

MAN IN THE MIDDLE:
THE BOARDING SCHOOL EDUCATION OF WILL WEST LONG

By

Jill Elizabeth Ingram
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School
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1. Will West Long circa 1895, during his time as a student at Hampton Institute in Hampton, Va. (Photo courtesy of Hampton University Archives)

ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the boarding school education of Will West Long (circa 1870-1947), a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Based largely on analysis of sources from the archives of Trinity College (now Duke University) and Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), where Long attended school, this thesis argues that from his boarding school education, Long gained insight to place, race, and identity that allowed him to conceive of the Eastern Band as culturally distinct, intrinsically valuable, and in some ways attractive to the dominant white culture. When he returned to the Qualla Boundary after more than a decade away, Long employed this understanding through his work as a tribal politician, language preservationist, cultural preservationist, and anthropological informant to help shape modern Eastern Band identity.

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians developed from disparate groups who, with difficulty, managed to avoid federal removal to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in the 1830s. Today, the majority of the 13,400-member tribe resides on the Qualla Boundary, an approximately 56,000-acre tract of land in North Carolina's far western region, which the U.S. government has held in trust since 1925.¹ The fortunes of this small tribe have waxed and waned, but through resiliency and resourcefulness the Eastern Band today demonstrates political strength, a healthy economy, and a persistently distinct culture. In broadest terms, this thesis is an exploration of the Eastern Band's transition from individuals united by upheaval and a shared history and homeland to its contemporary status as a nation "both inherently limited and sovereign."² Specifically, this thesis will examine the education of one Eastern Band member, Will West Long, circa 1870-1947. Long was an active participant in the shaping of the contemporary Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, but until recently he had not received much academic attention. Biographical information about him is limited to bits and pieces and one extended obituary. Yet Will West Long and the other returned students of his era led the Eastern Band in new directions, and studying the boarding school experience will bring insight into the tribe's development.

Will West Long's early life paralleled a campaign by the federal government to assimilate Native populations into the dominant society. Spanning the 1880s through the 1920s and known as the era of assimilation, the goal of this policy was to "civilize" the American Indians to an extent that the federal government could unburden itself of the obligation of their support. Assimilation had two key components: allotment, the dissolution of tribal land bases; and the education of American Indian youth in off-reservation boarding schools. In theory, these schools, either federally operated or federally subsidized, shared curricula designed to eradicate tribal culture by "physically, ideologically, and emotionally remov[ing] Indian children from their families, homes, and tribal affiliations."³ Scholars have identified an ironic consequence of boarding school education: "[W]hile the teachings of missionaries and schoolmasters could alienate children from their families, they could also provide those children with tools for reforming or combating the institutions that sought to regiment their existence."⁴

Rather than attempting to meld into white society, many students returned to their Native communities. Using their educations to secure positions as teachers, politicians, government agents, businessmen, authors and artists, these "returned students" often occupied what historian Frederick E. Hoxie has called a "cultural borderland" between Native and white populations, serving as delegates for their Native communities to the omnipresent white society.⁵ Many served as assistants to a growing number of anthropologists, who conducted long-term studies of Indian communities to document what they perceived to be dying cultures. Former students frequently faced difficulties on their return home,

finding that their prolonged absences prompted wariness among community members. “My people received me coldly and with suspicion,” a returned student from the era of assimilation recalled.⁶ American Indians who collaborated with anthropologists exposed themselves to charges of opportunism because the work might require trading in sacred or secret elements of tribal tradition.⁷ Despite such hardships, along with the frustrations of returning to communities with few economic opportunities (and almost certainly none for which their schooling had trained them) these returned students applied their educations and understanding of white culture to strengthen and reshape Indian identity in their local communities and across Indian Country.⁸

Will West Long was one such returned student. While a strict adherence to Cherokee tradition marked Long’s childhood, during his teens, 20s and 30s, he spent more than a decade away from the Qualla Boundary, primarily gaining a boarding school education. Long’s combination of traditional and boarding-school education equipped him with a unique perspective that allowed him to recognize the Eastern Band as culturally distinct. Further, he learned to recognize Eastern Band members as desirable to the dominant society *because of* this cultural distinctiveness. Drawing from this understanding, he spent his life promoting the tribe’s inherent worth both within his own community and to outsiders. On his return to the Qualla Boundary, Long quickly assumed roles within the tribe that included politician, teacher, and cultural revivalist. Working outside the tribe, Long provided valuable assistance and information to the many ethnologists and anthropologists who visited the Qualla Boundary to document Eastern Band

culture, work that, according to Hoxie, gave the culture “greater permanence” and elevated it “in the eyes of the outside world.”⁹ Long’s actions opened economic avenues to tribe members during a time when such opportunities were limited. This marriage of culture and the economy was ingenious because it allowed the Eastern Band to engage the dominant society in a way that benefited the tribe and at the same time *required* the persistence of certain elements of Cherokee tradition. As one educated about both white society and the conjurer’s arts, Long naturally sometimes inspired suspicion and fear among community members.¹⁰ His contributions, however, are undeniable.

Long was born circa 1870 in Big Cove, a remote community on the Qualla Boundary. Big Cove and its traditional characteristics shaped Will West’s boyhood. In his later years, Will West would help shape Big Cove into a traditional enclave that attracted generations of anthropologists, whose research dollars trickled down to Long and his community members. Big Cove was also the backdrop for Long’s initial contact with white society. White encroachment in the Big Cove community sometimes led to acts of aggression between the races, and Long’s generation “approached whites with anxiety, doubt, and resentment.”¹¹ Long’s mother, Ayâsta, was a medicine woman who through rituals and formulas engaged in the ancient Cherokee practice of conjuring. According to the ethnologist James Mooney, who studied the North Carolina Cherokees beginning in the late 1880s, conjuring covered “every subject pertaining to the daily life and thought of the Indian,” from snakebites to the killing of witches, and was essentially the “ancient religion of the Cherokees.”¹² Will

West Long's initial education came from his mother, a powerful member of the tribe who schooled the boy in the conjurer's arts and other Cherokee customs.¹³

From 1882-85, Long attended Trinity College (eventually Duke University), a private institution founded to educate the white farming class.¹⁴ It was Long's "first unshielded exposure to white society," and his status as a racial minority amid a white majority might have prompted him to identify the Eastern Band as a distinct community with limited members.¹⁵ Similarly, the relatively flat land of North Carolina's piedmont may have prompted in him an understanding of the Eastern Band's mountainous homeland as a distinct and limited region. Long returned to the Qualla Boundary and in 1887 became engaged as scribe to Mooney, who introduced him to the anthropological profession and also encouraged Long to further his education.¹⁶ From Mooney, who paid for information related to Eastern Band culture, Long learned to recognize the tribe's unique traditions as valuable and important to influential members of white society. He further learned to recognize anthropologists as a potential resource, for, as Hoxie wrote, "[visiting scholars] could publicize struggles against federal authorities or record local traditions that were in danger of being lost."¹⁷

In 1895, Long left home for instruction at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (now Hampton University), a private university in Hampton, Virginia, founded during the Reconstruction era for the education of freed blacks.¹⁸ Its sophisticated marketing of Indian culture to prompt financial contributions from wealthy white patrons served as a model for Will West Long's future endeavors to showcase Cherokee song and dance. After five years at Hampton Institute,

Long spent the next five years working in New England, for the most part on farms in Conway, Amherst, and North Amherst, Massachusetts.¹⁹ In 1905, at approximately age 35, Long returned to the Qualla Boundary and “settled down thankfully to his old way of life.”²⁰

Will West Long became a deeply engaged community member who contributed to Eastern Band culture in ways that remain relevant today. Recognizing language as a primary expression of a distinct culture, Long taught “the Cherokee language[,] written and spoken” at the Qualla Boundary’s boarding school up until the year of his death, noting that “children of pure blood” showed a stronger interest in learning the language “than the others.”²¹ Long helped create the Cherokee Indian Fair, which today remains a well-loved centerpiece among the tribe’s cultural offerings. Long was one member of a three-member fair committee that, along with federal agents working on the boundary, helped organize the original fair in 1914. In fact, oral accounts confirm that Big Cove residents held two fairs of their own before helping to launch a larger one, an undertaking in which Will West likely participated.²²

Long also participated in the Eastern Band’s original historical drama, “The Spirit of the Great Smokies.”²³ This pageant ran for several years in the 1930s and related the history of the North Carolina Cherokees from before white contact to after removal.²⁴ “The Spirit of the Great Smokies” included approximately 200 members of the Eastern Band; Will West Long played a chief and led the play’s dancers.²⁵ “The Spirit of the Great Smokies” was a precursor

to “Unto These Hills,” another outdoor production that has been staged each summer on the Qualla Boundary since 1950.²⁶

Long revived tribal song and dance, not only helping to preserve them as cultural elements of the tribe, but also developing them into an economic opportunity at a time when such opportunities were limited for tribe members. A 1937 booklet promoting tourism on the Qualla Boundary reported that the “famous Indian dances that have almost been forgotten by the younger generation on the Qualla reservation are kept alive almost solely through the efforts of Will West Long,” who often traveled with his troupe for out-of-town performances.²⁷ According to the pamphlet:

[A] sizeable group, under the guidance of Will West Long[,] have preserved these dances for the current and future generations. [Men and women] often walk for miles over the mountain country to the home of Mr. Long high up on a peak to practice the dances for pageants and other public appearances. A large space in his front yard has been leveled and is well beaten by the tramp, tramp of Indian dancers.²⁸

Long moved adeptly between Indian and white worlds. Outside the tribe, Long used his expert knowledge of Cherokee culture and tradition, along with his bilingualism in English and Cherokee, to serve as scribe, interpreter, informant, and collaborator to scholars including Mooney, Mark R. Harrington, Frank G. Speck, William H. Gilbert, Paul Kirchhoff, Arthur Kelly, Franz Olbrechts, Leonard Bloom and John Witthoft.²⁹ The role of anthropological assistant influenced many aspects of Long's life. First, several of these anthropological associations developed into meaningful, long-lasting friendships. Long and Mooney sustained a friendship and professional collaboration until Mooney's death.³⁰ Speck

considered Long a colleague, and Witthoft remembered him for his “fine personality.”³¹ As a paid informant, Long was able to tap an “anthropological economy” into which he also invited friends and family to participate. Long, his son, and members of the Big Cove community carved masks, sang, danced, and otherwise reenacted ceremonies and rituals for the visiting anthropologists.³² Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Long’s anthropological work allowed him to preserve and promote elements of Cherokee tradition.

In recent years, scholars have examined the reciprocal nature of the anthropologist-informant relationships. In his 1998 work *Playing Indian*, Philip J. Deloria focused on the relationship between Lewis Henry Morgan, who helped found American anthropology, and Ely Parker, a Tonawanda Seneca Indian involved in the preservation of his community’s land base. The two met as young men in 1844 in a bookstore in Albany, New York. Parker, along with his brothers and sister, spent the next eight years as Morgan’s “most valued collaborators.”³³ They wrote Morgan “letters filled with ethnographic detail,” escorted him to ceremonies, and “manufactured objects for his collections.”³⁴ But as Deloria observed, “If Morgan used Parker, Parker was equally astute at putting a willing Morgan and his society to use.” Not only did Morgan and members of his New Confederacy (a society Morgan founded to study the Six Nations of the Iroquois) sponsor the Parkers as students, but on a communitywide level, the New Confederacy became involved in the Seneca fight to keep its land. Deloria believes that American Indians were conscious of the benefits for tribes in manipulating anthropological interest.³⁵ In that same spirit, as an anthropological

informant, Long found himself in a position that allowed him to preserve knowledge, engage in the economy, and shape outside perceptions of the Eastern Band. The anthropologists themselves were aware of the informant's power. Acknowledging that "Cherokee scholars have given us all that we know about" the nuances of the Cherokee language, Witthoft wrote, "Will West Long fed his ideas to [anthropologists] Mooney, Gilbert, Olbrechts, and Speck, and they recorded what he told them."³⁶

Beyond Eastern Band development, this thesis sheds light on the development in general of Southeastern tribes in the post-removal era. While scholars have created an impressive historiography on related topics, this is a population that research typically overlooks. Hoxie's *Final Promise*, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," and *Talking Back to Civilization*, an edited collection of documents, examined the effects of assimilation, the phenomenon of the returned student, and American Indians voices in the Progressive Era. *Between Indian and White Worlds*, edited by Margaret Connell-Szasz, examined the role of the cultural broker. While dated, the collection *American Indian Intellectuals*, edited by Margot Liberty, acknowledged Native contributions to the field of anthropology. Deloria's *Playing Indian* updated the relationship of "mutual exploitation" between the informer and the informed. And works such as *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of the Chilocco Indian School*, by K. Tsianina Lomawaima, and *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879-2000*, edited by Lomawaima, Brenda J. Child, and Margaret L. Archuleta, examined the American Indian boarding school experience. Yet

these works concentrated primarily on American Indians in the West. Hoxie, in *A Final Promise*, explained his decision to ignore the East: "Most thinkers and policy makers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries assumed that the 'Indian question' involved the trans-Mississippi West, and I have accepted this tendency to define national policy in terms of that region."³⁷ Yet Donal F. Lindsey, author of *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923*, argued, "Hampton's influence on Indian policy, Indian education, and Indian race relations with both whites and blacks was disproportionate to the small number of Indians involved."³⁸

The boarding school experience greatly influenced generations of American Indians, but the experience was not homogenous. Scholars should consider era, administration, geography, and tribal philosophy regarding "white education" in evaluating the boarding schools' effects. Eastern Band students in the 1880s may have been more sophisticated than members of Western tribes in their understanding of the changes related to white-dominated society. As a tribe that avoided removal, the Eastern Band had already adjusted and repositioned itself in response to white encroachment when tribes west of the Mississippi were only in the initial stages of cultural upheaval. By the mid-1800s, most North Carolina Cherokees had experienced at least limited exposure to the whites living in the communities surrounding the Qualla Boundary – Webster, Whittier, Bryson City (formerly called Charlestown), Robbinsville and Murphy. Eastern Band members were less isolated than Western tribes. The railroad reached Bryson City in 1884, and many Cherokees in turn traveled to Waynesville,

Asheville and beyond.³⁹ The Eastern Cherokee were already familiar with white education and white Christian religious practices in effect at the boarding schools. Nearly a hundred Cherokees boarded at the Brainerd Mission after it opened in 1817 in Tennessee.⁴⁰ Charles Lanman, a journalist traveling the South in 1848, reported that the Cherokees were “chiefly Methodists and Baptists.”⁴¹ An education at Hampton was not as isolating an experience for Eastern Band students as it was for students from Western tribes, where the trip to school could take days of travel by wagon, train, and boat. For Eastern Band students traveling to Hampton, the trip lasted a day.⁴² Unlike their Western counterparts, Eastern Band students could travel home for summer breaks and family obligations with relative ease, and they did.⁴³ At the beginning of the boarding school movement, the arrival of whites and acculturation was new to the West, and tribes there were wary (with good reason) of packing their children off to school. Many Eastern Band students, however, wanted to attend school. At 25, Will West Long was a grown man and surely could have refused to attend Hampton, yet he went.

The schools participating in Indian education also differed. Hampton and Trinity were private institutions with independent philosophies. Schools that were created as part of the federal Indian school system, such as the Chilocco Indian School, established in Indian Territory in 1884, or the Carlisle Indian School, established in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1879, experienced more direct government oversight than their private counterparts, especially in the early years of the assimilation policy. Student demographics also differed according to

school, again affecting the overall student experience. While the federally run schools were exclusively Indian, at Trinity and Hampton, at least, the Indian students were a minority.

I initially began researching Will West Long because I am interested in biography and his name seemed to appear everywhere in literature pertaining to the Eastern Cherokee, practically since removal. His name appears in the text of Mooney's classic *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee*.⁴⁴ John Finger, best-known historian of the Eastern Band, included Long in his *Cherokee Americans* as among Progressive Era Cherokees who exemplified "the countervailing tendencies and directions within Cherokee society early in the century."⁴⁵ Sarah Hill included Long in her monograph *Weaving New Worlds*, an elegant study of the changing life ways of the Eastern Cherokee through the evolution of their basketry. Long appeared again and again in archival material such as programs from the Cherokee Indian Fair, records of the Eastern Band camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and Tribal Council minutes.

Long's life was filled with paradox. As anthropologist Franz Olbrechts, with whom Long worked in the 1920s, observed: "Few, if any, on the whole reserve have had a better 'white education'; hardly one of his people has lived in white communities as long as [Long] has; yet he is the most ardent and most conscious of traditionalists."⁴⁶ This man who came to typify "Cherokee tradition" led a most atypical life. He received his education late in life, married late in life, and became a father late in life. He capped his time in New England, before returning home, by working for two years as a footman in Boston to husband-

and-wife medical doctors.⁴⁷ Long, the ardent traditionalist, married a woman of the same clan, unthinkable in earlier times.⁴⁸ In Big Cove, a most remote portion of a most remote boundary in a most remote region of the state, Long struck up long-term friendships with some of the most renowned scholars of the day. Even in his role as a returned student, Long defied stereotypes. Throughout Indian Country, many such individuals were of mixed ancestry, making their place at the cultural border understandable.⁴⁹ Not so for Long, a full-blooded Cherokee whose family was rooted firmly in the community.

There are several points related to sources that I want to address. The scope of this thesis is limited to Long's off-boundary education and how it might have influenced his later thoughts and actions related to Eastern Band development. The primary source material is rich, but specific mention of Long is sporadic. What I have done is attempt to reimagine the boarding school experience based on my primary sources and, when I am able, expand on Long's biographical information.

And while Long's descendants are many, this thesis does not rely on oral interviews. There are two reasons for this. First, with limited time, I was more interested in concentrating on archival material from the schools Long attended. Second, the Eastern Band denied my request for oral interviews. This denial was in part prompted by a surge of interest in Will West Long. The tribe has initiated its own documentary project of Long's life and opted for interviews conducted by tribe members and non-Natives more familiar with the community. I was lucky

enough to receive funding from the tribe's Will West Long project for archival research at Trinity and Hampton, which I shared with the project leaders.

My perspective and abilities also limit this thesis. I am a non-Native female and do not pretend to know the worldview of a turn-of-the century Cherokee man. I am positive that many nuances of the culture relevant to this study have escaped me. Scholars recently have turned their attention to the notebooks full of writings in the Cherokee syllabary that Long left us, but as I do not read the Cherokee syllabary (or speak the language), I cannot access them.

Finally, a note about spellings, dates, and other information that varied according to source. Rather than choose a single date, spelling or version of history, I have done my best to identify – within the text or in a note – alternate sources of conflicting information, and in some cases present an explanation of which I think might be most accurate.

¹ John Finger, *Cherokee Americans: The Eastern Band of Cherokees in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 47; Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation, official Web page, 3 October 2007, <www.nc-choerokee.com> (9 October 2007).

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

³ Margaret L. Archuleta, Brenda J. Child, and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *Away From Home: American Indian Boarding School Experiences, 1879-2000* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Heard Museum, 2000), 19.

⁴ Frederick Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland: Native American Journeys of Discovery in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of American History* 79 (December 1992): 976.

⁵ Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," passim.

⁶ Thomas Wildcat Alford, *Civilization* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936 (1979 reprint)), 111.

⁷ Margaret Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination, 1928-1973* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 10; Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," 983.

⁸ Hoxie, passim.

⁹ Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," 982-83.

¹⁰ James Mooney and Frans M. Olbrechts, *The Swimmer Manuscript: Cherokee Sacred Formulas and Medicinal Prescriptions*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 99 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1932), 110. From here on cited as Olbrechts, who completed *The Swimmer Manuscript* based on Mooney's field notes.

¹¹ Frank G. Speck and Leonard Broom, with Will West Long, *Cherokee Dance and Drama* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), xvii.

¹² James Mooney, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891) (1982 reproduction by Charles and Randy Elder, Booksellers, Nashville, Tenn.), 307, 313, 351, 384.

¹³ John Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," *American Anthropologist* 50, no. 2 (April-June 1948): 357.; Frank G. Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies" (undated, circa 1947), Frank G. Speck Papers, American Philosophical Society.

¹⁴ Nora C. Chaffin, *Trinity College, 1839-1892: The Beginnings of Duke University* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1950), 34, 40.

¹⁵ Speck and Broom, xviii.

¹⁶ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.

¹⁷ Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," 976.

¹⁸ 1895-96 catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton University Archives; Donal F. Lindsey, *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 9.

¹⁹ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

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- ²⁰ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 358.
- ²¹ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ²² "Cherokee Fair & Festival: A History thru 1978," compiled by Mary Ulmer Chiltoskey (1995), 5, WCU Special Collections. Will West Long even suggested a name for the new fair – "Indian Fair" – but was voted down.
- ²³ "The Spirit of the Great Smokies," 1935 program guide, 2, General Library, Kansas State Historical Society.
- ²⁴ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 99-100.
- ²⁵ "The Spirit of the Great Smokies," 2, General Library, KSHS.
- ²⁶ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 99-100.
- ²⁷ "The Cherokee Indians of the Qualla Reservation" (Knoxville, Tenn.: J.L. Caton, 1937), WCU Special Collections.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 358.
- ³⁰ William Munn Colby, "Routes to Rainy Mountain: A Biography of James Mooney, Ethnologist" (doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison: 1977), 438; Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 358.
- ³¹ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 359.
- ³² Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 71.
- ³³ Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), 83.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 83-85.
- ³⁶ John Witthoft, review of *Run Toward the Nightland*, by Jack and Anna Kilpatrick, *American Anthropologist* 70 (December 1968): 1220.
- ³⁷ Frederick Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xiii.
- ³⁸ Lindsey, preface.
- ³⁹ John Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees, 1819-1900* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 176; Sarah H. Hill, *Weaving New Worlds* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 182.
- ⁴⁰ James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, Nineteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900) (1982 reproduction by Charles and Randy Elder, Booksellers, Nashville, Tenn.), 107.
- ⁴¹ Charles Lanman, *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains* (New York, N.Y.: George P. Putnam, 1849), 95-97.
- ⁴² 1895 Principal's Report, HUA.
- ⁴³ *Talks and Thoughts of the Hampton Indian Students*, the student newspaper of the Hampton Institute Indian students, often recorded the comings and goings of Eastern Band students. One of many examples includes a report from the April 1897 paper that "Hugh Lambert returned to Hampton from Cherokee on May 22 and brought news of former Hampton students there." (HUA)
- ⁴⁴ Mooney, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, 307.

⁴⁵ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 70.

⁴⁶ Olbrechts, 110.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Life in Smokies," 1;

⁴⁸ John Gulick, *Cherokees at the Crossroads* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina, 1960), 67.

⁴⁹ Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," 982.

CHAPTER 1

“We Lived Good”: Will West Long’s Early Years

As the anthropologist John Witthoft wrote in an obituary for his colleague, Will West Long’s life “spanned the period of most intense culture change and social unrest among his people.”¹ Although removal and the Civil War had a more direct impact on the generation of Will West Long’s parents, those traumatic events continued to reverberate among the next generation, shaping Eastern Band development. Accordingly, between 1868 and 1900 – the stretch of years from Long’s birth until he left for Hampton Institute – the North Carolina Cherokees experienced shifts in citizenship, land status, economy, education, and culture. In a sense, Long and the Eastern Band developed concurrently.

Will West Long’s parents were Cherokees with the anglicized names Sallie (or Sally) Terrapin and John Long, who was the second of Sallie’s three husbands.² John Long’s Cherokee name was Gûnahi’ta, alternately spelled Gonuhida.³ Speck described the elder Long as “a well-known Baptist minister and full-blooded Cherokee.”⁴ According to information from the Miller Roll, finalized in 1909, John Long was born in Sand Town, a community of Cherokees six miles outside present-day Franklin, in Macon County, N.C., close to the Georgia border, and was still living there in 1851.⁵ A white man named William Siler owned the Sand Town property, along Cartoogechaye Creek, and allowed Cherokee fugitives from removal to settle there.⁶

It is unclear when John Long died. Will West Long recorded his father as deceased on the Miller Roll, answering “unknown” for the date of death.⁷ Mooney referred to John Long as Will West’s father in *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee*, which he researched on the Qualla Boundary in 1887-88. During his summer research trips, Mooney spent time with Will West, Sallie Long and other family members. John Long is absent from Mooney’s descriptions of interactions with the family. From this, we might infer that John Long was dead by this time.

Long’s mother, a full-blooded Cherokee, had the Cherokee name Ayâsta, which means “Spoiler” or “Spoiled It.”⁸ She was born in Wolf Town, on Soco Creek, in 1830, to a “prominent traditionalist family.”⁹ Her father, born circa 1768 in Long Ridge (a Valley Town), had several names, but is best known as Terrapin.¹⁰ Her mother, Takey or Daggie, was born circa 1773 and had the maiden name Junluskie.¹¹ The couple was living in Wolf Town by 1851.¹² Ayâsta was one of five children. A brother, Co Ta Quas Kee or Godoquoskie, died in 1838 at the age of 6.¹³ The date of Ayâsta’s death also is unclear. Witthoft reported she died circa 1904, but the fact that she filed an application for the 1909 Miller Roll, as the wife of John Hill, does not support this.¹⁴ Mooney, during a visit to the Qualla Boundary in 1911, reported Ayâsta not only alive but singing “songs to the rising sun each morning” and praying “to the water spirit at each new moon.”¹⁵ The anthropologist Arthur Kelly reported that Ayâsta died circa 1916.¹⁶

The 1838-39 federal removal of the Cherokee Nation to Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears would have been a dominant force in the young lives of Will

West Long's parents. After removal, more than 1,000 Cherokees remained in North Carolina. Some of this number included a group of individuals who, acting to avoid a future removal, formally split with the main Cherokee body in 1819. These Cherokees, under the guidance of Will Holland Thomas, a white man who tirelessly advocated on their behalf, claimed North Carolina citizenship and settled near the junction of Soco Creek with the Oconaluftee River, what is now central Qualla Boundary.¹⁷ Known as the "Quallatown" Cherokees, they numbered 333 in 1837.¹⁸ For them, theoretically, the removal experience would have been least traumatic. It seems that Ayâsta and her parents were among this group. Her father's name appears on the 1817 Reservation Roll, a list of individuals registering for 640-acre tracts of land in the East over removal, and neither of her parents' names seem to appear on the Emigration Rolls of 1817-35.¹⁹

The remaining Cherokees, numbering roughly 800, evaded removal forces by hiding themselves in the Western North Carolina forests.²⁰ For this group, whom Mooney reported as "the purest-blooded and most conservative of the Nation," the removal experience was extreme. They lost their land and their crops and spent the winter of 1838-39 as fugitives scavenging for food.²¹ Ultimately, aided by negotiations with Thomas, the War Department abandoned its efforts to remove the stragglers.²² About half of these Cherokees settled in and around Quallatown. For the Eastern Cherokees determined to stay, attachment to place was stronger than their sense of belonging to the larger Cherokee Nation.

The Siler Roll of 1851 registered Ayâsta as living in Wolf Town and the mother of three young children, a 5-year-old son, a 4-year-old daughter, and a 1-year old son.²³ Ayâsta's husband at the time was a man named Gahuni, a Methodist preacher and medicine man who died circa 1857.²⁴ Gahuni was not Will West Long's father – Ayâsta remarried – but examining Ayâsta's relationship to this man allows insight into how she might have influenced and educated Will West Long.²⁵

The federal government commissioned the Siler Roll to establish per capita payments due the Eastern Cherokees under the removal treaty of 1835 (it appears that Ayâsta received payment of \$571.04 on Dec. 18, 1851).²⁶ David W. Siler, the agent appointed by the secretary of the interior to take the roll, had instructions to “distinguish *males* and *females* and designate heads of families, noticing whether Indian or White and whether living together as man and wife.”²⁷ Beside Ayâsta's name on that roll was the remark, “Her husband ... has left her.”²⁸

Perhaps Siler misinterpreted the situation. As members of a matrilineal society, Cherokee women were the permanent members of the household. Not only did clan designation pass from mother to child, but according to Theda Perdue's book *Cherokee Women*, “Husbands were outsiders.”

In the event of divorce, the husband left his wife's house and returned to the household of his mother or sister. Although he may have been unwilling to leave his children and a household in which he had grown comfortable, an estranged husband had little recourse if his wife wanted him to go.²⁹

And a white woman who lived on the boundary in 1874 observed that marriage did not always tightly bind a Cherokee man and woman: “[W]hen a young fellow tires now of his wife, he puts her out of his hut and takes another, and nobody thinks any the worse of either of them.”³⁰

Well-respected among her fellow citizens, Ayâsta was “the only woman privileged to speak in council among the East Cherokee.”³¹ Mooney considered Ayâsta “one of the best traditionalists in the tribe.”³² Despite the degree of acculturation of the Eastern Cherokee by the mid-1800s, knowing what we do of Ayâsta it is possible, if not likely, that she deemed the marriage over and requested that her husband leave.

Ayâsta had eight children.³³ Three of them, apparently fathered by Ayâsta’s first husband, died in 1866.³⁴ These children possibly were the victims of a smallpox epidemic of the same year, started by a Cherokee soldier returning home from the Civil War.³⁵ Mooney, in *Myths of the Cherokee*, reported that the disease “spread throughout the tribe” and killed more than 125 members of the community.³⁶

Ayâsta and Gûnahi’ta were married and living in the Qualla Boundary’s Big Cove community by the time Will West Long – Ayâsta’s youngest son, and likely the last of her eight children – was born.³⁷ Over the years Long recorded at least two dates of birth. It appears as “1869 Jan.” on his Miller Roll application, but later, on a 1924 roll and a 1940 enrollment record for the Civilian Conservation Corps, he recorded the date as Jan. 25, 1870.³⁸ In both of these instances we can reasonably assume that Long supplied the date himself. Some

of what others have written about him casts that general timeframe into doubt. Witthoft, for instance, wrote that Long was “16 when he was sent off to Trinity College” in 1882. This information does not quite resonate with the circa 1870 birth date, but it appears to be no more than a simple miscalculation.³⁹

A more confounding assertion came from Hill’s *Weaving New Worlds*, where Hill identified Will West Long as the author Rebecca Harding Davis’s interpreter when she visited the Qualla Boundary in 1874.⁴⁰ In her account of the visit, called “Qualla,” which appeared in an 1875 issue of *Lippincott’s Magazine of Popular Literature and Science*, Davis described her group’s interpreter as a “lad of nineteen” with the name of Wilowisteh.⁴¹ If, as Hill asserted, the Will West Long under study here was Davis’ interpreter, it would advance Long’s age by a decade and a half, putting him at nearly 40 years old when he enrolled at Hampton University and into his 90s when he died. In other words, the information skews much of what we can reasonably assume about Long. The Hester Roll of 1884 helps unravel the mystery by confirming the existence of two Will Wests in Qualla at the time. Registered under No. 226 is an older Cherokee man named simply Will West, who lived with a woman (“in relation of wife,” reported the census) and their two young children. In the remarks column next to this Will West’s name is the word “interpreter.” This is the individual to whom Davis referred. Registered under No. 741 is the younger Will West, age 13. In the remarks column next to his name are the words “At Trinity College.”⁴²

The community in which Ayâsta raised her family, still haunted by removal and the Civil War, was fragile and unformed but with the binding qualities of a

distinct culture, land base, language, and religion. These two events continued as a strong presence in the collective Cherokee memory long after both had passed, and it is important to consider their effect in contextualizing the years of Will West Long's boyhood. For example, Will Holland Thomas lived until 1893, when Will West Long was in his early 20s.⁴³ According to Speck, "The trauma of that Removal dominated the lives of West Long's generation as well as that of his parents."⁴⁴ As Witthoft wrote, "Will grew up surrounded by men who had seen the Georgia Militia seize their homes and who had escaped from the stockade just west of the present Bryson City."⁴⁵ Long's parents likely relayed removal stories to their children. Long felt connected enough to the removal era that years later he wrote his own account of it.⁴⁶

Finger's description of the comprehensive and crushing Civil War aftermath suggests most Cherokee families felt its effect:

Their fields were in ruin, their lands in jeopardy. Factionalism, virtually nonexistent before the war, proved even more virulent than smallpox. The old sense of propriety, the striving for consensus based upon an ethic of harmony, was fast disappearing at a time when they were most threatened as a people. Those who had served the Union were ostracized or vilified. ... Demoralization was pervasive. Their children were undernourished, clothed in rags, and growing up in ignorance. ... [A]lcoholism now threatened them as it did many other tribes.⁴⁷

Sometimes elements of the war took physical form. Long's boyhood recollections included adults hunting with muskets and muzzle loaders "used in some civil war (sic)."⁴⁸

The land itself was a dominant presence in Cherokee life. By the 1940s, logging and the chestnut blight would permanently alter the composition of

Qualla Boundary forests, but during Will West Long's early years the boundary was still a wild place.⁴⁹ While traveler's accounts disagree in so many respects, they do agree on the Qualla Boundary's dramatic landscape and terrain. The botanist William Bartram traveled through Cherokee country in 1773 and recorded a landscape both dramatic and delightful. Traveling from South Carolina, Bartram entered the Cherokee territory from the southwest on a trading path that led him "over uneven rocky land, crossing rivulets and brooks, and rapidly descending over rocky precipices."⁵⁰ Past Cowee and traveling north, Bartram encountered a swift creek about fifteen yards wide "roaring over a rocky bed" that he crossed only with "difficulty and danger."⁵¹ Ascending the Jore Mountains (Bartram was likely referring to the Cowee range), he "beheld with rapture and astonishment a sublimely awful scene of power and magnificence, a world of mountains piled upon mountains." The landscape, which he found "magnificent, ... infinitely varied, and without bound," included stands of black walnut, red maple, hickory, and magnolia trees.⁵² The understory was thick in turn with viburnum, wild mountain roses, azalea, mock orange, sweetshrub, rhododendron, and mountain laurel.⁵³ Turkeys and deer were plentiful.⁵⁴

A hundred years later, the deeply forested and isolated region remained intact. Davis described the trip she and her companions made from "the village of Asheville" to sites including Waynesville, Whittier, and Cashiers: "[T]his 'riding over,' so jauntily hinted at, had turned out to be not the gallop of an hour or two, as we supposed, but slow journeys of hundreds of miles along mountain-roads."⁵⁵ The group covered terrain including cold, swift river gorges and 6,000-

foot mountain passes that the party traversed on “narrow paths with bare cliffs on either side.”⁵⁶ Davis reported undergrowth of laurel, rowan, and “scarlet rhododendron” beneath balsams, hemlocks, oaks and chestnuts.⁵⁷

The region was so thickly wooded and full of unknown danger that at times it inspired fear and melancholy in visitors and residents alike. His solitary wanderings in Cherokee country at one point left Bartram comparing his “situation in some degree to Nebuchadnezzar’s, when expelled from the society of men, and constrained to roam in the mountains and wilderness, there to herd and feed with the wild beasts of the forests.”⁵⁸ Davis described a stand of dead balsams as “tossing their bare branches against the sky like a procession of ghosts going down into Hades” and, after contemplating the oppressive, lonely scene around her, wondered if the party’s trip into Qualla wasn’t a journey “into a place of departed spirits.”⁵⁹

Isolation and a rugged terrain especially marked Big Cove, Long’s home. The northernmost Qualla community, today it borders the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to the west and north. Historians and anthropologists commonly identify Big Cove as the most conservative, or traditional, of Qualla’s five townships.⁶⁰ Residents there, for example, were the last to receive electricity – in 1952, five years after Long’s death.⁶¹ Even into the late 1920s, the road to Big Cove was so poor that cars sometimes had to be pulled out by oxen.⁶²

According to Witthoft, Big Cove was a “composite town made up of the most conservative mountain Cherokee families from several settlements” who avoided removal by hiding in “impenetrable back-country areas”.⁶³ Hill disputed

Mooney's claim that Thomas originally laid out and named the community, as he did with other parts of the boundary, contending instead that Big Cove was among the oldest Cherokee settlements on the boundary and at first was called Raven.⁶⁴ Speck recorded John Long and Sally Terrapin among the nine original families to settle there.⁶⁵ According to Olbrechts, the homes were typically one-room log cabins with an occasional home of frame construction.⁶⁶ These homes were "scattered about the two slopes of the cove," at least 500 yards apart but often more than a mile.⁶⁷ The log home of Long's youth, Long recalled, "had a door, no windows[,] but openings that we closed with a board at night, to let in the light and air."⁶⁸ As an old man, Long continued to live in the same spot.⁶⁹

The Big Cove of Long's boyhood was a place fourteen miles from the nearest road and far removed from even its nearest Cherokee neighbors.⁷⁰ Big Cove developed along a northern ascent characterized by the Ravens Fork, "an impetuous stream, at times a torrent, flowing in its upper course through narrow valleys, coves or pockets."⁷¹ Will West recalled visiting the banks of the Ravens Fork to "hunt flat, round stones," that he and his friends would skip across the water.⁷² A number of tributaries in Big Cove's far north feed the Ravens Fork, which in turn empties into the Oconaluftee River, along which are situated the Qualla Boundary's Birdtown and Yellow Hill communities.⁷³ An 1875 survey of the Qualla Boundary in the Ravens Fork area, near North Carolina's border with Tennessee, recorded the land as "mountainous, rough and rocky."⁷⁴ Trees included balsam, birch, and paruvian, with dense undergrowth that included

briars and honeysuckle.⁷⁵ “Difficult chaining” and “running rough chains with great difficulty,” the surveyors reported.⁷⁶

Shortly before Will West Long died – perhaps the same year – he shared a conversation about his life with friend and anthropologist Frank G. Speck, which Speck recorded in a brief biographical sketch.⁷⁷ “In telling of his boyhood,” Speck recorded, “he smiled at pleasant memories.”⁷⁸ Many of Long’s happy childhood memories were tied to community and the environment, with Long recalling:

There were 10 boys in the crowd about like me. It was a beautiful valley, the mountains all around and the river full of speckled trout, silversides, honeyheads, and the flirting fish that came in early spring and stayed a short while; hundreds of them that kept the water churned up all the time. Wild turkeys were everywhere. ... The deer and elk furnished us our clothing and moccasins. ... Squirrels, rabbits, bears, deer, elk, all the meat we wanted. We killed some with bows and arrows and trapped. ... We had fish hooks [sic] cut out of bone.⁷⁹

Long and his friends played “many games” when he was a child, but they “didn’t dare go into the wilderness,” he recalled. “There were too many wolves, bears, wild cats, panthers; they were bad, bad. But we did play near the edge.”⁸⁰ The children incorporated their surrounding environment into their play. One game had a single boy named the deer, another named the hunter, and the rest the hunter’s hounds. The deer hid and the hunter released his hounds, “shooting” the deer with a mulberry popgun should the hounds scare up their prey.⁸¹

Like most of the North Carolina Cherokees, Big Cove residents relied on family farms for sustenance and to generate income. The Cherokees had long been cultivators; Bartram found the soil fertile and was impressed by the neat

fields of corn and beans.⁸² The 1892 Extra Census Bulletin of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians reported Big Cove as “attractive from its rich soil, its well-worked hillsides, its fertile coves between mountain spurs, its excellent fences, and the universal indications of well-applied industry.”⁸³ The 1875 survey reported the land in Big Cove’s far north as “3rd rate” and “of very little value.”⁸⁴ The census bulletin, however, ranked “the last Indian house in that direction,” the homestead of a Cherokee man named Chitolski, as “one of the best in the country.”⁸⁵ Chitolski kept a peach orchard and livestock and operated a mill where neighbors could grind their own meal.⁸⁶ Long’s family planted half their fields in maize, “the rest in corn, potatoes, beans.”⁸⁷ Either Chitolski’s mill was built after Will West’s childhood or it was farther than Will West and his family were willing to travel to grind corn because it was Long’s recollection that “There were no mills and all the maize and corn was ground by pounding on a block with a pestle.”⁸⁸

Long recalled that the family cooked on a rock fireplace and had “lots of meat and game.”⁸⁹

We had no butter, no cows, so bear grease was used in its place. Mother made a ‘steep’ of hickory nuts that we used like cream now. She made soup out of bear, deer meat, or birds. There was neither sugar or molasses but we had a sweet. Mother took the sweet honey locusts and made a syrup. Then we had the juice from wild grapes. Everything we had was used for food and there were many kinds of that.⁹⁰

The family had no “money to buy things” – not that there were any nearby stores – but as a child Long did not feel deprived. “We lived goo[d],” he

recalled.⁹¹ Ayâsta, an industrious woman, made cloth from cotton the family grew and had a talent for Cherokee basketry.⁹²

Long's mother seems to have been the cornerstone of his boyhood. Witthoft described the Long household as "a conservative social unit of pagan Cherokee tradition, in which aboriginal patterns of economy and the whole Cherokee supernaturalistic philosophy were still of very real significance."⁹³ Will West likely grew up listening to Cherokee myths, considering the extent to which Ayâsta contributed to Mooney's collection. She and a brother named Tsiskwa undertook familiarizing the young Will West "with many of the archaic expressions used in the sacred formulas."⁹⁴ And according to Olbrechts, Ayâsta taught Will West "a lot of mythological and botanical lore when he was quite young."⁹⁵ This early training shaped Will West in a way, according to Witthoft, that his later experiences enriched rather than altered his personality.⁹⁶ Long recalled a "stock of information and magical procedures" from his uncle; a cousin, Charley Lawson, taught the young Will West how to carve masks and sing the traditional songs.⁹⁷

Growing up in a household that combined Christianity with traditional Cherokee spirituality and conjuring practices, Long developed a concurrent Christian faith and adherence to traditional beliefs. While he believed in "the teachings of Christ," he "longed for the power to be a 'medicine man.'"⁹⁸ Long related to Witthoft an "ecstatic experience of youth" that suggested he possessed a shaman's powers.⁹⁹

Will was walking the fourteen miles from Qualla post office to the Big Cove on a spring morning when he suddenly realized that the

world was 'things transformed.' Colors were brilliant and transparent, sounds were musical, all things were of great beauty, all of nature seemed lucid, and any wish was possible.¹⁰⁰

At the least, the experience evinced a deep connection to his environment, but Long never experienced another such episode, and he ultimately decided he did not have the conjurer's gifts.¹⁰¹ It is interesting to consider that as he wrestled with this problem of identity, Long considered himself a Christian.¹⁰² In his mind and in the minds of most Cherokees, the arts of the medicine man complemented Christianity rather than opposed it. As Hill wrote, "To Cherokees, Indian and Christian belief systems were both approaches to and expressions of the sacred."¹⁰³ Indeed, in the year of Long's death, Speck recorded that Long "believes in the teachings of Christ and practices brotherly love."¹⁰⁴

Long began his formal education as a child in Big Cove. In 1875, the federal government entered a partnership with a group of Quakers to provide North Carolina Cherokee children with local education.¹⁰⁵ By 1876, five such schools were in operation, including a day school in Big Cove.¹⁰⁶ The schools struggled, however, and after they temporarily closed and then operated briefly under the jurisdiction of the state of North Carolina, another federal agreement brought them under the direction of a Quaker man from Tennessee.¹⁰⁷ Will West Long recalled attending a "log school house on Big Cove for five years," but said he "didn't learn a thing."¹⁰⁸ An early school administrator noted that "very few full-bloods could speak English, although to their credit nearly all could read and write their own language, the parents teaching the children."¹⁰⁹ Long likely fell

into this category. Compounding his unproductive time in the Big Cove school was the fact that he likely attended during the midst of these early changes.

Even in Big Cove's isolation, Will West Long might have gained first-hand education there of another kind: the tenuous race relations between Cherokees and neighboring whites. In fact, part of what initially closed the Cherokee schools was the "mischievous' actions of a few whites" in connection to the Big Cove school.¹¹⁰ Big Cove was close to a trail into Tennessee, and a number of whites, refusing to acknowledge Indian possession of the land, settled in the community's far north.¹¹¹ It is probable that conflict arose between the races concerning possession of this land. Witthoft vaguely referred to such violence, writing that the "history of the Big Cove is badly bloodstained," and that Long "had sheltered and protected Indians pursued by the murderous aggression of neighboring Mountain Whites."¹¹²

Big Cove might also have brought Will West an awareness of another dimension of race relations: the federal government's hold on the Cherokee economy. Much of this struggle centered on logging, and Big Cove was the site of some of the tribe's best stands of timber. For many years beginning in the early 1880s, the federal government stymied the tribe's logging efforts to the point that "About the only way the Cherokees themselves could legally cut trees was in clearing land for farming."¹¹³ Will West might very well have been aware of a circumstance in 1881 surrounding Chief Nimrod J. Smith's contract to sell walnut trees from Big Cove. The Indian commissioner intervened, and while the parties tried to reach an agreement, a number of trees that had already been cut

lay indefinitely on the ground.¹¹⁴ Beginning in 1893, logging of the 33,000 acre Cathcart Tract became central in a years-long effort by the Eastern Band to define its legal status. Much of the tract, secured through Thomas's efforts, covered a north-south swath of Big Cove.¹¹⁵

Sources conflict on the condition of the Eastern Cherokeees in the era of Long and his parents. Most extant accounts of the Eastern Cherokeees and the Qualla Boundary are from visiting non-Natives, and their prejudices and biases are sometimes evident. The writers of these travel accounts also sometimes used the Cherokeees as a means to project the writer's own politics. Ten years after removal, in 1848, the journalist Charles Lanman offered his perspective of the Eastern Cherokeees during a stop in "Qualla Town" while on a journey through Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Lanman described the Eastern Cherokeees, then numbering about 1,200, as the "the happiest community that I have yet met in this Southern country."¹¹⁶ The Eastern Cherokeees through Lanman's eyes were resourceful, successful farmers with plenty to eat. They were also progressive in regard to the rights of women.¹¹⁷ He admired what the Eastern Cherokeees had built, from their court system to their road system to the "small log houses of their own construction."¹¹⁸ Lanman continued: "They are probably as temperate as any other class of people on the face of the earth, honest in their business intercourse, moral in their thoughts, words, and deeds, and distinguished for their faithfulness in performing their duties of religion."¹¹⁹

Lanman's perspective was not unbiased, and one could argue he created the Cherokee identity he wished to see. Before they appeared in book form the

following year, Lanman's dispatches appeared under the heading "Letters from the Alleghany Mountains" in *The Friend*, a religious and literary journal from the Quakers. That religious order vocally opposed both slavery and the federal government's policy of Indian removal. Lanman himself was "still indignant" over the last matter, according to Finger. Further, Lanman stayed with Thomas, who would have been his main source and might also have colored his perspective.¹²⁰

Politics aside, Lanman's account is useful as evidence of the Eastern Band's cultural distinctness at the time in terms of land, tradition, language, and religion.¹²¹ Lanman recognized Qualla Town as a finite area with prescribed boundaries and as designated home to the Cherokees. He recorded that the Cherokees continued to identify themselves according to clan. He noted that very few Cherokees spoke English, conversing instead in their own language. And while many Cherokees accepted Christianity in the early 1800s (during the federal government's civilization program), Lanman reported that Cherokees were Methodists and Baptists and had modified the Sunday service. There were "many little eccentricities," the singing was "wild and plaintive," and one of the preachers, a man named Big Charley, delivered the sermon in Cherokee.¹²²

Davis ventured through Qualla twenty-five years after Lanman and reported quite a different situation. Where Lanman found the roads through Qualla in good order, Davis found the road leading in "scarcely practicable ... and never repaired since it was built."¹²³ The Cherokee "huts" also failed to impress: "There was but the one little room, without any window[. T]he grass actually grew in the heaps of dirt on the floor. A stool, a bedstead with some

straw on it, and an iron pot were the only plenishing.”¹²⁴ She observed unequal status for women and, unlike Lanman, was skeptical of Thomas’s position among and intention toward the tribe.¹²⁵ Rather than the happiest people on earth, Davis found the Eastern Cherokees poor, underfed, listless, ignorant, miserable, and dull.¹²⁶ Indeed, Davis detected a “heavy, hopeless sadness” in every Cherokee but one – the other Will West.¹²⁷ Davis sometimes displayed her own prejudices. She admitted surprise, for instance, at finding a man she said described himself as the “head-chief of the Cherokee nation” hard at work rather than “drunk” or “meditating on the past glories of his race,” as she expected.¹²⁸

Davis’s agenda differed from Lanman’s. A prolific author who produced everything from novels to children’s books to nonfiction, Davis was an active social reformer of the late nineteenth century.¹²⁹ Abolition and education were among her many causes, which also included female enfranchisement, legal protection for those institutionalized in asylums for the mentally ill, and prison reform.¹³⁰ She was born in Pennsylvania and lived in Philadelphia after she married, but spent her childhood in the slaveholding states of Alabama and Virginia.¹³¹ If childhood experiences failed to alert her to racial injustice, the Civil War and Reconstruction likely did. These were the years in which she and others began to publish “reform literature,” work that avoided sentimentality and romance in favor of realism and a call to individual action as a means to curing social ills. Critics credit her with representing American literature’s shift from romanticism to realism.¹³²

In "Qualla," Davis openly acknowledged her motive was to urge readers – "strong and kindly men and women" – to offer their money and services in establishing schools for the Cherokees, and it is legitimate to consider whether Davis exaggerated her experiences to prompt response.¹³³ For instance, her motive might have influenced her findings regarding the Cherokee standard of living at the homes of those who could read and write: "[E]ven that small degree of education told in clean floors and neat flannel dresses."¹³⁴

At the same time, Davis's observations are sometimes valuable because of her perspective. She identified with uncommon perceptiveness the complicated positions Southern Appalachian residents adopted during the Civil War.¹³⁵ Davis also was attuned to racial disparity, and her essay identified contemporary extremes in the surrounding white community's understanding of the resident Native population. Reporting on conflicting information she heard before visiting Qualla, Davis wrote: "The nation was Christian, and in a condition of peace and prosperity. ... [T]he nation was heathen, living in polygamy and unbridled revolt."¹³⁶

Despite the dissonance of first-hand accounts, evidence exists to offer historians the opportunity to reconstruct the circumstances of post-removal Eastern Cherokees. Finger makes a strong case for his argument that after removal the Eastern Cherokees "endured a precarious and anomalous legal status vis-à-vis their white neighbors, the state of North Carolina, and the federal government."¹³⁷ They were citizens of neither North Carolina nor the United States. Their claim to the land was constantly in question. They were poor and

had limited engagement with the outside economy. Thomas, a white man, assumed a position of leadership. (Mooney, in this instance perhaps guilty of hyperbole, wrote that the Eastern Cherokees “owe their existence as a people” to Thomas.¹³⁸) In a strongly worded argument, Finger asserts that the uncertainty surrounding the Eastern Cherokees “posed a constant threat both to their homeland and their psychological well-being.”¹³⁹ Sarah Hill offered that what most unified this post-removal group of Eastern Cherokees was “a common history of dispossession, dislocation, and dismemberment.”¹⁴⁰ Historian George Frizzell argued that Cherokee legal status as Indians “has placed them in a special context regarding the white community. This context has constantly changed and therefore the legal status of the Indians has changed and rendered them subject to the prevailing political, economic, and intellectual climate.”¹⁴¹

Historians agree that the Civil War also had a devastating effect on Eastern Cherokees. Mooney called the Civil War era, with its privations and political repercussions, “a most momentous period” in Eastern Band history.¹⁴² A detachment of more than 200 Cherokees, under Thomas, served in the Confederate Army for more than three years. Commonly called the Thomas Legion, they concentrated on defending mountain passes near the border between North Carolina and Tennessee during the war’s early years, from 1862 to early 1864. Late in the war, a contingent of the Cherokee troops joined the Union Army, some by forceful persuasion and some by choice.¹⁴³ The years following the Civil War exposed the Eastern Band to further difficulties. According to Finger, the war left many Eastern Band members “hungry, dispirited, and

bedeviled by a host of problems and uncertainties,” struggling even to simply survive.¹⁴⁴ The effects of the Civil War might explain some of the disparities between Lanman’s and Davis’s perspective of the North Carolina Cherokee including the condition of roads and housing and their perceptions of the Cherokees’ standard of living. According to Frizzell, the Civil War was a demarcation in the Eastern Cherokees’ perpetual legal struggles with the state and federal governments. Prior to the Civil War, the North Carolina Cherokees focused on state citizenship “to secure acceptance of their permanent residency in the state.”¹⁴⁵ After the war, the debate over status “revolved around the primacy of federal versus state authority.”¹⁴⁶

In 1868, just prior to Long’s birth, Congress formally recognized the Eastern Cherokees as a distinct tribe. The action, as Finger writes, boosted Cherokee morale and offered the tribe a “semblance of protection.”¹⁴⁷ Still, the Eastern Cherokee citizenry was fractured at the time of Long’s birth. The federal government in the early 1840s had made a second, unsuccessful effort to remove the Eastern Cherokees, and pressure on the Cherokee to remove continued.¹⁴⁸ In spring 1871, under the continued threat of dispossession, more than 100 Eastern Cherokees set out on foot for Indian Territory on invitation from the Cherokee Nation, with a final detachment of Eastern Cherokees joining the Cherokee Nation in 1872.¹⁴⁹ During the first ten years of Long’s life, the population was actually decreasing; at 1,109, the number of North Carolina Cherokees in 1880 was 10 percent less than in 1870.¹⁵⁰

In 1875, after a protracted legal battle, the Qualla Boundary became common tribal property.¹⁵¹ With this action, according to Finger, “the Indian Office was at last convinced of the permanence of Cherokee residence in North Carolina.”¹⁵² Despite official acknowledgment of the Cherokees’ North Carolina presence, whites in adjacent communities continued to ignore their neighbors’ legal rights, evidenced in an 1881 letter to Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, from James Taylor, a mixed-blood active in Cherokee political affairs.¹⁵³ The letter complained that lands rightfully held for the Eastern Cherokees were “occupied by Whites and Freedmen in many places” and that the Cherokees were “not able to evict the trespassers.”¹⁵⁴

But the letter also reflected the Cherokee characteristics of independence and perseverance and the habit of adapting to contemporary methods of negotiation. The letter continued: “Will you do our people the favor to furnish us with a copy of the conveyance to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs made in pursuance of a decree of the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of North Carolina[,] Oct. 23, 1874, and inform us of the true status of the title to these lands in question?”¹⁵⁵ White encroachment on Cherokee lands, however, continued to be a problem, with white families occupying and farming 6,000 acres of the Qualla Boundary’s best lands as late as 1890.¹⁵⁶ According to Finger, North Carolina policy left tribe members and federal agents with little authority to eject the intruders, and it was not until the mid-1890s that they found a solution to the widespread trespassing.¹⁵⁷

In the tumult of the years surrounding Will West's boyhood were three factors that Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, named as essential to the spread of nationalism after the middle of the nineteenth century. I introduce this information to suggest that the Eastern Band at this time was ripe for cohesion and development, which Long and his schoolmates – equipped with their boarding school educations – facilitated by filling key positions within the tribe as politicians, teachers, artists, and cultural mediators. These factors were an increase in physical mobility “made possible by the astonishing achievements of industrial capitalism,” the colonial state's need for bilingual “clerks” capable of “mediating linguistically between the metropolitan nation and the colonized peoples,” and the spread of modern-style education conducted “not only by the colonial state, but also by private religious and secular organizations.”¹⁵⁸ Anderson further added that education expanded not only to provide employees for government and corporate agencies, “but also because of the growing acceptance of the moral importance of modern knowledge even for colonized populations.”¹⁵⁹

While automobiles did not appear around the Qualla Boundary until the 1910s, the railroad, prompted by the logging industry, reached neighboring Bryson City in 1884, and many Cherokees in turn traveled to Waynesville, Asheville and beyond.¹⁶⁰ “Clerks” might also act as a buffer between the local population and white agents of the federal government (who even while intent on “helping” the Cherokees could fall into racist paternalism such as Davis observed).¹⁶¹ With the 1875 arrival of the tribe's first federally assigned agent,

individual Cherokees began stepping into the clerk role Anderson described.¹⁶²

An early example was James Blythe, a Cherokee man educated at a Quaker college in Maryville, Tennessee. Blythe was named Cherokee agent in 1889, the first time the federal agent had assigned the position to a local; before that, Blythe had served as the agency interpreter.¹⁶³

It is possible that during his childhood, Long began to comprehend enduring tribal weaknesses including uncertain land and legal status and the absence of a viable economy. He might also have begun to comprehend whites as people unlike the Cherokee. During Long's time away at Trinity College, when he was part of a racial minority, he would come to understand the counter implication of this concept, that he also was an "other." Arriving at Hampton Institute with this knowledge, Long was able to understand the economic possibilities attached to certain Cherokee qualities that "others" deemed valuable, such as song, dance, art, and spiritual manifestations of the culture. Spending years away from the Qualla Boundary gave Long an unusual amount of insight into race in America at the turn of the twentieth century. On return he successfully applied the understanding he had gained to strengthening the Eastern Band's position.

¹ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356.

² Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 70; Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357; Witthoft and Finger use the spelling of "Sally" for Will West Long's mother, but her Miller Roll record (no. 11106) has her name as "Sallie Hill." The Miller Roll application also records the name of Sallie's third husband, John Hill of Big Cove.

³ Mooney, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, 317; Miller Roll record no. 15817, WCU microfilm collection.

⁴ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Collection, APS.

⁵ Miller Roll record no. 15817, WCU microfilm collection.

⁶ Hill, 147-48.

⁷ Miller Roll record no. 15817, WCU microfilm collection.

⁸ "Ayâsta" is the spelling Mooney gave. An alternate spelling of "Iyostah" appeared in the Mullay Roll of 1848, which also listed an alternate name of "Spoiler." Will West spelled his mother's name "Ahyasta" on his Miller Roll application. Sallie Long's Miller Roll application (by which time she had taken the surname Hill, the name of her third husband) recorded the alternate "Spoiled It."

⁹ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 70. The Miller Roll applications of Will West Long and his half-brother Lawyer Callhoun record Wolf Town as Ayâsta's birthplace. Ayâsta's own Miller application does not give a birthplace.

¹⁰ Ayâsta's father is listed as Terrapin and Calasonih on the Mullay Roll of 1848 (Mullay Roll no. 379, WCU microfilm collection). Sallie Long (Hill) listed her father as Golsowee (English name) and Digonhi (Indian name) on her Miller Roll application. Ayâsta's Siler Roll application (no. 415) recorded her full-blood status.

¹¹ Mullay Roll application no. 380; Miller Roll application no. 11106.

¹² Miller Roll application no. 11106.

¹³ Mullay Roll application no. 382; Miller Roll application no. 11106.

¹⁴ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357. Miller Roll no. 11106, WCU microfilm collection.

¹⁵ Colby, 434.

¹⁶ Kelly to Speck, July 6, 1929, Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

¹⁷ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 159.

¹⁸ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 18-19.

¹⁹ Bob Blankenship, *Cherokee Roots, Volume I: Eastern Cherokee Rolls* (self-published in Cherokee, N.C., 1992), 13, 16.

²⁰ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 28-29.

²¹ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 157; Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 28-29.

²² Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 28.

²³ Siler Roll nos. 415-418, WCU microfilm. Ayâsta is spelled "Iyostah" on this roll.

²⁴ Mooney, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, 313-14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 317.

- ²⁶ Chapman Roll no. 415, WCU microfilm collection; Gaston Litton, "Enrollment Records of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 17 (July 1940): 210.
- ²⁷ Litton, 210. Emphasis original to document.
- ²⁸ Siler Roll no. 415.
- ²⁹ Theda Purdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700-1835*. (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 42-44.
- ³⁰ Rebecca Harding Davis, "Qualla," *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* (Nov. 1875): 582.
- ³¹ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 453n.
- ³² As quoted in Hill, *Weaving New Worlds*, 235.
- ³³ I reasoned this number based on Will West Long's and Lawyer Calhoun's Miller Roll information.
- ³⁴ Miller Roll no.15817, WCU microfilm collection.
- ³⁵ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 172; Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 101.
- ³⁶ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 172.
- ³⁷ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ³⁸ Miller Roll no. 15817; Baker Roll no. 1405; CCC-ID enrollment records 1939-1942, Cherokee Indian Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, NARA, Southeastern branch, Morrow, Ga.
- ³⁹ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.
- ⁴⁰ Hill, 168-69.
- ⁴¹ Davis, 585.
- ⁴² Hester Roll nos. 738 and 741, WCU microfilm collection. It is understandable how Hill reached this conclusion. Beyond the name, the similarities between the two Will Wests are uncanny. Davis described her guide as having a great interest in education, even suggesting to the travelers that select Cherokees go North to train as teachers.
- ⁴³ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 171.
- ⁴⁴ Speck and Broom, xvii.
- ⁴⁵ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356.
- ⁴⁶ Harry Edgar Wheeler, "The Removal of the Cherokee Indians," with additional manuscripts collected by Hiram C. Wilburne, 195?, WCU microfilm. Film quality makes Long's contribution unreadable.
- ⁴⁷ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 102.
- ⁴⁸ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ⁴⁹ Hill, 319.
- ⁵⁰ William Bartram, *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (Savannah, Ga.: The Beehive Press, 1973) (reprint of 1792 edition): 331.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 359.
- ⁵² *Ibid.* 334, 360.

⁵³ Ibid., 352, 355, 360.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 355.

⁵⁵ Davis, 576.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 576-77, 580.

⁵⁸ Bartram, 358. God punished Nebuchadnezzar's boastfulness by taking his sanity and sending him to live like an animal in the wild for seven years.

⁵⁹ Davis, 580.

⁶⁰ Witthoft termed it "the most marginal and conservative of Indian communities" ("Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356). Even into the 1930s, the anthropologist William Harlen Gilbert reported Big Cove was "the least permeated by white influences of the several towns." William Harlen Gilbert Jr., *The Eastern Cherokees* (New York, N.Y.: AMS Press, 1943) (1978 reprint): 201.

⁶¹ Hill, 310.

⁶² Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 55-56.

⁶³ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356.

⁶⁴ Hill, 155-56, 353n.

⁶⁵ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

⁶⁶ Olbrechts, 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

⁶⁹ Ibid. Speck wrote that Long continued to live "at the same place." This might not include the actual house, as later in the biographical sketch Long described the cabin in the past tense.

⁷⁰ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356.

⁷¹ Extra Census Bulletin, Report on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Printing Office, 1892), 12, WCU Special Collections.

⁷² Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

⁷³ Paint Town and Wolf Town are on Soco Creek, also a tributary of the Oconaluftee River.

⁷⁴ Field Notes of the Qualla Boundary Survey, Vol. 1 (1875-76), 52, WCU microfilm collection.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 52, 53-54.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Speck's "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies" is undated but recorded Long's age as 77, the same age recorded in Long's March 27, 1947, obituary in the Sylva Herald.

⁷⁸ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

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- ⁸¹ Ibid.
- ⁸² Bartram, 352, 354.
- ⁸³ Extra Census Bulletin, 12, WCU special collections.
- ⁸⁴ Field Notes of the Qualla Boundary Survey, 52, WCU microfilm collection.
- ⁸⁵ Extra Census Bulletin, 12, WCU special collections.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ Ibid.
- ⁹² Hill, 236.
- ⁹³ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.
- ⁹⁴ Mooney, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, 317.
- ⁹⁵ Olbrechts, 109.
- ⁹⁶ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid.
- ⁹⁸ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ⁹⁹ Witthoft, review of *Run Toward the Nightland*, by Jack Frederick Kilpatrick and Anna Gritts Kilpatrick, *American Anthropologist* 70, no. 6 (December, 1968): 1220.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS. Speck's biographical sketch of Long also included a story about Long's drawing an eagle from its habitat, using "magic words" he learned from a brother, and then killing it. It is unclear at what stage in his life this occurred.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ Hill, 155.
- ¹⁰⁴ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ¹⁰⁵ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 125.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 131.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 133-34.
- ¹⁰⁸ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS. Long's CCC enrollment record, somewhat inexplicably, records him as having only a third-grade education.
- ¹⁰⁹ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 174.
- ¹¹⁰ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 133.
- ¹¹¹ Hill, 156.
- ¹¹² Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356-57.
- ¹¹³ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 149.
- ¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ George Frizzell, "The Legal Status of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians" (master's thesis: Western Carolina University, 1981), 72; Hill, 156; Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 169.

¹¹⁶ Charles Lanman (unsigned), "Letters from the Alleghany Mountains," *The Friend: A Religious and Literary Journal* (15 July 1848): 342-43. The 1,200 population figure comes from James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 168.

¹¹⁷ Lanman in *The Friend*, 342.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 342-43.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 69-70.

¹²¹ In *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, Finger himself argued that despite the unsettled circumstances, Eastern Band members successfully retained a unique identity.

¹²² Lanman, *Letters from the Alleghany Mountains*, 95-97.

¹²³ Davis, 579-80.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 583.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 581, 584.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, passim.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 585.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 584.

¹²⁹ Lisa A. Long, "The postbellum reform writings of Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps," in *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing*, ed. Dale M. Bauer and Philip Gould. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 262, 272.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

¹³¹ Long, 263; Kenneth W. Noe, "'Deadened Color and Colder Horror': Rebecca Harding Davis and the Myth of Unionist Appalachia," in *Back Talk From Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes*, ed. Dwight B. Billings, Gurney Norman and Katherine Ledford. (Lexington, Ken.: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 70, 73.

¹³² Long, 262, 266.

¹³³ Davis, 586.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 584.

¹³⁵ Noe, 70.

¹³⁶ Davis, 578.

¹³⁷ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, xii.

¹³⁸ Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 158.

¹³⁹ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, xii.

¹⁴⁰ Hill, 147.

¹⁴¹ Frizzell, ix.

¹⁴² Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, 168.

¹⁴³ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 82-100.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁴⁵ Frizzell, vii-viii.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

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- ¹⁴⁷ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 106.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 29-40.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 115-117.
- ¹⁵⁰ Wilbur G. Zeigler and Ben S. Grosscup, *The Heart of the Alleghanies* (Raleigh, N.C.: Alfred Williams & Co., 1883), 36.
- ¹⁵¹ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 122-25. By 1880, the federal government had also settled Cherokee claims on 15,000 acres outside the Qualla Boundary, including land in Cherokee and Graham counties.
- ¹⁵² Ibid., 125.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid., 58.
- ¹⁵⁴ James Taylor to Hiram Price, April 27, 1881, James Taylor Collection, Special Collections, Duke University.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁶ Extra Census Bulletin, 8, WCU Special Collections.
- ¹⁵⁷ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 144.
- ¹⁵⁸ Anderson, 115-116.
- ¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 116.
- ¹⁶⁰ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 55; Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 176; Hill, 182.
- ¹⁶¹ Davis, 582-83.
- ¹⁶² Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 125.
- ¹⁶³ Ibid., 156.

CHAPTER 2

“Rather Dull, Rather Stubborn”: At Trinity College

In 1882, when he was around 12 years old, Will West Long was one of twenty Eastern Band boys who traveled to Randolph County, in the North Carolina Piedmont, to spend three years attending Trinity College.¹ School records recorded the following about Long: “Will West: Learns only tolerably well. Rather dull, rather stubborn. Ran away twice. Tolerably neat.”² Trinity’s assessment of Long is more a reflection of its faculty and staff. Obviously Long’s capacity for learning was immense. Just a few years after Trinity, ethnologist James Mooney would describe his newly hired scribe as “gifted with ready comprehension.”³ In fact, it was while he attended Trinity that Long learned to read and write in English and the Cherokee syllabary (the latter taught him by an older Cherokee schoolmate from Tennessee), skills that served him the remainder of his life as an anthropologist’s informant.⁴

Virtually no scholarship exists on situations like Trinity, which in its five years participating in Indian education failed to achieve any sort of cultural compassion for or understanding of its alien and exotic new students. Long seems to have experienced the worst of boarding school education there, including isolation, poor teaching, and exploitation. As Finger has noted, while Eastern Band students through the years gave boarding schools mixed reviews, whatever the experience, off-boundary education contributed to an increased

awareness “of the outside world.”⁵ In this situation of extended vulnerability and uncertainty, Trinity educated Long in matters of race in the twentieth century, forcing him to consider relationships between Cherokees and the dominant society and to navigate between Indian and white worlds.

Trinity was a school for children from common families, growing from a subscription institution where children could learn during breaks from laboring on their parents’ farms.⁶ It occupied the northwest corner of Randolph County, part of North Carolina’s piedmont, the long stretch of terrain bound to the west by the Southern Appalachian Mountains and by the Atlantic coast to the east. These rolling hills, a contrast to the Eastern Band’s mountainous homeland, may have reinforced the concept of the Qualla Boundary as the distinct and limited homeland of the Eastern Band to the young Will West. Though only seventy miles from Raleigh, the region’s rural character gave it a remote quality.⁷ Rolling hills characterize Randolph County’s nearly 800 square miles, and at the time the area around Trinity was largely agricultural, although textile mills – part of a manufacturing expansion – began to open after the Civil War.⁸

“The location is in a fine hill country, remarkable for health, good water, and everything to make life pleasant,” read the Trinity College catalogue for the 1880-81 school year.⁹ The village of Trinity, with about 350 residents, was smaller than its neighbor to the north, High Point, the closest disembarkation for the passenger rail.¹⁰ To the Cherokee students arriving at Trinity in August, excited and tired from travel, Randolph County’s geography might have seemed flat and hot in comparison with their home in the Blue Ridge Mountains and could

have contributed toward a sense of isolation. According to anthropologist Keith H. Basso, an unfamiliar landscape "is always a little daunting," and combined with an unfamiliar language (English, in this case), "the combination may be downright unsettling."¹¹

Longtime Trinity President Braxton Craven initiated the Indian program in the 1880-81 school year.¹² He described his decision to accept the Eastern Band students in his 1881 annual report to the school's trustees:

Very soon after Commencement last year, the government of the United States proposed to us to take twelve Cherokee Indian boys from the Eastern Band of Cherokees in North Carolina. The conditions proposed were that we should board, clothe and instruct them ...; that they would be required to work as much as two days in the week, and that we should receive \$150 per annum for each boy.¹³

Craven sought advice regarding the proposal from Trinity's board of trustees, preachers, politicians, and judges, reporting, "all except two or three advised to take them."¹⁴ Accordingly, Craven signed the government contract, and the first group of Eastern Band students arrived at Trinity on Sept. 28, 1880.¹⁵ In these years, Congress appropriated \$167 per student annually for the "care, support and education ... of Indian children."¹⁶ The initial group of Cherokees, between 10 and 20 years old, included two Longs (relation to Will West unknown), a Blythe, an Owl, a Queen, one Wolf, a Smith, and two Wayahanettes.¹⁷ According to Craven, ten of them spoke no English on arrival.¹⁸ Eight months later, Craven reported, "now they all speak English very well, all can spell, read, write etc. Two of them are tolerably well advanced to primary studies. They are obedient, very quick to learn, and are doing well."¹⁹

Craven's remarks are surprising. Trinity exposed the Eastern Band students to a chaotic environment, repeatedly transferring their care and supervision and changing their learning environment. Rare is the record indicative of Indian curriculum. There was not even a consistent name for the program under which the Eastern Band students were educated. The 1880-81 catalog listed the Eastern Band members under the heading of "special and preparatory."²⁰ At this point, although they were educated separately from Trinity's non-Native students, they were listed, as a group, among other Trinity students under the same heading.²¹ Afterward, they always were separate. The 1883-84 catalog listed the students under the blunt heading of "Cherokee Indians."²² The 1884-85 catalog listed them under the heading "Cherokee Industrial School."²³ The few sources that do exist relating directly to individual students reflect exasperation and lack of any cultural understanding or sympathy for these children in a strange place. After one week in the archives, I found no evidence of any sort of formal curriculum for the Eastern Band students. Arguably most revealing about the Eastern Band student experience at Trinity, and the administration's attitude toward their minority students, was Craven's statement that, "They have been kept separate from the other students, and [we] have had no trouble with them whatever."²⁴

Upon accepting the Eastern Band students to Trinity, Craven gave his son, James L. Craven, responsibility for their "care and training."²⁵ The boys lived at the younger Craven's home and received "industrial training" on his farm and garden.²⁶ In a 1940 interview with Trinity historian Nora Chaffin, Kate Craven,

daughter of Braxton Craven and sister of James Craven, recalled the Eastern Band students when they lived on her brother's farm.²⁷

The fact that some could neither speak nor understand English, together with their unfamiliarity with American social conventions, made the provisions for their living conditions a difficult problem. Some of the boys had to be taught to sleep in beds, to wear conventional clothes, and to eat food prepared for them in the usual Southern manner. For weeks after their arrival [Braxton] Craven feared they would starve. They would not eat, nor would they touch milk. They roamed the fields and woods and ate acorns, wild onions, green or dry maize, and roots. Sometimes they mixed corn meal and water into a thick paste, molded it into oblong hunks to fit within shucks of corn, and cooked it in hot ashes from fire kindled in the fields or woods. They followed the brooks and creeks and hunted for tiny fish which they caught and either ate raw or cooked on the banks of the streams.²⁸

Rare is the archival source from Trinity that acknowledges the Eastern Band students as individuals. Instead, they tend to group the Eastern Band students under some variation of the collective "Cherokee Indians" or "Indian boys." However, a few individual records do exist. For example, the school catalogs list student names and differentiate between originating communities, listing students as from Qualla Town, Robbinsville, Cherokee, and Long's designation, "Ocounalufly" [sic].²⁹

Another document, three pages and handwritten, offers individual assessments of the Eastern Band students, and reveals the institutional attitude toward the Cherokees. Notation is brief, with some names abbreviated; the tone is rushed, perfunctory, dismissive and void of cultural understanding; and the appearance at points is unorganized. This is the document that assessed Long – future teacher, politician, anthropological informant, cultural revivalist, and published author – as "dull."³⁰ With few exceptions, notations indicate the

student's perceived obedience or rebellion. Four students, including Long, are recorded as having run away at least once. Notes beside other student names include:

- "Rather inclined to be dirty."
- "Rather dull, obedient, neat. Studies but has not the mind."
- "Learns well, obedient. Very neat."
- "Last to come. Knows nothing."
- "Learns slowly. Obedient. Ran away once."
- "Very dull in learning. Obedient in the main. Dirty in person."
- "Not well balanced some way."
- "Learns well when he tries. Tries sometimes."
- "Learns very well. One of the best in books. Obedient. Neat."³¹

The document assigned students to different classes. Will West, along with Nick Toineetah, Byrd Goins, Ned Stamper, Jacob Wolf, and Loyd Smith were in the first class, a ranking for students who grasped geography; understood addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division "fairly well"; read and spelled "very well"; and wrote "exceedingly well."³² Long, however, was one of two students assigned to the first class who was assessed as behind the others.³³ The majority of the Eastern Band students ranked in the second class, a designation for students who were "good spellers," had "completed two readers," "wrote very well," knew "a little geog[raphy]," and could "add and subtract [and] multiply a little."³⁴ A third and fourth class were reserved for a combined three students whom Trinity personnel deemed as knowing little about numbers or letters.³⁵ Only two students, Nick Toineetah and Richard Smith, impressed Trinity faculty with their capacity for learning. Toineetah, for example, earned the remarks, "Learns very well. Obedient. Very neat. Makes more rapid progress

than any. Best of any on the average.”³⁶ The student assessment ranked Smith as having the abilities of a freshman.³⁷

Insight into the typical day for Eastern Band students at Trinity comes from a February 1884 report to the Office of Indian Affairs. The four-page form reported that the students engaged in academics from 8 a.m. to noon.³⁸ Their subjects included reading, geography, arithmetic, spelling, English grammar, and writing.³⁹ The entry “description of manual labor” received more attention than the one devoted to academics, summarizing that during the month of February, the boys engaged in “farm and gardening work, and such other work as is connected therewith – repairing tools and harness,” as well as assisting in “repairing barn and stables.”⁴⁰ The Trinity response to a section of the report titled “remarks” is telling of the school’s attitude toward Indian education by what it does not say. This section asked for information that might “practically illustrate the condition and growth of the school, and the public sentiment of the tribes concerning it.”⁴¹ Though allowed nearly a page for remarks, the response is fewer than two lines: “The boys enjoying uninterrupted health, and are making fair progress. Two are in advanced classes.”⁴²

There is a strong likelihood that the Eastern Band students were exposed to elements of racism at Trinity, which to a large degree reflected North Carolina’s white supremacist politics. Born in 1822, Braxton Craven attended Trinity (at that time called Union Institute Academy), and with a brief exception was associated with the school until his death, guiding the school through periods of tremendous turmoil, including the Civil War and Reconstruction.⁴³

While most of the residents around Trinity did not own slaves, and large slaveholders in Randolph County and neighboring Guilford and Davidson counties were few, Craven was the owner of two slaves and “made the best of the system as it existed.”⁴⁴ In the years leading to the Civil War, Craven publicly decried what he saw as the South’s dependence on the North.⁴⁵ He apparently opposed secession, but when the Civil War commenced the school formed the Trinity Guard, which “quieted local disturbances” and supervised Union prisoners and Confederate deserters in a prison in Salisbury.⁴⁶ Craven appears to have been in full support of the Confederate cause, even participating in a movement for the authorship of textbooks meant to foster “Southern intellectual independence” and countering what Southern educators viewed as Northern bias.⁴⁷ In 1868, Craven ran unsuccessfully for the office of superintendent of public instruction on the Conservative ticket and against a Radical opponent.⁴⁸ Craven opposed ratification of North Carolina’s new constitution and during his campaign reported blacks as “generally Radicals,” in favor of the new constitution, and at times displaying “some insolence.”⁴⁹

Two politically significant racists, Furnifold Simmons, a longtime U.S. senator from North Carolina, and Josephus Daniels, editor of the *State Chronicle* newspaper in Raleigh, shared close ties to the school. Simmons graduated in Trinity’s class of 1873 and thoroughly admired Craven, once stating that Craven “made a profound impression on me.”⁵⁰ He continued: “I doubt if the South has produced many abler educators[. H]e emphasized character and independent thinking, and I am more indebted to him than to any other man with the sole

exception of my father.”⁵¹ Daniels and Trinity administration forged a relationship based on the former’s position to publicize the school. Daniels’ editorials commented favorably on school progress and policy, and school administration used the newspaper as a forum to outline and explain its decision to relocate to Durham.⁵² In 1886, Daniels wrote then-president John Franklin Heitman, thanking Heitman for hosting Daniels’ recent visit to the school, with Daniels adding that he would “always be glad to do what I can in serving Trinity.”⁵³

Simmons and Daniels helped mastermind the Wilmington, N.C., pogrom of 1898.⁵⁴ In this campaign of white supremacy, a contingent of white Democrats, resentful of the political strength of the black-majority city’s Fusion coalition (Populists and African-American Republicans), forcefully unseated the city’s rightful officeholders and terrorized the city’s black population, murdering as many as 300 residents and inspiring 1,400 others to flee.⁵⁵ Historians have termed the event a “revolution against interracial democracy” and contend “its aftermath brought the birth of Jim Crow social order, the end of black voting rights, and the rise of a one-party political system in the South that strangled the aspirations of generations of blacks and whites.”⁵⁶

While particulars about Long’s experience at Trinity are few – Witthoft called Long’s time there “lonely” – conditions were enough to prompt Long at one point to flee home to the Qualla Boundary, “hiding and sleeping during the daytime and walking at night” through an unfamiliar terrain with a possibly unfriendly population.⁵⁷ According to Witthoft, after a few months, Long returned to school.⁵⁸

At the time Will West Long and the other Cherokee boys began attending Trinity, the status of Cherokee education on the Qualla Boundary had improved but the tribe remained in social and political upheaval. In 1881, the Quakers entered a ten-year education agreement with the Eastern Band.⁵⁹ By 1884, with the Eastern Band population at 2,956, the Quakers had begun building a co-educational boarding school in the Qualla Boundary's Yellow Hill community.⁶⁰ Cherokee students were also attending off-reservation schools. By 1880, in addition to Trinity, there were Eastern Band students enrolled at Weaver College and Asheville Female College, also in North Carolina.⁶¹ As Finger has written, the span of years from the late 1880s to 1900 remained turbulent and uncertain for the Eastern Band.⁶² Their legal status was convoluted, they were beset by factionalism, they lacked an economic base, and surrounding whites had no respect for the Qualla Boundary's borders.⁶³ Educators encouraged a homogenous "American" identity; ethnologists implicitly encouraged "traditional culture."⁶⁴ "Previously isolated from the major currents of American development, they now confronted an expanding white population and myriad changes," Finger wrote. "Through all these difficulties, the Indians struggled both to adapt and to retain their identity."⁶⁵

Government policy regarding Indian education also changed considerably during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, the span of years during which Long attended off-reservation, government-funded boarding schools. For fifteen years beginning in 1879, federal funding for Indian education rose from \$75,000 to more than \$2 million, the number of off-reservation boarding schools

and agency schools multiplied, and it became the job of a superintendent of Indian education to oversee a massive, coordinated educational effort.⁶⁶

According to Finger, while institutions such as Weaver, Asheville, and Trinity called themselves colleges, they were “little more than glorified grammar schools and were so hard-pressed financially that they competed in seeking federally sponsored students.”⁶⁷

This can be true of no place more than Trinity. In 1892, desiring a more urban setting for the school and enticed by financial backing from tobacco magnate Washington Duke, Trinity College officials moved the campus to Durham.⁶⁸ Renamed Duke University, the elite, private school today is among the best endowed in the country.⁶⁹ However, from its inception until its relocation – and especially in the years after the Civil War, when Will West Long attended – the school’s financial struggles were considerable and constant.⁷⁰ As a school for farmer’s children, the student population often came from meager backgrounds. Pleas for financial assistance from prospective students were common. A 1885 postcard asked if the school could provide for a “poor but bright and worthy young man” who, unable to afford board, nevertheless wished “to prepare himself for the university.”⁷¹ In 1851, the state supported the school with a charter, orchestrated by Craven to keep the school afloat. Financial instability even prompted Craven to court the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.⁷² In 1856, the school became that organization’s official college, a transition Braxton Craven hoped would alleviate the school’s constant financial pressures.⁷³

The Civil War years especially stretched Trinity. Its students became eligible for the draft and each succeeding year saw fewer in the graduating class.⁷⁴ During the midst of the war, in the 1862-63 school year, the number of students shrank to the smallest since 1851.⁷⁵ With many students in the Confederate army, the spring 1863 commencement was limited to one graduate.⁷⁶ Braxton Craven raised school tuition twice in a short time, partly to accommodate for an inflated Confederate currency.⁷⁷ The school stopped operations briefly at war's end, in spring 1865, when a division of the Confederate army encamped on the Trinity campus before surrendering to the Union army.⁷⁸ When Trinity reopened in January 1865, it was in a state of neglect stemming from the war years, and there was no money for repairs.⁷⁹ The nearby village of Trinity reflected this condition, as did the region in general.⁸⁰

During the short span of Eastern Band attendance, Trinity officials often, in ways open and implicit, stated their financial motive for accepting the students. Trinity's archival sources mentioning the Eastern Band students nearly always accompany some statement of school finances or related earning potential. An 1884 article about Trinity in the *Raleigh Christian Advocate*, for instance, included a section subtitled "The Indians and the debt."⁸¹ To a frightening extent, the drive to profit translated into a commodification of Indian education and the Eastern Band students themselves. In their short time at the school, the Eastern Band students were the fulcrum around which revolved several money-related conflicts, both major and minor.

When Braxton Craven died in November 1882, the Eastern Band students became the center of a struggle between the younger Craven and the school administration over who should rightfully claim responsibility for the Eastern Band students, and subsequently collect the federal allocations.⁸² Until that time, James Craven had claimed that position.⁸³ The school's new president, Marquis Lafayette Wood, recognized an untapped revenue source, and in October 1883 requested that James Craven both "send the 20 Indian boys now in his possession to the college."⁸⁴

James Craven refused, instead engaging Hiram Price, commissioner of Indian Affairs, on his behalf.⁸⁵ Price's corresponding telegram to Wood indicates both the administrative distance between the Office of Indian Affairs and its contract schools, and the tendency to depersonalize and commodify Indian education:

[James] Craven telegraphs today that you refused to take Indian Boys. What are the facts[?]If the college wants them it can have exclusive charge of them[. O]therwise they can be sent home at government expense.⁸⁶

On Monday, October 8, 1883, Wood recorded in his diary that "The Cherokee Indian boys came in the college this morning in a room to themselves, for the purpose of being taught till 12 o'clock each school day."⁸⁷

It is unclear which individuals assumed responsibility for the Eastern Band students once the Trinity administration wrested control from James Craven. According to the terms of a written agreement between Wood and James Craven, the latter continued to board the Eastern Band students, allowing him to at least share in some of the related profits. For James Craven's "services

rendered in boarding, including washing, fuel and lights, medical attention, [and] industrial training on farm and garden,” he was to “recieve [sic] the sum of nine dollars per capita per month for the 20 Cherokee Indian boys now at Trinity College.”⁸⁸ According to Chaffin and a 1961 article in a Duke alumni publication, J.J. White, an 1870 Trinity graduate, assumed responsibility for educating the Eastern Band students.⁸⁹ Trinity’s February 1884 report to the Office of Indian Affairs listed Wood as the Indian students’ “superintendent or principal teacher” and M.W. McCollum and C.A. Wood as their assistant teachers.⁹⁰

The five years after the elder Craven’s death were a tumultuous time for Trinity, characterized by heated and public debate over the school’s financial future, sinking enrollment, and power struggles within the administration.⁹¹ Wood’s turn as president lasted only a year and a half, but even before it expired he seemed resigned to the fact that Indian education would not bring money into the school.⁹² In a June 1884 report to the trustees, Wood laid out income versus expenditure and admitted that “there can be but a small margin for profit” related to the “Twenty Cherokee Indians.”⁹³ In fact, on Wood’s resignation in January 1885, oversight of the Eastern Band students reverted to James Craven.⁹⁴ Shortly afterward, the tribe summoned the Eastern Band students home.

“I am in receipt of request [sic] from N.J. Smith Chief of the Eastern Cherokees that the Indian pupils now at your Institution be allowed to return to their homes having completed the three years for which they were sent to Trinity College,” wrote Commissioner of Indian Affairs J.D.C. Atkins to Heitman in a letter dated July 1, 1885. Heitman, in an exasperated tone, responded: “I hope

you will grant the request of Chief Smith, and allow them to go to their homes without unnecessary delay.”⁹⁵

After the Eastern Band students returned en masse to the Qualla Boundary in the summer of 1885, two of them decided to return to Trinity. Student Richard Smith shared a correspondence with John Franklin Heitman, who had assumed the role of acting president on Wood’s resignation.⁹⁶ “Should like to return to coll[ege] should I get the desired appropriation, hope I will,” Smith wrote Heitman in August.⁹⁷ Smith’s letters to Heitman actually indicate an element of closeness, with Smith writing: “Ma and our neighbors are well. All the boys are well as far as I know. Kindest regards to the Profs.”⁹⁸ Working with the Office of Indian Affairs to secure funding, Heitman arranged for both Smith and Nick Toineetah to return to Trinity the following school year.⁹⁹

This introduced another financial conflict involving the Eastern Band students, for Trinity apparently double-billed the Eastern Band federal representatives and the Office of Indian Affairs for Smith’s and Toineetah’s travel expenses.¹⁰⁰ On the heels of an extended and heated correspondence between Heitman and Henry W. Spray, superintendent of the Qualla Boundary schools, regarding train fare, the Office of Indian Affairs alerted Heitman that it was holding Trinity’s \$100 claim for Smith and Toineetah’s tuition and transportation costs.¹⁰¹ Returning the claim, acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, A.B. Upshaw, wrote Heitman:

It is not apparent how the twenty-five dollars (\$25) is due you, as your letter and the vouchers show that Prof. Spray, Superintendent of the Cherokee school, in Swain Co., loaned to one pupil (Smith) fifteen dollars (\$15.00), to pay his traveling expenses, and Agent

J.L. Holmes of the Eastern Cherokee Agency, advanced ten dollars (\$10.00) to Toineetah, the other pupil, to pay his expenses.¹⁰²

Toineetah and Smith studied at Trinity at least for the 1885-86 school year, with the school eventually receiving reimbursement for student room and board, although not travel expenses.¹⁰³

Around this same time, Trinity became involved in further financial entanglements related to the Eastern Band students. The school was the target of threatened legal action from E.D. Latta & Bro., a clothing company in Charlotte that claimed James Craven owed it \$200 for an order of clothing for the Eastern Band students.¹⁰⁴ "I furnished the Indians with clothing and I am determined to be paid for it and will if necessary carry it to the Supreme Court," E.D. Latta threatened.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, the father of James Craven's widow (the younger Craven died in 1885) wrote Heitman to say his daughter was due federal funds from the Indian program.¹⁰⁶ "[W]hile I am a humble poor man[,] this world will be older than it is before I bow in submission to a proceeding that I know wrongs my poor unfortunate daughter," J.R. Bulla wrote.¹⁰⁷ It is unclear how Trinity resolved this last conflict.

The brief glimpses that sources allow into the Eastern Band experience at Trinity do not offer a complete picture of individual student experience. Scarce as it is, however, evidence suggests that the experience was isolating and that in response, the Eastern Band students drew together more closely, looking to each other for comfort and companionship. Unlike at Hampton Institute, where contact and correspondence between tribe members and school administrators would be frequent, Eastern Band communication with Trinity seems to have been

quite limited. An upcoming visit from Nimrod J. Smith to Trinity, as reported in an 1881 newspaper article in *The College Herald*, seems to have been the exception, not the rule.¹⁰⁸ In fact, at a time when few Eastern Band members successfully engaged in the cash economy, the agreement between Wood and James Craven regarding oversight of the Eastern Band students specified that “visits of relatives or friends of the Indian boys shall be borne pro rata by the said parties.”¹⁰⁹

In such isolation, it is possible that the Eastern Band students at Trinity learned to identify strongly as a unit separate from the larger, white majority surrounding them. For some, the experience might have been more intense than for others. For while by this time the Eastern Band population could engage the larger world outside the Qualla Boundary; however, individuals from more remote parts of the boundary, such as Big Cove, might not have had as much occasion or inclination to do so. One Eastern Band member, born 1916, recalled not seeing a white person until he was 5 or 6 years old.¹¹⁰ His initial thought on first seeing whites, when a missionary couple visited his family's cabin was, “There were two people coming up the trail, and they were not Indians.”¹¹¹

Long's experience at Trinity would have shaped and influenced his perceptions of his own community. According to Philip Deloria, “We construct identity by finding ourselves in relation to an array of people and objects who are not ourselves.”¹¹² Trinity was Long's first prolonged stay away from home, and there he was part of a tiny minority of Cherokees amid a much larger population of whites. Long's initial boarding school experience also would have forced him

to navigate “across cultural borders,” as Connell-Szasz writes.¹¹³ The school years introduced twentieth-century cultural intermediaries to “the other side,” teaching them to move in “multicultural worlds.”¹¹⁴ At this, Long later proved quite adept, skillfully acting as liaison between the Cherokee and white worlds in his roles as politician, cultural revivalist and anthropologists’ informant.

¹ Atkins to Heitman, July 1, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU. Will West Long's time at Trinity College is well-documented, although discrepancies exist regarding his age while attending and the years he attended. Witthoft recorded Long's age at 16 when he left for school, and put his time at school at roughly two years. Finger, drawing on Speck in *Cherokee Americans*, repeated 16 as Long's age on arrival at the school. However, research of Trinity's school catalogs for the years 1880-81 through 1884-85, as well as other Trinity documents, indicates that Long and the majority of the other Eastern Band students most likely attended the school from 1882 to 1885. This would have put Long at approximately age 12 on arrival.

² Untitled, undated assessment of Eastern Band students, from folder titled "Braxton Craven, Trinity College, North Carolina, Miscellany: Student lists and grades," Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.

³ Mooney, *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees*, 317.

⁴ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.

⁵ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 28-29.

⁶ Chaffin, 34.

⁷ Randolph County Government, "About Randolph County," *Randolph County Government Online*, <http://www.co.randolph.nc.us/about_randolph.htm> (2 March 2008).

⁸ *Ibid.*; Chaffin, 266.

⁹ 1880-81 Trinity College catalog, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 71.

¹² Chaffin, 270.

¹³ Braxton Craven's annual report to the board of trustees, 9 June 1881, as quoted in Chaffin, 271.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ H. Price to M.L. Wood, July 11, 1884, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁷ 1880-81 Trinity College catalog, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU; Chaffin, 271.

¹⁸ Chaffin, 271.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ 1880-81 Trinity catalog, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² 1883-84 Trinity catalog, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.

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- ²³ 1884-85 Trinity catalog, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.
- ²⁴ Chaffin, 271.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 373.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 271.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 271.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 271-72.
- ²⁹ Trinity catalogs for the 1880-81, 1883-84, and 1884-85 school years, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.
- ³⁰ Assessment of Eastern Band students, from folder titled "Braxton Craven, Trinity College, North Carolina, Miscellany: Student lists and grades," Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Monthly report of Trinity College to the Office of Indian Affairs for the month ending February 29, 1884, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU. This report was in the Trinity collection apparently because the Office of Indian Affairs returned it.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ Chaffin, 54. 238.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 217.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 23, 217-18.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 222-25.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 232.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 259-261.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 260.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 270.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid., 430, 454, 503-504, 506.
- ⁵³ Letter from Josephus Daniels to John Franklin Heitman, June 26, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.
- ⁵⁴ David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson, ed. *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and its Legacy* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of N.C. Press, 1998), 12; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of N.C. Press, 1996), 66.
- ⁵⁵ Cecelski and Tyson, 4-6.

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- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 6.
- ⁵⁷ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid.
- ⁵⁹ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 138.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.; U.S. Serial Set, Senate Document, 48th Congress, 1st Session, "Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, in response to Senate resolution of March 13, 1884, preliminary report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs concerning roll of the Cherokee Indians east of the Mississippi River," March 21, 1884.
- ⁶¹ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 135.
- ⁶² Ibid., 147.
- ⁶³ Ibid.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 53-64. During this stretch of years, policy focused on a curriculum that allowed students eventually to join and contribute toward a larger white society.
- ⁶⁷ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 135.
- ⁶⁸ Chaffin, 478, 497-98, 515.
- ⁶⁹ Justin Pope, "College Donations Set Record," *The News & Observer* online, 20 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/story/954138.html>> (9 March 2008).
- ⁷⁰ Trinity's financial struggles are obvious throughout Chaffin and archival documents.
- ⁷¹ Postcard, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.
- ⁷² Chaffin, 170-71.
- ⁷³ Ibid.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., 227, 230.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 92-93, 232.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 233.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., 235.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., 247.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., 252-53.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid., 258-59.
- ⁸¹ *Raleigh Christian Advocate* 29, no. 8 (Feb. 27, 1884), University Archives, DU.
- ⁸² Ibid., 326; executive committee meeting minutes, April 4, 1883, from Proceedings of the Board of Trustees, 1880-1891, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, University Archives, DU.
- ⁸³ Chaffin, 373.
- ⁸⁴ Diaries of M.L. Wood, Oct. 1, 1883, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid.; Price to Wood, Oct. 4, 1883, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Diaries of M.L. Wood, Oct. 8, 1883, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁸⁸ Agreement between M.L. Wood and J.L. Craven, Oct. 6, 1883, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁸⁹ "Trinity: The Town and the College," *Duke Alumni Register* 42, no. 8 (Oct. 1961): 13, University Archives, DU; *Raleigh Christian Advocate* 29, no. 8 (Feb. 27, 1884), University Archives, DU.

⁹⁰ Monthly report of Trinity College to the Office of Indian Affairs for the month ending February 29, 1884, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹¹ Chaffin, 342, 371-72.

⁹² Diaries of M.L. Wood, Oct. 8, 1883, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹³ Draft of the president's report to the trustees, June 12, 1884, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹⁴ Diaries of M.L. Wood, Jan. 9, 1885, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU; Chaffin, 374.

⁹⁵ Heitman to Atkins, July 6, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹⁶ "Inventory of the John Franklin Heitman Papers, 1863-1911," DU Libraries; Smith to Heitman, Aug. 4, 1885, and Aug. 26, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹⁷ Smith to Heitman, Aug. 4, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹⁸ Smith to Heitman, Aug. 26, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

⁹⁹ Atkins to Heitman, Sept. 9, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰⁰ Upshaw to Heitman, Feb. 25, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰¹ Spray to Heitman, Jan. 4, 1886; Atkins to Heitman, Feb. 2, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰² Upshaw to Heitman, Feb. 25, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰³ U.S. Treasury Department to Heitman, June 10, 1886; Office of Indian Affairs claim receipt, July 14, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰⁴ Walher to Heitman, Nov. 17, 1885, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰⁵ Latta to Heitman, March 24, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰⁶ Bulla to Heitman, March 23, 1886, John Franklin Heitman Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ "Local Items," *The College Herald*, Dec. 30, 1881, Trinity College (Randolph County, N.C.) Collection, 1836-1990, DU Archives.

¹⁰⁹ Agreement between M.L. Wood and J.L. Craven, Oct. 6, 1883, Marquis Lafayette Wood Records and Papers, University Archives, DU.

¹¹⁰ Barbara R. Duncan ed., *Living Stories of the Cherokee* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 160.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Deloria, 21.

¹¹³ Margaret Connell Szasz, ed. *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 218.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

"Civilized Tribes Closer to Home": At Hampton Institute

"Three more Cherokee boys from North Carolina have been added to the School," announced the April 1895 edition of Hampton Institute's Indian student newspaper.¹ This number included Will West Long, who arrived at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, in Hampton, Virginia, in March 1895.² His five years of education there strengthened his understanding of the importance of a physical homeland to the survival of Eastern Band identity, exposed him to the concept of racial equality, and reinforced his perceptions about what the dominant culture found "valuable" in American Indians.

Long probably traveled to school with his half brother Deleskee Climbing Bear and Tinola Wolf, both of whom arrived at the same time.³ A larger group of Eastern Band students preceded Will West Long's smaller one; Arizona Swayney, Sallie Crow, Nancy Saunooke, Jackson Smith, Lorenzo Swayney, Henry Blythe and Pico Sneed arrived a month prior, in February 1895.⁴ *Talks and Thoughts of The Hampton Indian Students*, a monthly publication produced by the Indian students, ran two short pieces in its March 1895 edition, one announcing the larger party's arrival and another empathizing with the new students: "We must remember how strange and homesick we were when we first arrived, and must make them feel at home as much as possible."⁵ Primary sources from the Hampton archives offer only brief glimpses of Long during his

years as a student there. However, the Eastern Band students appeared regularly in *Talks and Thoughts*, and these references along with school documents and other information allow us to form some idea of Long's experience there.

From the time he arrived until he departed in 1900, Long experienced the comfort of an extended Eastern Band community of students attending the school, affording him the company of fellow tribe members in class, in the boys' dormitory, called Wigwam, and during his extended summer stays at New England farms, arranged through Hampton's outing program. A total of fifty-nine Eastern Band students attended Hampton Institute between the years of 1889 and 1921.⁶ Will West Long was among an influx of Eastern Band members who began arriving in the mid-1890s, with twenty-four Eastern Band students attending Hampton during the 1895 school year.⁷ In that year, Hampton's Indian Department included ninety-seven male and forty-nine female students.⁸ The Eastern Band, with twenty-four students, ranked third among tribes with most members attending, after the Wisconsin Oneidas and the Sioux.⁹

The reason behind the influx was that with the construction of more off-reservation boarding schools in the west, students there had less reason to travel East for an education.¹⁰ "A comparatively small number now come from that portion of the country," read the principal's report for 1895.¹¹ Hampton responded by recruiting students from the "more civilized tribes nearer home."¹² The Eastern Band was attractive because the Qualla Boundary was close and, as farmers, tribe members were a good fit for the school's agricultural focus. "The 1,500



2. The Wigwam, dormitory of the male American Indian students at Hampton Institute, as it looks today. (Photo courtesy of the author)

Cherokees of North Carolina are a hopeful tribe, cultivating their own land and needing help," read the Principal's Report for 1895. "Their reservation is near the School, and it seems eminently proper that Hampton should help them toward improved agriculture and better living."¹³ An 1895 report by Josephine E. Richards, the teacher in charge of Hampton's Indian Department from 1881-1900, elaborated on the Eastern Band students:¹⁴

These Indians from the mountains of North Carolina seem very naturally to fall to Hampton's care. They are only about twenty-four hours distant from us, come from healthy surroundings, are anxious for manual training as well as for academic instruction, and promise to make rapid progress. The outlook for them when they return home is also encouraging. The soil of their beautiful valleys is fertile, especially adapted to fruit-raising. Asheville and other markets are close at hand. There seems no reason why this

community, where now the older people hardly speak any English, where the houses often had only one room, and the knowledge of farming and of trades is very limited, should not in time resemble a New England country district under the influence of a band of earnest and intelligent young people.¹⁵

Samuel Chapman Armstrong founded Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, in Hampton, Virginia, in 1868, during Reconstruction, as an industrial school to educate blacks.¹⁶ Armstrong, who served as the school's principal until his death in 1893, was the sixth of ten children born to husband-and-wife missionaries.¹⁷ Richard and Clarissa Armstrong were serving in Wailuku, Maui, when Samuel Armstrong was born in 1839.¹⁸ Richard Armstrong established schools in Hawaii to counter what he perceived as the laziness, ignorance, and stupidity of the Hawaiian Natives.¹⁹ Schools with a curriculum of required labor, the elder Armstrong reasoned, would improve the "heart, head, and body" of these individuals by targeting the young. "I am making strenuous efforts to have some sort of manual labor connected with every school," he wrote in 1840.²⁰ According to Suzanne C. Carson, Samuel Armstrong's biographer, the younger Armstrong patterned Hampton Institute on his father's example, specifically naming a Hawaiian normal school (whose curriculum included manual labor) and an industrial school as the inspirations for Hampton.²¹

Like the students who attended Hampton Institute, Armstrong grew up attending schools with mixed racial populations – in his case, Hawaiian and white children.²² However, Armstrong did not confuse the situation and status of all minority groups; throughout his life he remained convinced that different minority groups had distinct needs.²³ He actually maintained that his life's work educating

blacks stemmed more from religious conviction than desire for social justice.²⁴ Armstrong attended Williams College in Massachusetts and became close to the school's president, a moral philosopher named Mark Hopkins.²⁵ From Hopkins, whom Armstrong credited with "whatever good teaching" he did, Armstrong absorbed the concepts of education as a social equalizer, private property as a gateway to spiritual growth, and the obligation of Christians to actively work for unity.²⁶ After graduating in 1862, Armstrong joined the Union Army, where before he was discharged in 1865, he led a black regiment and ran a school for black troops.²⁷

Armstrong knew even before he left the army that he wanted to join the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal agency created in part to assist blacks adjust to their new conditions after the Civil War.²⁸ He was appointed superintendent of a district that included nine Virginia counties, with headquarters in Hampton, a city situated at the tip of the peninsula where the James River meets the Chesapeake Bay.²⁹ Early in the Civil War, Union victories were mostly related to naval exploits, and territories adjacent to water often became havens for escaped slaves.³⁰ Such was the case with Hampton and the surrounding areas. White residents abandoned the city in May 1861, with Confederate soldiers retaking it in August 1861 just long enough to burn it to the ground.³¹ With the lower end of the peninsula a Union foothold, escaped and freed slaves poured in to the area; during the course of the war, the peninsula's black population quadrupled, rising from 10,000 to 40,000.³² The sizeable black population in turn drew missionaries and others who, like Armstrong, were intent on humanitarian work.

Within a couple months of his arrival in the city of Hampton, Armstrong began to lobby for a school to “prepare colored teachers for southern schools.”³³ He selected a 125-acre site for his school and – with endorsement from individuals including Hopkins and future U.S. president James A. Garfield, began operation of Hampton Institute in April 1868.³⁴ The school’s autonomy was a primary goal. While Armstrong worked with the American Missionary Association to establish Hampton, within a few years he had replaced the AMA teaching staff with one selected by him.³⁵ He had also secured steady state funding. When the state of Virginia agreed to charter Hampton, and the AMA deeded the Hampton property to a 15-member board of trustees, the school’s independence was secured, which surely worked to Hampton Institute’s advantage when Armstrong made the controversial decision to implement the Indian program.³⁶

Armstrong, a strong-willed individual and hands-on leader, first demonstrated an interest in Indian education – which he believed was in accord with Hampton’s mission – nearly a decade before the Indian program actually began. When his friend Edward Parmelee Smith, an AMA representative and Hampton trustee, became commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1870, Armstrong suggested Smith “give me a chance” should the opportunity to serve Indians arise.³⁷ Hampton’s first Indian student, a young man named Peter Johnson, arrived in 1877.³⁸ Johnson was an Ute who had traveled east with John Wesley Powell, who would go on to establish the Smithsonian Institution’s Bureau of Ethnology.³⁹ Johnson’s tenure proved uniformly unsatisfying. He refused to perform manual labor, prompting Armstrong to withhold rations.⁴⁰

The Indian program took off in 1878, when Armstrong and the Hampton trustees agreed to accept as students a group of sixty-two Plains Indians, from four tribes, who were being held as prisoners in St. Augustine, Florida.⁴¹ Capt. Richard Henry Pratt and the school he founded in 1879, Carlisle Indian Industrial Training School in Pennsylvania, are generally recognized as establishing the template for federal Indian education. But before Pratt established Carlisle, he worked at Hampton; as the warden of the St. Augustine prisoners, he accompanied his charges to school.⁴² Hampton also preceded schools in the West built specifically as part of the federal Indian education system such as Chillicothe Indian Agricultural School in Indian Territory and Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, both built 1884, and others in New Mexico, California, Oregon and Arizona.⁴³

Hampton, which over its forty-year span educated 1,388 Indian students from sixty-five tribes, was both a model for these later schools, and different from them.⁴⁴ According to Donal Lindsey, author of *Indians at Hampton Institute, 1877-1923*, Hampton's Indian program "led the way to the development of the modern Indian school system."⁴⁵ Lindsey further argues that Hampton Institute's Indian program "influenced national Indian affairs in several important, concrete ways."⁴⁶ For one, along with Carlisle, it inspired the founding of major Indian boarding schools in the West that imitated the emphasis on industrial and vocational education.⁴⁷ Beyond that, it initiated the yearly contract amount of \$167 per year per student for private schools participating in Indian education; it undertook the education of female Indian students; and it pioneered both

coeducation among races and the outing system, made famous by Carlisle, that placed Indian children in white homes, theoretically furthering acculturation.⁴⁸

As important, Hampton promoted Indian education to the general public.⁴⁹ Armstrong was well connected, generally well liked, and a master at publicity. He understood how to generate interest in his cause. Striving for dramatic flair, Armstrong sought to recruit members of the “wildest” tribes, such as the Nez Perce and the Sioux.⁵⁰ He dispatched friends as his public relations minions, having them invite individuals in positions of power to events such as commencement ceremonies and other celebrations.⁵¹ Hampton’s “before and after” photos of Indian students fresh on arrival, wide-eyed and wrapped in blankets, and again a year or so later, freshly groomed and handsomely posed, perhaps at a table with a basket of mending, today are iconic images beyond the field of Indian studies. Lindsey calls the photos “a publicity stunt to increase revenue,” and in fact Armstrong ordered Pratt, on a recruiting trip, to return with the new students’ “wild, barbarous things” to “work that photograph business well.”⁵² (This “trick” worked best with members of Plains tribes, whose traditional garb contrasted with white norms. Eastern Band members, in many ways already acculturated, arrived at Hampton dressed much as they would for their duration at school.)

There were few similarities between Hampton and Trinity, although they did exist. Both were private institutions in the South that contracted with the federal government for the purpose of Indian education. Additionally, both schools administered themselves according to Christian doctrine and the Indian

students at both schools were minority populations within a larger student body. For the most part, the differences were dramatic. Trinity's administration had identified with the Confederate cause, for example, while Armstrong was a Unionist. And where Randolph County was rural, Hampton, Virginia, was a bustling city.

Another difference lay in the fact that where Trinity had no obvious mission for Indian education, Armstrong had clear educational and vocational goals for all his school's students. (When Armstrong died in 1893, Hollis B. Frissell became Hampton's principal, occupying that position for the duration of Will West Long's education there.⁵³) Hampton Institute approached Indian education with the dual purpose of training most Indian students in a profitable trade that would allow for self support, and training as teachers those tribe members deemed capable who would return to their reservation communities – “the remote and benighted country regions, where ignorance, superstition and low ideas of labor and morality prevail” – and educate the younger generations.⁵⁴

There were also financial differences. Where Trinity was perpetually impoverished and beholden to outside interests, Hampton at the turn of the century was well-funded and in firm control of its own destiny. In 1895, for example, the school, a tax-exempt corporation governed by a board of trustees, registered a balance of more than \$145,000, including more than \$80,000 in donations and \$19,000 in government money “for maintenance of Indian students.”⁵⁵ The school's investments, largely in railroad and utility companies, totaled more than \$424,000.⁵⁶ Unlike Trinity, Hampton accepted and educated

American Indians who for various reasons did not qualify for federal reimbursement; in 1895, as many as twenty such individuals, typically funded through dedicated donations, attended the school.⁵⁷ This would have been unthinkable at Trinity.

A spirit of fun and camaraderie existed at Hampton Institute that seems nonexistent for the Indian students at Trinity. Hampton students routinely participated in debates, plays and mock trials, and formed social groups such as bands and civic societies. The students routinely picnicked, camped, sailed, swam and oystered.⁵⁸ The February 1899 newspaper reported that a mock trial staged in the boys dorm concerned the case of a stolen rooster. There was a live rooster, Eastern Band member Pico Sneed cross-dressed to play the part of the accused's mother, and Will West Long played the part of a Chinaman.⁵⁹

Hampton abided by federal mandates regarding Indian education, and Long experienced first-hand the effects of a shift in ideology. In the 1880s and early 1890s, the first years of large-scale, organized Indian education, federal administrators expected schooling to prepare students for entry into mainstream society.⁶⁰ But as time passed, it became clear that widespread racism among the general public made the expectation of integration unrealistic.⁶¹ The shift, accompanied by political turbulence, occurred in the latter half of the 1890s, coinciding precisely with Will West Long's attendance at Hampton. In 1895, the year Long entered school, forty-five U.S. school districts accepted American Indian children into their white classrooms.⁶² Five years later, the length of time Long attended Hampton, the number of U.S. school districts accepting American

Indian children into white classrooms had dropped by half.⁶³ Correspondingly, the curriculum for Indian education shifted further to the industrial arts, theoretically occupations with which American Indians could support themselves.⁶⁴ In 1900, Frissell spoke to an audience of educators, telling them that the Indian students would best be “brought to manhood” through labor.⁶⁵

Even as a contract school, Hampton reflected the shift. When Long arrived in 1895, manual training for Indian students was available, but the overall focus was academic. The very best students were put on a teaching track and the remainder, for the most part, embarked on the preparatory track, which was “intended for Indian pupils who are not far enough advanced to enter the regular academic course.”⁶⁶ In his first year of school, Long was placed in the second division of the preparatory school.⁶⁷ As such, he and his fellow students would have spent half the day in school studying English, geography, reading, arithmetic, writing, drawing, and singing, and spent the other half of the day working.⁶⁸ According to the 1895-96 school catalog, the purpose of the manual training, which around that time included bench work, wood-turning, and forging, was not necessarily self-support: “It is given for the purpose of opening the minds of the students in as many directions as possible and to give a varied and reasonable degree of skill in using different kinds of tools.”⁶⁹ This contributed to preparing the Indian students for life in an industrial society.

By 1896, Hampton established the Armstrong and Slater Memorial Trade School and greatly expanded the manual training it offered students.⁷⁰ The 1899 offerings at the trade school included instruction in carpentry, painting,

wheelwrighting, bricklaying and plastering, blacksmithing, machining, harnessing, shoemaking, steam engineering, and tailoring.⁷¹ By 1900, trade school students were “required to devote nine hours a day” to their trades.⁷² Students were attuned to the changes. The topic of an 1895 debate, held in Hampton's Wigwam, was whether a “trade is of more service to a man than a book education.”⁷³ When representatives from each side rested their cases, “the judge pronounced a tie.”⁷⁴

Will West Long's academic performance never elevated him beyond the preparatory track. He had advanced from the lower to the top preparatory class by 1898-99, but by 1900 the school had done away with separate preparatory classes and simply ranked students together.⁷⁵ For his industrial training, Long studied blacksmithing, a trade he may have used during his time as a footman in Boston.⁷⁶ He may even have found use for the trade when he farmed in Massachusetts and later in Big Cove. However, it appears Long never relied on blacksmithing as a sole means of support.

Hampton's status as a private institution in some instances did ensure it freedoms that schools within the federal school system did not have. The school allowed its Indian students an organ to express solidarity and question authority with the newspaper *Talks and Thoughts*. The newspaper, while supervised by Hampton faculty, was nevertheless an example of a certain freedom of thought and action apparent at Hampton. Eli T. Winkler, in a master's thesis examining the newspaper, concludes that *Talks and Thoughts*

[S]erved as a means for Indian student to express themselves – albeit under institutional supervision – to a small audience

consisting mainly of comprehending, empathetic readers like themselves. It also suggests the emergence of a new pan-Indian identity, as *Talks and Thoughts* strove to unite a growing group of Indians that still recognized tribal distinctions but also felt connected by the potential that they might ... "lead and serve" their race.⁷⁷

Armstrong's ability to choose his own staff had resulted in a highly qualified core group of teachers and administrators with impressive devotion to the school and its students, a fact that students appreciated. A February 1895 essay in *Talks and Thoughts* titled "Our Uncle Sam" commented on the perceived difference between Hampton teachers and those employed by the federal school system. It read: "If [Uncle Sam] would compare his own schools with Hampton he would find that the Hampton teachers are professionals holding the diplomas of the best colleges and Normal Schools of New England and New York and following the latest and most approved methods of teaching."⁷⁸

Hampton faculty and staff maintained a high degree of interaction with current students, returned students, and adult members of the tribes from which the school's students came. For example, the Cherokee agent and two Cherokee adults, a Mr. Reed and Mr. Owl, accompanied the group of students that included Arizona Swaney to school, even addressing the Indian students at Sunday school.⁷⁹ "[A]s they did not speak English one of the students interpreted their remarks which were very good," reported the paper.⁸⁰ The "Mr. Owl" was probably Sampson Owl, a prominent Eastern Band member who at one time served as principal chief.⁸¹ He was uncle and guardian to the ten Owl children who at different times attended Hampton; Caroline Andrus, longtime supervisor of the Indian Records Office, also maintained a correspondence with him.⁸²

Hampton routinely sent its employees on recruiting missions that included the Qualla Boundary in addition to reservations in the West. "Miss Folsom and Miss Louise Armstrong left May 27th for Cherokee, N.C.," announced the June 1895 *Talks and Thoughts*. "Afterward they go to the West."⁸³

During these trips, Hampton employees made a special effort to connect with returned students. Andrus made at least three such visits to the Qualla Boundary, in the late 1890s, 1911, and 1920, and compiled a "Reservation Scrapbook" of more than seventy photos from Cherokee.⁸⁴ Andrus was obviously interested in her surroundings. Scenic photos include images of Soco Creek, the Oconaluftee River, Qualla farmland and the roads into Soco, Birdtown and Big Cove, and other images include a 1911 outdoor meeting of the Tribal Council, a treetop bandstand, students from the Soco day school and the Cherokee boarding school, a 1911 Indian ballgame in Yellow Hill, and a lumber camp at Raven's Ford. But most often in Andrus's scrapbook it was Hampton's returned students who found themselves in front of the lens.

Photos of returned students and their families include Arizona Swayney, who by this time had taken the married name Blankenship, and her two children; Arch Blythe's house with his family on the porch; and David and Henry Owl directing footraces at the boarding school. The wife of returned student William Wahnetah posed with her four children on the front porch of the family's home in a picture from 1920. There is a photo of the same house from 1911. Climbing Bear and his family are pictured in front of their cabin in the late 1890s. There are photos of returned student Hugh Lambert's cornfield, from 1920, and his gristmill,

near Birdtown, as it looked in 1911.⁸⁵ During Andrus's first trip, it was Lottie Smith Pattee, the first Eastern Band member to attend Hampton, her husband, John Pattee, and their two children whom Andrus most often photographed. There is picture after picture of the young couple, in formal dress, with their children sitting in a covered pram.⁸⁶

A most obvious difference between Hampton and federally run schools was the former's multiracial learning environment. Armstrong initially faced opposition to the Indian program from the press; the public, including African Americans; school trustees; and staff.⁸⁷ After the program's establishment, there were incidents of friction and infractions between the races.⁸⁸ While the school undoubtedly tried to downplay negative happenings, Lindsey writes that school records including discipline logs and meeting minutes reveal "perhaps fewer than a dozen" instances of conflict between blacks and Indians.⁸⁹

There are many examples of interaction between the races. At times, the blacks and Indians united on issues concerning student rights and hypocrisy on the part of white school administrators.⁹⁰ An archival manuscript called "Indian Work at Hampton" reported that black students sometimes supervised the Indian students, with a young black woman and her seven Indian female charges "studied and worked and played together and had a very happy time" over the course of a summer.⁹¹ During the same summer, a group of male Indian students in residence at Shellbanks, a school farm a few miles from the campus, "were under the direct care of Mr. Robbins, a colored graduate of Hampton who had been for some time the house father at the Wigwam; the boys all loved him and

called him Ti-bdo, Elder Brother."⁹² The African American educator and author Booker T. Washington led the program, although for less than a year, beginning in 1880.⁹³

During the 1890s, the post-Reconstruction disenfranchisement of blacks was in full effect. Close interaction with Hampton's black students might have heightened the awareness of Indian students to friction between dominant white society and racial minorities, including struggles related to home and place. Two events in particular, the black emigration to Indian Territory and the Wilmington pogrom of 1898, could possibly have attracted the attention of Hampton students. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, independent intentional communities of blacks began to take hold in the United States. Most were concentrated in the South, but according to historian Steven Hahn, a black-town movement in Indian Territory drew "roughly 100,000 African Americans who traveled there from the states to the east and south between 1890 and 1910."⁹⁴ (Indian Territory achieved statehood as Oklahoma in 1907.) The Wilmington event would have interested Hampton students for at least two reasons. First, historians identify an incendiary editorial by Alexander Manly, black editor of the *Wilmington Messenger*, as helping to spark the riot.⁹⁵ Manly had attended Hampton Institute (where he "mastered the painting trade.")⁹⁶ Second, similarities and proximity between the cities of Hampton and Wilmington might possibly have enticed some of the 1,400 evacuees to settle there.

Hahn argues that African Americans in the rural South, as slaves and as freedmen, "conducted politics and engaged in political struggle[and] constituted

themselves as political actors in a society that tried to refuse them that part."⁹⁷ Blacks gave "powerful direction to America's revolutionary experience of disunion, emancipation, and nation-building," he argues.⁹⁸ The instances of migration/dislocation amid racial tension described here were concurrent with the federal practice of allotment of Indian lands in the West. Allotment, also known as severalty, broke up tribal land bases into parcels of between sixty and 180 acres for individual ownership.⁹⁹ The General Allotment Act of 1887 authorized severalty, which along with education was a key component of the federal government's assimilation tactic.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the federal government attached nationality to allotment by granting citizenship to allotted Indians.¹⁰¹ The Allotment Act commonly is called the Dawes Act after Henry L. Dawes, a former Massachusetts senator instrumental to its passage.¹⁰² Armstrong assumed a leading role in presenting allotment favorably to the general public.¹⁰³ Beginning in 1887, Hampton Institute hosted an annual "Indian Citizenship Day" in commemoration of the Dawes Act.¹⁰⁴ In fact, a black man opened the ceremonies during the inaugural event, who said that the Dawes Act "placed the Indian where the Emancipation Proclamation had placed blacks twenty-five years earlier."¹⁰⁵

At first, *Talks and Thoughts* greeted allotment with enthusiasm. In the March 1887 edition, Thomas Sloan, an Omaha from Nebraska, wrote that there were a number of Hampton students who recognized the law as "the work of honest Christian men and women who have worked unceasingly" to have laws passed that would "give the Indian his rights, protect him and make a man of

him.”¹⁰⁶ By the time Long was at Hampton, however, the paper’s tone had changed. Some editorial voices continued to advocate the policy for its acculturating effect; others criticized the policy for the rampant corruption, pilfering of natural resources, and the reduction in the tribal land base that it prompted across the Western United States. Some did both, with one writer observing:

In selling the land for Indians, the government always crowds the Indians to one part of their reservation, and then sell the vacated part. It seems to us that it would be a good thing not to continue this, but instead sell the number of acres to be sold from all parts of the Indian land. This would give a great many Indians white neighbors, from whom they could learn a great deal.¹⁰⁷

Eastern Band students did not weigh in directly on the allotment debate, but they did contribute to a dialogue about place and land, demonstrating an awareness of the importance of place in the struggle to retain identity. “From the earliest history of this country the Cherokee Indian has inhabited the South Atlantic States,” wrote Alonzo Lee, an Eastern Band student at Hampton from 1894-1900, in the March 1899 edition of the newspaper.¹⁰⁸ Lee’s essay, titled “Transition Scenes,” primarily commented on positive changes (as he saw them) observed during a recent visit to the Qualla Boundary and on the need for more education and increased temperance among tribe members. It also included a brief history of the genesis of the Eastern Band that illuminates the importance that Eastern Cherokee placed on their homeland. The Cherokees who resisted removal, Lee wrote, “are always spoken of as the disloyal part of the Cherokee Nation, because they would not share the fate of their brothers, but who can dishonor them for love of home. Men of every race and of every age since the

birth of Adam have been ready to fight, or even die, to defend their homes. It is human nature to love the place where you are brought up.”¹⁰⁹

During the 1897 Indian Citizenship Day, Will West Long made a speech that was later reprinted in the newspaper.¹¹⁰ Called “Indians as Voters and Tax-payers,” Long focused on holding the traditional Cherokee homeland and the nature of land ownership. The reservation was small, he allowed, but Eastern Band members loved it:

But we love this reservation. The reason is, because for more than a hundred years our forefathers have lived in and loved this reservation. And our old chiefs have lived in and loved this reservation. And our old chiefs have been speaking about our land, how to keep this land, and how these people ought to grow.¹¹¹

Long tied the people to the land, comparing them with elements of the landscape, including water and trees. He explained how the Eastern Band members owned their land, not in severalty but in common. It is easy to pay taxes, he wrote. Several families share acreage, with one man per tract appointed as “headman.” “We are citizens under the law,” he concluded. “We cannot sell our land, but the Indian can use what he needs and will work on.”¹¹²

When Long wrote this, there had been rumblings of severalty for the Eastern Band for years. According to Finger, “A recurring theme in the 1880s was that the Eastern Cherokees were not quite ready for allotment,” which acculturated (and often mixed-blood) tribe members disputed.¹¹³ Allotment for the Eastern Band was highly controversial and the issue dragged for decades. In 1905, Will West Long, in a letter to the secretary of the interior, wrote that the Eastern Band members were not ready for allotment, comparing the condition to

the Bible story of Joseph's brothers casting him into a pit.¹¹⁴ Long also was part of a 1930 Tribal Council vote opposing allotment.¹¹⁵ That same year, the Office of Indian Affairs decided against allotment for the Eastern Band, both because the scarcity of agricultural land meant there simply was not enough to allot the required acreage to every tribe member, and because the federal government by this point was abandoning the policy.¹¹⁶

Only 160 Indian students ever graduated from Hampton University, and Will West Long was not among them when he ended his education there in 1900.¹¹⁷ Student and school continued to maintain ties. In 1901, *Talks and Thoughts* ran this report: "Will West Long stopped with us a few days on his way north from Cherokee. He is going to work in Amherst this summer."¹¹⁸ According to Speck, Long spent the next five years in Massachusetts, working for three years on farms in Conway, Amherst, and North Amherst, and then working for two in Boston, "where he was hired by Dr. and Mrs. A.M. Miller to drive their horses."¹¹⁹ By the time he returned home to the Qualla Boundary, Long had been gone a decade.

¹ *Talks and Thoughts*, April 1895, 4, HUA.

² Enrollment records for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, HUA.

³ *Ibid.* Olbrechts recorded Climbing Bear as Will West Long's half-brother in *The Swimmer Manuscript* and Will West Long's Miller Roll application lists Climbing Bear (spelled "Climbingbear") as his brother.

⁴ *Talks and Thoughts*, March 1895, 5, HUA. The spellings of Eastern Band students' names sometimes varied according to Hampton archive sources. For instance, Arizona and Lorenzo's surname appeared as "Swaney" in the newspaper article introducing them, but it appeared as "Swayney" in their school records and is definitely the spelling most often attached to Arizona in other sources, including Sarah H. Hill's *Weaving New Worlds*. In most instances, I use the spelling in agreement with the student's enrollment record, or as I could confirm it with another reliable source. Because Pico Sneed's name is recorded as both "Pieco" and "Pico" throughout *Talks and Thoughts*, I have used "Pico," as it is spelled in his school enrollment record.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Enrollment records for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, HUA.

⁷ 1895 Principal's Report, 5, HUA.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Fritz J. Malval, ed., *A Guide to the Archives of Hampton Institute* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), 108, HUA.

¹⁵ 1895 Principal's Report, 24, HUA.

¹⁶ Lindsey, preface.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.* Lindsey extracted Richard Armstrong's quote from Suzanne C. Carson's biography of Samuel Armstrong.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 2-3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁰ L.P. Jackson, "The Origin of Hampton Institute," *The Journal of Negro History* 10, no. 2 (April 1925): 132.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 134.

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- ³² Ibid., 134-35; Lindsey, 7.
- ³³ Lindsey, 7.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 9.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 19.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 20.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 28-29; David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 46.
- ⁴² Lindsey, 30; Archuleta et al, 16.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 247 and preface. Hampton's Indian program continued through the early years of the 1920s, but according to Lindsey for various reasons began a slow decline in the early 1900s.
- ⁴⁵ Lindsey, 19.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 267.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 34.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Ibid., 35.
- ⁵³ Lindsey, 247.
- ⁵⁴ 1895 Principal's Report, vi, HUA.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid. 1895 Treasurer's Statement, HUA.
- ⁵⁶ 1895 Treasurer's Statement, HUA.
- ⁵⁷ 1895 Principal's Report, v, HUA.
- ⁵⁸ *Talks and Thoughts*, August 1895, 2; November 1899, 2; July 1900, 2, HUA.
- ⁵⁹ *Talks and Thoughts*, February 1899, 2.
- ⁶⁰ Hoxie, *A Final Promise*, 189-90.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 190.
- ⁶² Ibid., 190-91.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 190.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 193.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ 1898-99 catalog of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 27, HUA.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 79.
- ⁶⁸ 1895-96 catalog of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 26, HUA.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 26-28, 79; 1896-97 catalog of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 33-34, HUA.
- ⁷⁰ Lindsey, 125.

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- ⁷¹ 1899-1900 catalog of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, unnumbered, HUA.
- ⁷² Ibid.
- ⁷³ *Talks and Thoughts*, February 1895, 3, HUA.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid.
- ⁷⁵ 1889-99 catalog of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 69; 1899-1900 catalog of Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 107, HUA.
- ⁷⁶ 1898-99 catalog of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 75; 1899-1900 catalog of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 113, HUA.
- ⁷⁷ Eli T. Winkler, "Traveling the White Man's Road": The Quest for Identity in Hampton's Indian Newspaper, 1886-1907 (master's thesis, College of William and Mary: 1998), 2-3.
- ⁷⁸ *Talks and Thoughts*, February 1895 (unnumbered page), HUA.
- ⁷⁹ *Talks and Thoughts*, March 1895, 5, HUA.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid.
- ⁸¹ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 24, 46.
- ⁸² Enrollment records of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, HUA; Malval, 90-91.
- ⁸³ *Talks and Thoughts*, June 1895, 2, HUA.
- ⁸⁴ "Reservation Scrapbook, Cherokee, N.C.," HUA.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid. "Wahnetah" is alternately spelled "Wahhanette" in the school's enrollment records.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Lindsey, 31-32.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 156.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 157.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., 166.
- ⁹¹ Cora M. Folsom, "Indian Work at Hampton," unpublished manuscript, 40, HUA.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Lindsey, 95-97.
- ⁹⁴ Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South From Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 455.
- ⁹⁵ H. Leon Prather, Sr., "We Have Taken a City," in *Democracy Betrayed*, 23-24.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid., 24.
- ⁹⁷ Hahn., 1.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ David E. Wilkins and K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *Uneven Ground: American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 207.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid., 208.
- ¹⁰² Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 152.
- ¹⁰³ Lindsey, 78.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 100.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Winkler, 47.

¹⁰⁷ *Talks and Thoughts*, September 1895, 4, HUA.

¹⁰⁸ *Talks and Thoughts*, March 1899, 3, HUA.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ *Talks and Thoughts*, April 1897, 2, HUA.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Finger, *The Eastern Band of Cherokees*, 175.

¹¹⁴ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 25.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 51, 71.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 51.

¹¹⁷ Lindsey, preface. According to Hill, Long was a Hampton graduate, but no evidence supports it. Considering the small number of graduates and the fact that Long never rose past the preparatory program, his formal graduation from the school is unlikely.

¹¹⁸ *Talks and Thoughts*, April 1901, 2, HUA.

¹¹⁹ Speck, "Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies," Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.

EPILOGUE

A combination of factors eventually prompted Will West Long's return to Big Cove in 1904. He was homesick, he disliked white people's food, he was often in poor health, and he was unaccustomed to the deep snows and extreme cold of the New England winter.¹

Scholars have noted the anger, sadness, confusion, and frustration with which some returned students responded when they arrived home to poverty, limited economic opportunity, and an absence of jobs for which they had been prepared. No matter their intentions, success was impossible. "You first taught me the white man's road. I am now very poor and disconsolate. All you gave me is gone, and if you can send me any clothes or something to work in I will be thankful," a former student (and one of the St. Augustine prisoners) wrote to Pratt shortly after his return to Fort Sill, in present-day Oklahoma.² A letter from Eastern Band member William Wahnetah to *Talks and Thoughts* in 1902, after he had returned to the Qualla Boundary, carried a tone of resignation. "I am doing all I can to make a living," wrote Wahnetah, whose time at Hampton, 1894-97, overlapped Long's.³

Compounding the difficulties of return, many students found they incurred the suspicion of community members who considered them outsiders. "When the pupils returned to the reservation, they often became objects of ridicule,"

Connell-Szasz writes.⁴ Hampton student Thomas Wildcat Alford wrote poignantly of his return to the Absentee Shawnee in his memoir, *Civilization*:

There was no happy gathering of family and friends, as I had so fondly dreamed there might be. Instead of being eager to learn the new ideas I had to teach them, they gave me to understand very plainly that they did not approve of me. I had no real home to go to, and my relatives did not welcome my presence.⁵

Of Will West Long's return to the Qualla Boundary, Olbrechts wrote, "It did not take him more than a few days to drop into the old life again."⁶ This assessment fails to consider the attendant difficulties of Long's homecoming. Olbrechts himself reported Long as "feared by many, despised by a few, loved by none."⁷ Writing about Long in the context of traditional medicine man, Olbrechts offered a description that revealed some of Long's internal conflict and his position among others suspicious of his different set of experiences:

He is fully aware of his own worth and accomplishments, and therefore extremely sensitive to mockery and slight. ... An activity and a providence, which the more surprise us as they are totally unknown to his shiftless and happy-go-lucky fellows, he owes, I feel quite sure, to his training as an adolescent in the Government boarding school, and to his subsequent stay with white families as a servant and coachman. Altogether, [Long] was by far the most impressive and most important personality in the settlement at the time of my stay. If only so much antipathy had not been rampant against him, he would without any doubt have been considered, implicitly if not outspokenly, the leader of the community.⁸

Will West Long seems to have made the best of the anthropological economy as it presented itself, often recruiting family and community members into what work was available.⁹ He might even have nurtured Big Cove's conservative characteristics after he returned to the Qualla Boundary. According to Witthoft, "Under Will's leadership the Big Cove community re-enacted the



3. Will West Long dances at the Cherokee Indian Fair in this undated photograph. (Photo courtesy of Sylvester Crow)

whole Cherokee ceremonial cycle for study and recordings.”¹⁰ In a 1932 work, anthropologist William Harlen Gilbert Jr. thanked Will West Long and then described Big Cove as so conservative it “does not actually seem to be representative of the rest of the boundary.”¹¹ It is impossible to know if residents there embraced conjuring because of its economic potential in the anthropological economy. In any case, in the mid-1920s, Olbrechts noted that of the fifteen families living in Big Cove, ten individuals were “avowed medical practitioners” and “three or four more occasionally took up the practice of medicine as a side line.”¹²

According to Witthoft, Long endured the frustration of seeing the men “for whom he worked prosper, while he remained impoverished.”¹³ A series of letters from Long to Speck in the 1920s reveals that Long and his son, Allen, produced masks for the anthropologist for a matter of dollars. At times, Long received more

money from Speck to cover shipping expenses than for the goods he produced.¹⁴ Meanwhile, the anthropologists received hundreds of dollars to aid in their studies of the tribe.¹⁵ Long apparently overcame any feelings of jealousy, forming not only lasting professional relationships with the anthropologists visiting the boundary, but personal ones, as well. Mooney came to value Will as “one of his best sources of information,” and the men shared a friendship and working relationship until Mooney’s death.¹⁶ Wrote the anthropologist Arthur Kelly, “Will West is one of the most admirable characters I have ever known. We became staunch friends and I shall always remember our hours together.”¹⁷ Of course, such relationships further exposed Long to the scrutiny of other Eastern Band members. According to Hoxie, “Collaborating with outsiders opened informants up to charges of opportunism, for even the most dedicated anthropologists approached native communities with their professional agendas foremost in their minds.”¹⁸ Even Witthoft, in his remembrance of Long, laments his friend’s death as “opportunity neglected and data lost.”¹⁹

Historians continue to debate the level of student desire to participate in boarding school education. Scholars tend to cast the experience in negative terms, especially as it pertains to the era of federal assimilation policy. Therefore, statements such as the following, by Larry Richard Patlis Patterson, from his dissertation about Eastern Band member boarding school experiences, are common:

The history of American education has a dark side and it manifested itself at its absolute ugliest during a period when the Federal government used the educational system as a means of trying to destroy Native American culture. The primary instrument

created by the government for carrying out its insidious plan was a system of boarding schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.²⁰

Without question, boarding school was traumatic for many students, many of whom resented the experience. Eastern Band member Arch Blythe, who attended Hampton around the same time as Will West Long, routinely broke rules and challenged authority before he left school, a decision that met with faculty approval.²¹ But Will West Long was a grown man of 25 when he arrived at Hampton and it is unlikely anyone forced his attendance. For the most part, attending Hampton appears to have been voluntary among Eastern Band members. For many years, students and former students proudly recruited for the school, routinely accompanying younger tribe members from the Qualla Boundary to Hampton.²² Attendance at Hampton might even have held some prestige among Eastern Band members. Lottie Smith, the school's first Eastern Band student, was the daughter of Chief Nimrod J. Smith.²³

Long was among several Hampton students who went on to make significant contributions to the Eastern Band in positions of leadership and cultural stewardship. Arizona Swayney helped preserve double-weave basketry, a technique sought by collectors today. One of the few American Indian students to actually graduate from the school, she went on to teach basket-making at Hampton and on the Qualla Boundary.²⁴ Jarrett Blythe, who attended Hampton from 1905-08, served six terms as Eastern Band principal chief, twenty-four years total spanning 1931 to 1967.²⁵ He was, according to Finger, "probably the most popular political figure ever to hold office on the Cherokee reservation."²⁶

Blythe helped the tribe develop its tourism interests and successfully negotiated an alternate route for the Blue Ridge Parkway with the federal government after band members protested the original parkway plans.²⁷ As John Collier, commissioner of Indian affairs under Franklin D. Roosevelt, noted in his 1963 memoir, *From Every Zenith*, “through and after the upheavals of the second World War and the Indian Bureau’s ‘relocation’ drive of the 1950s,” the Eastern Band “held fast to their homeland, expanding their economic enterprise and social contact into the best of modern life and of their whole region, but all the while firmly rooted in their culture and their tribal life.”²⁸ Further scholarship on the contributions of Hampton alumni to the Eastern Band might shed additional light on Eastern Band development in the modern era.

Long engaged in the Eastern Band community from the time he returned home until he died, often propelling the tribe forward while referencing its past. He served twenty-eight years on Tribal Council; taught the Cherokee language to schoolchildren; helped launch the Cherokee Indian Fair; participated in the “Spirit of the Great Smokies,” which lives today as “Unto These Hills”; traveled with his dance group to introduce Cherokee culture to non-Natives; and served as informant to generations of anthropologists. We see traces of Long in the contemporary Eastern Band. Several years ago, the tribe reclaimed its outdoor drama, “Unto These Hills,” by rewriting it and casting it with a majority of Eastern Band members rather than non-Natives. The Eastern Band is dedicated to language preservation. A language immersion program is in place at the schools, and a literature project, administered through the Museum of the Cherokee

Indian, translates and publishes work in the Cherokee language.²⁹ Performance of traditional song and dance has developed into something of an Eastern Band trademark; one such group, the Warriors of AniKituhwa, performs around the world, and its members are “cultural ambassadors” of the tribe.³⁰ The tribe annually hosts revenue-generating events such as the Festival of Native Peoples and the Southeastern Tribes Cultural Arts Celebration, both of which highlight Eastern Band dance and that of other tribes. A renovation to the boundary’s downtown aims to attract visitors with aesthetics including water features and native stone, meant to echo the surrounding terrain. Even the tribally owned Harrah’s Cherokee Casino and Hotel promotes Cherokee culture with an extensive, impressive collection of contemporary art created exclusively by Eastern Band members. In these actions, we see echoes of Long, who helped shape Eastern Band policy, preserve the language, and establish an economic infrastructure. He worked to attract the outside world’s attention not only to the Eastern Band’s existence, but also to its inherent worth.

- ¹ Speck, *Aged Indian Tells of Early Life in Smokies*, Frank G. Speck Papers, APS; Olbrechts, 79, 109; Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 357.
- ² Adams, 281.
- ³ *Talks and Thoughts*, February 1902, 2; enrollment records of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, HUA.
- ⁴ Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*, 10.
- ⁵ Alford, 111.
- ⁶ Olbrechts, 109.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 110-111.
- ⁹ In one of a series of letters between Frank Speck and Will West Long, Long at one point reminds Speck about payment due to an elderly neighbor who needed the "money to buy her food." Allen Long inherited his father's position as supplier to the anthropologists and maintained correspondence with Speck after Will West Long's death.
- ¹⁰ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 358.
- ¹¹ Gilbert, 175. The Cherokee townships are Birdtown, Yellow Hill, Paint Town, Wolf Town, and Big Cove. The Cherokee community of Snowbird is also recognized as quite traditional. However, Snowbird is in Graham County and not a contiguous part of the Qualla Boundary.
- ¹² Olbrechts, 7.
- ¹³ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 359.
- ¹⁴ Long to Speck, April 24, 1929, Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ¹⁵ Kelly to Speck, Jan. 1, 1930, Frank G. Speck Papers, APS.
- ¹⁶ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 358.
- ¹⁷ Kelly to Speck, Nov. 10, undated (circa late 1920s to early 1930s), Frank G. Speck Papers, APS. Long had at least one rocky relationship with an anthropologist. Olbrechts caused a minor scandal among scholars when he used portions of *The Swimmer Manuscript* to defame Long.
- ¹⁸ Hoxie, "Exploring a Cultural Borderland," 983.
- ¹⁹ Witthoft, "Will West Long, Cherokee Informant," 356.
- ²⁰ Larry Richard Patlis Patterson, "The Eastern Band of Cherokee and Their Boarding School Experiences: Stories and Reflections From the Elders" (doctoral dissertation, Tennessee State University: 2001) 1.
- ²¹ Records of Discipline of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, 1895-96, HUA.
- ²² *Talks and Thoughts*, June-July 1896, 5; January 1902, 2, HUA.
- ²³ Enrollment records of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, HUA.
- ²⁴ *Talks and Thoughts*, July 1901, 2, HUA; Hill, 216-19.
- ²⁵ Enrollment records for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, HUA; Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 95.
- ²⁶ Finger, *Cherokee Americans*, 94.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 92-97, 113.
- ²⁸ John Collier, *From Every Zenith: A Memoir* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), 56.

²⁹ Jess Clark, "A Language Almost Lost," *WNC Magazine*, May/June 2007, 90; Barbara Duncan, "Museum of the Cherokee Indian Announces Literature Initiative and Partnership with Charles Frazier," September 2006 news release.

³⁰ "Eastern Band Cherokees, warrior dancers have international fans," electronic newsletter of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, 3 April 2007.

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