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The American Indian Quarterly, Volume 39, Number 1, Winter 2015,
pp. 1-24 (Article)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

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“Why[,] These Children Are Not Really Indians”

Race, Time, and Indian Authenticity

CHERYL A. WELLS

As Americans struggled in the aftermath of the Civil War to make sense of their new world, they increasingly searched for authenticity, not truth, to manufacture an imagined and soothing past.¹ While southerners fashioned the Lost Cause ideology and created a romantic South of happy slaves, demure belles, and gallant gentlemen, northerners imagined an abolitionist society based on free wage labor and dominated by industry. As this search turned to the West, Americans continued to try to make sense of their world and “to reaffirm [their] modern identities” by creating an authentic past in order to imagine, idealize, and racialize “the real, the traditional, and the organic in opposition” to the anxieties unleashed by modernization, capitalism, emancipation, and industrialization.² Having already “defined their own states as inauthentic,” Americans “located authenticity” in the figure of the American Indian, who served as the perfect Other and increasingly measured Indian authenticity or Indianness in opposition to the symbols and processes of modernity.³ Blood quotas, clothing, hairstyles, and facility with technologies, among other indexes, all served at various points in time to construct Indianness as isolated from the corrupt currents of modernization.⁴ As scholar Phil Deloria argues, those “Indians who had assimilated into modern society” emerged in white eyes as “negative others.”⁵

When Indians embraced the quintessential symbol of modernity, namely, the clock, Americans rebelled.⁶ If Americans emerged as modern, clock conscious, and progressive, then Indians, “real Indians,” emerged as static, antimodern, and ignorant of the clock. When Indians seemingly assimilated into mainstream society and adopted modern temporal cues, whites denied Indians’ indigeness. The Cherokee,

for example, who functioned on the Gregorian calendar and clock time as early as the 1820s, are constructed as “negative others,” while Indians like the Yahi Ishi, whose sense of time was rooted in sun sense rather than mechanical time, emerged in American imaginations as authentic and “the last wild Indian” in North America.⁷ Some scholars have wholeheartedly digested this binary of authenticity, wrongly conflated “real Indians” with ignorance of the clock, and in doing so rendered American Indians static, timeless, powerless, and atavistic. American Indians have colored attitudes toward Indian temporality by deliberately privileging task orientation over mechanical time as a means of securing power, autonomy, and authority.

This marriage between authenticity and temporality has its roots in European colonization. Successive waves of European settlers arrived from a world governed by multiple and competing times. Natural times, God’s time, and personal times, increasingly undergirded by the clock, regulated daily life in Europe and on the voyage to the Americas.⁸ Upon arrival in the new world, Europeans set out to approximate and transplant the temporal rhythms and timescapes of the old world in the new. Colonists established temporally regulated rules, erected clock-regulated bells, preserved the integrity of the Sabbath, and shaped work schedules by using task orientation and natural time in harmony with clock time. While Europeans continued to refine and develop their temporal worlds, they also sought to temporally colonize American Indians, whom they perceived as having no recognizable or discernable system of time. Not surprisingly, the absence of clock time among Indians struck Europeans as most curious. European and later American observers of Indian life recorded a lingering portrait of “real Indians,” those in their natural state, as ignorant of time generally, the clock specifically.

Such was the case in 1635, when French missionary Jean de Brébeuf recalled the puzzlement with which the Huron greeted the clock. “They all think it is some living thing,” Brébeuf wrote, for they “cannot imagine how it sounds of itself; and when it is going to strike, they look to see if we are all there, and if someone has not hidden, in order to shake it. . . . They think it hears. . . . When it strikes they say it is speaking.”⁹ An apparently similar event occurred in New York’s Mohawk Valley in 1780. During a raid of a store, the store clerk observed that the store’s clock “began to perform, and the Indians, in numbers, gathered round in mute astonishment, to listen to its melody. They supposed it the voice of a

spirit” and stopped robbing the store.¹⁰ Although the event’s publication occurred in the 1880s, thus perhaps casting doubt on its accuracy, the depiction of Indians as ignorant and mystified by the clock clearly reveals a rejection of Indian compatibility with the clock and thus modernity. Nelson Lee made a comparable assumption in 1855. After Lee was captured by the Comanche in Texas, the Indians discovered his watch, and while they were inspecting it, the alarm sounded, startling the Indians, whose “utter astonishment . . . was beyond description.” Lee convinced the Indians that the watch was “something supernatural which connected [him] with the Great Spirit” and that only he commanded the watch and, in turn, controlled the Spirit. Many Indians visited Lee during his captivity “to see and hear the wonderful watch, the fame thereof beyond question, having spread far and near.” Indeed, it was his watch, “the silver child of the sun, that had so providentially shielded [him] from unspeakable outrage,” permitted him to endure three years of captivity, and eventually secured his escape. Lee no doubt spoke for Brébeuf, the store clerk, and many others when he stated that the sounds of mechanical time “captivated the simple children of nature.”¹¹

Anthropological and historical scholarship has reinforced such observations. Traditionally, scholars have identified two routes to explain the inculcation of clock-dependent time consciousness. E. P. Thompson argued that changes in the workplace wrought by capitalism—namely, industrialization—resulted in the emergence and eventual preponderance of clock-regulated wage labor, which over time evolved into an all-encompassing clock-dependent time consciousness. Mark M. Smith, however, argued against free wage labor as the only measuring stick of capitalism. Under the pressures of the market revolution, American southerners embraced a “capitalist economy” largely absent of wage labor, and clock-dependent time consciousness emerged in the South through participation in such an economy.¹² Largely isolated from the currents of industrialization and capitalism, American Indians, therefore, must have remained ignorant of the clock. That is certainly the argument put forth by anthropologist Douglas Givens. His 1977 work, *An Analysis of Navajo Temporality*, argues that physicians serving the Navajo reservation used picture labels replicating the position of the sun rather than clock times to indicate when medicine should be taken, since the Navajo could not tell time.¹³ Historian Calvin Martin likewise suggests that clock time is not Indian time. Fellow historian Donald L. Fixico

argues that “the hands of the white man’s clock” attempt to strangle the Indian’s soul but that the cyclical nature of American Indian time has inoculated Indians against inculcations of linear and clock-based time.¹⁴

Once true at particular points in time and for particular indigenous nations, the currency of such observations has eroded. Consider Black Elk’s and Lakota Luther Standing Bear’s thoughts on the subject. During the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876, Black Elk “saw something bright hanging on [a dead] soldier’s belt and [he] took out something yellow on either side on a chain. . . . [I]t was beautiful. [He] did not know what it was and at home used it as a necklace.”¹⁵ During an 1880 visit to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Luther Standing Bear received “silver dollars and a gold watch and chain” from his father. “When any of the boys or girls looked at me,” recalled Standing Bear, “I always took out that watch and looked at it, imagining that I could tell time!!”¹⁶ Neither Black Elk nor Luther Standing Bear possessed an understanding of mechanical time, but they developed and inculcated one over time. Black Elk eventually recognized his necklace as a watch and used it as such, and Luther Standing Bear learned how to tell time with his watch.¹⁷

For Union general and Seneca Isaac Newton Parker that realization occurred earlier, as evidenced by an 1863 letter to his wife in New York:

Take the *watch* to O. E. Sibley[‘s shop in Buffalo, New York, for] . . . [t]he watch has not been cleaned in *seven* years. . . . I want it *cleaned* and *repaired* thoroughly, for I send it north for that express purpose. . . . When the job is finished, you take the watch, after a due trial in running by hanging *still* in the shop for a few weeks: and give it a trial to see how it will run by carrying. It will run [a] full 48 hours before it will run down. . . . [M]ade and brought over from Germany . . . I know myself that it is a splendid time keeper when it is all right. . . . But I will not trust it [to North Carolina watchmakers, who are nothing] but the unfinished apprentices of our northern cities and some not knowing the difference between a “balance wheel” and “main spring.”¹⁸

Clearly, clock time for Parker was so critical that he sent his watch over a thousand miles to be fixed.

Parker, Black Elk, and Luther Standing Bear acknowledge what scholars and others have accidentally glossed over, that Indian temporal consciousness changed over time to include clock time. To suggest

otherwise, as Martin and Fixico do, is to argue that native cultures remained static, “intricate, exotic, and delicate edifices which could not change” and were consequently bound for destruction.¹⁹ Clearly, Native American temporality did not collapse with the addition of clock time. The ticks of the clocks or the absence of them cannot measure authenticity. Native Americans, like Americans of all stripes, functioned within multiple, conflicting, cyclical, linear, gendered, religious, personal, natural, and clock times, among others. What they did not share was the process of clock time’s installation or the time frame in which that installation occurred.

Native Americans possessed a finely honed sense of time. Graeme Davison’s astute insights into Aborigines and temporality in Australia are equally applicable to North American Indians. They, like “Aborigines[,] were not strangers to ideas of divided time. In some ways, their ideas of time were more precise than those of the Europeans. They were more alert to the subtle changes in foliage, wind direction, tidal movement, and bird migration that marked the passage of the year.” “Punctual people,” Indians and Aborigines “were obedient to the time-signals that mattered to them.”²⁰

Before widespread European contact, the environment provided such time signals. Natural time imparted a rhythm, an order, and a measure to Indian life. While sunrise and sunset organized the parameters of the day, the cycles of nature organized life. The blooming of chokecherries, for example, signified to the Crow the appropriate time to plant their sacred tobacco, while deep snow signaled to the Algonquians the close of hunting season.²¹ The summer solstice scheduled the Kiowas’ Sun Dance ritual, while the spring equinox instructed the Pawnees to inaugurate their First Thunder Ceremony.²² The Comanches and the Pawnees reckoned time by “the cold and the hot season,” whereas the Algonquians measured time by the passage of the budding of spring, the earring of corn, the highest sun, corn gathering, and winter.²³ The Creeks, Sioux, and Chippewas measured time through the passage of twelve lunar cycles, while the Hopis and sometimes the Pawnees ordered their time by the passage of thirteen lunations. The naming of the lunations, however, was contingent on geography. When the Lenape lived in Pennsylvania, they referred to the European American month of March as the “*shad* moon,” for this was when the shad fish “began to ascend the fresh-water rivers from the sea.” Upon their removal to Ohio, the same month was

referred to as the moon of the sap running.²⁴ Native Americans relied on nature to organize their civilizations and direct their action and inaction.

Indigenous people meticulously measured changes in nature and left physical evidence of their linear and cyclical time measurement. Plains Indians, like those who inhabited the Bighorn Range in Wyoming, used medicine wheels to design lunar calendars to mark the passage of time and to measure time.²⁵ The Salish of British Columbia used string calendars to mark the passage of “days, weeks, months, and years . . . by different knots or makers,” while the passage of each moon was indicated by a bead marker that “occurred every twenty-eight knots.”²⁶ Other nations, such as the Sioux, marked time with calendar sticks. On William Clark’s famed 1804 voyage west, he visited the Santee and witnessed how they measured time. According to Clark, the Santee calendar stick was “a slender pole about 6 feet in length, the surface of which was carved with small notches.” These notches, an elder told Clark, represented particular battles, events, and births. In short, they “represented the history of [the] tribe for more than a thousand years.”²⁷ Likewise, Sioux Iron Shell diligently marked time, for “when the moon first rose, Iron Shell made a nick in a long pole he kept by the bed. . . . Every night he made another nick, until the moon finally disappeared. . . . He got a new stick each year, cutting it in the Moon of the Birth of the Calves.”²⁸ Other nations opted to record their histories in the form of winter counts. The keeper of the winter count measured time by recording one significant event each winter or, in European American terms, each year. The Dakota and Kiowa winter counts reveal the coexistence of linear and cyclical time.²⁹ Chronological in nature, the counts allowed Indians to calculate their ages. Black Elk recalled that he was born in “the Winter the Four Crows were killed” during “the moon of the popping trees.”³⁰ He then counted the characters between his birth and the present to determine his age. Indians, therefore, understood winter counts specifically and time generally as simultaneously linear and cyclical, in short, as multiple and dictated by the cycles of nature.

With the encroachment of European missionaries and the establishment of missions, traditional Indian time cues, calendrical and natural, and consequently soundscapes began to change. Missionaries sought to purge Indians of their perceived indolence while simultaneously instilling a seemingly missing respect for industry and labor and “proclaim[ing] the supreme value of time in Christian, civilized com-

munities.”³¹ As in Europe, missionaries sought to do this through strictly regimented natural time in the form of sundials, which they then used to set their clocks and disseminate time through the ringing of the mission bells. The Spanish modeled such efforts on their previous experiences with indigenous peoples in Latin America.

In Latin America generally and Mexico specifically, Europeans recognized indigenous calendars and time systems, labeled them heretical, and immediately sought to eradicate such ideas. The Spaniards systematically “destroyed the elite [indigenous] cadre that could understand, amend, and disseminate the [indigenous] calendar[s] in [their] full complexity,” thus destroying the underpinnings of indigenous temporality.³² The Spanish sought to replace these calendars with the Christian calendar and European temporality sensibilities as articulated through bells and organized by sundials.³³

In the North American context, the Spanish relied on their experiences in Latin America but with modifications, as they viewed the North American context through different eyes. North American Indians, to European eyes and ears, lacked highly developed and evolved civilizations and a recognizable sense of time, as indicated by physical calendars and time articulated by sound. Since the Europeans recognized no timekeepers or calendar keepers, none could be destroyed. Instead, they set about approximating the timescapes, and the accompanying soundscapes, of Europe while simultaneously instilling a deep sense of time and discipline in their Indian charges.

Missions employed sundials as a means of temporal control. Aware that Native Americans functioned according to the sun, missionaries set about grafting such consciousness onto mission life. The sun still dictated the completion of tasks, much as it had before contact, but missionaries dictated what tasks Indians accomplished. Missionaries’ dedication to precision manifested itself in their use of sundials. In order to ensure accuracy, artisans constructed each sundial for the specific latitude of the mission. At California’s Mission San Carlos Borromeo, the highly specialized sundial clearly married the position of the sun to specific tasks. All around the sundial’s face,

carved in stone, were objects and figures indicating, apparently the various duties to be performed by the neophytes at the hour marked by the shadow of the gnomon. For instance, there were carved fig-

ures of kneeling Indians calling attention to the hour of prayer; figures of Indians partaking of food—an immense kettle in which it had been cooked indicating the time for breakfast, dinner, and supper. Then there were shown sheep tended by Shepherds, workers in shops and fields, reminding the Indians that it was time for work when the shadow touched the spot. All around the dial's face, the activities of the day were so noted that all could understand.³⁴

In addition to instilling Natives with a sense of European time, sundials also regulated the mission clocks. Most missionaries possessed mechanical timepieces, as Jean de Brébeuf did in 1635. In 1774, for example, mission records revealed that Father Junípero Serra used an alarm clock at California's Mission San Carlos to regulate time. At Mission Santa Clara, "a wood clock with little bell, or chimes," marked "the hours and quarter hours."³⁵ These clock times, set by the missions' sundials, then transferred the time to the larger mission community through the ringing of bells.

"No single mechanism," notes scholar Richard Steven Street, "was more important in setting the schedule of labor, dividing the day into discernible units, and reminding" the Indians "who was in charge than the mission bells."³⁶ The ringing of bells punctuated the ears, disseminated clock time, required time obedience, and acted as "acoustic markers of place and identity."³⁷ For converts, bells represented a foreign place and a changing identity in which alien noise dictated action and inaction. Converts "worked, played, prayed, ate, slept, married, and were even born and buried according to a system of bells."³⁸ These bells, in turn, challenged the authority of nature to organize time. Whereas Indians once rose at sunrise and worked according to what missionaries saw as vague natural cues, the bells rigidly scheduled time.

And so it was for Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf. He recalled that during his 1635 mission among the Huron the Indians initially had no understanding of mechanical time and arrived at all hours. Over time, however, the Huron learned that when the clock "sounded four o'clock of the afternoon, during the winter," the mission was closing. They recognized the time and "immediately . . . arose, and went out." Similarly, the Huron learned that at noon, sound indicated a meal. The Huron "never fail[ed]," Brébeuf recalled, "to come at that hour."³⁹

For the Huron, a temporal miscalculation resulted in hunger. More

severe punishments awaited California mission Indians. Like Jean de Brébeuf, eighteenth-century Franciscans ordered the Indians' day so that they

first heard the voice of God just before sunrise, when the prayer bell woke them for mass. They continued hearing prayer bells as they trudged through the darkness to attend devotion, and again sometimes at the conclusion of services. At the sound of work bells around 9 A.M., Indians assembled in the quadrangle or some other previously designated point, picked up their tools, received instructions and marched off to start the day's labor. They remained at their posts until a bell tolled out a lunch break around 11 A.M. Following a siesta, work bells sent them back to the fields at 2 P.M. (1 P.M. in winter) and summoned them for evening prayers at 5 P.M. An hour later, the prayer bell rang them to supper. At 8 P.M. the Poor Souls' Bells announced curfew and finally, at 9 P.M., one of the *esquilas* [bells] commanded the Indians to retire to quarters. Except for Sunday, when field labor ceased and the work bells were not rung, the sequence never changed.⁴⁰

Nor had it changed by the nineteenth century. Missionaries rang the Santa Cruz mission bell, for example, "at eleven a.m. [every morning] to call [the Indians] together" for dinner. "At the end of the hour the bell was rung again and all went to work" until the work bell indicated the end of labor.⁴¹ Missions served to instill time in their charges through sound.

Not all Indians cooperated with the demands issued by mission bells. Some refused to abandon their older time schedules and responded to the same time cues as they always had. Indians on California's coast frequently left their missions in the late spring and "congregated by the seashore to catch sardines and gather shellfish or dispersed to the hills to collect grasses, acorns, and other wild seeds" and then returned to the missions, as they previously did to their own settlements, in early fall.⁴² Indians at Mission San Gabriel likewise favored older temporal cues over the clang of the mission's bells. "Sometimes," complained the missionaries, "the lure of the wilds, a sort of spring fever, would seize [the Indians]; at other times wild berries were ripe, or the hunting season was on, when nothing would detain the young fellows; in most cases the pent up animal propensity, which they could not gratify at the Mission, would make them leave."⁴³ Missionaries misunderstood Native im-

pulses. What missionaries viewed as Natives abandoning the regulation of the missions was, in reality, Natives privileging and adhering to older temporal signals dictated by nature. Native Americans did not lack a sense of time, as missionaries argued, but rather selected which temporal cues to follow.

When older indigenous temporalities, based on task orientation and Native time cues, trumped clock-regulated mission bells, Indians paid a steep price. Missionaries enforced the authority of the clock and controlled their labor force by systematically employing brutal violence as a deterrent to disobedience. In California missions, “infractions against the work schedule” often resulted in “a variety of coercive measures, including solitary confinement, whippings, stock, and leg chains.”⁴⁴ When mission Indians opted for unauthorized rest periods following the completion of a task, missionaries severely whipped them for violating the ticks of the clock. Tardiness to mass also met with violence. In 1829 at the San Luis Rey Mission, visitor Alfred Robinson noted that the *alcaldes* drove the laggard Natives “under the whip’s lash . . . to the very doors of the sanctuary.”⁴⁵ For other mission Indians, resistance took the form of unauthorized leaves from the missions. Some escaped back into the interior of California. Luck, however, eluded others. Those captured faced punishment for leaving the mission and thus the authority of mission bells. Missionaries gathered the Indians to witness the punishments given to those Indians who had been captured and marched back to the mission. Russian Vassili Torkanoff noted that offending Indians

were all bound with rawhide ropes, and some were bleeding from wounds, and some children were tied to their mothers. . . . Some of the runaway men were tied to sticks and beaten with straps. One chief was taken out to the open field and a young calf which had just died was skinned and the chief was sewed into the skin while it was yet warm. He was kept tied to a stake all day, but he died soon and they kept his corpse tied up.⁴⁶

Death often resulted from resistance to European-imposed temporal systems.

Instead of resisting, some Indians inculcated, recognized, and co-opted the power of mission bells. On March 8, 1876, missionaries Father Philip Rappagliosi and Father Imoda traveled among the Blackfeet and Pend d’Oreilles of the Rocky Mountain region to perform baptisms. The

missionaries discovered that the Pend d'Oreilles "brought a little bell from the mission . . . [i]n order to bring a signal to alert the Indians" that it was time for baptism.⁴⁷ Because these Natives had tied the ringing of the bell to the scheduling of religious events, they followed the authority of the bell and appeared to Rappagliosi and Imoda at the appropriate time for their slated baptisms.

For those Natives living near missions, bells punctuated the pastoral nature of their soundscapes and introduced a new regularity by which to organize events. During Pontiac's rebellion in 1763, for example, the missionaries inside of Fort Joseph, Michigan, forbade the ringing of mission bells. They feared that Pontiac and his men might use the bells to coordinate their attacks, as the bells indicated the hours. The bells remained silent, and Pontiac did not use the clock-regulated chiming of the mission bells to coordinate his attacks.⁴⁸ Although the missionaries' fears remained unfounded, the existence of those fears are telling and serve as a strong indicator of the inculcation of clock time as articulated through mission bells in the surrounding Indian population. Not all Indians embraced the authority of the bells to schedule their day, for such inculcation remained contingent on inclination and geographic proximity to missions and mission bells, thus making the process uneven at best.

The missionary zeal to convert the Indians, in part through the inculcation of clock time as articulated through bells, continued with the founding of schools, among other institutions. All schools dedicated to Indian education shared the same goal, namely, to strip Indians of their traditional ways and understandings and replace such things with European and American ways and understandings. In this context, school officials systematically employed the clock as a weapon of deculturalization and assimilation. Educators believed that the inculcation of clock time was the route from savagery to civilization due to clock time's close association "with such positive virtues as work, money, and progress."⁴⁹ In schools, educators sought to "reset the internal clock of Indian pupils from natural time to clock time."⁵⁰ De-Indianization occurred through the ticks of the clock or the sound of clock-regulated bells, whistles, and horns.

The use of sound to mark time organized all schools for most Americans, Indians included, although students did not initially possess personal timepieces. In 1871 "one of the first difficulties" John Homer Seger encountered in his attempt to teach the Cheyenne and the Arapahoe "was getting the children to come at the right hour. They were not used

either to going to bed or getting up at any specified time, and as they had no timepiece punctuality was out of the question.” Seger solved this problem in the same way that missionaries alerted converts to the start of services. Seger used his watch to track time but articulated the time through sound; in this case, a cow’s horn alerted students to the start of classes.⁵¹ Luther Standing Bear recalled that at the Carlisle Industrial Indian School in 1879, the students “knew by the sun” when it “was near dinner time,” so they would “play close to the dining room, until the woman in charge came out with the big bell in her hand to announce the meal was ready. . . . After a while they hung a big bell on a walnut tree near the office. This was to be rung for school hours and meals” in order to replace sun time with sound articulating mechanical time in Indian consciousness.⁵² This marriage between clock time and sound organized schools as clock-regulated bells and whistles scheduled the school day.

For most Natives, the sound of clock-regulated bells and whistles negatively altered their soundscapes. They found the sounds jarring and foreign. Zitkala-Ša complained of the “loud metallic voice” of the bells in her “sensitive ears” on her first day of school.⁵³ In 1881 at the Shoshone Episcopal Mission School, bells startled new female students. “Listen,” one wrote, “what is that loud, ringing noise.”⁵⁴ Basil Johnston echoes these sentiments when he recalled his first day at school. At “6:15 A.M. Clang! Clang! Never had anything—no wind, not thunder—awakened” Johnston “with quite the same shock and fright.”⁵⁵ Lakota Mary Crow Dog no doubt spoke for many when she complained of “the sterile, cold atmosphere” of her school, the “unfamiliar routine, language problems, and above all the . . . damn clock—white man’s time as opposed to Indian time, which is natural time. Like eating when you are hungry and sleeping when you are tired, not when that damn clock says you must.”⁵⁶ Despite Crow Dog’s dream of a clock-free world, clock-regulated bells tightly organized the school day by slicing time into regimented sections.

Navajo Frank Mitchell recalled that at his school “they rang a big bell to tell us the time of day. We learned what the bell meant” and followed accordingly.⁵⁷ The schedules at the Rapid City Indian School and the Round Valley Agency Day School certainly reflected the increasingly tyrannical authority of clock-regulated bells and whistles typical of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Indian schools. The schools functioned on a Monday to Saturday schedule, with Sunday reserved for clock-regulated worship. During the school week, clock-regulated bells and

whistles called out seventeen times a day, dictating how Indian students spent their time.⁵⁸

Punishments greeted those students who resisted the commands of the clock. Zitkala-Ša recalled that “every time the bell rang [at her school,] it meant we had to get in line, or go to bed, or get up and get ready for breakfast, or dinner, or supper.” When Zitkala-Ša altered the clock-scheduled mealtime by sitting down at the first bell, she received disapproving stares.⁵⁹ Rarely did students receive such mild discipline. “Paddlings, standing on tip-toe with arms outstretched, or walking with a ball and chain” often greeted Indian resistance to clock time.⁶⁰ School officials often employed more violent methods to enforce the authority of the clock. In 1891 a teacher at a Kiowa school in Anadarko, Oklahoma, noticed that two of her students failed to arrive to class on time. Further inspection revealed that they had abandoned the authority of the clock and run away. Officials returned the students to school but whipped them so savagely that “they ran away again only to perish in a winter storm.”⁶¹ In 1928 a student named Barbara at the Chilocco School also considered running away from school. Instead of violating the clock by abandoning it, she secretly co-opted its meaning in a covert act of resistance. The clock, whose ticks had once been a constant and painful aural reminder of her imprisonment, became a reminder of her impending freedom. Barbara recalled, “I was so homesick that there was a big clock on the wall, and I was looking at this clock and I’d say, how many minutes in an hour? And how many hours in a day? And how many days in a month? And how many months before I get to go home?”⁶² Barbara thwarted the meaning given to the clock by the school by infusing it with her own meaning.

While students actively resisted the meaning and direction of institutional time, the authority of clock-regulated bells and whistles remained absolute within the walls of Indian schools and impenetrable to acts of personal resistance. Such did not hold true outside of school grounds. Older Indian temporalities, intimately bound to the cycles of nature, forced school officials to adjust institutional times. Frank Mitchell noted that school offices adjusted the beginning of the school to accommodate the seasons and the accompanying Indian agricultural labor. Consequently, in winter the 8:30 a.m. bell indicated taps, while in spring and fall administrators adjusted the clock to indicate taps at 9 a.m., as demanded by the agricultural labor of Indian students.⁶³ In addition to

adjusting the clocks, “agricultural rhythms of harvest and the cultural rhythms of reservation fairs” forced administrators to push back the beginning of the semester at the Phoenix Indian School or face empty classrooms.⁶⁴ Simply put, Indian students functioned in multiple times: sidereal times as prescribed by nature and clock and calendrical times as dictated by the schools. In this particular case, Indian students clung to the demands of natural time and forced institutional time to accommodate it, making time simultaneously multiple, cyclical, and linear.

Although older temporal understandings continued fusing with modern clock consciousness during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the notion of Indian timelessness, generally, Indian ignorance of the clock, specifically continued to thrive as an index to authenticity. Americans often denied Indians who inculcated clock time and engaged in the world of mechanical time their indigenoussness. Consider the 1906 case of Tlingit Rudolph Walton, who attempted to use white temporal logic. He wished to send his two biracial children, Dora and Tille, to a white school that banned mixed-race children unless they could prove they lived a “civilized” life. Walton predicated his lawsuit against the Sitka school board on the fact that he “repair[ed] watches and clocks with suitable tools for the same.” He argued by virtue of his engagement with the symbols of modernity that his family lived a civilized life and his children should be permitted to attend school.⁶⁵ Although Walton successfully proved his civilized nature through his appeal to white temporal logic, he ultimately lost the case due to the inherent racism of the school board, which for flimsy reasons blocked his children from attending school.

In 1911 Edward Curtis made the same claim but in the opposite fashion. As part of his vanishing race collection, Curtis photographed Little Plume and Yellow Kidney in their Montana lodge surrounded by their belongings. Originally, their belongings included a pipe, a tobacco board, feathers, ropes, a medicine bundle, and an alarm clock. When the negative went to print, however, Curtis deliberately manipulated the image and erased the alarm clock from the photograph he titled *In a Piegan Lodge*. The clock, the quintessential symbol of modernity, was at odds with Curtis’s purpose. He sought to capture images of Indians “whose lifeways existed outside industrialized modern culture.” Thus he removed the clock from the image and produced a photograph of “real Indians,” “forever repeating their ancient ways.”⁶⁶

Curtis's image of timeless Indians lingers in popular consciousness due certainly to racism but also in part to the way in which Indians helped shape white temporal definitions of authenticity by continuing to privilege, in certain instances, temporal ways based on nature over clock time, an action that whites interpreted as indifference, if not ignorance, of the clock and that became known as operating on a more leisurely and less demanding time, namely, "Indian time."⁶⁷ In 1953, for example, game wardens with the Minnesota Department of Conservation noted that "'Indian time' and the clock of the whites have never been closely synchronized, so it was perhaps inevitable that game wardens arrested forty Ojibway for starting to rice five minutes ahead of the scheduled opening of the lake."⁶⁸ In the 1940s and 1950s, mine managers concluded that "mine work did not agree with many Indians who . . . work[ed] in the mines until the trapping season began at which point they would quit to return to more familiar and relaxed surroundings. The idea of working by a clock was too new to be accepted by many."⁶⁹ In both instances, Indians privileged temporal cues based on nature over clock time, and in both instances, such actions emerged as indicative of Indian apathy toward clock time.

Nowhere is this misunderstanding of time more apparent than in so-called arenas of authenticity. Dedicated to celebrating the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase and illustrating American progress, the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair offered a powerful example of white constructions of Indian authenticity. In the anthropological villages exhibit, five hundred members of twenty-nine Indian nations approximated traditional, authentic Indian life as seen through white eyes. Organizers "insisted that Natives wear traditional clothing regardless of the weather, build old-style homes, and perform bona fide songs and dances." They banned manufactured goods, including clocks and watches, as well as European American clothing from the exhibit.⁷⁰ In essence, the anthropological villages brought to life a version of Indian authenticity designed to illustrate how "real Indians," authentic Indians, old Indians lived, and Indians played Indian accordingly.

Across the fairgrounds and under the charge of Samuel McCown, superintendent of Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma, organizers erected a model Indian school for the purpose of eliciting comparisons between the school and the anthropological villages and thus illustrating to visitors the progress toward civilization made by Indians. The school,

complete with classrooms, a dormitory, an industrial school, and domestic kitchens, showcased civilized Indians for visitors. These Indians dressed in European American clothing were industrious, Christian, and disciplined, for they were all watched over and regulated by the clock. Clocks dominated the Indian school, and clock-regulated bells divided the time up at the model school much as it did at reservation schools outside of the fairgrounds. These new Indians, these inauthentic Indians, punctually responded to the demands of the clock in such a manner that more than one tourist exclaimed, "Why[,] these children are not really Indians."⁷¹

These clear-cut and carefully constructed images of Indian authenticity hide a complicated ruse. Old Indians, authentic Indians, depicted in their "natural state," merely played Indian, for they were clock conscious and thus very much part of the modern world, despite their calculated presentation. At 9:30 every morning, clock-regulated bugles called Indians to work at the fair, where authentic Indians performed for visitors from "9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and then from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m."⁷² In most cases, Indians played Indian for economic gain, whether through wages earned for time worked or through participation in the capitalist marketplaces as the Indians sold their traditional wares to visitors.

While the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair serves as an example of Indians playing Indian by conforming to white expectations of Indian authenticity, Indian dances and powwows offer a glimpse into another complicated world in which Indians played Indian by running events on Indian time. Indian time frustrated whites, for whom the clock had become a reified reality unto itself. Whites and some Indians continually argue that Indian time was "at complete variance with the clock-bound habits of the ordinary American citizen." Such was scholar Edward Hall's experience while attending a Christmas dance hosted by the Pueblo Indians in the 1950s. He and other whites arrived punctually at the stated time only to shiver well into the winter night and well past the appointed hour. When the dance finally started Hall concluded that the Pueblos had abandoned the clock, geared the dance "to no schedule," and begun when they felt like it.⁷³ Veronica Evaneshko had a similar experience while visiting the Tonawanda Reservation in New York in 1972. When she asked, "Why do I have to arrive sharply at seven when the others will saunter in as they please?" a Senecan replied, "Because you're the white."⁷⁴ To Hall, Evaneshko, and others of

their ilk such events confirmed long-held popular conceptions of Indian temporality, namely, its incompatibility with clock time and indifference to promptness. In reality, however, Indians, like all Americans, operated in a world of multiple and competing times, including clock time, which jockeyed for temporal dominance. In these cases and others, task orientation trumped clock time as a means through which Indians claimed authority over time.

Powwows also offered Indians the opportunity to claim power, autonomy, and authority over time while simultaneously playing Indian. Promotional information for the fourth annual Peoria Pow-Wow in 2001 declared: "Activities will get underway with a gourd dance at 7 p.m. Friday, June 15. Social dances and stomp dancing is scheduled to begin at 9 p.m. . . . More gourd dancing will be held Saturday afternoon, starting at 3 p.m. . . . until supper break at 6 p.m. At 7:30 there will be more gourd dancing. The war dance will get started around 8:30 and last until 11 p.m."⁷⁵ When events got under way, however, the emcee encouraged participants and observers to function on Indian time, "time unregulated by the clock, time that may be allowed to pass without activity or anxiety." Scholar Daniel J. Gelo argues that the emcee purposely suspended "time as ultimately imposed by the dominant white society" as "an expression of ethnic identity."⁷⁶ Indians who function by the clock are not authentic in their ethnic identity, while those who abandon the clock emerge as "real Indians." While clock times are often forsaken, the order of events remains intact, as Indians privileged task orientation over clock time and function on Indian time. Indeed, "by interrupting and delaying the scheduled event," whether it is a dance or a powwow, Indians "not only challenged the authority of clock (or white) time while affirming the value of 'being on Indian time,' but also asserted" Indian identity. Yet in some ways, the powwow's operation on Indian time "present[s] the image of Indians that met the desires or needs of . . . whites" attending the powwows.⁷⁷ For Americans, and indeed some Indians, "real Indians" operated on task orientation rather than clock time.

Despite the obvious problems with using temporality as an index for authenticity, this complicated marriage endures. Whites, scholars, and some Indians continue to cast Indian time as authentic and clock time as inorganic, for such an equation serves multiple purposes. For whites, the existence of Indian time reinforces and reaffirms the incompatible nature of Indian temporality and white temporality. It permits the cre-

ation, albeit erroneously, of a form of shorthand that makes the identification of Indians as others quick and easy. For Indians, the inculcation and usage of Indian time permits Indians to play Indians by deliberately privileging task orientation over clock time. Ironically, however, Indian time is predicated on clock time. In order for Indians to consciously ignore the authority of the clock, its authority must be acknowledged and digested; thus, “real Indians” actually emerge as clock conscious and modern in the very arenas of authenticity in which they are bent on proving otherwise.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Versions of this article have been presented at the annual meetings of the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the Western History Association, as well as before the history departments of the University of Southern California and the University of Tulsa. I am grateful for the strong critiques and comments, which made the piece all the better. I am also indebted to a fine array of scholars, including the anonymous reviewers of this article, who, even when they were busy with their own work, found time to toss research tidbits my way, offer advice, act as sounding boards, and read and comment on multiple drafts of this work. Thank you especially to Andrea Binder, William J. Bauer, Jr., Tyler Boulware, Cam Cobb, Travis Helm, Brian C. Hosmer, Alexis McCrossen, Jeffery D. Means, Ethan A. Schmidt, Brenda Schoolfield, Rebecca Shrum, and Mark M. Smith.

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