

CISDRC Teaching Module:

Athletics, Assimilation, and Identity at the Carlisle Indian School: Exploring Student Files

College Level

Overview:

This teaching module will utilize primary documents from individuals who attended the Carlisle Indian School to inform a conversation about the role of athletics in the lives of the students and the institution. Using close reading techniques and qualitative approaches, students will inquire into the significance of sports in student/Native identities, the mission of the school, and concepts of masculinity.

Selected Primary Sources:

The primary documents are sourced from the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center (<http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/>). They include individual student files of members of various Nations who attended the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the first off-reservation boarding school in the United States.

Instructors/students may select additional primary sources by searching the “Student Files” portion of the Digital Resource Center using the names of specific sports (such as football, baseball, basketball, or lacrosse) or general terms (such as athletics or coach).

[Scott J. Porter](#) (mentions character, good habits, and the fact that he didn’t drink liquor)
Student file of Scott J. Porter, a member of the Chippewa Nation, who entered the school on September 1, 1905, and ultimately departed on September 30, 1910. The student did not attend the school continuously, but left and reentered. The file contains student information cards, a former student response postcard, a progress/conduct card, a returned student survey, and a report after leaving indicating that Porter was working as a farmer in Duane, Minnesota in 1911 and 1912 and as a police officer in Duane, Minnesota in 1913. The records also suggest that Porter, for a time, was only enrolled in the school to participate in athletics.

[Charles Albert Bender](#) (dismissed for “treachery” to baseball team)
Student file of Charles A. Bender, a member of Chippewa Nation, who entered the school on September 5, 1896, graduated in 1902, and departed on May 14, 1902. The file contains a student information card, a report after leaving, a returned student survey, photographs, news clippings related to Bender's professional baseball career, and correspondence.

The file indicates that Bender attended Dickinson College Preparatory School (Conway Hall) and worked as an assistant watch maker at R. H. Conlyn in Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1902. The

file also indicates that Bender was a professional baseball player playing for the Harrisburg Athletic Club in 1902, signed with Philadelphia Athletics in 1903, and played through 1911 with Philadelphia, having pitched in the World Series in 1910.

[Edwin Miller](#) (assisted lacrosse coach)

Student file of Edwin Miller, a member of the Miami Nation, who entered the school on October 24, 1911, and ultimately departed on June 9, 1917. The student did not attend the school continuously, but left and reentered. The file contains student information cards, applications for enrollment, correspondence, trade record cards, an outing evaluation, an outing record, financial transactions, and certificates of promotion. The files indicate Miller was interested in painting and carpentry and helped coach the lacrosse team.

[Charles Amos Walker](#) (file mentions that he played on lacrosse team)

Student file of Charles Amos Walker, a member of the Omaha Nation, who entered the school on September 17, 1908 and ultimately departed on June 20, 1918. The student did not attend the school continuously, but left and reentered. The file contains student information cards, applications for enrollment, an outing evaluation, medical/physical records, certificates of promotion, a progress/conduct card, a returned student survey, an outing record, a report after leaving, financial transactions, and correspondence. The file indicates Walker was on the lacrosse team in 1918 and was living in Macy, Nebraska in 1918.

[Henry J. Flood](#) (gives talk on citizenship and athletic assoc. gives him a suit)

Student file of Henry J. Flood, a member of the Sioux Nation, who entered the school on October 1, 1915 and departed on February 24, 1916. The file contains a student information card, a trade/position record card, progress/conduct cards, and correspondence. The file indicates that Flood attended the Haskell Institute prior to Carlisle where he was selected for all-Missouri Valley honors in football as a quarterback, played as a forward on the basketball team at Carlisle, was awarded a piece of suiting by the Athletic Association of Carlisle. In 1916 Flood attended Dickinson College Preparatory School (Conway Hall) in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and was then Deputy Treasurer in Martin, South Dakota.

[William J. Gardner](#) (football coach, lawyer, wants to work for Ford)

Student file of William J. Gardner, a member of the Chippewa Nation, who entered the school on September 4, 1904 and ultimately departed on July 21, 1908. The student did not attend the school continuously, but left and reentered. The file contains student information cards, correspondence, newspaper clippings, a photograph, and a report after leaving indicating that Gardner was on the football team while at school, received a diploma in law from Dickinson College, and was a Captain in Co. H of the 338 Infantry in the United States Army stationed at Camp Custer, Michigan in 1917.

[Charles M. Guyon](#) (coach, businessman, considered a "success," Carlisle team not winning)

Student file of Charles M. Guyon, a member of the Chippewa Nation, who entered the school on September 13, 1905 and departed on September 15, 1906. The file contains a student information card, newspaper clippings, a trade/position record card, correspondence, a returned student survey, an application for enrollment, and a report after leaving.

The file indicates Guyon played football as a student in 1905, was a ballplayer in Chicago, Illinois in 1910, was working as the manager of the college department of A. G. Spalding Bros. in Atlanta, Georgia in 1911 and 1914, was a coach for the Georgia School of Technology in 1915 and 1916, and was living in Atlanta, Georgia in 1917.

Note: in this file the student is identified as Charles M. Guyon and Charles Wahoo.

[Jonas Metoxen](#) (Played football and considered successful even though he returned to reservation)

Student file of Jonas Metoxen, a member of the Oneida Nation, who entered the school on June 28, 1891 and ultimately departed on January 9, 1900. The student did not attend the school continuously, but left and reentered. The file contains student information cards, correspondence, a news clipping, a returned student survey, and a report after leaving. The file indicates Metoxen was a football player at Carlisle and was married to Phoebe Baird (Ya-go-win) and farming in West De Pere, Wisconsin in 1911.

[James M. Phillips](#) (football, mayor)

Student file of James M. Phillips, a member of the Cherokee Nation, who entered the school on October 27, 1901, and departed on June 17, 1903. The file contains a student information card, newspaper clippings, a photograph, correspondence, a trade/position record card, and a report after leaving.

The file indicates Phillips played football for Carlisle, graduated from the Dickinson College law department in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the Northwestern University law school in Evanston, Illinois. Phillips then moved to Aberdeen, Washington where he was a hod carrier for three years before joining a law practice, lived in Aberdeen, Washington in 1910, was elected judge in Aberdeen, Washington in 1911, an attorney in the law firm of Taggart and Phillips in Aberdeen, Washington in 1912, and was elected mayor of Aberdeen, Washington in 1915.

Note: in this file the student is identified as James M. Phillips, William H. Phillips, and James Philips.

Secondary sources:

For general background on the school:

Fear-Segal, and Susan D. Rose. "[Introduction: History of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School \(1879-1918\).](#)" In *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations*, edited by Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose, 5-12. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.

For an understanding of the role of athletics in the mission of the school, student identity, and masculinity:

Bloom, John. "The Imperial Gridiron: Dealing with the Legacy of Carlisle Indian School Sports." In *Carlisle Indian Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories, and Reclamations*, edited by Jacqueline Fear-Segal and Susan D. Rose, 124-38. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.

Specialized Reading for Additional Research:

Carlisle vs. Army. By Lars Anderson.

Doctors, Lawyers, and Indian Chiefs By Tom Benjey

Fabulous Redmen: The Carlisle Indians and Their Famous Football Teams. By John Steckbeck.

Forward Pass: The Play that Saved Football, by Philip L. Brooks

Pop Warner: A Life on the Gridiron, by Jeff Miller

The Real All Americans. By Sally Jenkins.

Procedure:

This lesson plan may take place over a series of days or one in-class session. To maximize time for student exploration and discussion, the evaluation activities may be assigned as homework outside of class.

- Introduction to the Carlisle Indian School with attention to the history of its athletics program
 - Assign students secondary source readings by Fear-Segal & Rose, and Bloom (see bibliography above).

- Orientation to the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center
 - Provide students with an overview of the different portions of the website (student files, images, publications, etc)

 - Allow students to explore the database on their own to familiarize themselves with the site's content

- Analysis of student files

- Assign files to students or allow them to choose from preselected student files (see list above) or to search the student files for one of interest.

- Individually or in small groups, have the students explore the student files as they complete a worksheet (see template below) or a similar set of prompt questions.

- Class Discussion

- Bring the class together as a group and discuss their answers to the worksheet questions. Did they discover anything that surprised them? Did different student files offer similar or dissimilar ideas, themes, and issues?

Assessment Ideas:

Have each student or group of students prepare a presentation or PowerPoint that summarizes the experience of the student represented in their file and addresses the student's sense of identity. Are concepts of Native identity, masculinity, and/or assimilation expressed in this file? Provide examples.

Have each student write a paper reflecting on their experience reading and analyzing their student file. What surprised them? How is reading and analyzing an historical document different from reading and analyzing a journal article or book/book chapter? What themes, issues, or conflicts did they identify within their student file? What questions did the document raise in their mind?

Have each student write a paper connecting the student file they examined with the larger context of student/Native identity, masculinity, and/or institutional mission at the school. This may require students to connect the student files to class readings and/or to do additional research.