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# Renaming the Indians: State-Sponsored Legibility through Permanent Family Surnames among the Sisseton and Wahpeton at Lake Traverse, 1903

*Joseph Paul Brewer II, Stephen L. Egbert, Paula I. Smith, and Dory Tuininga*

## NAMING, ASSIMILATION, AND THE MOVEMENT TO RENAME THE INDIANS

Naming in the present day for the most part is a social construction deemed necessary to delineate people, power, and place. However, the practice of naming ourselves, and one another, is fraught with histories of oppression and while the process of naming has brought societies, communities, and families together, it has also torn them apart.<sup>1</sup> Naming can connect humans with their past, present, and future.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, names in one's own language, whether of persons, places or things, have the potential to empower and give agency to those who are displaced and disenfranchised by colonialist enterprises. A name can in fact establish a place in this world for those who may feel as though they have no place. Beyond the human network, naming also connects us to our nonhuman relations in a way that can rekindle and reconnect us to a human-environment relationship that is significantly older than our current relationship to

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the places we inhabit today.<sup>3</sup> In a name we can find a voice, and in this paper we bring to the foreground a part of the voice that comprises the Native American experience.

The first part of this paper reviews, but does not exhaust, the context and history of naming and renaming Native Americans during the height of the assimilation era during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This paper seeks to contribute to the literature on naming/renaming through a case study that illustrates how assimilationist policies and overall assimilationist intentions, however well-meaning, were to disconnect Native people from their heritage and traditional ties to their lived environment.

In the post-Civil-War period several groups of reformers sympathetic to Native causes, including the “Friends of the Indian,” adopted assimilation as their preferred method of solving the “Indian Problem.” Assimilation may be seen partly as a progressivist reaction against what were viewed as the excesses of corrupt speculators, government officials, and Indian agents, as well as often-hostile, land-hungry local settlers. The key goals of the assimilationists generally included the settlement of nuclear families on individual farmsteads, abandonment of nomadism and the hunt, elimination of tribal identity and “uncivilized practices,” and the adoption of white culture, especially language and religion.<sup>4</sup>

One of the key tools of the assimilation movement was land allotment, whereby all the individuals on a reservation were required to select individual parcels of land to settle and farm, with the “surplus” land being made available to non-Native settlers, railroads, and speculators. The theory behind allotment was that settling individuals on their own land parcels would turn them into yeoman farmers and ranchers. Allotment was advocated fairly early in the conflict with Natives and non-Natives over land, but it picked up steam during the assimilation movement and culminated in what is commonly known as the Dawes Act of 1887. Until allotment was finally terminated with the Howard-Wheeler Act in 1934, nearly 41 million acres of land, primarily west of the Mississippi, had been allotted and the surplus sold.<sup>5</sup> The Indian Land Tenure Foundation sums up the loss of land due to political pressures and processes this way: “From 1887 to 1934, 60 million acres of ‘surplus’ Indian lands were sold or transferred to non-Indians, and 30 million acres were lost due to the Burke Act, forced sales and other takings.”<sup>6</sup>

Among the concerns that grew out of allotment was the “heirship” question, that is, when an allotment holder died, how would people know who the heirs were, since many Native people of the time did not have family surnames. Of course, this concern ignored the fact that the local Native people knew who the heirs were; permanent family surnames were primarily for the benefit of non-Native people and the United States legal system. Consequently, one corollary of the allotment program was a program to rename all Native people to give them permanent family surnames. The major stated goals were to facilitate the transparency of family relationships, clarify eligibility for inheritance of allotment land parcels, and prevent land fraud.<sup>7</sup>

In what follows, this article more specifically describes the political figures involved in the movement to rename Native Americans in the late 1800s, their motivations, and how they created the templates used to implement this program, including the role

of the prominent Dakota scholar Charles Eastman in renaming Dakota and Lakota tribes. We also present the archival sources and methods we used to compile and analyze the renaming registers from Eastman's work at the Sisseton and Wahpeton reservation in present-day northeastern South Dakota. We conclude by discussing the complex impacts and ongoing questions this research presents. We hope this initial study sheds light on one part of what undoubtedly were many renaming efforts and the actual processes used to rename Native people; benefits those who are interested or engaged in doing this or similar work; and opens up this conversation to a broader audience—most of all, the descendants of those who were renamed.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE PRODUCTION AND VALUE OF NAMING

For many indigenous peoples throughout the world, individuals' names are associated with deeds or actions, experiences in a landscape, and the everyday histories of their people. The names themselves, whether for places or persons, can describe what happened, who was involved, what the experience was like, why it should matter to those who are paying attention, and most importantly, the relationship conceived when the name was given. However, when the historical connection that Native people have to one another and to their landscape is renamed or reshaped with the names of mainstream society's icons or heroes—as with Harney Peak in South Dakota, named after a military figure who massacred Native peoples—integrity and familial relationships are displaced and further written out of contemporary history. As William Chapman states in *Preserving the Past*, “the past is at its best when it takes us to places that counsel and instruct, that show us who we are by showing us where we have been, that remind us of our connections to what happened here.”<sup>8</sup> Whether intentional or not, to rename Native peoples and the landscapes that shaped them severs connections to lands and family, rewrites their history, and displaces them culturally, spiritually, and spatially.<sup>9</sup> Renaming not only disconnects them but also positions them as outsiders in political systems that were—and in many cases still are—new, constructed without spiritual connection to people or place.<sup>10</sup> This article concerns Native communities on the upper Great Plains, where names were often profoundly shaped by people's experiences on the land. Their names, whether referencing a place, an aspect of the environment, a person, an animal, a relationship, and/or all of the above, were and are extraordinarily dynamic and descriptive.<sup>11</sup>

In the Lakota language the word *tiblo*, in its direct translation, means “older brother,” but there is much lost in translation. “*Ti*” can be described as a dwelling where people go to be comforted, to rest, out of the elements, to be with family (as in the word *tipi*); “*blo*” can be described as a hearty root that continually regenerates and is consistent. Additionally, the Lakota word for “buffalo” is *tatanka*, a common word made famous in film and media, but again, a literal translation misses the true significance of the word, which invokes a very different definition, one that expands into a relationship. Lakota people hold buffalo or the relationship to buffalo as more of an honorific; “your majesty” would potentially be a more accurate portrayal of the relationship.<sup>12</sup>

## STATE LEGIBILITY AND PERMANENT FAMILY SURNAMES

For good or ill, as Scott notes in *Seeing Like a State*, one of the state's highest interests is to make its subjects "legible"—to know, above all, who and where they are. Legibility permits the consolidation of power and the extension of control.<sup>13</sup> On one hand, legibility makes it possible to provide effective services, such as mail delivery or provision of utilities, or to levy taxes on a particular individual for a defined parcel of land so as to provide those government services. On the other hand, legibility can become a powerful coercive tool of the state, enabling it to arrest, detain, or even murder its enemies because it knows who they are, either individually or by categories, and where to find them.

States acquire legibility through a variety of state-sponsored projects, including cadastral mapping, assignment of permanent family surnames, censuses, and many others.<sup>14</sup> Spatial legibility is acquired through cadastral maps that are used to create the "cadaster," a registry of land parcels showing the location of parcel boundaries and the identity of their owners. Other information on cadastral maps may include buildings, crops or other land use, land quality, and, of course, value. Cadastral mapping provides the graphical and definitional "where" to the state legibility project by linking persons to their lands—and it almost goes without saying that cadastral mapping is the basis for taxes and levies on real estate. Censuses, of course, are instruments for establishing both identity and location. Identity is established first of all by given names and surnames for individuals, but a wider set of census identifiers may include gender, age, family relationships, race or ethnicity, religion, occupation, education level, and more. Location may include the address or land parcel number, but often also includes a hierarchy of political subdivisions that widens out from village or township up through state or province. Together, names and locations on censuses and similar documents provide a set of nested identities that richly, though imperfectly, describe individuals, their kin, and associates.<sup>15</sup>

The establishment of permanent family surnames goes hand in hand with censuses and cadastral mapping. As Scott notes, "[Uniform surnames] were to the legibility of the population what uniform measurement and the cadastral map were to the legibility of real property."<sup>16</sup> He further points out the importance and even primacy of surnames in establishing identity, writing that "the surname was a first and crucial step toward making individual citizens officially legible, and along with the photograph, it is still the first fact on documents of identity."<sup>17</sup> The *raison d'être* of the permanent surname is twofold: to uniquely identify individuals and to make family relationships visible to outsiders.

States have long had an interest in identifying their subjects through "regular" surnames. For example China, in the fourth century BC, decreed permanent family surnaming that facilitated taxation, conscription, and the recruitment of forced labor, as Scott and colleagues describe, and Jews in the Austrian Empire in the late 1700s and early 1800s were forced to either choose their own surnames or to have surnames chosen for them.<sup>18</sup> Assigning surnames to colonized peoples was an almost universal project. Scott also details the assigning of surnames in the Philippines in 1849, when

the governing authority decreed that each family was to be given a surname from the *católogo*, a list of approved surnames that included Spanish personal names but also words drawn from flora, fauna, minerals, geography, and the arts. Each Philippine town was assigned a few pages from the *católogo* alphabetically and in some towns the impacts of this alphabetical renaming in Spanish are still visible.<sup>19</sup>

Scott's work demonstrates connections to other scholars' similar work on how cartographic practices systematically displace indigenous peoples in the United States and Hawai'i, work that has established how indigenous people's identities were deliberately written out, whether by renaming or simply not recognizing indigenous place-based histories at all.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, until fairly recently with the publication of seminal works by authors such as Margaret Pearce, Jay T. Johnson, Renee Pualani Louis, R. D. K. Herman, and Brian Harley, to name a few, these cartographic practices had constituted a long-held, common mapping ideology of mainstream United States academics.

In sum, just as policies such as allotment leave lasting and tragic effects that evidence how power accompanies the displacement of indigenous peoples and dispossession of their lands, renaming is also one of the many systematic tools of assimilation. By many scholarly accounts, renaming is a practice of the genocidal tendencies of colonial powers over those whose agency has been curtailed.<sup>21</sup> In the United States, not only Native Americans but numerous ethnic and racial populations have been subjected to renaming, such as enslaved African Americans.<sup>22</sup> Renaming has been used to generally disenfranchise these populations of land, title, property, and inheritance and limit their access to legal remedies also.<sup>23</sup> By contributing to existing scholarship and filling a gap in the research on how individual citizens are made officially legible to the state, this article reveals how the surnames of Native allotment owners were actively linked not only to land parcels on cadastral maps but to their future heirs, thus establishing the links among naming, mapping, and territorializing (allotment) in the assimilationist agenda.

## THE RENAMERS AND THEIR TEMPLATES

To understand the nature of the project to rename the Indians is to examine the recommendations of its advocates, who essentially constructed a renaming template intended for use by officials in the field. Key leaders in the movement were Thomas J. Morgan, commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1889–1893; John Wesley Powell, explorer, geologist, and director of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1881–1894; and Hamlin Garland, a successful author and activist who championed Native causes. All three had specific recommendations for renaming the Indians that agreed in most respects and that ultimately provided the guidance for the renaming efforts of Dr. Charles Eastman in the early nineteenth century. To be clear, the core intention of this political and legal endeavor was to impose colonial rule and deconstruct indigenous epistemologies.<sup>24</sup>

It is, however, worthwhile to point out what the renaming project was *not* intended to be. It was not to borrow famous names or even assign common English-language names, as was notoriously done at Indian schools. As Frank Laffesche illustrated in

his reminiscence of life at an on-reservation boarding school, new names commonly were assigned to incoming students by either the headmaster or by students under his direction. Names of students at the school included "Ulysses S. Grant" and "Edwin M. Stanton," among others.<sup>25</sup> One of the most egregious examples of assigning famous names occurred at Carlisle Institute, where one unfortunate male student went by the moniker of "Bedford Forrest."<sup>26</sup>

The initial document defining guidelines for renaming the Indians, "Instructions to Agents in Regard to Family Names," was a circular written by Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morgan to Indian agents and superintendents of schools and printed as an appendix to the *Fifty-Ninth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, March 19, 1890.<sup>27</sup> His instructions had been forwarded to Powell at the Bureau of Ethnology for his comments, which were also included in the circular. Morgan's instructions can be summarized as follows:

(1) There is "no good reason to continue the custom of substituting English names for Indian names," especially when different members of a family are given different surnames;

(2) The practice of using English translations of Indian names is inadvisable because "the names thus obtained are usually awkward and uncouth, and such as the children when they grow older will dislike to retain";

(3) The use of Indian names [in the Native language] is preferred: "in many . . . cases the Indian word is as short and as euphonious as the English word that is substituted, while, other things being equal, the fact that it is an Indian name makes it a better one";

(4) "If the Indian name is unusually long and difficult to pronounce it may perhaps be arbitrarily shortened";

(5) For convenience an English "Christian name" [first name] may be used with the Indian name as a surname; and

(6) "the habit of adopting sobriquets given to Indians such as 'Tobacco,' 'Mogul,' 'Tom,' and 'Pete' . . . is unfortunate and should be discontinued."<sup>28</sup>

John Wesley Powell's additional April 4, 1890 comments underscored that renaming was important not only because of inheritance of property, but also because "it will enable much more accurate census enumeration to be made in the future" and "it will tend strongly toward the breaking up of the Indian tribal system which is perpetuated and ever kept in mind by the Indian's own system of names." Agreeing with Morgan, he emphasized the value of retaining Indian names in the original language: "Undoubtedly it will be better, whenever possible, to retain the Indian name as a surname, adding an English Christian-given name. Occasionally, however, it will be found advantageous to make the latter also an Indian name." Like Morgan, he also advised eschewing English translations of surnames, but with the following proviso: "in general it is inadvisable to call Indians by the English translation of their names, though in the case of animal names and some others, as deer, hawk, etc., it is not objectionable." He also thought that "little difficulty . . . will be experienced in shortening Indian names in the interest of brevity and euphony, and the Indian will be found to readily adopt names so changed."

Going a step further, in a note reminiscent of the practice adopted by the Spanish in the Philippines with the *católogo*, he suggested that those doing the renaming could cast a wider net than just the kinds of names already used by Natives:

In selecting aboriginal names I do not think it will be necessary to limit the choice to such names as Indians already bear. Excellent names may frequently be selected from the Indian's vocabulary of geographic terms, such as the names of rivers, lakes, mountains, etc., and where these are suitable and euphonic, I think they may with advantage be substituted for personal names which are less desirable.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the 1890 "Instructions to Agents in Regard to Family Names," relatively little was done to respond in a formal, organized way,<sup>30</sup> but Hamlin Garland later picked up the cause at the turn of the century. In the 1890s he had taken an interest in Native issues and helped form his own Indian rights association, the Sequoyah Society, named after the prominent Cherokee scholar, although Garland originally had proposed naming it "The Tipi League."<sup>31</sup> Like many of the time who advocated for Native causes, Garland was an assimilationist, but departed somewhat in opposing the outlawing of Native religion and other cultural practices imposed by the Courts of Indian Offenses. Garland made renaming Native Americans a major crusade with two broad goals: to clarify family relationships and solve the heirship issues that would surely arise out of allotment, and to provide names that would not be "disgraceful" or embarrassing—from his viewpoint, of course. He met with numerous influential people to press his agenda, including President Theodore Roosevelt, and personally worked on renaming the Southern Cheyenne and Arapahoe.<sup>32</sup>

In 1902, working with then-Commissioner of Indian Affairs William A. Jones, he drafted his own letter on renaming that "amplified and reissued" the 1890 circular, which then went out from Jones to all agents, allotting agents, school superintendents, and teachers.<sup>33</sup> Garland's stated goal was to create "a system which will show family relations, which will meet the wishes of the red people, and be comprehensible to the white people."<sup>34</sup> The recommendations omitted some of Powell's more exotic suggestions and boiled down to the following basic principles: English translations of Native names, such as "Plenty Hoops," "Young Dog," and "Red Day" generally were out, as were famous borrowed names such as "Horace Greeley" and "Abraham Lincoln." Native language names such as Sinte Gleska were in, although they might be shortened for convenience and combined with an English first name.

Underlying the renaming crusade were assumptions about the superiority of Euro-American culture and that Native people needed to make accommodations to conform to it. Among other assertions, the renamers claimed that many names were difficult to pronounce, that some were uncouth or objectionable, and that the Native system of names made family relationships unclear. Beyond that, all the renamers seemed to place a premium on "euphony," or pleasant-sounding names, a common practice of the time. Of course, the names were not difficult for Native people to pronounce, and both uncouthness and euphony rest in the ear of the listener, so to speak. Certainly Native people understood family relationships and knew who the heirs of a given person

were, even if Native names generally did not indicate family relationship as did most Euro-American surnames.

### THE RENAMING WORK OF DR. CHARLES EASTMAN (OHIYESA)

At the instigation and recommendation of Hamlin Garland, Dr. Charles Eastman was hired by the Office of Indian Affairs in 1903 to begin the work of renaming several tribes on the Northern Plains.<sup>35</sup> Charles Eastman was the grandson of a soldier stationed in Minnesota and his Santee wife; his father Jacob Eastman had taken his father-in-law's English surname. Charles studied at Boston University to become a medical doctor, after which he worked in Dakota Territory in a variety of positions for the Office of Indian Affairs. He also became increasingly well known as an author and speaker on Native topics, sometimes under his Santee name, Ohiyesa. He worked full-time on the renaming project from 1903 to 1909, completing renaming entries for well over 25,000 individuals on at least eleven reservations (table 1). Despite Garland's ongoing urging, the renaming work was discontinued in 1909.<sup>36</sup>

Eastman's work became well known nationwide through the publication of several news articles, likely at the behest of Hamlin Garland. Typical was an article in the

TABLE 1  
RESERVATIONS VISITED BY EASTMAN AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE RENAMED

Reservation	Individuals Renamed
Cheyenne River	2,895
Devil's Lake*	—
Fort Peck	1,091
Lower Brule	572
Pine Ridge	6,687
Ponca (Nebraska)	199
Rosebud	1,446
Santee	874
Sisseton and Wahpeton	2,116
Standing Rock	3,500
Yankton	2,599
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,979</b>

\* It is known that Eastman renamed people at the Devil's Lake Reservation; however, the records were missing from their binding and have not been located in the National Archives.

Amador (California) *Ledger*. While the newspaper correctly noted that the main point of renaming was to ensure “the right descent of property,” it wrongly asserted that names were to be “translated and Americanized.” This and other articles mentioned and praised the case of a man named “Bob-tailed Coyote” who was renamed “Robert T. Wolf.”<sup>37</sup> Eastman himself characterized his approach this way:

It was my duty to group the various members of one family under a permanent name, selected for its euphony and appropriateness from among the various cognomens in use among them, of course suppressing mistranslations and grotesque or coarse nicknames calculated to embarrass the educated Indian. My instructions were that the original native name was to be given the preference, if it were short enough and easily pronounced by Americans. If not, a translation or abbreviation might be arbitrarily given, but such as were already well established might be retained if the owner so desired.<sup>38</sup>

Eastman correctly perceived that his main duty was to group all family members under a common surname, and in general Eastman’s views on renaming matched both the sentiments and guidelines of the renamers; for example, preference was to be given for retention of original Native names, provided they were short and easily pronounced (by Euro-Americans), emphasizing euphony while suppressing “grotesque or coarse nicknames.” However, he also asserted that a translated or abbreviated name might be arbitrarily given if the preferred guidelines could not be met, which, as noted above, sometimes resulted in names like “Robert T. Wolf.”

The long-range goal of our research is to analyze the nature and impacts of renaming among all the tribes that were visited by Eastman in the time period from 1903 to 1909. We conducted our research at the National Archives in Washington, DC in August 2014 and June 2015 and made high-resolution photographs of Eastman’s “Revisions of Names Rolls” for all available records.<sup>39</sup> Eastman’s renaming registers consist of large bound volumes with entries in meticulous handwriting; each individual page bears the title “Revision of Names on (Agency) Allotment Roll.”<sup>40</sup> Entries for each individual were entered according to the column headings listed in table 2.

Most of the terms are self-explanatory, but the term “Indian Name” was defined quite conservatively on Eastman’s rolls. If a person had a translated name, such as “Bear Hill,” or a Native name with an English first name, such as “Simon Hepanna,” the name was considered to be an English name and would appear in the “English Name” column. It appears that only Native names in the Native language, such as Sintewastewin, were included in the “Indian Name” column.

An image showing the first nine columns from the Sisseton and Wahpeton renaming roll (“Revision of Names Roll of the Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux, 1903”) for page 21 is shown in figure 1. Once the rolls were photographed and the images enhanced for readability, the next step was to transcribe all the individual entries into an Excel spreadsheet to facilitate visualization and analysis. With sixty-nine ledger pages and more than 2,100 names with potentially eleven entries per name, transcription of the Sisseton and Wahpeton “Revision of Names” rolls was a highly labor-intensive process, requiring over one hundred hours of effort.

TABLE 2  
COLUMNS IN EASTMAN'S RENAMING REGISTERS

Allotment No.
Permanent Family Name
Family Surname
First Name
Family Relationship (husband, wife, daughter, son, widow, single, orphan, etc.)
Indian Name on Allotment Roll
English Name on Allotment Roll (or School Name)
Male/Female
Age
Other Relationship
Remarks
No. on this Roll

No. 21. REVISION OF NAMES ON *Sisseton and Wahpeton* A1

ALLOTMENT No.	PERMANENT FAMILY NAME		FAMILY RELATIONSHIP	INDIAN NAME ON ALLOTMENT ROLL	ENGLISH NAME ON ALLOTMENT ROLL, OR SCHOOL NAME	MALE	FE. MALE	AGE
	Family Surname	First Name						
10, 16	<i>Hedutah</i>	<i>Samuel</i>	<i>husband</i>	<i>Heduta</i>		1		
1247-216	"	<i>Nupah</i>	<i>son</i>	<i>Nupahica</i>		1		1
19	<i>Hedutah</i>	<i>Jacob</i>	<i>husband</i>		<i>Jacob Heduta</i>	1		
767	"	<i>Emma</i>	<i>wife</i>		<i>Emma "</i>		1	22
768	"	<i>Louise</i>	<i>daughter</i>		<i>Louise "</i>		1	4
769	"	<i>Abraham</i>	<i>son</i>		<i>Abraham "</i>	1		2 1/2

FIGURE 1. Excerpt from page 21 of the renaming register for the Sisseton and Wahpeton. Photograph by authors.

## RENAMING THE SISSETON AND WAHPETON

We elected to begin our study with the Sisseton and Wahpeton on the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota, because they were the first group to undergo renaming by Eastman, who reported that he met with each head of family in 1903 to carry out the renaming process. Importantly, by the time Eastman began his renaming work at Lake Traverse, the land allotment process had long been completed for the Sisseton and Wahpeton. Because several treaties and agreements governed allotment among the Sisseton and Wahpeton, it took place in three “waves”: in 1875, 1887, and 1891. The Lake Traverse experience not only serves as an introduction and overview of Eastman’s

six-year foray into renaming, but also casts light on his own approach to renaming. Did Eastman apply the template of Morgan, Powell, and Garland, and, if so, to what extent?

We reviewed and transcribed the Sisseton and Wahpeton renaming rolls to (1) summarize the results of Eastman's work; (2) examine to what extent his efforts matched the template of Morgan, Powell, and Garland; and (3) look for patterns, exceptions, and perhaps the unexpected. We examined the "Permanent Name" column of the renaming rolls for the 384 heads of household at Lake Traverse, primarily because the surnames of the heads of household would be the ones assigned to the other members of the household and even to grandchildren. We found the following categories of "permanent" names (table 3):

TABLE 3  
SISSETON AND WAHPETON — HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD NAMES ON  
EASTMAN'S REVISION OF NAMES REGISTER

Type of Name	Number
Native language name	112
Native language name – shortened	20
Translated name	85
English or French language name	167

A total of 132 heads of household retained their Native language names<sup>41</sup> (either full or shortened) at the completion of Eastman's work, approximately one-third of the total number (34 percent). This relatively low percentage stands in contrast to the expressed template of the renamers that favored Native names in their own language. One thing that Eastman commonly did was change the spellings of Native names in an apparent effort to standardize them and make them more phonetically pronounceable. For example, "Makaxa" became "Makasha." Almost all of those who retained their Native names in the renaming process either took or retained English first names, although a few would take a Native first name or omit a first name altogether. Among those who retained Native first names, the Dakota ordinal names of "Caske" for a firstborn son and "Winona" for a firstborn daughter were noted.<sup>42</sup>

In the second category there were eighty-five translated Native names (22 percent of the total), most of which appear to be names that were already in use at the time of renaming. One notable exception was a man named Tatankawanjina (a direct translation may be "One Buffalo" or perhaps "Lone Bull") who was given the new surname of "Bullock." Eastman was known to do this occasionally, apparently in attempts to adopt or cleverly create English surnames that captured the essence of the Native names while also overcoming names that perhaps were thought to fall into the "disgraceful" category that Garland and the other renamers hoped to eliminate, or perhaps may have been difficult to pronounce. Examples of such creativity abound in discussions of Eastman's work, including that of a man named "Rotten Pumpkin" who was renamed "Robert

Pumpian” and another whose name was changed from Bob-tailed Coyote to Robert T. Wolf (noted earlier), although these instances were not at Lake Traverse.<sup>43</sup> One of Eastman’s most consistent changes was to make compound translated surnames into a single word; for example, “Red Bird” became “Redbird” and “Blue Cloud” became “Bluecloud.”

On the final renaming roll, 167 heads of household (43 percent) had European surnames, primarily English but also some French names. It is certain that many of these, especially the French ones, were due to marriages between a Euro-American man and a Native woman. In most of these cases the wife and children adopted the surname of the husband and father. In other cases, however, the names likely were adopted at school or church from common Euro-American surnames. Among those who already had first names of any kind, first names taken from the Bible were very common, including a few highly unusual ones, no doubt reflecting the influence of Christian missionaries and educators.<sup>44</sup> Only one clear example was found of a famous name being adopted, that of a man who was obviously named after the famous American newspaper editor and politician Horace Greeley (1811–1872).

In her work on ethnicity and dispossession among the Anishinaabeg at the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, Melissa Meyer briefly discusses the anglicization of surnames among the various Anishinaabe bands living on the reservation.<sup>45</sup> A table and several charts highlight the progression of the adoption of anglicized names among the Anishinaabeg around the turn of the last century. Bar charts grouped by age, gender, and band show whether an individual had an Anishnaabe name, an anglicized name, or both. While there were small differences by gender and larger differences among bands, between 1890 and 1920 the clear trend was toward adoption of anglicized names. Meyer notes that among some bands, by 1920 Anishinaabe names had all but disappeared.

Figure 2 similarly charts the frequency of surnames by age group at Lake Traverse, revealing patterns among the Sisseton and Wahpeton that are significantly more dramatic than those Meyer found at White Earth. Bearing in mind the rather conservative definition of “Indian Name” used on Eastman’s roll—a Native name in the Native language with no English first name—among individuals in the two oldest age groups (fifty and older, or those born prior to 1853), figure 2 shows that an average of over 80 percent had Native names, while only around 50 percent to 60 percent had English names. In contrast, for those in the two youngest groups (those born between 1874 and 1903), approximately only 30 percent were listed as having a Native name, while nearly 100 percent had English names. The number of those who had both English and Native names generally stayed around 30 to 40 percent for most age groups, but declined to less than 20 percent for the youngest groups.

It should be emphasized that the decline in Native names at Lake Traverse only refers to Native names retained for official use on school rolls, censuses, and other documents and aspects of public life. It does not address the use of Native names privately, particularly those that were given in naming ceremonies at birth, or sometimes later, and were held sacred and generally not revealed publicly.

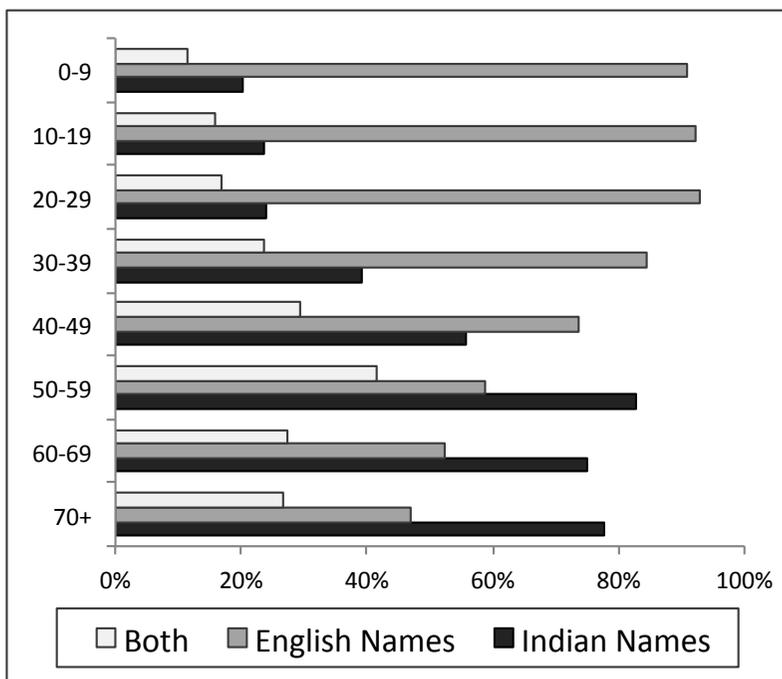


FIGURE 2. Name Type by Age Group on Eastman's Roll, 1903.

## EVIDENCE OF EARLIER RENAMING EFFORTS

From the point of view of the government's long-term assimilation and legibility project, in the end renaming the Indians was "mission accomplished," not only for the Sisseton and Wahpeton, but for almost all Native people. At most reservations in the United States, Indian censuses were taken annually or near-annually from around 1887 through the late 1930s. These show that by around 1900 a majority of Native people were using permanent surnames, regardless of format, in combination with an English first name. However, it is still unclear how much of this can be attributed to Morgan's original circular and the subsequent efforts of Hamlin Garland and people such as Eastman, or how much was due to general but less organized efforts by missionaries, educators, Indian agents, and others who may have had much smaller-scale agendas, but who nonetheless viewed the imposition of family surnames in the Euro-American style as being of benefit to both Native people and those who interacted with them.

In the context of the templates of the renamers among the Sisseton and Wahpeton at Lake Traverse, only one-third of the people ended up with surnames that conformed to the template, that is, Native names in the Native language, albeit usually with an English first name. Fully two-thirds of the names were either translated surnames or Euro-American surnames. From the standpoint of the renamers it would appear that renaming for the Sisseton-Wahpeton occurred too little and too late—by as much as fifteen to twenty years or more—and that de facto, renaming had already happened

for most people. Many of these surnames undoubtedly were acquired at schools or churches, or during allotment, or perhaps from Indian agents prior to the issuance of the formal renaming guidelines by Morgan.

Regarding this latter point, the 1910 memoir of James McLaughlin, Indian agent at Standing Rock from 1881 to 1895, sheds some light on the renaming process he undertook, seemingly on his own initiative.<sup>46</sup> In a chapter devoted to "How the Indian Gets His Name," McLaughlin explained that he had engaged in renaming at Standing Rock some fifteen to thirty years earlier:

Many years ago, seeing the necessity of giving the people living at Standing Rock family designations, I undertook, as agent, the work that has recently been taken up by the Indian office [an apparent reference to Eastman's work]. . . . Gray Eagle, for instance, had several children. I gave those of them who did not possess a baptismal name an English name, then wrote the father's name in one word, Grayeagle, and the thing was done. And this practice I put into effect generally, retaining the English translation of the Indian name and making one word of it wherever possible. The rolls at Standing Rock agency were found to be practically complete when the enrolling official began his work there, the people being enrolled as families.<sup>47</sup>

McLaughlin, who was married to a Mdewakanton woman, also railed against what he regarded as the numerous incorrect and unjust English translations of Lakota names, for example noting that a man whose Lakota name had been translated "Afraid-of-Soldier" really meant that enemy soldiers feared him and thus should have been named "Their-Soldiers-Fear-Him," an entirely different meaning. He further disapproved of the flowery translations sometimes given to women by "teachers in the boarding schools, missionary sisters, or women teachers in the other schools." He also appeared to favor the retention of Lakota-language names, especially for women: "In the soft accents of the Sioux syllables there is much beauty when their accents are accommodated to pronounce the name of a woman, and it is to be hoped that the Indian names will be preserved so far as possible."<sup>48</sup>

James McLaughlin was noted for his tireless work ethic and devotion to his duties, spending fifty years in the Indian service altogether, which is an unusual length of time spent in such a role during this era, so it seems unlikely that his systematic renaming efforts would have been replicated by others on a broad scale. On the other hand, he noted both directly and indirectly that many people had already either received English names or translated versions of their names prior to his efforts in the 1880s or 1890s, further underscoring that Eastman's work primarily codified and documented what had already been done long before he arrived in 1903, although it also established family genealogies and suggested new versions of names where he deemed it necessary. Importantly for future research, the genealogical discussion in concert with known renaming methods potentially broadens the discussion of the circumstances under which Native people received their names. While the impact of Eastman's renaming may seem minimal on its face, we believe more research is needed on the continuing social, legal, political, and environmental consequences.

## EASTMAN'S RENAMING AND ALLOTMENTS: FUTURE RESEARCH

One question, of course, was whether the surnames documented by Eastman had any impact in preventing land fraud, and one purpose of this article is to lay a foundation for answering this question by drawing a connection between those who were renamed and their ensuing linkages to allotments. To recall, one of the key goals of the renamers was to clearly identify landholders and their rightful heirs for the purpose of fighting land fraud. More than likely it would not be possible to create a metric for measuring the effectiveness of this goal; however, Charles Eastman did report that he had uncovered cases of attempted land fraud in which surnames played a role during his stay at Lake Traverse, so it is clear that he, at least, believed in the efficacy of renaming for that purpose.<sup>49</sup> In a June 12, 1903 letter to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, he explained:

I beg to inform you that there is considerable trouble for the Sisseton Indians on account of certain shrewd unprincipled lawyers and land speculators who are trying to defraud the Indian heirs of some very desirable lands. On a personal investigation I discovered that the scheme is systematic as they select allotments to which the heirs are ignorant and helpless orphans or old people, and secure the relinquishment of the land in question from some Indian of similar name to that on the patent. In one or two cases the lawyer with an unreliable interpreter obtained the "marks" of the Indian by misrepresentation and deception whereby the Indian is made to sign away his rights. I wish to state that the foregoing facts are my own observation, and that I am personally acquainted with all the Indians concerned in the cases that I looked into, and that I know most of the whites involved.<sup>50</sup>

He added that he had found that "many of the single Indian names on both the allotment rolls and the patents are misspelled or entirely different from the correct name of the Indian for whom it was intended. In some cases the meaning of the name is changed. If the dishonest lawyers get hold of these mistaken names they will have even more tangible ground on which to contest the right of the Indian." He went on to argue that this potential for fraud was an important incentive for completing renaming before allotment.<sup>51</sup>

For these and other reasons, Eastman advocated doing his renaming work either in conjunction with or prior to allotment. In particular, it is known that renaming by Eastman occurred at Standing Rock and Pine Ridge prior to or during allotment, and therefore our future research will compare the renaming rolls from those reservations with those from Lake Traverse. However, given McLaughlin's statements on renaming at Standing Rock, it may have been that there was little for Eastman to accomplish there, as well. Only a detailed analysis of the renaming registers will reveal that story.

A second question is whether any of the substantial changes made by Eastman persisted—"Thomas Bullock" instead of "Tatankawanjina," for example. Did recipients put their new names into permanent use? Indian census records taken both before and after the renaming in 1903 show that some of the names did indeed persist, while others did not. For example, the surname "Bullock" was nowhere to be found in the Sisseton and Wahpeton censuses. To thoroughly and systematically examine

this question, it would first be necessary to study the censuses and original allotment records for all individuals to identify which surnames were given during Eastman's sojourn at Lake Traverse and which preceded him. Following that, it would be possible to study pre- and post-renaming censuses to see if individuals retained those surnames.

A third key question revolves around the impact of renaming on women, which likely diminished their identities. Prior to renaming, women had unique names that they retained after marriage, whereas after renaming, whether by Eastman or otherwise, most married women typically had an English first name and their husband's surname. Again, pre-and post-renaming censuses would flesh out the extent of the impacts. However, in some cases a woman would be given a middle initial that came from her Native name, thus constituting a small relic of her Native identity. An example of this interesting practice from Eastman's work is that of Esther H. Harris, whose original English name was Hapan Harris. "Hapan" is clearly a derivative of the Dakota ordinal name "Hapanna," for the second-born daughter in a family, and Eastman retained an element of it by including it as the middle initial in her listed "Permanent Name." Unfortunately, even this small reminder of a woman's unique identity would be lost as ensuing generations took only their father's surname and, generally, an English first name.

Beyond providing a basis for potentially answering the three questions laid out above, it would appear that the long-term value of Eastman's work lies in two areas. First, by laying out side-by-side versions of the two or three various names by which a person might have been known (permanent name, English or school name, and Indian name) he provided a sort of Rosetta Stone to the identity of each individual. And second, Eastman took the column of the renaming rolls titled "Other Relationship" seriously, meticulously documenting family relationships for many individuals to assist not only in identifying the individuals themselves, but also the family linkages among various people on the rolls. As an example, Mary S. Brant, whose Indian name on the allotment roll was Sagyemazawin (the source of the middle initial in her Permanent Name), Eastman noted under "Other Relationships" that she was the daughter of Wamdiupiduta. Furthermore, the "Remarks" column frequently contained cross-references to other individuals, such as the entry for Samuel Hankeduta, the adopted son of Antoine Hankeduta, which noted "see John Blake" for further information about him. Thus, the ultimate value of Charles Eastman's renaming rolls and this research may lie in enhancing opportunities for the descendants of the people on the rolls to rediscover the naming heritage of their ancestors as well as offering an expanded awareness of the heritage of their post-allotment lands.

## POSTSCRIPT: EASTMAN'S LEGACY

Dr. Charles Eastman left a complex legacy, of which his renaming work constitutes a small but significant part. For researchers and interested parties, who Eastman was and what his legacy in Indian country might be are perplexing. Like many, we have tried to weigh his contributions, understand his rhetoric, and conceptualize his place in American history, but without great success. We recognize the polarizing figure Eastman seems to have become in contemporary Native American history, but we feel

it important to address some of the insights we have gained into Eastman's internal struggles, and ultimately his contributions, that arose during this research.

In pondering Eastman's legacy in "Renaming the Indians" and the enthusiastic role he played, perhaps it is the case that the renamers who organized these efforts, especially Hamlin Garland, were genuinely committed to the importance of Native names and had enough insight into their own shortcomings to turn to a person who was immersed in both Native and Euro-American cultures. In other words, perhaps they sought out Eastman to do the work knowing that he would try to strike a balance between Native and Western naming identities during the renaming process. This gave Eastman abundant opportunity to mold the policies and guidelines he had been given in what were, to him, culturally and identity-appropriate ways within the context of vast change. We believe that this is what the evidence of his work suggests.

After weeks and months of research we remain unsure how to fully measure his impact in Indian country, but perhaps one encounter, amongst many, drawn from his book *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*, signifies the intellectual space he has created for us to pursue his contributions within the renaming context. As he traveled widely throughout Indian country encouraging tribes to devote themselves to education and Christianity, Eastman recalled "one of the strongest rebukes I ever received" while among the "Sac and Fox tribe in Iowa."<sup>52</sup> After giving a speech "emphasizing the necessity of educating their children, and urging their acceptance of the Christian religion,"<sup>53</sup> one of the chiefs stood and began to speak directly to Eastman:

He was glad that I had come to visit them. He was also glad that I was apparently satisfied with the white man's religion and his civilization. As for them, he said, neither of these had seemed good to them. The white man had showed neither respect for nature nor reverence toward God, but, he thought, tried to buy God with the by-products of nature. He tried to buy his way into heaven, but he did not even know where heaven is.<sup>54</sup>

He then quoted the Chief: "As for us," he concluded, "we shall still follow the old trail. If you should live long, and some day the Great Spirit shall permit you to visit us again, you will find us still Indians, eating with wooden spoons out of bowls of wood."<sup>55</sup>

After his meeting with the Sac and Fox delegation, as he readied himself to board the train for the next stop on his tour, a Sac and Fox member handed Eastman his wallet, which he had dropped at some point and which contained his tickets and a large sum of money. He said to the missionary standing with him, "Better let these Indians alone! If I had lost my money in the streets of your Christian city, I should probably have never seen it again."<sup>56</sup> Reflecting on this experience with the Sac and Fox Indians of Iowa, it reminded him of his own identify as a Dakota, and he recognized the intellectual foundation that had made his life's work possible.

I found the facts and logic of [the Sac and Fox] often hard to dispute, but was partly consoled by the wonderful opportunity to come into close contact with the racial mind, and to refresh my understanding of the philosophy in which I had

been trained [i.e., Sac and Fox epistemology], but which had been overlaid and superseded by a college education.<sup>57</sup>

Whether viewed as a tragic, polarizing, or heroic figure, we have great respect for Eastman's earnest willingness to take on such tasks as have been presented in this article. As we continue this work, we have come to realize that first, the events of Eastman's life should not be considered in a vacuum; and second, upon closer evaluation of his writings and body of work, it is clear that Eastman knowingly sacrificed some of his own intellectual and spiritual connection to his Dakota life in an attempt to slow, counter, and ease what he had come to see as the inevitable assimilation process for Native Americans. In addition to our reporting and analysis on the renaming process at Lake Traverse, we hope this research has broader implications for scholars who take a renewed interest in Eastman's extraordinary life and how he came to reshape tribal communities in the face of insurmountable odds.

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35. Raymond Wilson, *Obiyesa: Charles Eastman, Santee Sioux* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); Newlin and McCullough, *Selected Letters of Hamlin Garland*, 122.
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40. *Ibid.*
41. Note that we used a somewhat different definition of Native name than Eastman used for his "Indian Name" column. In the Indian name column on his roll, Eastman only counted those whose names were in the Dakota language and who had no English surname. We counted any surname that was in the Dakota language, whether full or shortened, and regardless of whether the person had an English first name.
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