

ARP, KRISTIN N. D.M.A. Early Native American Bands: The Phoenix Indian School. (2024)  
Directed by Dr. Jennifer S. Walter. 44 pp.

The Phoenix Indian School was a boarding school designed to educate and “civilize” Native American students while assimilating them into white culture. The assimilation tactics used to induce Native American children to behave like white, European colonists were many and varied, and those tactics were forced on students at Native American boarding schools throughout the U.S. Although there were more than 523 Native American assimilation boarding schools in 37 states, the current research study focuses on the Phoenix Indian School and its band program, in operation from 1891 to 1990.

The purpose of this historical case study was to explore the contributions and development of the Phoenix Indian School Band from 1891 to 1990. The researcher used purposive sampling to select the Phoenix Indian School because it was the longest running school that served Native Americans, first as a boarding school and later as a traditional high school. The researcher specifically chose to investigate the Phoenix Indian School Band given its prestigious, national reputation. The researcher utilized the following questions to conduct the study:

1. What impact, if any, did participation in the Phoenix Indian School Band have on Native American students from 1891 to 1990?
2. What contributions, if any, did the Phoenix Indian School Band have on the history and development of bands in the United States?
3. Why is the history of the Phoenix Indian School Band typically left out of discussions of the history of bands in America?

EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN BANDS: THE PHOENIX INDIAN SCHOOL

by

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A Dissertation  
Submitted to  
the Faculty of The Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro

2024

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Before the arrival of white Europeans, North America was inhabited by many indigenous people. When the first colonists arrived in the 1600s, they found a people whom they considered to be “savage” and “inappropriate” in their lifestyles. This led to hostile interactions between the two groups. Over the course of many decades, Native Americans were eventually removed from their lands and forced to move into various government-made reservations across the country. This action was taken primarily for two reasons: 1) so that European colonists could expand westward and claim land for themselves, and 2) to try and create specific areas where the U.S. government can Americanize Tribal people and organize them into small farming communities (Howard University, 2023).

The Indian Removal Act (1830) was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson so that Native Americans would be removed from their land (The History Channel, 2023). President Jackson planned to sell native land to earn money for the U.S. government. Over the next thirty years the U.S. government oversaw the forced relocation of Native Americans to points west of the Mississippi River. Between 1830 and 1850, several thousand men of the U.S. Army pushed Native Americans to their new “home” – newly assigned as “Indian Territory” set up by the federal government (Mandewo, n.d.). On the Trail of Tears, more than fifteen thousand Tribe members from the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole Tribes were forced to walk approximately one thousand miles in the middle of winter (Schurr, n.d.). More than four thousand Native Americans died while making this horrific journey.

By 1863, European colonists moved westward and settled the land known as the Salt River Valley (now known as Phoenix, Arizona). Upon their arrival, the settlers sought to work with the Native Americans inhabiting the land; however, this proved difficult due to conflicting

ways of life. The United States Army arrived in the area in 1865 to protect white community members and businesses from what they perceived as hostile Native Americans. Over the next 20 years, Native Americans were misunderstood in how they dressed, their language, their diet, and their musical and cultural practices (NNABSHC, n.d.). The settlers decided to “educate” Native Americans and teach them the ways of white culture, including religious practices and agriculture.

On July 1, 1889, Thomas Morgan took office as Commissioner of Indian Affairs (DeJong, 2022). While in office, Morgan supported the General Allotment Act (Dawes Act) of 1887, which provided for the distribution of reservation land among individual Native Americans (Otis, 1973; The History Channel, 2023). In fact, Morgan calculated there were 116 million acres in land inhabited by Native Americans (DeJong, 2022). Granting 160 acres to each Native American head of household would occupy 30 million acres, thus leaving a remaining 66 million acres that could be sold at \$1 per acre to whites (DeJong, 2022). In addition, 20 million acres would remain for the Tribes removed from the Southeastern United States to Indian Territory in Oklahoma via the Trail of Tears (Schurr, n.d.).

Commissioner Morgan felt that the education of Native Americans was important. He wrote a proposal in 1891 *Studies in Pedagogy*, that discussed public schools within the United States and how American citizens could become unified by using the English language (Morgan, 1891). Native Americans were included in this plan of a new educational system and the forced use of English as the only language option (DeJong, 2022, NNABSHC, n.d.).

The school system Morgan described (1891) consisted of three types of schools: common schools on reservations, agency boarding schools, and national industrial schools. The curriculum would consist of a universal course of study that included standardized textbooks

with industrial education remaining at the center (Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs (CIIA), 1990). Schools who received federal funds would be limited to speaking English only, which is why every Native American boarding school enforced the restriction of Tribal languages on campus (DeJong, 2022, NNABSHC, n.d.).

Finally, under the General Allotment Act (Dawes Act of 1887), Native Americans received U.S. citizenship in addition to land, which made them subject to federal, state, and local laws. Under these laws, Native Americans would be forced to ignore all knowledge of their Tribal culture to avoid losing their U.S. citizenship. Ignoring Tribal knowledge meant they were forbidden from practicing traditional ceremonies, which included music making. This challenged the Native American cultural vitality and identity.

Music, for example was and remains at the center of Native American life (Smithsonian Music, n.d.). Tribal members conducted ceremonies and passed down oral/aural traditions through music. The inability to perform traditional music was one assimilation tactic utilized that stripped Native Americans of their cultural identity and heritage. According to Juliette Appold at the Library of Congress (2021),

Music serves as a medium of communication to celebrate, invoke, or accompany aspects from the cycle of life. In Native American culture the music is closely connected to and even intertwined with nature. It is an integral part of spiritual, social, moral, and cultural events. Its most traditional instruments are voices, drums, and flutes; and all created sound, melody, and song serve a specific purpose. While contemporary Native American music includes modern instruments and languages, they continue to draw on traditional contents. (¶3)

The U.S. government and settlers believed that education was the best means of assimilating Native Americans into white culture. Government officials also thought education was the only way to regulate a large group of individuals. Initial attempts at reservation schools to assimilate Native American children proved to be unsuccessful, however, because the children would return home and not educate their parents in this new, white way of life.

The U.S. government concluded that Native Americans would not forsake their cultural heritage, therefore they had to be assimilated into a more “appropriate” way of life. Thus, off-reservation boarding schools were created. Indian boarding schools were the genesis of Col. Richard Henry Pratt, who believed, “Kill the Indian, save the man” (Heard Museum, n.d.; Northern Plains Reservation Aid, n.d.). Creating a school away from the reservation would force students to be fully immersed in white society.

Conditions within the boarding schools were poor. Students were often malnourished due to a lack of government funding. The budget to feed students in these schools was eleven cents a day on average in 1928. By contrast, the national average to fully nourish a child in 1928 was thirty-five cents a day (Child, 2000, p. 32). As part of their labor-focused education, students learned to grow and harvest fresh vegetables, fruits, and dairy products (Heard Museum, n.d.). Many families who voluntarily allowed their children to go to boarding school thought they were sending students to receive an academic education. In many cases, however, students were used as cheap labor to keep the boarding school functional.

Overcrowding in the schools was common. Students often shared beds or slept outside on sleeping porches despite the cold weather in midwestern and southwestern states. Diseases such as influenza, measles, trachoma, and tuberculosis were rampant through the schools due to

poor diet, living conditions, and overcrowding (Child, 2000). An underpaid staff that was not well-trained in medical matters only exacerbated the issues (Little, 2023).

To make matters worse, in 1898, Commissioner Jones insisted that an attendance law be passed for Native American children (Child, 2000). This law would give the government more power to remove children from their reservations and place them in schools, regardless of health or age. Many students who were recruited were either sick or too young to be attending boarding schools.

Public health physicians began to take notice of the dramatic increase in sickness in Native American children at the boarding schools. Additionally, parents were rarely, if at all, informed of their children's illnesses. Many parents would hear about their children through rumors on the reservations before ever hearing a word from school officials that something was wrong or that their children were unhealthy. This included injuries that occurred during vocational training or during weekend hunting activities.

Furthermore, it became the policy of boarding schools to prevent children from returning home once they had arrived (Child, 2000). Boarding school administrators would not allow students to return home for vacation or summer breaks. Administrators felt that if students returned home to their families for any extended amount of time, they would regress in their education. Therefore, many students in assimilation boarding schools suffered from homesickness.

For the few that did return home, they were greeted by families who did not recognize them. Often, students were no longer considered part of the Tribe and viewed as outcasts. The students could not speak their Native language and their appearance had changed (NNABSHC, n.d.). The students' hair was cut, they were required to wear surplus military uniforms, and to

speaking English (NNABSHC, n.d.). Children were taken as early as four or five years of age from their homes and by the age of fourteen at the latest. They would remain at the school until they were nineteen and missed many coming-of-age opportunities in their Tribes. For example, young people were given greater responsibilities and had a more important role in caring for their families as teenagers. They would miss these rites of passage when they were sent to assimilation boarding schools.

The assimilation tactics used to induce Native American children to behave like white colonists were many and varied, and those tactics were forced on students at Native American boarding schools throughout the U.S. Although there were more than 523 Native American assimilation boarding schools in 37 states (NNABSHC, n.d.), the current research study focuses on the Phoenix Indian School and its band program, in operation from 1891 to 1990.

Therefore, the purpose of this historical, case study was to explore the contributions and development of the Phoenix Indian School Band from 1891 to 1990. The researcher used purposive sampling to select the Phoenix Indian School because it was the longest running school that served Native Americans, first as a boarding school and later as a traditional high school. The researcher specifically chose to investigate the Phoenix Indian School Band given its prestigious, national reputation. The researcher utilized the following questions to conduct the study:

1. What impact, if any, did participation in the Phoenix Indian School Band have on Native American students from 1891 to 1990?
2. How did white audiences perceive the Phoenix Indian School Band?
3. Why is the history of the Phoenix Indian School Band typically left out of discussions of the history of bands in America?

### ***Limitations***

The current study has had two primary limitations. First, other Native American boarding schools were not examined as part of this study. Second, band programs from the other Native American boarding schools were outside the scope of this study.



## CHAPTER II: HISTORY OF THE PHOENIX INDIAN SCHOOL

Native American boarding schools were created throughout the United States as part of a comprehensive public school system that was established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The boarding schools were fully funded by the United States federal government. These schools had one goal in mind: to make certain that Native Americans were educated and assimilated into white society. The Phoenix Indian School was one such boarding school. Chapter II is an introduction to the Phoenix Indian School including its genesis, administration, student population, and evolution during its nearly 100-year history.

The Phoenix Indian School was built on 80,000 acres of land that was donated by the citizens of Phoenix, Arizona. In 1881, this territory became formally known as Phoenix, and in February 1912, Arizona was granted statehood. On September 3, 1891, the Phoenix Indian School, originally called the U.S. Indian Industrial School, opened its doors. According to Handel and Humphries (2005) “Its purpose was to train Native Americans in industrial and other manual labor, to show them the advantages of a ‘civilized’ and modern society, and to teach them the ways of the white man” (p. 148). While enrolled in the school, students participated in academic, agricultural, and vocational classes. They were trained to speak English along with learning other skills, such as cooking, ironing, washing, and growing food and flowers. When the school first opened, only boys could attend. Girls arrived a few years later and were charged with sewing, cleaning, and cooking. Administrators at the boarding school split the curriculum in half with 50% of the time focused on reading and writing English and performing vocational work, and the other 50% focused on civics and Christian values.

The basic objectives of these pioneers of Indian industrial education thus centered on teaching the English language, the work ethic, Christian moral principles, and the

responsibilities of citizenship; Indian students were to be “Americanized.” On Sunday, students would be sent to local churches to sit through services. (Chavez, 2022)

The Phoenix Indian School stood as an example of the government’s commitment to educating Native Americans. The goal was to bring Native Americans into an assimilation process through vocational programs and a federal school system. The first Tribes who were targeted by the government were the Pima and Maricopa (Troutman, 2012). Collectively, these Tribal members numbered just over 5,000 and were viewed as the most friendly and ready for assimilation (Troutman, 2019).

Many students found that the skills they learned at the boarding school were not applicable to reservation life. For example, agriculture differed on the reservation. The growth of crops was different, the actual crops being grown were different; thus, the techniques students learned were not applicable. Students were learning to work on vehicles and repair tools/machinery for agricultural use while attending assimilation boarding schools. This equipment did not exist on the reservation. There were few vehicles and machines to fix. Additionally, reservation life was very different economically than living in the city, so students often chose to leave the reservation to find gainful employment and make a living in nearby cities and towns. By leaving the reservation, former boarding school students terminated their day-to-day involvement in the Tribe, moved away to work, and were having families outside of Tribal cultures and customs, assimilating further into a typical American lifestyle (American Archive of Public Broadcasting, n.d.). Helen Sekaquatewa, for instance, described her return to the Hopi Mesas from the Phoenix Indian School in 1918.

I didn’t feel at ease in the home of my parents now. My father, my mother, my sister, and my older brother told me to take off those clothes and wear Hopi attire...I didn’t wear

them...My mother said she was glad I was home. If I would stay there, she would not urge me to change my ways. I could wear any kind of clothes that I wanted to wear if I would just stay home with her. (Lindauer, 1998)

The negative impacts of former Native American boarding school students having moved away from reservations remains present in the lives of Native Americans today. Deb Haaland, the current Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior (2021) stated,

I am the product of these horrific assimilation policies. My maternal grandparents were stolen from their families when they were only eight years old and were forced to live away from their parents, culture, and communities until they were thirteen. Many children like them never made it back home. The Phoenix Indian School was created to assimilate Native Americans to a way of life that made every effort to deny who they were because it was different from what the rest of society was familiar with. (Haaland, 2021).

Administrators at the Phoenix Indian School were employed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and were given the role of headmaster. At the time of establishment of the Phoenix Indian School (1891), Commissioner Thomas Morgan suggested that hired staff have a “high degree of moral fitness and a positive religious character” (Trennert, 1988, p. 16). He stated further, “You will be called upon to train pupils who, for the most part, are pagan or heathen, and have had no religious training” (Trennert, 1988, p. 17). Headmasters then hired matrons, industrial teachers, and clerks to educate the students. Matrons monitored students throughout the day, educating and overseeing their academic studies. They also monitored students as they moved through the hallways to go to different classes. Matrons directed activities such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, and housekeeping. Industrial teachers were hired to instill students

with vocational skills. Industrial teachers taught students to work the land around the school and to learn skills such as carpentry and blacksmithing. Clerks were hired to monitor the day-to-day operations of the school and the students. They kept records of resources and materials that were produced by the students at the school. In addition, they arranged off-campus town days and other social activities for the students throughout the school year.

Children were not initially treated with kindness by headmasters, teachers, matrons, and clerks. Many of the staff at the Phoenix Indian School felt that their role was to civilize the Native American children and not necessarily educate them. Students were often punished or disciplined unnecessarily related to the common practices of their Indian heritage and upbringing.

When the Phoenix Indian School first opened its doors, there was only one teacher for forty students. In effect, classroom education was second in terms of priority for the students. A greater emphasis was placed on vocational and agricultural training, rather than academic learning. Specific to agriculture, students were taught that soil, climate, and general conditions directly affected the type of crop that could be harvested, as well as its success. Students were taught to grow wheat, corn, potatoes, and garden vegetables (Reel, 1901), which was likely not what students from Tribes were used to growing.

Care of livestock was also included in daily instruction. Students were taught to care for cows, horses, chickens, and pigs (Reel, 1901). Students learned to groom and feed each type of animal, as well as harvest milk, eggs, and meat (Reel, 1901). General care of the animals was also taught including barn maintenance, stable care, pens, and corrals. Students were taught to keep these areas clean and neat to keep all animals healthy and in an environment that would promote quality growth.

In their vocational studies, students were taught to repair and build fences, dig ditches, care for trees and plants, and repair farm equipment, such as harnesses and vehicles (Reel, 1901). Students were also taught carpentry, blacksmithing, basketry, shoemaking, sewing, upholstering, and tailoring (Reel, 1901). Blacksmithing skills were taught so that boys could shoe a horse, set a tire on a wheel, and be able to repair any equipment used in farming or dairying (Reel, 1901). Administrators felt that students would be more successful in life if they had general knowledge of how to build what they needed. Thus, students were taught basic levels of carpentry to either aid in farming or in blacksmithing. Students were first trained in carpentry by learning to mold clay and eventually they learned to create their own toys (Reel, 1901).

Figure 1 lists the full curriculum for students at Native American boarding schools nationally. This curriculum was set in place by Estelle Reel, the first woman elected to Wyoming public office as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1895 (Heard Museum, n.d.; Reel, 1901). She was also appointed Superintendent of Indian Schools by President William McKinley in 1898 (Reel, 1901). Of the thirty subjects listed below, only eight are considered academic courses. The remaining twenty-two subjects are considered either vocational or agricultural. Academic subjects were not prioritized over vocational and agricultural study. Agricultural study was needed to provide resources for the students while they were at the boarding school. Vocational study ensured that students could participate in the “outing system,” which allowed Native American students to earn money either for themselves or for the school by providing services to community members (Heard Museum, n.d.). This system also allowed the community to see how well the assimilation process was working as they received help from Native American students who were “well-mannered” and able to be trusted by school administrators.

**Figure 1. Course of study for the Indian Schools of the United States (Reel, 1901).**

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The philosophy of the Phoenix Indian School evolved over the years. The publication of The Meriam Report in 1928 was the catalyst for change in Native American boarding schools. This report was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation rather than the federal government to avoid misinformation presented in the report. This report detailed the poor treatment of Native Americans within the boarding schools and reservations. Margaret Szasz, Research Fellow at the School of Divinity, History, and Philosophy, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, specializes in Native American History and Comparative Indigenous History. She referred to The Merriam Report as “the symbol of a definitive response to the failure of fifty years of assimilation policy.” Beginning in 1931, the Phoenix Indian School began to make changes towards educating Native Americans, not only in vocational work, but in the actual teaching of academic subjects. These changes promoted the involvement of families on the reservations, leading to the creation of a Parent Teacher’s Association in the late 1970’s.

The Phoenix Indian School closed its doors in 1990 due to a decrease in funding from the Reagan administration. Without consistent staffing and resources, fewer students attended and on May 24, 1990, the Phoenix Indian School hosted its final graduation ceremony.

## CHAPTER III: METHOD

Chapter III contains a brief explanation of the methodology used to acquire information regarding the Phoenix Indian School (later Phoenix Indian High School) and its inhabitants.

### *Participants*

Participants in this research included John Troutman, Curator of Music and Musical Instruments for the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives and Amanda Hiatt, Associate Librarian of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona (the physical site of the Phoenix Indian School). What follows is an exploration of the contributions of these three individuals.

### *Materials*

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Materials acquired involved extensive newspaper clippings, photographs, and information from public displays from both the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. From the Smithsonian, the researcher gathered photographs of contextual history of the relationships between Native Americans and white settlers. From the Heard Museum, the researcher received photographs of the Phoenix Indian School Band from 1900 to 1982, along with newspaper clippings and concert programs detailing performance and repertoire for the band from 1901 to 1969.

### *Procedure*

Institutional Review Board permission was sought in 2023 to gain permission to complete an interview with John Troutman. Through the IRB process, it was determined that interviewing this participant did not constitute research with human subjects. Therefore, data collection proceeded after this notification.



An unstructured interview with Dr. John Troutman was conducted on May 10, 2023, and lasted approximately 46 minutes. Dr. Troutman gave the researcher permission to record the interview. After explaining the project, Dr. Troutman and the researcher proceeded to discuss sources and locations for the best information regarding this study. Dr. Troutman recommended a search through the archives center at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives Research Center. Literature from Dr. Troutman's teachers was also recommended. Specifically, the following books: *Boarding School Seasons* by Brenda J. Child, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* by K. Tsianina Lomawaima, and *Indian Blues: American Indians and the Politics of Music, 1879–1934* by John Troutman.

The researcher also worked with Amanda Hiatt, Associate Librarian of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona (housed in the former main building of the Phoenix Indian School) across the span of six months. Items provided from the Heard Museum included concert band programs, newspaper clippings, certificates, award letters, and photographs of the Phoenix Indian School Band from 1900–1980.

## CHAPTER IV: BAND PARTICIPATION AND STUDENTS

Chapter IV contains a detailed history of the Phoenix Indian School band program and the band students. In particular, the researcher examined the uniforms, repertoire, instrumentation, performances, travel, and performance at community events. Included are artifacts from the early, middle, and late periods within the categories of uniforms, repertoire, instrumentation, and travel. Early artifacts covered the period from 1891 to around 1929. Middle-period artifacts covered the period from approximately 1930-1959. And late period artifacts were presented from the period 1960-1991. The researcher examined the first research question, specifically, which reads, “What impact, if any, did participation in the Phoenix Indian School Band have on Native American students from 1891 to 1990?”

The Phoenix Indian School Band first began as a marching band program formed in the mid-1890s. They performed for the student body and civic groups (Seelye & Littleton, 2013). From the perspective of the public, the band represented a sure sign that Native American education was a “civilizing” endeavor (O’Connell, 2012). The first public appearance of the band was in the fall of 1894 as part of a winter carnival sponsored by the school (Handel & Humphreys, 2005). School officials hoped that this carnival would show the city that providing Native Americans with an education was a worthwhile investment.

To that end, a marching band was ideal for its structure required self-discipline and routine. Self-discipline came in the form of marching in formation, dressing accurately in a uniform, and learning to be uniform in posture and presentation. Routines were the result of strict schedules students were told to follow. Routines consisted of bedtimes, wake-up times, meals, classes, and vocational work.

There was a division among males and females in terms of participation. Females were not permitted to participate in outdoor marching bands; therefore, they were taught to play piano and worked on parlor music (Troutman, 2019). Male students were formed into brass and marching bands. Male students were viewed as needing a more regimented routine; one that a marching band could provide to fully assimilate their bodies and minds into white culture.

### *Uniforms*

Students were provided surplus military uniforms to wear during school hours and during their participation in the band. Uniforms were not a part of the Native American culture. Wearing uniforms was far removed from anything that they had either worn or were used to wearing. Most, if not all Native American clothing was handmade with resources from their environment (i.e. animal fur, animal skin, etc.). Figure 2 is the Phoenix Indian School Band and the student body on the campus grounds in 1900. This photo showcases the uniforms worn by the students when the school first opened.

**Figure 2. The Phoenix Indian School Band and student body on school grounds (1900).**

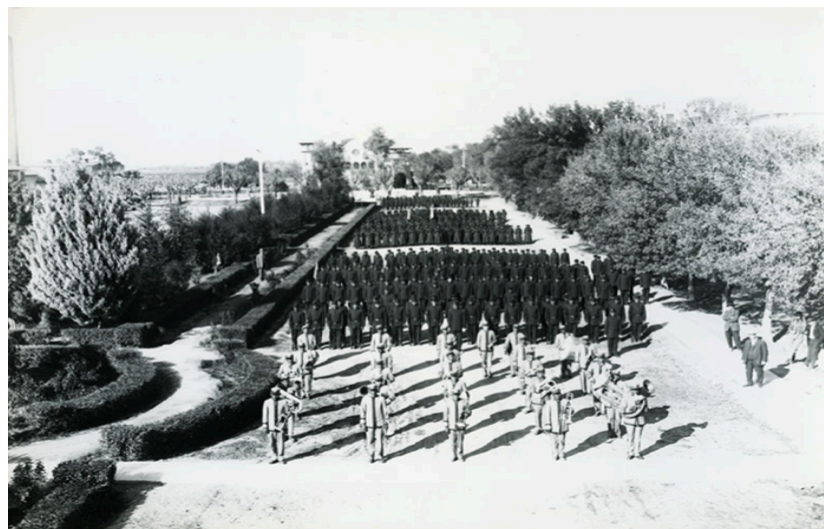


Figure 3 is a model of the uniform worn by students at the Phoenix Indian School on display at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. This photo is an enhanced presentation of the

uniform that allows for the full display of this military design. This uniform aided in the assimilation process in that all students looked the same. Their appearance was not unique to the Tribe they came from. Instead, they were all given the same appearance to change this mindset of belonging to a Tribe. Uniforms also made the presentation of the Native Americans to the public more familiar. White audiences did not see Native American students marching and playing in the parade. They saw students marching and playing in the parade.

**Figure 3. Uniform worn by students at the Phoenix Indian School [n.d].**



Much like other high school bands, uniforms for the Phoenix Indian School Band gradually changed throughout the years the school remained open. Military uniforms gave way to a uniform that fit a more up-to-date style of band uniform in the United States. Figure 4 illustrates the Phoenix Indian School Band in a uniform that was dated around 1950. Notice the students were not wearing military uniforms, but a uniform that resembled what one might have seen on a typical high school marching band in the mid-twentieth century. Students were not wearing military hats or shakos. Instead, they were wearing headbands with a feather in the back.

This appeared to be a way for the ensemble to appeal to the white audiences that they played for. We know this simply for the use of the feather. Feathers held a great degree of significance for some Tribes, but it was highly dependent on how the feather was used and where it was placed. Some Tribes wore feathers braided in their hair, while others would wear them in a headdress or on their clothing. Where the feather was placed and in what ceremony it was used was specific to each Tribe.

**Figure 4. Phoenix Indian School Band on school grounds (1950).**



Figure 5 illustrates the Phoenix Indian School band in 1982 at a performance in Papago Buttes, a park located in Scottsdale, Arizona with buttes formed of sandstone. Notice the students were wearing matching shirts and pants rather than military uniforms. This photo represents not only a natural evolution of band uniforms from 1900–1982, but also a sense of individualism for the students. Yes, there was uniformity in wearing matching clothes, but these clothes were not masking who they were as human beings and members of indigenous Tribes.



Individual faces, haircuts, and expressions from these students were evidenced in the photograph. They were not hidden by a hat or a headband with a feather. This progression of strict uniformity to a less controlled appearance is the result of the progress of the publication of The Meriam Report in 1928. From 1931 to 1990, Native American boarding schools took on a new direction of education. Assimilation processes were reduced, and academic education held a higher priority.

**Figure 5. Phoenix Indian School Band at Papago Buttes (1982).**



Repertoire was another area used to assimilate Native Americans within the boarding schools. Since students were not allowed to play music from their various Tribes, tracking the progression of repertoire played by the Phoenix Indian School Band gives researchers historical context into the types of music played by the PIS Band.

### ***Repertoire***

Local newspapers documented the Phoenix Indian School Band. *The Arizona Republican*, the city's major newspaper, wrote, "It is worthy of comment that the Native American School

Band’s repertoire consists largely of classical music, it is playing very few ragtime and cakewalk nondescripts...as a result, people will hear music that will claim their attention and admiration” (Handel & Humphries, 2005, p. 151). The school’s newspaper, *The Native American*, also raved about the popularity of the band with its high-quality music writing, stating “The school band plays music written by the best composers of the day, avoiding the trashy and inconsequential,” (Handel & Humphries, 2005, p. 151).

Figure 6 contains a concert program from 1901 detailed the music played by the Phoenix Indian School Band (Phoenix Indian School Students, 1915). Students were not only learning Sousa marches and opera transcriptions, but they were getting the opportunity to perform them in front of the Arizona community (Troutman, 2019). The fact that students were playing this type of music is not unique or profound. What is unique and profound is the fact that this type of music held no significance within their culture. Never had they been forced to play music that did not serve a purpose within their Tribe.

**Figure 6. The Phoenix Indian School Band Concert Program (1901).**

<i>Chicago Tribune March</i> .....	W. Paris Chambers
<i>Poet and Peasant Overture</i> .....	Franz von Suppé
<i>Moonlight on the Nile</i> .....	Karl King
<i>Atlantis: Suite in Four Parts</i> .....	Vincent F. Safranek
<i>American Patrol</i> .....	Frank W. Meacham
<i>Teddy: Trombone Novelty</i> .....	Henry Fillmore
<i>The Death of Custer</i> .....	Lee Johnson
<i>Stars and Stripes Forever</i> .....	John Philip Sousa

Figure 7 includes an additional program for the Phoenix Indian School Band from 1901 with similar programming strategies. It was important to view these two programs side-by-side to see the consistency of programming within the band program. The similarities in structure and repertoire between the Sousa Band and the Phoenix Indian School Band suggested that the choice to model the PIS Band program after the Sousa Band was deliberate. Perhaps the supposition was that this choice led to a more assimilated way of life for the band students.

**Figure 7. The Phoenix Indian School Band First Inaugural Concert Program (1901).**

<i>The Phoenix Indian School March</i> .....	Carlo Contrado
<i>Light Calvary</i> .....	Franz von Suppé
<i>The Lost Chord</i> .....	Arthur Sullivan
<i>The Lily of the Nile</i> .....	Gérard Berliner
<i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> .....	Gaetano Donizetti
<i>Medley Overture, Happy Home</i> .....	Chattanay
<i>Dusky Dues</i> .....	Arthur Schwartz

In 1906, the Phoenix Indian School Band was under the direction of P.A.Venne (Hilliard, 2016). Under his direction, the band remained one of the most sought-after entertainment and civic groups in the city of Phoenix (Hilliard, 2016). Band members gave regular Sunday afternoon concerts at the oval, which was “a space behind the school administration building, where a bandstand had been built for musicians to perform” (Handel & Humphries 2005, p. 154). These afternoon concerts were described as an eloquent way to answer the question, “Why educate the Native American?” (Handel & Humphries, 2005, p. 154).

Figure 8 is a program from the band and chorus concert in 1958. The band opened their portion of the concert with an arrangement of *The Stars and Stripes Forever* and ended with a



famous Sousa march, *El Capitan*. Notice that marches by Karl King were also programmed, along with *Them Basses* by Getty Herschel Huffine. What was interesting is what was found in the repertoire for the choir. The choir sang Mexican folk tunes and spirituals. Perhaps it was because those tunes, were staples in the choir repertoire or perhaps there was a deeper meaning to this programming; that which was beyond the scope of this study.

**Figure 8. The Phoenix Indian School Band Winter Visitors' Program (1958).**

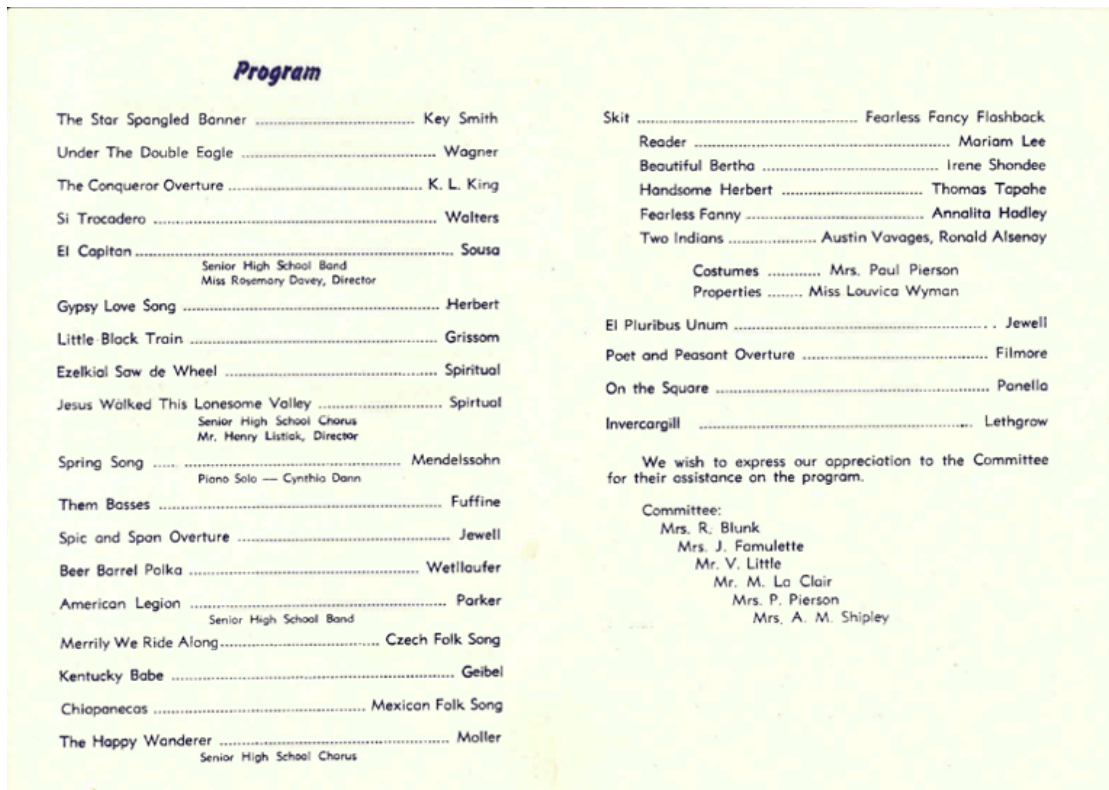


Figure 9 is a program from a band and choir concert in 1969. The music for the band can be found on the right-hand side of the program and illustrated similar repertoire choices. Works by Mendelssohn and Beethoven, orchestral and opera transcriptions, were programmed, rather than music that depicted the culture and heritage of Native American students or by Native American composers.

**Figure 9. The Phoenix Indian School Band and Choir Concert Program (1969).**

C H O R U S	B A N D
O God, Creator Blest..... Franck	Two Ceremonial Marches..... Davis 1. March from the Consecration of the House..... Beethoven 2. Royal Pageantry..... Davis
Land of Hope and Glory..... Elgar	Midsummer Night's Dream..... Arr. Davis Nocturne (night music)..... Mendelssohn
A Canticle of Peace..... Clokey	The Westerners..... Walters
Stranger in Paradise..... Wright and Forrest	Let There Be Peace on Earth..... Miller and Jackson
Sunrise, Sunset..... Bock	It's a Small World; The Happy Wanderer..... Sherman--Powers From Walt Disney Picture
Little David, Play On Your Harp..... Cain	Saxene (Valse Caprice)..... Hunter Maybelle Draper..... Alto Saxophone Solo Sandra Kinther..... Accompanist
My Fair Lady..... Lerner and Loewe	Theme from 2nd Piano Concerto..... Rachmaninoff -- Ployhar Mariachi..... Walters
Country Style..... Van Heusen and Burke	Trostung (Consolation)..... Mendelssohn -- Davis From "Songs without Words"
The Quaker Lover..... Folk Song	Born to be Free..... Williams (Only in relation to others, not just to ourselves)
Buggy Ride..... Spaeth and Bell	
Gonna Build A Mountain..... Bricusse and Newley	

***Instrumentation***

Marching bands or brass bands were the first ensembles developed in Native American boarding schools (O’Connell, 2012). The instrumentation for the Phoenix Indian School Band was modeled after British brass bands (O’Connell, 2012) and brass and percussion instruments filled the ranks of the ensemble in the early years of the band program. Woodwind instruments were added soon after. Figure 10 illustrates the instrumentation of the band at the Phoenix Indian School in the 1900s. Students were holding cornets, tenor horns, and small-bore tenor trombones.

**Figure 10. The Phoenix Indian School Band Instrumentation (1900).**



Students who participated in the marching band endured a strict routine of daily drills and rehearsals. Band members were taught to march in formation and did many of their daily tasks to various drum cadences and bugle calls (Trennert, 1988). Students were provided instruments that were surpluses from the American Civil War and World War I (Troutman, 2019). Native Americans would use these instruments to express themselves, even though they were being

forced to play music that had nothing to do with their own culture. Many Native Americans who were exposed to music through the boarding schools went on to have successful freelance careers in jazz (e.g. Albert Manus Screamer, Cherokee) and orchestras (e.g. David Russell Hill, Onondaga) (Troutman, 2019). Tribal instruments had been banned once the students arrived at the boarding schools. This initiative began in the earliest days on the reservation when the U.S. Government engaged in surveillance of the music and musical instruments Native Americans were using.

Figure 11 lists the instrumentation of the Phoenix Indian School Band in 1900. It was striking that, only nine years after the school opened, there was a fully functioning ensemble with complete instrumentation. Notice the names of the students in Figure 11. Students were from Native American Tribes and yet there were names listed such as “Albert Bread,” “Grover Cleveland,” and “Nat White.” It was common for administrators and matrons to have changed students’ names as part of the assimilation process.

**Figure 11. Instrumentation of the Phoenix Indian School Band (ca. 1900).**

Oscar Norton, drum major	Mariano Candelaria, bassoon
William Peters, piccolo and flute	Andres Moya, solo B $\flat$ clarinet
Cleoda Gonzales, oboe	Grover Cleveland, solo B $\flat$ clarinet
Juan Zamora, solo B $\flat$ clarinet	Elmer Sundust, first B $\flat$ cornet
Kitso Lotta, first B $\flat$ clarinet	Alex Lewis, second B $\flat$ cornet
Nat White, first B $\flat$ clarinet	Albert Bread, first horn
Ernest Chusay, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Nelson Miles, second horn
Lonnie Jackson, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Jose Pablo, third alto
Edward Manonka, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Sam Oetama, fourth alto
Calino Smith, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Kay Ethelba, euphonium
Jack Sands, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Robert Lewis, first trombone
James P. Hammond, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Juan Andon, second trombone
George Wilson, second B $\flat$ clarinet	Lancisco Hill, E $\flat$ tuba
Roh McCowan, solo E $\flat$ clarinet	Jose O. Montano, second tuba
Cyriaco Ardia, second E $\flat$ clarinet	Joseph Milda, B $\flat\flat$ bass
E. Henry Carrell, alto clarinet	Alfred Scott, string bass

Harris George, soprano saxophone  
Francis Clark, alto saxophone  
Thomas Johns, tenor saxophone  
Thomas Allison, baritone saxophone

Ambrosio Lusardi, string bass  
Jose Makil, snare drum and traps  
Josiah Allen, bass drum

Figure 12 depicts the number of students in the Phoenix Indian School Band from an announcement posted in an unknown source—likely a newspaper or a school newsletter. The announcement described specific instrumentation needs and indicated the total number of members as forty-three including auxiliary personnel.

**Figure 12. Clipping from an unidentified, undated publication [n.d].**

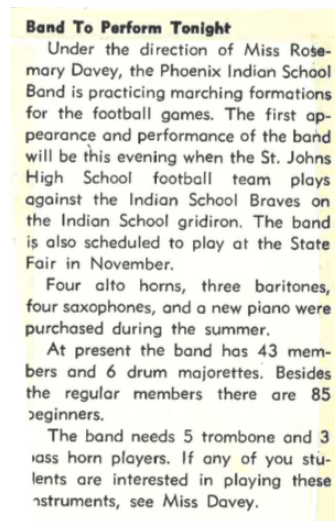


Figure 13 is a photo from the early 1900s of the Phoenix Indian School Band lining up to march in a parade in Phoenix prior to a school football game. Brass and percussion instruments were the main instruments present. Tubas, trumpets, and large bass drums were in the hands of students as they prepared to showcase their talents before the Phoenix community.



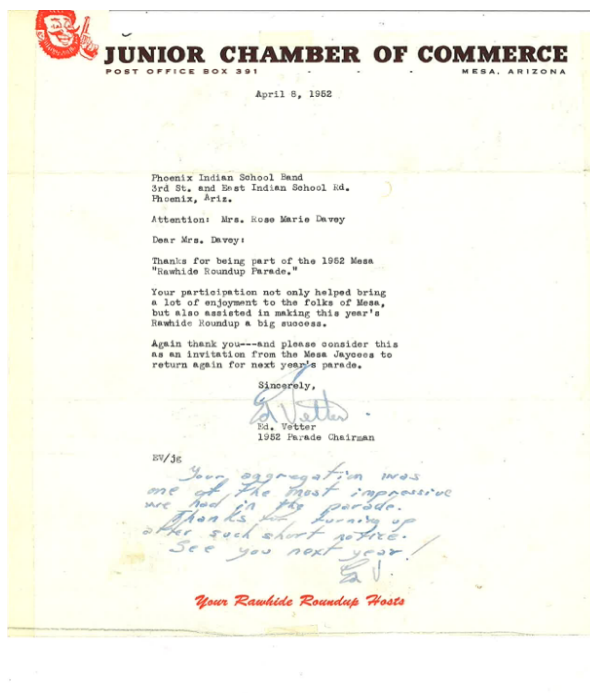
**Figure 13. The Phoenix Indian School Band marches in a parade after school [n.d.].**



### *Performances*

Early Phoenix Indian School bands were found marching in parades and presidential inaugurations, such as for Ronald Reagan in 1981 (Troutman, 2019). Performances in sit-down concert halls were also very common (e.g., Carnegie Hall). The band was considered a pillar of the community among the community members in Phoenix. Figure 14 is a letter of appreciation from Junior Chamber of Commerce in Mesa, Arizona. The Phoenix Indian School Band had participated in the “Rawhide Roundup Parade” and were viewed as a great success. This event was held high in the eyes of the community and the band’s participation made the event feel more communal.

Figure 14. Participation Letter - Rawhide Roundup Parade (1952).



The success of the band program had a direct correlation to the success of the school. If the band program was deemed successful by the public in Phoenix, then the boarding schools must be doing good work in assimilating Native Americans. Therefore, it was a way for the community to be proud of and to publicly support the Phoenix Indian School, regardless of the harrowing experiences the students were facing each day.

### ***Travel***

School officials began planning ways to make the school, its students, and its band more visible to the public. On June 25, 1899, the Phoenix Indian School Band traveled by train to the Omaha Exposition in Nebraska (Handel & Humphries, 2005). On the same trip, the group played concerts in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Kansas City, Missouri (Handel & Humphries, 2005). Students viewed this as a vacation as they were able to leave the worries of the boarding school behind and see the country from a different point of view. One student in the band was quoted as saying,

When we were on the train, we set our faces once more to the beautiful buildings at the exposition and gave three cheers for Omaha. I think we will never forget what a good time we had during our vacation instead of spending it on the reservation (Thomas Allison, Handel & Humphries, 2005, p. 150).

In this context, the student referred to the school as the reservation, as it was now their new home away from their families on the actual reservation.

The Phoenix Indian School Band traveled frequently to fairs and expositions to educate the public about the kind of education Native American students were experiencing in Phoenix. Figure 15 is a participation certificate for the Phoenix Indian School Band for their participation in the Arizona State Fair in 1954.

**Figure 15. Participation Award - Arizona State Fair (1954).**



In the 1920s and 1940s the band toured as far away as Atlantic City, New Jersey and Washington, D.C. (Montgomery, 2023). In 1950, Rosemary Davey led the group in California's Rose Parade, making the Phoenix Indian School Band the first Native American school to participate (Montgomery, 2023). These public-facing activities were the exact type of



propaganda school officials hoped would benefit the school and the students, to show the public that assimilating Native Americans into white society as children was the right thing to do. The *Arizona Gazette* pointed out that, “The Native American School Band will be on the train to show the East that not all the good Native Americans have passed away, and that the money spent in their education has brought good results” (Handel & Humphries, 2005, p. 155). The term “good results” meant that the Native American children were conforming to white culture. The band must have felt like a refuge to these students; something they could find solace in to endure the hardships and loneliness of leaving their families behind.

### ***Community Events***

The Phoenix Indian School Band participated in many community events throughout the years. The most popular of those functions were parades. Some of these parades would be held in Phoenix, but the band was also invited to participate in parades across the country. Upon inquiry of the school’s band, a community member claimed,

The band is one of the institutions of which Phoenix is proud, and in fact everybody is proud of it who has heard it and has an interest in the education of the Native American, or half an ear for music. (Handel & Humphries, 2005, p. 153).

On July 5, 1983, the Phoenix Indian School Band led the July Fourth Parade in Washington, D.C. A quote from the paper stated, “The 86 members of the band worked since September to raise \$50,000 to pay for their trip to the nation’s capital and to march in Monday’s parade” (Arizona Republic, 1983). Figure 16 is a photo of the band performing in the parade. At the time, over thirteen Indian Tribes were represented in the band’s membership (Navajo Times, 1983).

**Figure 16. Independence Day Parade, Washington, D.C., on July 5 (1983).**



Prior to their arrival in Washington, D.C., the Phoenix Indian School Band performed in the Philadelphia Independence Day Parade on July 3rd, 1983. Figure 17 is a photo of the band leading the Philadelphia parade. “Ms. Ileana McElwee, band director, said the trip was an educational experience plus an opportunity of a lifetime for members of the Phoenix Indian High School band” (Navajo Times, 1983). Julius Gilbert, a member of the band, shared that he felt the band’s participation in the parade proved the band could achieve a goal that many people thought was impossible (Navajo Times, 1983), which was to get to the East coast of the United States to perform. The students played over fifty concerts, hosted bake sales, and a basketball tournament to raise enough funds to participate in these two parades (Navajo Times, 1983). Figure 18 is a flier created by students to promote donations for this historic trip.

Figure 17. Independence Day Parade, Philadelphia, PA on July 3 (1983).

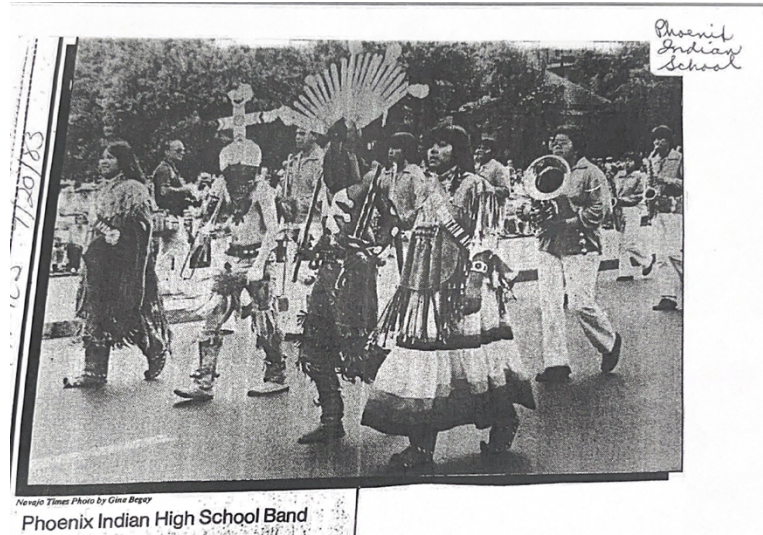


Figure 18. Phoenix Indian School Band requesting donations (ca. 1983).



## CHAPTER V: CONTRIBUTIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR

### FURTHER STUDY

In chapter five, the researcher examines research question three, and discusses conclusions of the research and implications for further study. Research question three is:

3. Why are the contributions of the Phoenix Indian School Band not in the narrative of American band history?

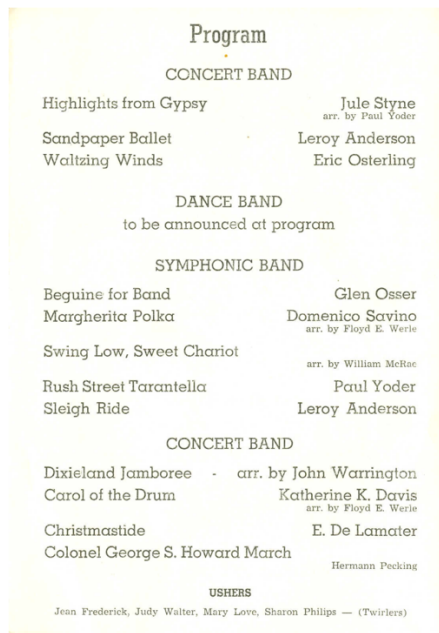
To answer this question, it is important to consider the current authors of band history. The history of bands in America has been written by band directors, not musicologists or historians.

As a result, band history is steeped in what band directors deem necessary or unnecessary to the narrative. Band directors such as Donald Hunsberger, Frederick Fennell, and others were writing band history around specific pieces of wind band repertoire, not around historical events. This is an important aspect to consider in dealing with research at such a limited scope. One reason Native American bands are excluded from band history is due to the lack of research completed on high school bands, specifically K–12 within the United States. These authors were writing about collegiate and professional bands and their repertoire, not the growth and contributions of high school bands in the United States.

The contributions of the Phoenix Indian School Band (and indeed all Native American boarding school bands) are missing from the history of American bands that exists in colleges and universities today. Perhaps Native American boarding school bands were not considered unique during the peak of their popularity. The Phoenix Indian School Band, for example, did not sound or look different from other white bands that audiences experienced live at that time.

We know from concert programs in Texas and Iowa that high school bands were playing the same repertoire as the Phoenix Indian School Band during the 1950's and 60's. Figure 19 and Figure 20 illustrate concert band programs from public high schools in Ida Grove, Iowa and Lamesa, Texas. Assimilation in that sense seems successful in that the students were made to act and sound like every other band program in the country.

**Figure 19. Ida Grove High School Band Concert Program (1960).**



**Figure 20. Lamesa High School Band Concert Program (1960).**

*March from First Suite in Eb for Military Band* .....Gustav Holst  
*Slavonic Folk Suite* ..... Alfred Reed  
*Symphonic Suite*..... Clifton Williams

Audiences knew that Phoenix Indian School Band members were Native American students from the boarding school. Perhaps audiences did not notice or were unaware of the unique qualities of the band members because the students' appearances and social behaviors had been adapted so that they looked more like the community members of Phoenix. The

formation of boarding schools to assimilate indigenous children into white culture happened solely to sustain the supremacy of white culture while simultaneously tearing down indigenous cultures deemed “savage.” Events such as these tend to be “white-washed” from history textbooks in U.S. schools, causing the details of the oppression to be lost, overlooked, or ignored.

Furthermore, Native American boarding schools were used as a form of propaganda to market the assimilation model that they stood for. As previously mentioned, students’ hair was cut, Tribal clothes removed, and uniforms were required to ensure that Native American students conformed to white culture. Student uniforms changed significantly overtime. Originally, uniforms were carried over from the military as a means of forced assimilation and structure. Overtime, uniforms became a form of costuming to advertise the government’s success to assimilate Native Americans into white culture. Fringed outfits and feathers in headbands were a white construct of what white Americans believed Native Americans looked like.

Finally, in conducting research for this document, the researcher gained further understanding of the relationships between Native Americans and white settlers. The researcher also gained knowledge of the reasoning behind the creation of the boarding school, along with the creation of the band program. What is still difficult to discern is the impact of the band program on the students themselves. Students participated and traveled with the group, but it is difficult to truly know how they felt about performance and travel because that knowledge has been lost.

### ***Implications for Further Study***

When considering the direction of further study to pursue, creating awareness is the first step. Many are unaware that assimilation boarding schools existed, let alone that they may have

had a successful and thriving band program. Creating awareness can be accomplished through a variety of means: publishing articles, presenting sessions at conferences, and completing recording projects of music by Native American composers (e.g. *The Phoenix Indian School March* by Carlo Contrado and the *Carlisle Indian Industrial School March* by Dennison Wheelock).

Examining a wider variety of Native American boarding schools that had band programs is warranted. Several band programs existed across the country within these schools, but there is little information that has been shared with the public. Making this information more accessible is a positive means of not only getting the information out there but integrating the information within the traditional history of bands in America taught to preservice music teachers, conductors, and students.

Discovering Native American boarding school students who became successful professional or semi-professional musicians would also be significant. Teachers include historically underrepresented musicians throughout most music curricula in the U.S.; however, Native American musicians are not often the focus of that study.

Lastly, creating units, lesson plans, lessons, and activities for elementary and secondary school music students regarding Native American boarding school music instruction and bands would be a welcome addition to the celebration of Native American Heritage month each year in November. Having authentic music lessons related to Native American school bands to teach during this observance each year would be an asset to the music teaching and learning profession.

## ***Conclusions***

Native American boarding schools were created to assimilate Native Americans into white culture. Band programs were created within these boarding schools to accelerate the assimilation of Native American students. The Phoenix Indian School Band was an extremely successful band program in that the students played well, were able to travel around the country, and were well-received by typical audiences according to local newspapers. Their contributions toward music performing should be mentioned in the history of American bands. Their story is no longer tokenism. This is a valuable piece of band history that is being ignored.

Tokenism is defined as the practice of making a symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups to give the appearance of racial equality within a workforce. This process was seen time and again for the Native American students at the Phoenix Indian High School Band. Events such as the July Fourth Parade in Washington, D.C. when the Phoenix Indian School Band was the only Native American band in the parade out of XX of groups. Their general participation in fairs and exhibitions when the group was serving as an educational beacon to the world of what assimilating and educating Native Americans looked like.



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## APPENDIX A: RECITALS

- I. Large Ensemble Recital: Spring Semester, 2022. *Concert Fanfare* (Eric Ewazen); *Moon by Night* (Jonathan Newman); *Into the Sun* (Jodie Blackshaw); *Satiric Dances* (Norman Dello Joio); *Masque* (Francis McBeth); *Salvation is Created* (Pavel Tschesnokov); *Into the Light* (Jay Bocook); *Pocket* (Sally Lamb McCune).
- II. Chamber Recital: *Divertimento for Brass and Percussion* (Karel Husa); *Six Little Songs* (Steve Danyew); *Octet in Eb Major, op. 103* (Ludwig van Beethoven); *Suite from 'Maria de Buenos Aires'* (Astor Piazzolla arr. Steven Verhelst).
- III. Chamber Recital: *Canzon per Sonare no. 2* (Giovanni Gabrieli); *Sonata Octavi Toni* (Giovanni Gabrieli); *Sept danses* (Jean René Désiré Françaix); *Polovtsian Dances for Brass Ensemble & Percussion* (Alexander Porfiryevich Borodin arr. Georges Moreau); *Divertissement, Opus 36, Movement III* (Jean Émile Auguste Bernard).
- IV. D.M.A. Research Project. EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN BAND: THE PHOENIX INDIAN SCHOOL (2024).