the hut of the savage, through the communal houses of the barbarians, to the house of the single family of civilized nations,” a dwelling that symbolized the monogamy, private property, and political society of civilization.²⁰ Morgan’s social evolutionary ideals bolstered domestic science with evolutionary science, proving through anthropological research Catharine Beecher’s assertion in her 1841 *Treatise on Domestic Economy* that “as society gradually shakes off the remnants of barbarism, and the intellectual and moral interests of man rise, in estimation, above the merely sensual, a truer estimate is formed of woman’s duties, and of the measure of intellect requisite for the proper discharge of them.” So close were the workings of the household to the workings of the nation, Beecher wrote, that “She, who is the mother and housekeeper in a large family, is the sovereign of an empire.”²¹

In 1900, WNIA president Amelia Stone Quinton celebrated the end of what fellow reformer Helen Hunt Jackson called the “century of dishonor” by attributing the success of the assimilation mission to the tireless practical and spiritual efforts of Anglo American women that began with the WNIA’s birth in 1878. Linking Christian duty, democracy, and womanhood, she swept away legislation- and property-centered narratives with one that vested authority in the inspiration and activism of women:

The land in severalty idea was one of President Madison’s, we are told, and of others all along the years; but it was also from a divine inspiration that the women’s association, first as a society, planned and began a popular appeal and combined

movement to secure it. . . . Ideas have wings, and they nest in minds and hearts; and what a singing of birds follows in the fullness of time!²²

Quinton suggested that while men had wrangled violently for centuries over land, the conversion of the “civilization” question into a domestic subject, a question of “minds and hearts,” was inspired and attained by women, who transformed a political problem into a movement with “popular appeal.”

The “nesting” of ideas in “minds and hearts,” theorist Tony Bennett argues, was, like evolutionary science itself, “a response to the problem of order, but one which worked differently in seeking to transform that problem into one of culture—a question of winning hearts and minds as well as the disciplining and training of bodies.” Contesting Foucault’s assertion that power is invested in organizing structures that remained invisible to the objects of their controlling power, Bennett argues that transforming the nineteenth-century problem of racial difference into a cultural ideal of “progress” involved making order visible rather than invisible. The anthropological world order was made visible not only in museum displays that depicted various cultures’ progress towards civilization, but also in other forms of popular and material culture, including historical novels, commodities, photographs, and midways at fairs. Bennett names this “extension of anthropology’s disciplinary ambit” into sites of cultural production outside the museum the “exhibitionary complex.”²³ Nineteenth-century museum and exposition displays invited viewers to participate in the construction of an anthropological world order by translating “order” into “object lessons” with popular appeal. Object lessons empowered spectators even outside the museum by allowing them to participate in *creating* “civilized order” in their daily lives and to be seen as models of correct behavior—behavior shaped, in part, by the narratives of race and nation governing the display itself.²⁴

The exhibitionary complex’s visual politics of display was a crucial element of late-nineteenth-century American ideology regarding interior home spaces and women’s domestic work. A nineteenth-century home’s tasteful interior could reveal the class status, artistic and moral sensibilities, and Anglo-Saxon values of the inhabitants through its architecture, furnishings, and appointments. Women’s virtuosity in creating interiors which could communicate the family’s values and status was an important part of Victorian womanhood, and conferred upon women the responsibility of making an environment that would display family values to outsiders as well as uplift both family members and visitors by impressing upon them the virtues of civilized, moral life. As such, the home could function as a tool for social uplift.²⁵ In asserting that women reformers had built a space in which assimilation policy could “nest” in hearts and minds, Quinton not only employed a potent image of domestic security, but also hinted at the architectonics of women reformers’ assimilation strategy.²⁶ As president of the WNIA, Quinton promoted the physical structure of home as an

object lesson, a metonym for civilization which would at once mobilize the support of middle-class women and serve as an educational tool for Native American women who would create new “nests” to lodge the ideals of “civilized” culture.

By the late-nineteenth century the “model Christian home” had already enjoyed decades of prominence in print and visual culture as a symbol of Euro-American “civilization” and its attendant virtues—morality, industry, and domesticity. As Gwendolyn Wright has shown in her histories of housing in the U.S., architectural treatises, pattern books, and women’s magazines all offered versions of the “model home” in its architectural, moral, technical, and commercial aspects.²⁷ Mid-century architectural theorists such as Andrew Jackson Downing and Catharine Beecher proposed house plans that would outwardly indicate the moral sentiments, cultural values, and class status of their occupants. Downing asserted that through its architectural appointments and exhibition of taste, the ideal home would “show, at a glance, something of the daily thoughts and life of the family that inhabits it.”²⁸ Women’s magazines as well as housing reformers were overtly concerned with the cultural meanings of domestic architecture and promoted the belief that homes had not only the capacity to display a society’s cultural values but also the potential to influence and even transform the social, political, and economic habits of those who viewed them, including both the home’s inhabitants and workers and immigrants. As Eileen Boris argues of women’s immigrant reform efforts in the last decades of the nineteenth century, “These missionaries of the beautiful offered more than useful information to wage laborers and the immigrant poor. They presented the dominant culture through housekeeping courses and home decorating guides; they would Americanize by design, sanitize through the arts and crafts.”²⁹

This potential of the home to function as a metonym for the cultural ideals of “civilization” for immigrants was not lost on anthropologist Alice Fletcher, who surmised that Native Americans’ tribal cultures made the lessons of the individual family home all the more important to this “foreign” population. If, as Tony Bennett argues, the nineteenth-century exposition provided a site where the anthropological order of nation and world might reach the hearts and minds of the populace, Fletcher’s anthropological exhibit on Native American assimilation at the 1885 New Orleans Cotton and Industrial exposition was a shrewd translation of scientific study into popular form. As an anthropologist, Fletcher respected the traditions and lifeways of the Omahas, yet her exhibit clearly indicated that these traditions were untenable in contemporary society; it focused on the deterioration of the Omahas’ traditional domestic life and the evolutionary possibilities offered by allotment. Sixteen photographs, two drawings, and a map depicted the transformation of the Omahas of Nebraska as a result of the Omaha Severalty Act of 1882. This display of seemingly benign, everyday activities and structures depicted the development and productions of homes in a before-and-after sequence that linked land use, labor, and gender relations through the iconography of domestic architecture.

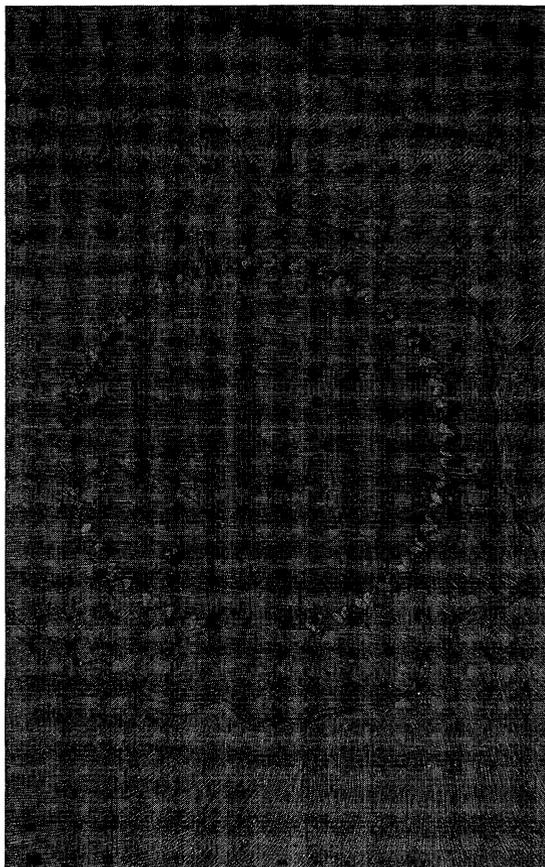


Figure 1: F. W. Miller, Drawing of an Omaha tribal circle, 1885. From Alice Fletcher, *Historical Sketch of the Omaha Tribe of Indians in Nebraska*. Courtesy of Library of Congress, Rare Books Collection.

Two images in particular illustrate the transformation in housing that Fletcher hoped would bring the Omaha people into U.S. civil society. One depicts a one-dimensional, bird's-eye view of a traditional Omaha tribal circle (figure 1). Each individual teepee is part of a larger whole. A second image shows a reproduction of a sketch made by an Omaha man for Fletcher, and represents a new Omaha village, complete with cottages, roads, and a steamboat landing. In contrast to the bird's-eye view, this image has dimensionality and is dominated by a number of squares in the form of cottages and garden plots (figure 2). Houses are numbered and labeled to indicate private ownership, and roads lead to someplace—the mission, the agency, village shops. This change, the exhibit suggested, would include positive changes for women. An image depicting a man

and woman in traditional dress showed a woman following behind her husband as they cross in front of an Omaha earth lodge—a dwelling that, in its resemblance to the landscape itself, would have been hardly recognizable to audiences as a home (figure 3).³⁰

The final image in Fletcher’s 1885 photographic display depicted a young Omaha woman and her son at a tiny cottage—an image of domesticity designed to inscribe Fletcher’s anthropological message on a familiar cultural ideal (figure 4). The woman in the picture is probably Minnie Stabler, for the house is one of several tiny model homes erected on the school grounds of the Hampton Institute. In 1881, Philip and Minnie Stabler, together with Omahas Noah and Lucy LaFlesche, came to the Hampton Institute at Alice Fletcher’s instigation. Fletcher was convinced that model homes could function as educational tools for young couples, and she raised \$400 for materials with which Philip and Noah would construct the “Omaha” cottages that were raised behind the women’s lodge at Hampton.³¹ They furnished the houses with upholstered wooden boxes that served as “miniature sofas; corner shelves answer for a what-not, while a wardrobe and wash-stand have been manufactured out of a few boards and draperies of coarse burlap, trimmed with maroon cotton flannel.” The LaFlesche’s house was adorned with “some strips of red carpeting, gay Christmas cards tastefully arranged on the walls, and a few plants near the window,” all of which made “the wee house look very inviting.” Hampton’s newspaper *The Southern*



Figure 2: F.W. Miller, Drawing of the “Village of the make-believe white men,” after a sketch by an Omaha man, 1885. From Alice Fletcher, *Historical Sketch of the Omaha Tribe of Indians in Nebraska*. Courtesy of Library of Congress, Rare Books Collection.

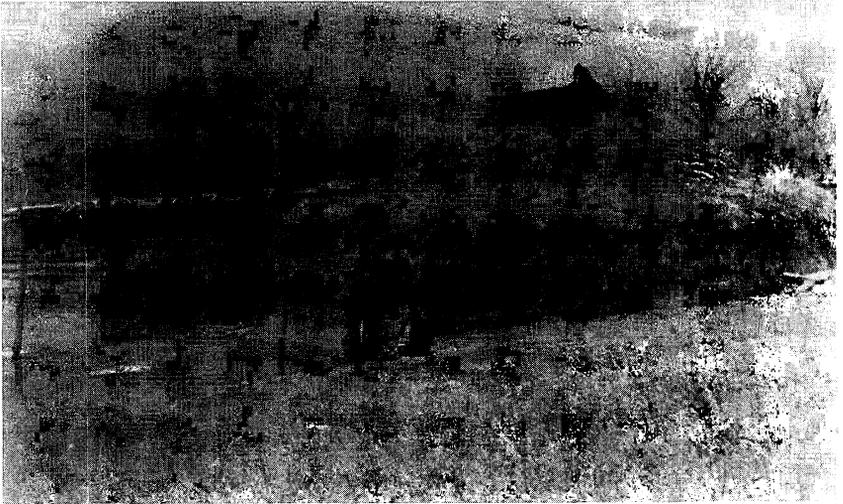


Figure 3: Omaha sod dwelling. Photograph by Hamilton for Alice Fletcher, 1885. *Courtesy of President and Fellows of Harvard College Peabody Museum, Harvard University.*



Figure 4: “Omaha Cottage” at Hampton, 1885. From Alice Fletcher, *Historical Sketch of the Omaha Tribe of Indians in Nebraska*. *Courtesy of Library of Congress, Rare Books Collection.*

Workman explained that the "wee house" would "furnish an effective object lesson to the students." Yet educators at Hampton anticipated effects far in excess of the dimensions of the cottage; one staff member wrote of hopes that the home's "light will shine far off into many a crowded cabin and comfortless teepee, and transform them likewise into pure, sweet, Christian homes."³²

Sara T. Kinney, leader of the Connecticut auxiliary of the WNIA, was deeply affected by the anthropological and domestic ideals made manifest in Hampton's Omaha Cottages. At the WNIA's annual conference in 1889, Kinney remembered an 1884 speech in which Fletcher promoted the Omaha cottages as security against native students "going back to the blanket" as "a really wise, practical plan by which Indians might be helped to help themselves . . . based upon the fact that the organization of the Indian tribe, is such as to make of prime importance, the rearing of homes in the midst of the people." Tribal relations, she explained, could "only be broken by giving to the members of the tribe individual ownership of land and homes. . . . Wherever this has been done by allotting land in severalty, the grip of the 'tribal relation' has been loosened, and the way opened for the founding of the family and the upbuilding of the home."³³

Fletcher's translation of social evolution into a home-centered narrative allowed Kinney to claim social power on behalf of women as custodians of the household, and she began to organize support for the assimilation effort by raising funds to erect model homes for Native Americans. In 1885, the WNIA voted to accept the Home Building and Loan Department as a permanent branch of its work. The group connected its own work to the work of legislators pressing for reform in Washington, arguing that "all the success of this work for freeing, elevating, and Christianizing our native American Indians, . . . promises to be permanent because to be based upon the creation of the Indian home."³⁴ In its first years, the department was extremely successful. State auxiliaries as well as individuals clamored to finance cottages and loans to native couples; in 1888 the department's funds exceeded \$2,000 and meted out over \$1,600 in loans.³⁵ It was a popular branch of the WNIA's work, for it promised concrete evidence of members' contribution to the civilization project and helped white women to assure themselves of the cultural power that their domestic work and homes could wield even in "civilized" society.³⁶

Three years after the department was established and a year after the Dawes Act was passed, the WNIA leadership attributed home building's success to its appeal to the "hearts and sympathies" of local members.³⁷ Sara Kinney similarly appealed to the minds and hearts of WNIA members when she linked progress to the visual power of homemaking:

The picture of this unpretentious home with its plain but civilized furnishings is familiar to you all. There is no need I think to speak to this audience of Christian mothers and sisters of the elevating influences that must necessarily emanate from every one of these object lessons that we can possibly put

before our Indian friends. Seeing is believing, and one such home, it seems to me, is worth more than volumes of instruction setting forth how the white man makes his home.³⁸

For Kinney, each “unpretentious home” rearticulated the highest aims of assimilation policy through the domestic ideal; like Fletcher, Kinney transformed allotment’s ideal of property ownership into a cultural ideal that “nested” in every middle-class woman’s home. Kinney and the WNIA’s national president, Amelia Stone Quinton, called upon American women collectively to envision themselves and their work as occupying a crucial space on the evolutionary ladder, rather than the restricted and helpless space that Morgan had regretfully affirmed as women’s allotted space. As Quinton traveled the states giving speeches during her long tenure as president, she paid little heed to cultural differences among tribes as diverse as the swamp-dwelling Seminoles of Florida, the pueblo-dwellers of the Southwest, and the mission Indians of California. For her, the route to civilization was the same everywhere and the path lay directly through the Native American home. Undermining Morgan’s theories of woman’s weakness in civilized society, Quinton declared that “The work which is being done in the homes among the women and children, is that which will lead the tribe in the shortest way to civilization. . . . In our women’s work we are striking at the very root of things.”³⁹ A teacher at the Santee mission school expressed similar sentiments about the value of women’s work: “When you get a woman to understand that it is her highest duty in this world to take care of her family and home in a Christian and intelligent manner, you have got near the heart of the matter.”⁴⁰

III

Home building encouraged white women to uphold assimilation policy’s social evolutionary narrative while simultaneously challenging its gender bias by inviting them to re-envision model homes as anthropological “object lessons” that validated domesticity as a social evolutionary force. White women’s intervention in the evolutionary narrative through the creation of object lessons, however, demanded an audience of witnesses whose acceptance of the lessons would solidify white women’s cultural power. Situating Fletcher’s experimental model homes on the grounds of the Hampton Institute suggests that model homes, as “object lessons,” were aimed at ordering the nation’s subjects through a structure that was, like the school itself, bent on producing domestic workers. Reformers stressed that the creation of object lessons was women’s work, and the plan to erect model homes as “centres of civilization among the tribes” demanded that the burden of culture-creation lay in the domestic performances of native women. The exhibitionary complex’s potential for organizing viewers as workers is clearly articulated in reformers’ plans for native girls: the process of civilization was contingent not only upon their seeing and believing, but also upon their working and producing. In this respect, model homes were meant to

reproduce the educational structures that encouraged native schoolgirls to be industrious domestic engineers.

Proponents of home building specifically connected model homes with domestic industry. Both *The Indian's Friend* and Hampton's journal, *The Southern Workman*, enthusiastically reported on the domestic work of students who had returned from school to make their homes into object lessons. Reformers relied particularly upon girls' industry to effect this transformation, for through their work, they could display "a gleam of enlightened Christian sentiment . . . in the Indian home." If girls learned domestic industries such as cleaning, knitting, sewing, making frames for pictures, and otherwise decorating their homes, they would exert influence on the whole family, for their work would "make their homes better, and more permanent, besides preventing much gadding about and gossip, by keeping young mothers at home and industrially employed."⁴¹

While teachers emphasized to girls the importance of performing domesticity as a component of home ownership, they also impressed upon both boys and girls the importance of domestic labor to American civic identity. At annual performances held at Hampton on the anniversary of the Dawes Act (which instructors there heralded as "Emancipation Day"), students displayed, through the performance of home-building and home-making activities, the values of the nation to which they were being assimilated. Thus, the boys at Hampton celebrated the second anniversary of the Dawes Act by miming at building as they sang the "Carpenters' and Painters' Song":

I am building me a house and I pound, pound pound./ Brush,
brush, brush, now I'll paint it all so fine; /brush, brush, brush,
for this handsome house is mine.

The girls, acting out the motions of washing, sang the "Laundresses' Song":

. . . When our work is done,/They'll be clean and smooth and
white./ A civilizing power is the laundress with her tub; / We
are cleaning more than clothes, as we rub, rub, rub.⁴²

These songs' lyrics are crucial to understanding the racial implications of the domestic exhibitionary complex as it was instituted at Indian schools that were invested in "cleaning more than clothes." At a sweep, the lyrics link the display of domestic industry and its companion values of cleanliness and cheerful labor with both "civilization" and, most noticeably, whiteness. The domestic values to which girls at school were exposed each day and which they were expected to exhibit at home were explicitly associated with whiteness and were meant to "rub away" all traces of native culture, assumed by instructors to be characterized by dirtiness and laziness. The songs suggest that native girls' access to civilization, symbolized by "whiteness," would come as a result of their literally "working" their way up the ladder of progress, for model homes, like

industrial schools, instituted an architecture meant to channel native girls into devalued domestic work.⁴³

Yet even as native women were taught to “rub away” all traces of their native cultures through domestic work, they were also aware of the cultural power that model homes seemed to wield, and some professionalized their work as creators of object lessons among their people. In 1891, when the position of “field matron” became part of the Civil Service, the government officially sanctioned model homes as sites of institutional power, for the field matron program could allocate government agency to those women who created model homes in places that had none. An article that originally appeared in the *Philadelphia Ledger*, reprinted in *The Indian’s Friend*, contains a list of duties that encompasses the complete care of the house, including “adorning the home with pictures, curtains, home-made rugs, flowers, grass plots and trees,” maintaining the yard, fences, and animals and supervising games, sports, religious observances, and the organization of social and educational societies.⁴⁴

The field matron program’s imperative was to train Native American women in the “ways of white women,” and as such, only white women worked as field matrons for the first five years of the program. But the lessons of schools like Carlisle and Hampton also suggested to some Native American girls that the creation of a domestic environment could offer them the same cultural power over the civilization process that it seemed to offer their white teachers. Native women also felt that the ethnographic narrative of civilization could offer them power at home that might otherwise be denied to them, and they too were inspired to make their “centers of light and civilization” the source of professional power. Between 1895 and 1905, Native American women accounted for as much as 33 percent of the field matron corps—6 of 18 in 1899, 8 of 30 in 1900 and 6 of 26 in 1901.⁴⁵

One of these was Anna Dawson Wilde, an Arikara who came to Hampton from North Dakota’s Fort Berthold reservation in 1878 as one of the first group of Native American girls at the school. After her graduation in 1885, she taught at Hampton and attended the Normal School in Framingham, Massachusetts; later, she enrolled at the School of Domestic Science in Boston.⁴⁶ In 1896, she was appointed field matron to the Mandans, Arikaras, and Hidatsas at the Fort Berthold reservation. True to her work, she created a home that her former teacher at Hampton, Cora Folsom, described as “an example of inexpensive, tasteful comfort that soon found many admirers and not a few imitators. . . . Soon every trail led to the little log home.”⁴⁷ Folsom elaborated upon the transformative power of the home:

Men came to measure and plan cabins of their own, women came to ask aid in making their clothes, to use the sewing machine, and to learn to cook in the new way. Young girls found there a sympathetic friend and helper, and many were

encouraged to go away to school with the hope that they too might some day come back to as good a home. Young men came to the attractive little house and learned to like their hostess's ways of living and thinking. Many came East through her encouragement and help. In sickness and trouble the young field matron was often sent for, but when not invited, went just the same, and showed the women how to care for their sick people and children—leaving them cleaner, better fed, and happier for her visit.⁴⁸

For Folsom, the home's structure encouraged the reproduction not only of its own architectures, but also the habits of "living and thinking"—of heart and mind—that were inherent in domesticity's cultural structure.

Dawson Wilde herself felt that "example and object lessons are worth equally as much to the people as the daily precepts," and spent a month getting her home into proper condition after its erection.⁴⁹ Her reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs include her attempts to open her home to the people of the reservation, as she invited men, women, and children into her home for prayer meetings and sewing circles, to read and look at pictures, and to be instructed in animal husbandry. She described at length the transformation of one woman, "one of the oldest of returned students," who had held out forcefully for years against whitewashing her home. "She and her children were the least attractive in appearance," Dawson Wilde attested, claiming that the woman "purposely would wear a most uncleanly gown to church, 'to see if it would kill Miss Dawson, (my maiden name), to see her in such a dirty dress!'" As a former student, the woman certainly knew the standards of appearance and hygiene the field matron was meant to encourage; her resistance jibes at those standards by suggesting that Dawson Wilde was so steeped in those ideals that to see them flaunted would "kill" her. Yet, in 1910, Dawson Wilde reported with relief that the woman had become more tidy, had interpreted for her, and had helped with the housework in Dawson Wilde's own home. To signify the change in the woman's attitude, Dawson Wilde "gladly transferred her name on the list with those who are of a genuine comfort to me."⁵⁰

However, in October 1905, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis Leupp received a letter via Fort Berthold agency superintendent Amzi Thomas from Mrs. Ella Ripley, a Mandan woman from the reservation. She charged Dawson Wilde and her fellow field matron, Adeline Beauchamp, with neglect of duty, and asked that Dawson Wilde be removed from the position. Ripley's complaint was prompted by the deaths of Mamie Elder and Esther Crows Ghost, both of whom succumbed to tuberculosis; Ripley submitted that the field matrons had "failed to visit or help" the women. Ripley got up a petition for the removal of the matrons, affirming that "We, undersigners Mandan[,] Grosventre, and Arikara of Fort Berthold N.D. reservation, desire to abolish the positions of

field matrons, as they have not been much use to us all these years. And the money put away for the benefit of the sick." The petition contained over 150 signatures; Ripley added that many people were away from the reservation at the time and that more were afraid to sign their names to the document, but "stick to it that the field matrons have not been any good to them." Ripley undergirded her complaint by claiming that "Mr. Red Bear[,] Mr. Ghost Crows or Knows Ghost[,] Mr. Little[,] and Mr. Boy Chief request to be the first ones to be call up on [*sic*] to give testimonies about Mrs. Wilde," and that "Mrs. Huntly[,] Mr. Yellow Bird[, and] Mrs. Howling Wolf (Jr.) are afraid to go on the list, but said they will tell an inspector when he comes about the field matron Mrs. Wilde."⁵¹

Ripley's letter produces an image of Wilde's home as little more than a display of authority, as a structure that excluded rather than empowered the native people. Ripley exhibited a keen understanding of the field matrons' duties, and shrewdly formulated charges which undermined the exhibitionary structures upon which Dawson Wilde relied. Ella Ripley had attended the Carlisle School herself and had worked for Dawson several years earlier: thus, she was both literate and cognizant of "civilization's" physical and cultural architectures. Ripley was, like Dawson Wilde, a spectator to the domestic models exhibited at industrial schools and had been encouraged to participate in the exhibitionary complex by reproducing them at home.⁵² However, unlike Dawson Wilde, who entered a service career as a professional, Ripley followed the path of most Indian school graduates who returned to their reservations to marry, farm, keep house, or work as domestic servants.⁵³ Her reading of the matron's model home differs significantly from Folsom's and Dawson Wilde's, and while it acknowledges the power of the home and women's work within it, Ripley suggests that the home site ought to open up a space for native women to participate in work that would sustain them and their culture rather than remaining a rigid and exclusive structure.

Ripley's charges exposed the ways Dawson Wilde's professional, systematized, and property-oriented version of domesticity discounted the unpaid, community-oriented work of native women. Beauchamp's and Dawson's visits were merely cursory, Ripley maintained, reporting that "Mrs. Wilde knows how to get out of anything." Ripley was well aware that matrons were responsible for "adorn- ing" their homes and teaching native women to do the same in their own homes, but she regarded such work as a superficial response to health crises on the reservation. Ripley related that Dawson Wilde stopped briefly at houses to ask "if they had any eggs to sell, or [at] another house gave them news paper for their shelves or cubbards. . . . When she come to make [her] report, she would counted these house among the houses visited, making appear that she had done some work [*sic*]." Dawson Wilde thoughtlessly spoiled bread in teaching women "who would have to wait a long time for the next issue" of flour rations. Ripley contended that Dawson Wilde's assistant, Mrs. Howard, did not even know how

to make corn bread herself. In Ripley’s perspective, Dawson Wilde and Beauchamp did not, in any real sense, enter into the lives and homes of the people. Rather, Ripley argued that their presence and influence were insignificant and that they did not show sensitivity to the physical and economic conditions on the reservation.⁵⁴

Dawson Wilde’s issue of shelf paper contrasts sharply with Ripley’s description of other women’s work on the reservation. Ripley not only recounted her work with an insistence upon its value, but also placed her work in the context of familial relations to in-laws, fourth cousins, aunts and uncles. Describing her own contributions of eggs, bread, milk, and health care to families on the reservation, Ripley highlighted the effectiveness of tribal and familial relations as a support network and stressed Dawson Wilde’s indifference to it. Dawson Wilde’s house emerged in the letter as a symbol of her apathy to this alternative, community-oriented system:

In June, Miss Mamie Elder[,] a promising young lady, went to bed with sickness, she was only one mile from Mrs[.] Wilde’s house. Miss Elder had no father or mother, but her uncle came to me every day for raise[sic] bread and milk and fresh eggs, she was a fourth cousin of mine, every day I walked by Mrs[.] Wilde’s house to go to see Miss Elder, always having something prepared for her to eat.⁵⁵

Ripley also related her visits to Mrs. George Wash, a widow with three children, who was immobilized by illness and covered with “maggoty sores” from shoulder to thigh. Ripley claimed that the field matrons stopped in on the ailing woman only to say “how do you do,” and that the other native women’s work to care for Mrs. Wash did not “soften the hearts of the field matrons.” While Dawson Wilde was anxious to account for her status as a home technician by counting rolls of shelf paper distributed, Ripley argues, she distanced herself from the troubling realities of reservation life. Ripley and her sister-in-law were left with the job of cleaning Mrs. Wash’s dirty body and the sores that were filled with blood, discharge, and maggots.⁵⁶

Ripley challenged reformers’ constant valorization of the house as object lesson by stressing that Adeline Beauchamp had removed herself physically from the Indians’ presence, building her house “out among the high hills” and thus constructing a barrier between herself and the people she was meant to serve. Her house, at once obscured in the hills and elevated, may have seemed like a deliberate move to allow Beauchamp to view the people of Fort Berthold without their seeing her. Just as Ripley stressed Beauchamp’s removal from the native village, she argued that Dawson Wilde’s house was not an “object lesson” but an exclusive place constructed by Indian labor but not open for their use. She maintained that while the house was built by and for the Indians, it was

opened only to a privileged few. "The house that she is living in the Indian men [built]," Ripley wrote, adding that native men had also dug a well in front of the house, at the cost of one man's life. Dawson Wilde had procured shingles for the house "for the benefit of the sick" and also had requested a range from the government, for the women "who will come to this house to cook, iron, bake, and heat water for washing on this range." Ripley expressed her faith that such government gifts were good for the people; she submitted, however, that the range was never seen by the Indians and stood in Dawson Wilde's shed. "The only Indians who have the benefit of all things done on this house, are Mr. and Mrs. Wilde, Mr. and Mrs. Howard, and the Howards children," and two men who worked for Dawson Wilde.⁵⁷ Ripley clearly felt that the house did not just belong to Dawson Wilde, but that by virtue of its status as an object lesson and the government's investment in its furnishings, the home belonged to the natives as well and was a space where women and men might gather to work. Dawson Wilde's failure to open her home to them was a grievous failure: a withholding of communal property and services.

Thus, the reform-minded women's argument that the home and its appointments constituted a space in which tasteful displays might perform the work of uplift must be reframed in light of Ripley's complaint. Ripley challenges the imperative of filling a home with objects that not only were tasteful but also useful by questioning for whom those objects had use. If the tasteful arrangements of Dawson Wilde's cottage did indeed reinforce Anglo-American cultural ideals, they were not necessarily "useful" to the Mandans, Arikaras, and Hidatsas. While white readers of the *Indian's Friend* or *Southern Workman* may have regarded the photographs, mottoes, and trinkets that adorned homes as "useful" because they exuded "moral influences," native readers of Dawson Wilde's model home may not have read those messages in the same way. Ripley, at least, understood that the house was for native people, but felt that it should not just be viewed, but *used* by them. The home did not welcome Indians into the community of viewers (here, the Wildes, Howards, and their assistants) who could see the home as a product of their own work and worldview. Ripley indeed desired that the home be opened as a space for native people to work and to create, but protested that the technologies with which Dawson Wilde had been furnished worked only to constitute Dawson Wilde herself as a professional and did nothing to help the native people support themselves.

Ripley's charges were informed by her belief that the field matron's duty was to open her home to the native people and to allow them access both to the home's visual power and the power offered by medical and domestic technologies. Ripley's criticisms bear some resemblance to ideas that were concurrently being developed by social feminists such as Jane Addams and Florence Kelley; their Progressive-Era settlement houses for working women also fostered a "supporting female network and new structures for living" in community.⁵⁸ Yet for Ripley and her kinswomen, such networks and structures were not new, nor

were they created to address the needs of wage-working and professional women like Dawson Wilde herself, as in the case of urban settlement houses. The social networks that helped sustain women on the reservation did not grow out of white women's reform movements, but were firmly anchored in longstanding tribal kinship and communal property systems. The very systems that reformers sought to eradicate, Ripley's letters suggest, were doing the work that the field matron and her home could not.

While Dawson Wilde may have seen herself as a model of industry, professionalism, and "cultural womanhood," some of the people of the Three Affiliated Tribes saw her home and work as part of the creation of what Mary Sylwester has called a "hostile domestic geography": a domestic geography that allowed only certain people to participate in creating the cultural order that domestic architecture orchestrated.⁵⁹ Dawson Wilde's home, according to Ripley, was not a welcoming place, but a fortress she used to consolidate her power and prestige, and which correspondingly devalued the work of women that was crucial to survival on the reservation. Ripley intimates that if Dawson Wilde had participated more fully in the life of the reservation, her help would have been welcome, but in making her home a citadel, she cut herself off from those who badly needed medicine, land, and economic justice. Her home, as an example of the government-sanctioned power of private property and "civilization," could not provide for the needs of the people as well as communal networks could. Ripley claimed that Dawson Wilde's real allegiance was to her white friends in Washington, who had helped her to this position of power on the reservation. According to Ripley, Dawson Wilde "brag[ged] that she has power in Washington, she says 'with a snap of my finger, I can put any employee out.'"⁶⁰

Fort Berthold Indian Agent Amzi Thomas advised the Office of Indian Affairs that Ripley was "likely to prove her case if given the opportunity."⁶¹ Dawson Wilde, however, retained her position until it was abolished in 1910, after having been deemed no longer useful to the people at Fort Berthold. Ella Ripley's reaction to the uses of model homes nonetheless remains as a powerful testament to the persistence of traditional communal values and resistance to their diminution, by a woman whose familiarity with the home as an object lesson enabled her to imagine the ways such spaces might be used to empower native women and their work rather than excluding them. Standing between cultures Ripley acknowledges her position as a participant in the exhibitionary complex that the model home articulated, yet she refuses completely to acknowledge the social and political order that its anthropological framework sustained. Instead, she deconstructs Dawson Wilde's model home, exposing its architecture as an object lesson that excluded rather than invited Native Americans to participate in its organization.

White women reformers claimed that the organizing structures of domestic space, could, like the allotment policy itself, contribute to the process of Native American assimilation. In so doing, these reformers claimed that women's inter-

est in the American home, although “outside” of politics proper, nonetheless struck “at the very root of things.” Similarly, by viewing the “object lessons in power” that Bennett associates with architectural and anthropological forms, Ripley and other Native Americans were invited to work to raise themselves up from the evolutionary status that powerful forms of knowledge—such as domesticity and ethnology—assigned to them. Yet, like white women reformers, Native Americans also received the invitation to “see themselves from the side of power, both the subjects and the objects of knowledge, knowing power and what power knows.”⁶² Ripley used her knowledge of the object lesson to undermine its potency, suggesting that a structure that did not incorporate the population it was meant to order was of no use at all. Ripley and the undersigners of her petition testify to the limits of the model home as a fusion of domestic ideology and social evolution, and thus to the limits of the object lesson’s extension of institutional power into sites outside the institution’s purview.

Neither white women reformers nor Native Americans sat passively by as social evolutionary theory articulated the order of the nation at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. The lesson of the object lesson is that while it offered an ideal to which its audiences might conform, it relied on the participation of viewers as producers of more object lessons in order to license itself. Even as viewers participated in framing the structures that would guarantee a national order based on “civilization,” they also participated in what Laura Rigal has called “counterassembly—in which details continually resist narrative framing, in which the structure becomes multidimensional, and at times disproportionate, and where parts do not always fit contiguously or neatly into wholes.”⁶³ White women reformers and Native Americans resisted the patriarchal, Euro-American thrust of social evolutionary theory by physically and imaginatively “counterassembling” scientific knowledge and its structures to accommodate their needs.

Ella Ripley’s incisive criticisms of Anna Dawson Wilde reveal the essential flaw in the object lesson itself: power, authority, and the benefits of cultural visibility came only in being the creator of the object lesson, not in learning the lesson. And native women, like white women, were not ready to relinquish their own cultures in order to live in the house that domesticity built. Anna Dawson Wilde’s home, counterassembled by Ripley and others of the Three Affiliated Tribes, could not constitute an object lesson without its population of willing learners. Instead, Dawson Wilde found herself confronted by women and men who wanted to gaze upon and to occupy and use her home’s physical space—without necessarily accepting the cultural and economic order that it symbolized. The Native American model home, as an object lesson removed from the exhibitionary space of the museum itself, proved to be a more mutable and flexible place for the structuring of identity than the creators of its anthropological architectonics presumed. Along with a growing number of early-twentieth-century Native American professionals, including writers, artists, and anthropologists, Ella Ripley and other less historically visible Native Americans partici-

pated in counterassembling the written, visual, and scientific narratives that undergirded imperialist policies.

Notes

1. *Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co., 1886), 45.
2. From a letter from Rosalie La Flesche Farley to Alice Fletcher, quoted in Norma Kidd Green, *Iron Eye's Family: The Children of Joseph La Flesche* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), 101-02.
3. "Scholarship Letters," *The Southern Workman* 14 (March 1885): 32.
4. "Home Building," *Southern Workman* 16 (March 1887): 32-33.
5. "Editorial," *The Indian's Friend*, 1 (Oct. 1888): 2.
6. On ways middle-class white men and women defined "manhood" as an aspect of racialized "civilization" during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
7. *Proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference* (1887), 55.
8. *Ibid.*
9. "Indians in Camp," *The Indian's Friend* 6 (Jan. 1894): 7.
10. On social evolutionary science in the nineteenth century, see especially George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984); Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past* (Oxford, U.K.: B. Blackwell, 1989); and Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963). For a counterpoint to Gail Bederman's analysis of the impact of theories of racialized "civilization" on constructions of American manhood, see Louise Michele Newman's discussion of social evolutionary discourse and its intersection with American feminism in *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
11. Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society; or, Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery Through Barbarism to Civilization* (1877; reprint, Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1963), 309, 6.
12. Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 20.
13. On Alice Fletcher and the Omahas, see Norma Kidd Green, *Iron Eye's Family*; Joan Mark, *A Stranger in Her Native Land: Alice Fletcher and the American Indians* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), especially chapter six, "Among the Omahas" (64-79) and "Allotting Land to the Omahas," (88-101); and Judith A. Boughter, *Betraying the Omaha Nation, 1790-1916* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).
14. Alice Fletcher, "The Winnebagos," *The Indian's Friend* 1 (August 1889): 2.
15. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 197.
16. *Proceedings* (1885), 46, 34.
17. Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607-1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 218-9.
18. The extensive scholarship on Native American boarding schools discusses the ways the schools shaped students' work habits and indoctrinated students in the rhetoric of social evolution that honored Euro-Americans as the most "civilized." See, for example, Robert Trennert, "Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920," *Western Historical Quarterly* 13 (July 1982): 271-290 and *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891-1935* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); Michael C. Coleman, *American Indian Children at School, 1850-1930* (Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1993); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1995); and Donal F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Alice Littlefield, "Indian Education and the World of Work in Michigan, 1893-1933," *Native Americans and Wage Labor: Ethnohistorical Perspectives*, ed. Alice Littlefield and Martha C. Knack (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 100-121; and Robert Francis Engs, *Educating the Disenfranchised and Disinherited: Samuel Armstrong and Hampton Institute, 1839-1893* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999). For ways schools influenced students to conform to gender norms, see Devon A. Mihesuah, *Cultivating the Rosebuds: The Education of Women at the Cherokee Female Seminary, 1851-1909* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); and K. Tsianina

Lomawaima, *They Called it Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

19. For more Fletcher's engagement with theories of evolution that disempowered women, and the engagement of nineteenth-century feminism with these theories, see Newman, *White Women's Rights*.

20. Morgan, *Ancient Society*, 5.

21. Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and At School*, revised ed. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1856), 156-57. For a comparison between Beecher's domestic ideology and the concerns regarding foreign inhabitants within the nation that shaped imperialist ideology, see Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70 (September 1998): 581-606.

22. *Proceedings* (1900), 106.

23. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 83.

24. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, See especially Ch. 2 "The Exhibitionary Complex," 59-88.

25. Gwendolyn Wright, *Moralism and the Model Home* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 13, 97.

26. See Laura Rigal's discussion of the "nest" as metaphor for familial and national production in *The American Manufactory: Art, Labor, and the World of Things in the Early Republic* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1998), 149-150.

27. Gwendolyn Wright, "Introduction," *Moralism and the Model Home*, 1-6.

28. Andrew Jackson Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, (1850; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 25.

29. Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 78.

30. Alice C. Fletcher, *Historical Sketch of the Omaha Tribe of Indians in Nebraska* (Washington, D.C.: Judd & Detweiler, printers, 1885).

31. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute*, 198.

32. "Our Indian House Warming," *Southern Workman* 3 (April 1884): 43; *Proceedings* (1884), 28; "Indian School," *Southern Workman*, 13 (June 1884): 68.

33. Sara T. Kinney, "Helping Indians to Help Themselves," *The Indian's Friend* 2 (Feb. 1890): 1.

34. *Annual Report of the Women's National Indian Association* (Philadelphia: The Association, 1885), 10.

35. *Annual Report* (1888), 11.

36. Joan Jacobs Brumberg has noted the widespread appeal of what she calls "popular ethnography" for middle-class white women in the nineteenth century. Descriptions of home life in "uncivilized" countries in magazines and at missionary society meetings, she argues, helped middle-class women justify their own positions within U.S. culture. "Zenas and Girlless Villages: The Ethnology of American Evangelical Women, 1870-1910," *The Journal of American History* 69 (Sept. 1982): 347-371.

37. *Annual Report* (1888), 11.

38. Kinney, "Report of the Home Building and Loan Committee," *The Indian's Friend* 5 (Feb. 1893): 3.

39. *Proceedings* (1887), 35.

40. *Proceedings* (1893), 29.

41. "Indian Mothers and Indian Girls," *The Indian's Friend* 2 (June 1890), 3.

42. "Indian Emancipation Day," *Southern Workman* 18 (March 1889), 33.

43. On native girls as workers in Indian industrial schools, see especially Robert Trennert, "Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920."

44. "Field Matrons," *The Indian's Friend* 6 (July 1894): 9-10. For a full historical account of the field matron program, see Lisa E. Emmerich, "'To respect and love and seek the ways of white women': Field Matrons, the Office of Indian Affairs, and Civilization Policy, 1890-1938" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 1987).

45. Lisa E. Emmerich, "Right in the Midst of My Own People," *American Indian Quarterly* 15 (Spring 1991): 212.

46. Biographical information on Anna Dawson Wilde is from Cora M. Folsom, "The Careers of Three Indian Women," *The Congregationalist and Christian World* (March 12, 1904): 374-75 and Engs, *Educating the Disfranchised and Disinherited*, 132.

47. Folsom, "The Careers of Three Indian Women," 374.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Report of Anna Dawson, November 1899, Letters Received 1899/58372 Record Group 75, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives.

50. Report of Anna Dawson Wilde, August 1910, LR 69746/1910, RG 75, BIA, NA.

51. Ella Ripley to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 26, 1905 (encl. 1), LR 87626/1905 RG 75, BIA, NA.

52. The report of the activities of alumni in Carlisle’s journal the *Red Man* for February 1914, contains this entry: “Ella Rickert, now Mrs. Ripley, living at Elbowoods, N. Dak., writes that she is keeping house and that her husband is a Government farmer, and that they are doing nicely.” (“Concerning Ex-Students and Graduates,” *Red Man* 6 (Feb. 1914), 241. Ripley notes in her letter that “When I was Mrs. Wild’s (*sic*) hired girl we used to have [a] good time, she was Miss Dawson then.” Ella Ripley to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 26, 1905 (encl. 1), LR 87626/1905 RG 75, BIA, NA.

53. Engs, *Educating the Disenfranchised and Disinherited*, 132.

54. Ella Ripley to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 28, 1905 (encl. 2), LR 87626/1905 BIA, NA.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*

58. Gerda Lerner, “Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges,” *Feminist Studies* 3 (Fall 1975): 6.

59. See Mary Sylwester’s discussion of the Whitman Mission in “Between Memory and the Dream of Home: Culture and Geography in Women’s Westering Narratives, 1805-1905,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1998).

60. Ella Ripley to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 26, 1905 (encl. 1), LR 87626/1905 RG 75, BIA, NA.

61. Quoted in Emmerich, ““Right in the Midst of My Own People,”” 208.

62. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 59-86.

63. Rigal, *The American Manufactory*, 11.