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By 1890, the end seemed very near. The Indian Wars had drawn to a close, with the US military the undisputed victor. America's Western frontier was opened to endless waves of settlers, taking land, water, forests, wildlife, minerals for their own. Native Americans, once numbering in the millions, were now less than 250,000. Confined to reservations, a fraction of their traditional homelands, Native Americans continued to lose land throughout the early twentieth century through a process called allotment, which assigned small homesteads to tribal members and sold "excess" land to non-Indians. No longer dependent on their own subsistence, Native people were forced into a labor economy that was foreign and alienating—or were left as supplicants to government handouts. Long-standing religious practices were attacked and outlawed. Many were forced into clothes and homes that were considered by their conquerors to be "civilized."

After centuries of colonialism, the extinction of Native Americans now seemed certain. This fact obliged the US government to determine how to handle the twilight of the continent's first people. With peace, the government could not so simply eradicate the Indians who remained. The only real choice left was assimilation—to force Native Americans to adopt the beliefs, attitudes, tastes, habits, and work of good Anglo-Americans.¹

But how?

Education.

School was quickly determined to be the avenue by which Native Americans would sojourn into an assimilated future. By transforming the next generation of Indians into good citizens, the government could swiftly sever Indians from the deep roots of their culture. Although Native Americans had long been the focus of educational efforts—Harvard University and William and Mary College began educating Indian youth in the 1600s—this strategy of advancement took on a fresh urgency.² Four hundred years after Christopher Columbus made landfall, the work of American colonialism was not quite over. The resources that were used in the old war were needed for a new one—a seamless transformation, often literally, of barracks into boarding schools (figure 1.1).

The new battle required new soldiers. Schools required educators willing to run these outposts dedicated to civilizing the savages at the gates of America's future.

Jesse H. Bratley was one such man.

1

A M A N A N D W O R L D I N B E T W E E N

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FIGURE 1.1. Cheyenne and Arapaho students pose in front of the Cantonment Boarding School. Before Cantonment was an Indian school, it was a US Army barracks. Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation, 1899–1900. (DMNS BR61-375)

Born in 1867, Jesse Hastings Bratley was an unlikely candidate to become an Indian schoolteacher. The son of pioneers Joseph and Mary Hastings Bratley, Jesse spent much of his early life helping his impoverished family merely survive (figure 1.2). When he was three years old, the family moved from Wisconsin to Kansas, lured by the promise of the frontier. Kansas proved just as difficult; the family owed a large debt for its new land and constantly faced poverty, poor harvests, inclement weather, wildfires, and Indian attacks. Jesse spent his childhood laboring on the family farm and, for only three months a year, attending school. As a student, Jesse struggled. He especially loathed arithmetic and grammar.

When he was nineteen, Bratley began his peripatetic work life—by turns a farmer, janitor, accountant, homesteader, traveling salesman, teacher, postal worker, and realtor. In 1893, Bratley saw an ad for positions at federally funded Indian schools. Attracted by the possibility of steady employment, he applied. Bratley was soon headed to teach the S’Klallam at the Port Gamble Day School, northwest of Seattle, Washington. Over the next decade, he taught at four more schools across the United States.

Yet this new opportunity would become more than a job; living among Native Americans permanently changed the direction of Bratley’s life. He began an ad hoc anthropological



survey of Native communities, ultimately taking more than 500 glass-plate photographs and collecting nearly 1,000 artifacts—images and things that would last beyond his lifetime and form the foundation of his legacy (figure 1.3).

The Jesse H. Bratley collection, as it came to be known, however, has more to teach us than about one man's life. Because Bratley occupied a perfect gray zone—a supporter of Indian schools but not their architect, a collector with only vague aspirations to anthropological seriousness, a photographer variously motivated by entrepreneurship, documentary voyeurism, and romantic dreams—he gives us an unusual visual and material testimony of one of the most profoundly important moments in the history of contemporary Native America. Bratley's story allows us to witness Native Americans' dramatically shifting way of life—the tangled processes of civilizing, resistance, and persistence—as the nineteenth century surrendered to the modern age.



After finishing his career as an Indian schoolteacher, Bratley and his family moved to Florida in 1910. Bratley dreamed of building his own museum in Miami where he could display the hundreds of objects he had collected. Unable to marshal the time or resources, Bratley never realized his dream. Following his death in 1948, Bratley's extensive collection

FIGURE 1.2. The Bratley family stands before their home in Wichita. SEATED: Jesse H. Bratley's mother, Mary Emma Hastings Bratley, and father, Joseph Bratley. STANDING (LEFT TO RIGHT): Hazel, Cyril, Forrest, Della, Jesse, Homer (holding his daughter Theresa), and Etta (Homer's wife). Kansas, 1924. (DMNS BR61-349)



FIGURE 1.3. Bratley sits with pride next to a small portion of his collection. Florida, date unknown. (Children of Dr. Forrest G. Bratley)

was divided among his four children: Homer, Hazel, Cyril, and Forrest. In 1961, Hazel sold her share of the collection, along with Homer's and Cyril's portions, to the Southeast Museum of the North American Indian, located in Marathon, Florida. In selling Bratley's collection, Hazel earnestly hoped to fulfill her father's lifelong wish to stimulate "interest in and appreciation for the North American Indian among the many visitors who will see these treasures through the years."³

The Southeast Museum was owned and operated by Mary and Francis Crane. The Cranes, as wife and husband, structured their retirement around a passion for collecting Native American artifacts.⁴ They had come to believe in the educational value of Native American collections and set about acquiring thousands of ethnographic and archaeological objects over the course of a seventeen-year shopping blitz. In 1958, the Cranes used their private collections to open the Southeast Museum, advertising it as "the largest and finest collection of artifacts south of the Smithsonian."⁵ Although the Southeast Museum's holdings were sweeping, many considered the museum a tourist trap; it also remained

relatively obscure among professional researchers and curators. The lack of professional attention was amplified by the museum's remote location and the public's recreation focus in the Florida Keys.

As a result of chronically low attendance, the Southeast Museum closed its doors in 1968 and the Cranes donated their extensive 12,000-piece collection to the Denver Museum of Nature & Science (then the Denver Museum of Natural History).⁶ When the Denver Museum received the collection from the Cranes, it contained roughly 1,500 ethnographic and archaeological objects, documents, and photographic items that Bratley had amassed. Before the Denver Museum took control of the collection, the Cranes invited the Smithsonian Institution to duplicate Bratley's photographs. The Smithsonian made prints of 243 glass plates and copies of 200 original photos and stereopticon views.⁷

Although the majority of the Bratley collection found its way to the Denver Museum, about a quarter of it remained with Forrest G. Bratley, the youngest of Jesse's children. In 1983, Forrest donated 47 ethnographic objects, primarily from the Plains and Southwest—including an impressive Lakota Winter Count (figure 1.4)—to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and another small portion to the Robinson Museum in Pierre, South Dakota.⁸ Forrest bequeathed the remainder of his collection to his own children, Jesse's grandchildren.

The Denver Museum of Nature & Science has long touted the Bratley collection as one of its prized possessions. Bratley's photographs have been used extensively in exhibits and programs; a number of the collected artifacts have been on permanent display at the museum. Yet despite the prestige accorded to the collection, it has never been the focus of sustained study.

In 2015, we had the chance to embark on a research project. Montgomery had joined the Denver Museum for a one-year postdoctoral fellowship, and Colwell, as a curator on staff, had long set his sights on the Bratley collection. Soon after beginning the work, we saw the Bratley collection's immense significance. The collection was widely used but little understood—images and objects more often employed as decoration than as an analytical lens. Jesse had written an autobiography, which had never been published. He left behind a paper trail in archives that could be followed. The Bratley family held more pieces, which had never been studied. For all its prominence, Bratley's life work was essentially unknown.

We considered it an imperative to document what Bratley had left behind. Even more, we saw the potential for a great and important story.

But what exactly did we see? What is the meaning of these hundreds of objects and images, which Bratley collected from 1893 to 1903? What should we make of them—and of him? Why do Bratley's collections of the S'Klallam, Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Havasupai, Hopi, and Seminole a century ago matter today?⁹

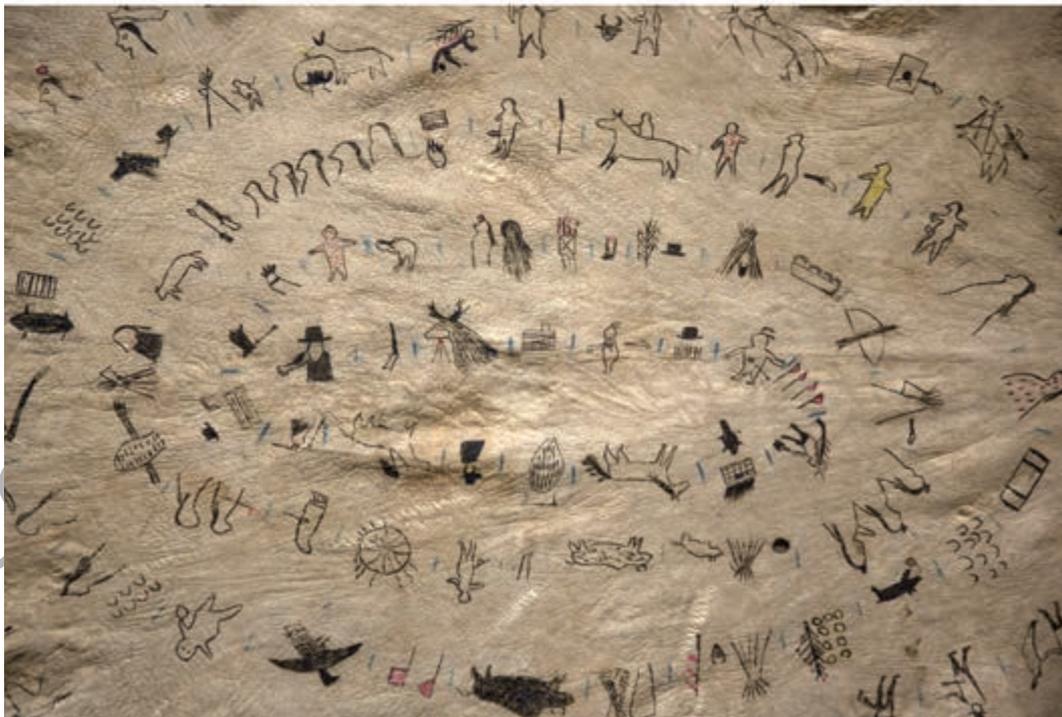


FIGURE 1.4 (above and facing page). The Chief Swift Bear Winter Count is now curated at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Recounted by the Swift Bear family, the Winter Count uses ideographs to depict the major events that occurred each year from 1800 to 1898. (National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum)

Swift Bear's Winter Count



1800–1801 First Good White Man Comes Winter

Position of the hand indicates good. First White man recorded by this Winter Count. First White man to live and trade with the Dakota Indians; however, White men had traded with them before this time but did not live among them.



1801–1802 First Good White Man Returns with Gun to Trade Winter



1802–1803 Chief Big Elk Killed Winter



1803–1804 White Trader Come Built House Winter

Probably this man is Little Beaver, so called by Indians and whose house burned down with the trader in it.



1804–1805 Seven Pawnees Came to Dakota Camp All Killed Winter

Had one gun from first White man.



1805–1806 Eight White Traders Come Winter

Other Counts call this winter “Eight Dakotas killed winter”; Hat counts one.

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A MAN AND
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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1806–1807 Dakotas Killed Three Pawnees Winter

Pawnees and Dakotas both on the warpath and met, had a battle; three Pawnees killed, and two Dakotas wounded, one shot in throat.



1807–1808 Many Flags Flying for Medicine Winter

The material used was red flannel procured through trade with first good White man. Indians were troubled with a bad cough this winter.



1808–1809 Pail Killed by Falling Tree Winter

Pail in His Hand is his name totem. The Indian was outing the tree when it fell on him and crushed him as the red on his body indicates.



1809–1810 Little Beaver's (White Trader) House Burned Winter

Burning is indicated by red on the rectangle, which indicates the house, and by the black marks above, which is fire and smoke, respectively.



1810–1811 Swift Horse with Feathers Tied in His Tail Winter

This was an extra fine horse with his tail so decorated that was in a herd of horses that was taken on the South Platte River. Some of the Indians say that the horses were stolen from the Pawnees and some say that they were wild.



1811–1812 Many Dakota Starve Winter

Buffalo meat was scarce as the empty drying pole indicates.

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1812–1813 White Man (Yellow Face) Comes Trade Provisions Winter



1813–1814 A Crow Went on a Visit and Was Scalped Winter

He was killed by Sioux. He made no resistance. His scalp is tied to a stick, as shown in the picture.



1814–1815 A Shoshone with One Arrow Came to Dakota Lodge to Make Peace Was Killed with Dakota Tomahawk Winter

The one arrow is noticed in front of the Indian, which indicates that he had come to treat for peace. The tomahawk is sticking in the Shoshone's head. Other Winter Counts call this a Kiowa, others an Arapahoe.



1815–1816 White Man Made House Winter

Boke is the name as nearly as I can understand it, which is not an Indian word.



1816–1817 Wounded Heel Went on Warpath Got Shot in Heel Winter

As the enemy outnumbered him, on first sight of the enemy he turned and started to run away when he was shot in the heel by an arrow. This man's name was changed after he was shot.



1817–1818 Crooked Wrist Killed Winter

This warrior's wrist was crooked from infancy.



1818–1819 Smallpox Killed Dakota Winter

The red spots on the body show the disease.

A MAN AND
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BETWEEN

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1819–1820 Many Old Men Died Winter



1820–1821 Two Utes Killed Winter

Red on the head of the first one shows that the scalp was taken. The other one has a round head; the Dakotas thinking him an African American, did not scalp him. The long hair is shown, which he had, they likely thinking at that early day that the African American's hair would grow long. Single Wood says they found out later that he was not an African American.



1821–1822 A Big Noisy Star Passed Winter

The streaks show that it let off particles of light in its passage. Red Cloud was born this winter. Much whiskey winter; Red Cloud's father died of drunkenness.



1822–1823 Wa-sku-pi Broke Leg Off Winter

While chasing buffalo his pony stopped suddenly, throwing the rider off, and at the same time, Single Wood says, his leg at the knee joint was taken entirely from his body.



1823–1824 White Man Taught Dakotas Plant Corn Winter

Corn growing is represented by a single stock of corn. The hat indicates a White man.



1824–1825 Killed One Buffalo Winter

The head on tipi indicates the one buffalo killed and also shows that the Indians made buffalo medicine in this tipi over the one buffalo head, after which many buffalo came.

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



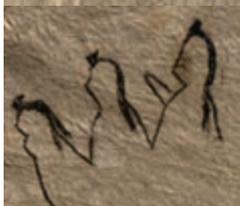
1825–1826 Many Dakotas Drowned in Great Flood Winter

They were camped at some point in a valley on the Missouri River, and as the ice was going out in the spring, there was an unusually large rise in the water, which overtook the Indians by surprise and many were drowned and crushed to death. All counts mention this.



1826–1827 Dragged Goods up River on Ice Winter

This was a very severe winter, which killed most of the ponies, and the Indians wished to move up the river as there was much timber further up and wished to visit another band of Sioux. So they dragged their tipis and all their goods on the ice. The road they made is plainly marked, showing that there were many of them, which wore the ice considerably. They used their saddles for sleds. Yellow Robe was born this year. They went upstream instead of across, as indicated by drawing on pictograph.



1827–1828 Crows Killed Dakotas in Lodge Winter



1828–1829 Dakotas Killed Three Crows Winter

Crows are indicated by the pompadour.



1829–1830 Swift Bears Father Made Medicine Winter

This man began the Winter Count.



1830–1831 Killed Ten White Buffalo Cows Winter

All were killed with arrows.

1831–1832 Broken Toe Winter

A warrior was sent out on a morning to a hill, by the Dakotas, to look for Crows, when out from the camp but a little way he was surprised by a band of Crows and in running from them he stubbed his toes (of one foot) on a rock, which broke them all back, indicated by red spots on foot. As he did not return that night, his people went out the next morning to hunt him. They found him alive as the Crows did not find him. This is the winter in which this happened.

A MAN AND
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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



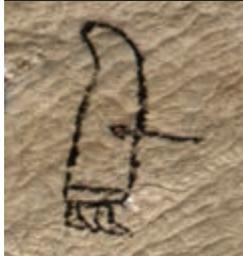
1832–1833 Grey Eagle Tail Died Winter or Tie Knot in His Penis Died Winter

Chief Grey Eagle Tail of Lower Cut Meat camp was named for this man.



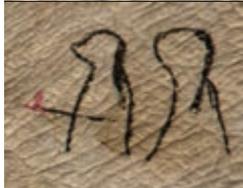
1833–1834 Many Stars Fall Winter

The circle represents a lodge or tipi with a shower of stars over or around it. Spotted Tail was born this year. (All counts mention this shower of stars.)



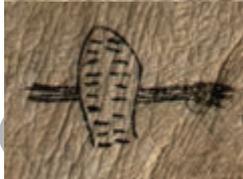
1834–1835 Man Came with Gray Cap on Killed Winter

The Dakotas saw a stranger wearing a gray cap and leaning against one of their lodges. Knowing that none of their people had such caps, they took this man to be an enemy and shot him through the body with an arrow. This was a Shoshone. He probably came to steal horses, or to kill the Sioux. His cap was like With-Horns, made up with a cape.



1835–1836 Two Cree Chiefs Went on Warpath Killed Winter

The pipe indicates the leader of a war party; or rather the pipe is carried by the leader of a war party.



1836–1837 Dakotas and Pawnees Fight on Ice Winter

The outlines, which represent the North Platte River and are very much the shape of the sole of a moccasin, are quite similar in shape to a portion of the figures in 1826–1827, 1811–1812, 1856–1857, although the first and last do not indicate rivers at all, but the former a death circle and the latter a high bank or bluff. The Pawnees had come from the South and were in camp as the Dakotas came from the North. The battle took place on the ice. There were only ten of the Dakotas killed and nine of the Pawnees, as indicated by the death marks on the respective sides. In 1899, Pawnee Tom told me at Cantonment that White Wolf, Old Hawk, and Standing Bull were among the Pawnees killed. Pawnee Tom says he is the only man that was with Custer that escaped alive.



1837–1838 Paints the Lower Half of His Face Red and Family Killed Winter

This man and family were moving from place to place and camping alone while hunting for buffalo. The entire family was killed by Pawnees. Sitting Bull was born this year. Willow Creek, North Dakota. Jumping Bull was his father.

A MAN AND
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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



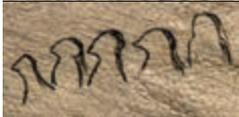
1838–1839 Many Mad Coyotes Winter

There were a great many mad coyotes and two Dakota men were bitten by a mad coyote. The men both died very shortly after being bitten.

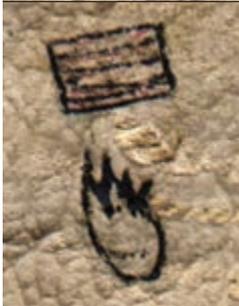


1839–1840 All Dakota Tribes United and Made War on the Pawnees Winter

They killed 100 Pawnees. The arrow and guns show that they used both weapons and forces were united.



1840–1841 Pawnees Killed Five of Little Thunder's Brothers Winter



1841–1842 Bear Hand Brought Striped Blankets to Trade Winter

Bear Hand is the name given to the White man who probably brought the first Mexican blankets to trade to the Dakotas.



1842–1843 Spotted Penis Died Winter



1843–1844 Brought Home the Cheyenne Medicine Arrow Winter

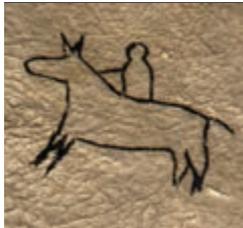
The arrow seemed to have some magic power. It had been stolen from the Cheyennes by the Pawnees, and the Dakotas in turn captured it from them. It was used to make medicine for the three Dakota bands that were together at this time. Mr. Fowke says that the Cheyennes had a bundle of arrows, which they regarded as the Jews did the Ark of the Covenant. In 1890, the writer found this arrow in charge of Chief Little Man of the Cheyenne at Cantonment, Oklahoma. The Cheyenne gave 100 Ponies to the Sioux to redeem the arrows.

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A MAN AND
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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1844–1845 Mules Father Died Winter



1845–1846 Smallpox Again Winter



1846–1847 Dakota Woman Killed Winter

This was a married woman who had slept with another man other than her husband. The Dakota punishment for such a deed is death to the woman. She was stripped of all clothing, her hands were tied, and then she was shot with a gun as the drawing indicates.



1847–1848 Paints Himself Yellow Died Winter

This was a good Dakota man, so Single Wood says.



1848–1849 Killed Half Man and Half Woman Winter

This person was a Crow, drawing indicates in woman's dress, who was captured by the Dakotas but as the person proved to be a hermaphrodite, it was killed.



1849–1850 Shoshone Man Killed Winter

The red on his head indicates that his scalp was taken.

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



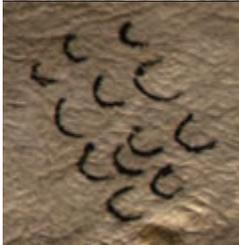
1850–1851 Big Smallpox Used Them Up Winter

The large-sized figures of a person and large red spots show that the epidemic was severe and that it killed a great many persons.



1851–1852 First Goods Issued Winter

This is a gray blanket, which is a symbol for many kinds of goods that were issued at this time, such as blankets, calico, guns, powder flour, sugar, tobacco, and everything as Single Wood says. These issues were to continue annually for fifty-five years, during which time the Dakota understood that he would not have to work. The number of issues was possibly changed in the treaty of 1868 and the one of 1877.



1852–1853 Crows Stole Many Dakota Horses Winter



1853–1854 Brave Bear Killed Winter

This Indian was killed by the Blackfeet Indians.



1854–1855 Red Leaf Went to Washington Winter

The red-tipped leaves of the pine tree indicate his name; the nine yellow circles represent the money.



1855–1856 Swift Bear's Father Made Medicine Again Winter

The buffalo head shows that it was buffalo medicine that was made, probably on account of the scarcity of that animal.



1856–1857 Camp under White Bluff Hunting Buffalo Winter

This was at or near the head of Little White River.

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continued on next page

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1857–1858 Buffalo Bull Meat Winter

This shows that the Indians were hard pushed for food, as they never ate buffalo bull meat if other could be had.



1858–1859 Many Ceremonial Flags Winter

This appears to be a form of worship in which all this people took part. Many flags were put on the hills around the Indian villages.



1859–1860 Big Crow Killed Winter

A Dakota chief was killed by the Crow Indians. He had received his name from killing a Crow Indian of unusually large size.



1860–1861 Cooking Utensils Died Winter

This man was a Dakota brave. He was a very large man, especially large around the body, as the drawing indicates. The circle indicates cooking utensils.



1861–1862 Killed Spotted Horse Winter

Spotted Horse and three other Crows came and stole many horses from the Dakotas, who followed them, killed them, and recovered their horses. The red on his head shows that they were scalped.



1862–1863 Crow Scalped Dakota Boy Winter

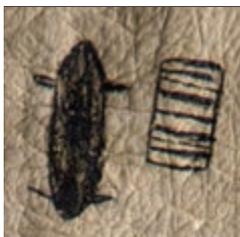
The knife blade above his head shows that he was scalped. The boy had gone just across the river to visit at some other lodges; he did not start home until after dark, and when crossing the river on the ice, some Crows that were in hiding scalped the boy. The next morning the Dakotas, after finding the boy, followed the Crows but on coming up with them decided not to attack as there were many Crows.



1863–1864 Rattlesnake Elk Killed Winter

This is probably one of the eight Dakotas that other winter counts refer to as being killed on this date. The rattlesnake and the elk horns on its head is the name totem.

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1864–1865 White Man Brought Navajo Blankets Winter

[Single] Wood pronounces the name “Long Dum Husk.” The drawing is the medicine sack made from the entire skin of a mink or weasel, as will be seen in a photo of it.



1865–1866 Crows Stole Many Horses Again Winter

This is the time Yellow Robe told me about in February 1899. He was thirty-nine years old when this happened.



1866–1867 Bear Head Killed by Soldiers Winter

Some emigrants passing through left a worn-out cow by the roadside near where the Goose River empties in the Platte River. A Miniconjou (who plants by the water) named Pompadour (his hair stood up) shot the cow with an arrow. Thirty soldiers came for him; he refused to go although his friends tried to persuade him to go. On his refusal an officer came in the tipi, the other Indians in the tipi came out and started to run off when the soldiers opened fire and wounded Red Leaf; then the Indians turned in and killed all the soldiers. The soldiers had two cannons. Search the Enemy Out and Chauncey Yellow Robe were born this year.



1867–1868 Thorney Went to Cree Camp Was Killed Winter

He was a young Dakota warrior and was killed by the Cree with a gun, as blood is shown and no arrow, lance, knife, or tomahawk is shown but only the bullet mark. He went to Cree camp to get something to eat as they had but little meat this winter.



1868–1869 Traded Mules to White Men for Corn Winter

The Dakotas were in a starving condition and traded a mule for only one or two sacks of corn or flour.



1869–1870 Tree Fell on and Killed Woman Who Was Cutting Wood Winter

This drawing is similar to the one in 1808–1809. According to Indian custom, it is the woman's place to get the wood; consequently, it seems strange that Pail (a man) should have been getting wood. This woman is the mother of High Back Bone, who was killed the next year.

continued on next page

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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1870–1871 High Back Bone Killed Winter

He was killed by the Shoshone. William Yellow Robe was born this year.



1871–1872 Show Prophesied Many Buffalo Winter

A Dakota whose name is Show is shown pointing to a buffalo head, but the buffalo did not come.



1872–1873 Issue Horses Winter

Horses first issued to Dakotas but only one horse to a family.



1873–1874 Killed Indian Agent's Son Winter

A Dakota named Bear Kicks knocked at the door of the agent's house; as the son opened the door, Bear Kicks shot the boy with a gun, as the drawing indicates. This took place at the Red Cloud Agency. Curtis, a soldier, says it was Appling and not the agent's son who was killed.



1874–1875 Turning Eagle Stole Spotted Mule Winter

Turning Eagle now lives in Lower Cut Meat Camp. The mule was stolen from the Omaha Indians by Four Ways, who now has charge of the Upper Cut Meat Omaha house. Turning Eagle was the chief or was party leader, hence the honor to him, to be chosen to mark a winter.



1875–1876 Spotted Bear or Buffalo Head Killed Winter

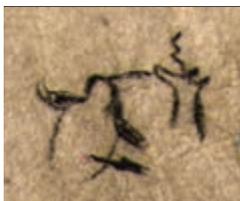
This man has two names and will be seen in the drawing. He and two other Dakotas were killed by the Shoshone.



1876–1877 Soldiers Drove Away Dakotas Horses Winter

The tracks of the horses indicate that the horses went to the White man. These horses belonged to Red Cloud's band. There was \$200,000 paid in 1891 to the Indians for these horses. I believe \$40 a piece for each pony was allowed.

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1877–1878 Crazy Horse Killed Winter

Spotted Tail, Red Cloud, and other Indian leaders were taken East, probably concerning the 1877 treaty, and Crazy Horse was wanted to [go] also, he had not promised the soldiers that he would go but came to his Indian friends and asked their advice. They said “don’t go” so he decided not to go. Some soldiers were sent for him; they were putting him in the guardhouse at Ft. Robinson when he made a dash to get by the soldiers and out of the open door when a soldier bayoneted him. The instrument by the wound has the appearance of a sword. The horse head with a wavy line from its forehead is the name totem.

The millions of buffalo that supplied the Sioux with good, clothing and shelter, thousands of horses, and hundreds of miles of free range made them, up to the year 1868 (time of first treaty with the Sioux), the richest most prosperous, the proudest, and withal, perhaps, the wildest of all the tribes of the Plains. According to the treaty of 1868 a reservation that includes all the present state of South Dakota west of the Missouri River was set aside for their absolute and undisturbed use and occupation. At one stroke of the pen they were reduced from a free nation to dependent wards of the government. In eight years the buffalo were nearly exterminated by White hunters and then followed the rush of gold hunters to the Black Hills, which was the direct cause of the Indian’s Massacre of Custer and his men in 1876.

As the White man wanted the Black Hill country, another treaty of 1877 was made by which the Sioux was shorn of one third of their reservation, the Black Hills County. As Elk Stands Looks Back said last Monday (March 20, 1899) on his return from Deadwood, “That it made me have a very bad heart to see the White man’s town, with electric lights, in what was once our home where there were plenty of wood, deer and bear.”

The Treaty of 1868 gave each male person over fourteen years of age a suit of good, substantial woolen clothing, consisting of coat, pantaloons, flannel shirt, hat, and a pair of homemade socks. For each female over twelve years of age, a flannel skirt or the goods necessary to make it, a pair of woolen hose, twelve yards of calico and twelve yards of cotton domestics. For boys and girls under the ages named, such flannel and cotton goods as may be needed to make each a suit aforesaid, with a pair of hoses for each. These goods were to be delivered by August 1 each year.

The Treaty of 1877 allowed for each individual 1½ pounds beef or ½ pound bacon, ½ pound of flour, and ½ pound of corn for a day’s rations and for every one hundred rations, 4 pounds of coffee, 8 pounds of sugar, and 3 pounds of beans.



1878–1879 Wagons Issued to the Dakotas Winter



1879–1880 Boys Girls Taken Dakota School Winter

October 1879 Major Pratt took eighty-two Sioux children to school; but one could speak any English and but one wore garments of our civilization. The others wore blankets and wore in their Indian dress. Clarence Three Stars was one of the number.

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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1880–1881 White Man's Son Stands on Prairie Killed Winter

This boy was the son of a squaw man who lived a few miles west of Rosebud Agency. The boy was standing near the house when an Indian was passing who was lamenting his sister's death and upon seeing the boy took his bow and an arrow and shot the boy.



1881–1882 Spotted Tail Killed Winter

He was a friendly Dakota to the White[s] and was killed by Crow Dog, a Dakota who was jealous of Spotted Tail. The government built a large two-story house near the agency for Spotted Tail and also gave him a very large flag, all as a reward.



1882–1883 Sitting Bull and Many Dakotas Put in Steamboat and Taken to Yankton Agency Winter

The smokestack with smoke issuing from it is the most nearly like a steamboat and, in fact, the only part of the boat that is recognizable.



1883–1884 Iron Horse Made Medicine Winter

He made medicine about three miles up Cut Meat from the schoolhouse.



1884–1885 White Cloud Killed Winter

He lived four miles below the schoolhouse and was killed by Lightning Hawk. Notice the hawk with a crooked line running from its mouth: lightning. Lightning Hawk had threatened to steal White Cloud's wife, which kept up a quarrel. Finally the Indians called a council in which the peace pipe played its part. The Indians gave many ponies to the injured parties and got their promise to have no more trouble but finally Lightning Hawk did steal White Cloud's wife and later killed White Cloud.



1885–1886 Ten Crows Come to Dance Winter

The Crows cut their hair off across the forehead while the other hair hangs down and is kept smooth and streaked with horizontal bars of white earth, as shown in the picture. The dance was held on Scabby Creek, eight miles northwest of the agency.



1886–1887 Six More Crows Come to Dance Winter

His drawing does not look like that of the year before.

Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1887–1888 Dakota Visit Crows Winter

Sitting Bear, Fast Dog, and Turning Eagle, with others from Rosebud and Pine Ridge, went to visit the Crows to learn about the Indian Messiah but were turned back by the Crow police on Agent Wright's orders.



1888–1889 Children Had Measles Winter



1889–1890 Issue Horses Again Winter



1890–1891 Spotted Female Elk Killed Winter

The crooked line from the mouth indicates that this is the name. This war leader is known to the White people as "Big Foot," who together with his band or most of his band were killed by the soldiers during the Ghost Dance craze, which ended in the Wounded Knee fight at Pine Ridge. The cost to the government for breaking faith with the Indians was about \$1.2 million and forty-nine Whites and others, one church, two schoolhouses, and one bridge, while the Indians' loss was about 300 or more. There was much suffering from hunger and cold and fifty-three Indian dwellings burned.

At the Wounded Knee engagement, three officers and twenty-eight privates were mortally wounded and four officers and thirty-eight privates were less severely wounded, several of these dying later. The Indian loss, according to the best estimates, was at least 250 Indians killed and died from exposure. The writer has the deer antler saddle that Big Foot used during this campaign. It bears bullet marks.



1891–1892 Rolls Off Shoots Himself Winter

He was one of Chief Yellow Robe's sons, who was a policeman in Lower Cut Meat camp. Cause of his rash act is not known, but supposes the drinking of two Indians, Raymond Steward and Pulls the Arrow Out, who was arrested by this policeman, taken to the Agency and the[n] sent to the U.S. Court at Deadwood, where they were punished had something to do with this.

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Swift Bear's Winter Count—*continued*



1892–1893 Issue Cows Winter



1893–1894 Dakota Policeman Killed Winter

This occurred at the issue house near the Lower Cut Meat Creek School.



1894–1895 Lightning Hawk Killed a Woman Winter

This woman lived in Big Turkey's camp, which is Southwest of Rosebud Agency. Lightning Hawk caught the woman out and, after sleeping with her, killed her. This is the same man who killed White Cloud 1884–1885. The Indians say that he was hung but for what is not known.



1895–1896 Blue Lightning Froze to Death Winter

The Dakota believe that the thunder and lightning are the cry and look of a large bird; which they call thunder bird, hence the thunder bird with a blue line from his mouth is the name totem.



1896–1897 Indian Collect Much Money Winter

The red disk above the Indian's head indicates collecting money. They had meetings in every camp just before annuity payment and took pledges for money and in this way a great deal of money was raised to use in celebrating the Fourth of July, at which time the agent allowed the Indians to indulge in old Indian ceremonies and dance some of which they were told that they would never be allowed to practice again. Indians from several reservations were visitors during the first week of July. The Indians followed the old custom of arranging their tipis in a circular fashion, making a circle nearly three miles across. It was a sight worth beholding.



1897–1898 Bear Looking Died Winter



1898–1899 One Ear Horse Died Winter

Jesse H. Bratley's role as an educator first defined his time in Indian country. It was his job to help enact the annihilation of Indian cultures ordered by the US government—or, from another viewpoint, to ensure that Native peoples were brought into the twentieth century as dutiful citizens and moral Christians. This he would do. Bratley taught his students English, arithmetic, and history. He showed them how to farm and garden. He cut their hair. He dressed them in neat clothes and crisp uniforms. He lined them up like soldiers. Bratley was little different from the thousands of other Indian schoolteachers and government agents of his era.¹⁰

Yet unlike many of his colleagues, Bratley was curious enough to attend ceremonies and enjoy local foods. He learned some Chinook and took notes on the Hopi language. He journeyed to sacred places. He amassed hundreds of objects. He took hundreds of photographs of the people he lived among. Looking back across the distance of time, Bratley does not always seem to be a perfectly devout disciple of the assimilationist creed he pledged to uphold.

Neither was Bratley an advocate for Native peoples. There is no documentary evidence that he fought for Native American rights or even acknowledged the validity of their traditional ways of life. Nor was Bratley a full student of Indian culture; he was not an avocationalist who managed to segue the unplanned opportunity to be among Indians into a reputation as a respectable near-anthropologist, like John G. Bourke, a US Army captain who published academic volumes and came to sit on the board of the Washington Anthropological Society.¹¹ In some ways, Bratley was just a more earnest apprentice of the flowering market in Indian crafts at the end of the twentieth century—a man consumed by the so-called Indian craze.¹²

Bratley did aspire to be associated with the burgeoning field of anthropology. He corresponded with the Bureau of American Ethnology—the government agency, which was then among the premier institutes for anthropological research—at times seeming eager to understand the people he now found himself among. He offered his objects for display at international expositions. He lectured on his experiences and clearly cherished his time—so unexpected, given his humble family origins—living among tribal people. Bratley perhaps saw his photographs as a method of anthropological inquiry, which the “father” of American anthropology, Franz Boas, and other scholars of this age had begun to deploy for research, publications, and the field's popularization.¹³ One reading of Bratley's efforts is that he was sincerely curious about Native Americans and held a genuine appreciation for their history and arts—a paradoxical esteem for the very traditions his work required him to eradicate.

Another view would be that his vocation and collection were not a contradiction at all. Perhaps he collected objects and took photographs precisely because the things and images were evidence—positive evidence, in Bratley's mind—of a Native America fast fading. Most of Bratley's images do not present a romantic vision but instead an everyday reality, one that does not glimpse backward but rather gazes into the future. The images

do not say *this is what was* so much as *this is how it will be*. As we will discuss, the world's fairs, which were hugely transformative for turn-of-the-century America, are one way to understand what might otherwise appear to be paradoxical about Bratley: a fascination with Native Americans as caught between the old and the new, traditional and modern, "savage" and "civilized."

The juxtaposed exhibits at the world's fairs—as well as the reenacted battles in Wild West shows—provided a public stage on which Native people could act out a myth of their gradual disappearance.¹⁴ In one area of the fairs, Native Americans wore traditional clothing and performed demonstrations of traditional arts and crafts; in the next area were Native American school students newly steeped in Euro-American clothing, behavior, language, and learning. In the same way the world's fairs paired tradition and education side by side to illustrate both Native America's past and its future, perhaps Bratley—who visited the famous 1893 Chicago World's Fair and other expositions—hoped to embody this vision of Native Americans before and after the arrival of "civilization."

Perhaps Bratley's entire collection can be understood as an echo of George Catlin's famous 1837–1839 painting *Wi-jn-jon, Pigeon's Egg Head (the Light) Going to and Returning from Washington*, a kind of split-screen image of the Assiniboine leader before and after his 1832 journey to the nation's capital—in traditional dress on one side of the canvas and in fancy Euro-American duds on the other.¹⁵ A photographic version of this genre was used to great effect by those seeking to promote the Carlisle Indian School, the first major boarding school, depicting a student's evolution from savagery to civilization.¹⁶ Bratley took several photographs that imitated this tableau. In one photo, a man decked out in tribal attire is standing beside another man dressed in a police uniform (figure 1.5). Another Bratley photo featured a Carlisle graduate dressed in a three-piece suit standing beside his "traditionalist" father (figure 1.6).

Bratley's ultimate aims as a photographer are just as elusive. He was generally like most of his generation even as he was precisely like none of them. Historian William E. Farr has described five categories of photographers that bridged the end of the 1800s and the start of the 1900s.¹⁷ First, there were the romantics, men like Walter McClintock and Edward Curtis who purposefully mourned the swiftly vanishing Indian (figure 1.7). Second, there were businessmen like N. F. Forsyth, J. H. Sherburne, and Thomas B. Magee who tried to make a living selling "Indian views"—images of the exotic, barbaric Indians. Third were the transformers: government officials, missionaries, and teachers trying to prove that Indians were progressing into a brighter future. Fourth were the snap shooters, Whites living near reservations and tourists who thought they were experiencing the authentic frontier and wanted to preserve the moment (figure 1.8). (This was possible because in the late 1800s, Kodak produced cheap, easy-to-use cameras. The rise of commercial photography equipment companies converged with mass tourism and the final colonization of Native Americans.)¹⁸ Fifth are the self-portraits, which Indians wanted to have for themselves (figure 1.9).¹⁹ While some of these photographers embraced multiple aims—Curtis was



FIGURE 1.5 (left). Bratley took this photo of two young Lakota Sioux men—one a policeman, the other dressed in traditional courting blanket and headdress. The contrast between “civilized” and “savage” was likely intended to draw the viewer into questions about Native America’s past and future. (DMNS BR61-292)

FIGURE 1.6 (right). Chauncey Yellow Robe, dressed in Euro-American-style clothing, poses next to his father, Chief Yellow Robe, who is wearing a mix of clothing styles. Chauncey Yellow Robe was among the first children taken to Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. After graduating from Carlisle in 1895, Chauncey held various positions in the Indian School Service. Rosebud Reservation, 1895–1899. (DMNS BR61-325)

both a romantic and (albeit struggling) a businessman—for the most part these stances were fairly delineated.²⁰

For Bratley, all of these motivations propelled his work, but he never fully subscribed to one of them (figure 1.10). Some Bratley images do present a kind of wistful nostalgia, an effort at aesthetically capturing the cultural precipice on which Native Americans then stood. He also invested in expensive equipment to sell images, including to Indians themselves (combining Farr’s types two and five). Dozens of photographs of school-children lined up military style, classroom scenes, and images of agricultural and outdoor labor also point to his role as a government official. Still other shots are clearly snapshots—opportune images little different from those of other travelers, such as the Hopi Snake Dance ceremony, which tourists attended and photographed in the early 1900s (figure 1.11).²¹

Many of Bratley’s images help show why he escapes easy categorization. Like a select few of his generation, the photographs in Bratley’s oeuvre “chart a continuum of encounters.”²² Consider Bratley’s image of Sam Powiky, a Hopi who delivered mail on the Star Route, walking 35 miles each day (figure 1.12). Which of Farr’s types would have taken this image? Surely not the romantic Edward Curtis—the image is not one that *simulates* Indianness.²³ This would not be a bestselling “Indian view.” A government bureaucrat would take this image to show the progress of civilization, but the delivery of mail on foot—of a man sporting a traditional Hopi haircut and with tracks of a wagon visible



FIGURE 1.7. Bratley likely posed Goes-to-War for this portrait in his ceremonial clothing and feather headdress. This image plays on the romantic image of the proud Plains warrior and fits neatly within the nostalgic genre of photography, which both professional and amateur photographers often used during this period. Rosebud Reservation, 1895–1899. (DMNS BR61-272)

behind Powiky—would hardly be suitable proof of modernity’s advent. Neither would Powiky be a good shot for tourists and an unlikely one anyway, since the tourist would have to happen upon Powiky during his long walks. And there’s no evidence that Bratley sold the image to Powiky or any other Hopis while in Arizona.

In short, the image of Powiky—everyday, impromptu, and unlike his contemporaries who constructed images of the barbarous Indian, noble Indian, or spiritual Indian—epitomizes many of Bratley’s photographs.²⁴ They are thus special because they touch on all of the categories we have come to understand of Bratley’s generation, and yet they cross all boundaries and frequently escape them.

This is in part the power of Bratley’s photos, as much as the act of photographing is an act of power. “To photograph people is to violate them,” the essayist Susan Sontag famously and astutely wrote, “by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.”²⁵ The art historian John Tagg similarly noted: “Like the state, the camera



FIGURE 1.8 (above). A group of mounted onlookers watch as a Lakota Sioux man rides a bucking bronco. Throughout Bratley's photographic career, he snapped many pictures of Native people's everyday life. Rosebud Reservation, 1895–1899. (DMNS BR61-263)



FIGURE 1.9 (left). Bratley took this portrait of Chief Mud Hole attired in traditional dress. He is wearing a beaded bandolier bag over one shoulder and holds a cane quirt. Similar to his picture of Goes-to-War (DMNS BR61-272), this image is representative of the posed style of portraiture Bratley and his contemporaries commonly deployed. Rosebud Reservation, 1895–1899. (DMNS BR61-175)

FIGURE 1.10 (left). This photograph captures the way Bratley's images moved between photographic genres. The Western hat in the background of the image as well as the man's clothing suggest that the image was posed, with Bratley providing the Indian artifacts for the subject to wear and hold—a supposition further supported by the pipe bag, which appears in other Bratley images. Yet this image defies easy classification. It seems to show that Native people were increasingly taking on the Western style of dress while also referencing the romantic image of the proud Plains warrior. Rosebud Reservation, 1895–1899. (DMNS BR61-312)



FIGURE 1.11 (right). According to Bratley, Shuplo—pictured here—was the oldest living snake chief at Hopi, and his wife, Sololk, was the only woman who knew how to make the medicine to cure snakebites. Hopi Reservation, 1902. (DMNS BR61-149)

is never neutral. The representations it produces are highly coded, and the power it wields is never its own.”²⁶ Bratley and his collection take on this power by epitomizing the churning uncertainty and the convergences of multiple interests—governmental, political, social, economic, scientific, voyeuristic—on Native America at the turn of the last century.

Bratley also matters because the historical moment he found himself in—namely, 1893 to 1903—was utterly pivotal for Native Americans and even the United States as a whole. Would the continent's first peoples wither and evaporate like a dying spring? Or would they persist and survive? And even if they survived, would it be in any recognizable form as Indians—or would they fully meld into Anglo-American society?

Just as Bratley himself was a man in between worlds, so, too, were Native Americans, ensnared between their traditional loyalties and the prospects of a terrifying modernity. More than a century later we know that those who were to vanish did not: instead, they endured. However, the US government's cruel mathematics of cultural subtraction and the equation of Native people's survival must be remembered. For in this story are planted the seeds of understanding why one group of people seeks to extinguish another and how those victims may oppose and outlast the forces of their destruction.

In the end, we suggest that the collection Bratley made consists of “objects of survivance.” Survivance is an inelegant word that elegantly unpacks the complexities of the colonial moment. Coined by Anishinaabe scholar Gerald Vizenor, he uses the term *survivance* to recast Native history so that it does not merely dwell on loss and surrender but rather on survival and resistance. Survivance, Vizenor writes, “is more than survival, more than endurance or mere response . . . survivance is an active repudiation of dominance, tragedy, and [victimhood].”²⁷ Vizenor acknowledges the power of colonialism to reshape lives and



entire nations. But he is saying that the subjects of colonialism have a power of their own. In survivance stories, Native actors become the protagonists who refuse to see their condition as tragic and refuse to be the victim. In this way, “Survivance emphasizes creative responses to difficult times, or agentive actions through struggle.”²⁸

The photographs and things in the Bratley collection can be interpreted as objects of survivance—objects made in the crucible of colonialism but with the full agency of Native Americans. These objects thus not only reflect decision points of adaptation and accommodation, survival and resistance, but also continue on today as material memories that can help Native peoples overcome, persevere, inspire, change, persist. Seeing these objects as embodied memories that connect the past to the present helps us reframe the collection, turning it away from a story of preserving the dying Indian. In many ways, the tribal members we worked with reconnected to these objects and images, embracing them as part of their past and reclaiming them as part of their contemporary identities.

The goal of disappearing Indian peoples was not at all haphazard. It was a fundamental and purposeful part of American colonialism. But today, these acts of cultural genocide have too often been rendered invisible.²⁹ Few outside Native communities grasp how much they have borne. Bratley’s legacy—his captured images and collected objects—force us to visibly and tangibly confront America’s attempted annihilation of its first inhabitants and its aftermath for the survivors.

FIGURE 1.12. A Hopi mail carrier named Sam Powiky delivered mail on the Star Route from Keams Canyon to Oraibi, stopping at Tor-e-va on Second Mesa and Polacca at First Mesa. The mail carrier would typically travel the 35-mile route into the canyon in one day and back the next. Hopi Reservation, 1902. (DMNS BR61-135)

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FIGURE 1.13. Lindsay M. Montgomery shares images of the Bratley collection with Hopi elder Elidia S. Chapella and her family in 2016. (Chip Colwell)

The story of the convergence of American Indian education, collecting, and the life of Jesse H. Bratley is based on the 500 photographs and nearly 1,000 objects currently held at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. We also depended on an unpublished autobiography that Bratley wrote sometime after his retirement in 1932. Although never formally published, several excerpts from Bratley's autobiography were publicly circulated by Forrest after Jesse's death in 1948.³⁰ Further, we draw on several archival sources, most notably records held by the Denver Museum, National Archives, National Anthropological Archives, and National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. In addition, the children of Dr. Forrest G. Bratley have served as an excellent steward of Jesse's legacy; they have protected a substantial collection as well as a number of documentary sources, and they generously allowed us access to their holdings. Finally, we reached out to representatives of the five tribes Bratley worked with and invited their participation in the project. Four of the tribes—we were unable to connect with the Havasupai—generously agreed to collaborate with us; their assistance and interpretations have been irreplaceable (figure 1.13).

This book aspires to be a kind of biography of Bratley and a history of Native American survivance between 1893 and 1903 on five reservations. However, we do not want this work to be five ethnographies of five Native communities or an all-encompassing history of Indian education in the United States; there are enough of both and of far greater

quality and depth than we could provide here. What we hope to add to this rich field of study is a new way of looking at this dynamic period in Native North American history. Through the collection—the visual and the material—we cannot just conceptually contemplate this moment, but we can also picture it in concrete terms. A photograph of children lined up like soldiers, a metal Western-style fork with a beaded handle, a ceremonial drum made when traditional religion was outlawed, and more all give a kind of testimony that otherwise may be abstract or found only in words on a page (figure 1.14). Written for a broad readership while grounded in academic research, this book explores what evidence the Bratley collection gives to scholarship that has revealed the US government's attempt to “civilize” Native Americans and, in turn, Native Americans' struggle to persist. The book is a case study that examines how these concepts are proven through the past's material remnants.

From the collection, we have picked a series of objects and images that help us consider three key themes—civilizing, resistance, persistence—for the five tribes Bratley worked among during this period. This is an expansive history we seek to tell through the

FIGURE 1.14. Bratley collected this decorated raw-hide drum, suggesting one means by which Lakota Sioux culture continued in the face of cultural extermination. Rosebud Reservation, 1895–1899. (DMNS AC.5727)



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narrow lens of Bratley and his collection—a biography of “intimate colonialism”—to give us focus on the immediate and everyday means by which Indians withstood this colonial moment.³¹ For objects, inspired by an object-based learning approach, we undertake a close “reading” of them, focusing on their form, function, sensory qualities, aesthetics, significance (symbolic and otherwise), provenience (original context), provenance (history of collection), and our reaction in a reflexive mode.³² We aim to consider how these objects are not passive products but how “individuals seek to influence others through the production of material objects,” how “objects are imbued with the intentions and agency of their originators.”³³ Rather than passive objects, we see each item in Bratley’s collection as holding stories and having readable meanings.

For Bratley’s photographs, we similarly sought to “read” them, considering the subjects’ poses, clothing, context, and gaze. Like other photographs of this period, Bratley’s images can be seen as a “manifestation of an oppressive colonial process,” but also the people in the photographs can exude “defiance, pride, and nonconformity with US norms at a time when it was extremely difficult and unpopular to be Indian.”³⁴ Where the subject can be linked to documentary evidence, we particularly pause to make these connections. In addition, we depended on an analytical framework that approaches images not as perfectly “true” representations but as crafted ones that reveal as much about the photographer and us the viewer as about the subject captured in time. The book is thus also a kind of museum catalogue—necessarily selective and personal, as much a springboard for future research as a statement of its own.

Throughout the book, we include the voices of living Native Americans. This was deeply important to the project because it links the past to the present, allowing an interpretation of the past grounded in the experiences of the generations that followed in the path of those Bratley taught, photographed, and collected from. We traveled to four of the reservations where Bratley worked, and our tribal colleagues showed us where Bratley lived and photographed so we could have a firsthand understanding of how these places are part of a living cultural landscape rather than places frozen in the past.

For our Native colleagues, as in other photo-based projects, the images allowed them to learn about their past and look for clues about what has been gained and lost, to see how images shape the contours of what it means to be an American Indian.³⁵ But more, historical images, as William Farr learned with the Blackfeet, do not so much as “explain the past” to community members as allow them to literally “picture it.”³⁶ In turn, it is Native community members who can help interpret the images for outsiders less familiar with the people, places, and events crystallized on glass plates.³⁷ The qualitative, open-ended interviews we conducted with thirty-six people from four tribes provided added layers of meaning to the objects and the places and people ensnared in Bratley’s images.

The interviews also allow us to further reflect on the possible need to seek reconciliation and forms of restorative justice for those who were harmed through the US government’s policies. In Canada, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the Indian residential

school system has allowed for a public airing of history and the opportunity, however imperfect, for healing.³⁸ In the United States, considering such an approach should begin with the victims and their descendants. Most basically, by consulting directly with contemporary tribes, we have worked toward a collaborative methodology to ensure that Native American voices and their values and viewpoints are not drowned but are saved from the wreckage of the American Indian school experience at the turn of the last century.

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