



Smithsonian

*National Museum of the American Indian*

George Conner Carlisle Indian School collection

Emily Moazami

2018

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Museum of the American Indian
<b>Title:</b>	George Conner Carlisle Indian School collection
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1884-1914
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAI.AC.250
<b>Creator:</b>	United States Indian School (Carlisle, Pa.) (Publisher)
<b>Extent:</b>	.21 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

This collection was purchased by the museum in 2012.

### Separated Materials

The museum also purchased two objects with this collection: a Carlisle Indian School uniform owned and worn by George Conner and a set of exercise juggling pins used by Conner when he assisted with physical education at Carlisle (object #s 268789 and 268790).

### Related Materials

The Archives and Special Collections at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania also holds collections related to the school.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed by Emily Moazami, Assistant Head Archivist, 2018.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); George Conner Carlisle Indian School collection, NMAI.AC.250; National Museum of the American Indian Archive Center, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

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## Biographical / Historical

George Conner, also known as Tse-dah-ha (Buffalo Hide), was born on the Osage Reservation in Kansas in 1870. His parents were Wah-kon-tah Shinka (Little Doctor) and Le-ah-tsa, both of the Little Osage tribe. Le-ah-tsa was the daughter of Wa-caba-shinka (Little Bear) who was the Principal Chief of the Little Osage.

Kansas Militia killed George's father on a return hunting trip shortly after George was born. George's mother married William Conner (Oh-hunka-moie) and approximately five years later, she was also killed. William Conner played a prominent role in reformulating the Osage government in the new Oklahoma Reservation and helped write the first Osage Nation Constitution.

William sent George to live with his Aunt Margaret "Maggie" Lawrence on her ranch west of Grainola. He attended Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania from 1885-1890 and was re-admitted in 1896 and stayed until 1899. During his last years at Carlisle, George assisted with the physical education of fellow students including exercise drills using 3.5-pound Spaulding Indian clubs, a set of which he brought home (now held in NMAI's collection). He also assisted with coaching younger boys in baseball and other athletics at Carlisle. While at Carlisle the second time, he learned harness making and saddle repair. He also participated in Carlisle's "outing" program, which placed student on neighboring Pennsylvania farms in the summer.

Upon return to the Osage Reservation at age twenty-nine, George moved from his boyhood home on the Lawrence ranch to the Osage Nation capital, Pawhuska. There he opened a harness shop and met his wife Lillian House, a matron at the Osage Girl's school. They had five children Letha, Adelia, Victor, Lester, and Don. George served as the Osage National Council Secretary for a number of years.

George and his step-father William also got involved with Osage resistance to the U.S. Government's Allotment Act, otherwise known as the Dawes Act of 1887. This law was designed to open up remaining Indian land in the West to white settlement, by dividing large reservations among the tribal members. Each would receive a small parcel and then U.S. made the remaining "surplus" land available for settlement. The Osage opposed this and William, George, and the tribe worked collectively for nearly two decades to prevent the reservation from allotment. In 1906, U.S. Congress passed the Osage Allotment Act, making the Osage one of the last tribes in Oklahoma to accept allotment. The tribe was also able collectively to retain the mineral rights of the reservation.

George and Lillian moved from Pawhuska, started farming west of Grainola, Oklahoma, and remained on the farm the rest of their lives. George died in 1936 at the age of 66 years old.

[Biography written by Dr. Joe L. Conner (George Conner's grandson) in 2012 and edited by E. Moazami (NMAI Assistant Head Archivist) in 2018.]

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## Scope and Contents

This collection contains materials documenting George Conner (Tse-da-ha; Osage) and his time as a student at the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. The collection contains 3 photographs of Conner circa 1884-1896, as well as Carlisle Indian School booklets and correspondence circa 1900-1914.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 5 folders.

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Education -- Carlisle Indian School
- Indians of North America -- Education
- Osage

Cultures:

- Osage

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence
- Pamphlets

Names:

- Conner, George

## Container Listing

Photo-folder 1	<p><a href="#">Photograph of George Conner, circa 1884-1885</a> 1 Albumen print Notes: Cabinet card with albumen print depicting student George Conner (Osage) circa 1884-1885. Photograph was shot by J.N. Choate, the official photographer for the Carlisle Indian School. Culture: Osage Place: Pennsylvania -- Carlisle Indian School</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p><a href="#">Group portrait at Carlisle Indian School, circa 1887-1888</a> 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Group portrait of Osage Nation officials, parents, and students at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, circa 1887-1888. The photograph is matted and includes names of individuals written in pen and pencil. The individuals depicted include, George B. Conner (front row, right); Richard Rusk; Edger McCarthy; Chief Blackdog II (younger); Ben Harrison; William Conner; Araus Osage; Harry Kopah; National Councilman Peter Bigheart; and National Councilman Strikeaxe. Place: Pennsylvania -- Carlisle Indian School Culture: Osage</p>
Photo-folder 1	<p><a href="#">Portrait of George Conner, circa 1895-1896</a> 1 Gelatin silver print Notes: Studio portrait depicting George Conner (Osage). In this full length portrait, Conner is wearing a three-piece suit and tie and stands in front of a studio backdrop. Writing on the back of the photograph reads, "George B. Conner / Ca 1895-96 Carlisle, PA / 26 yrs. old." Culture: Osage Place: Pennsylvania -- Carlisle Indian School</p>
Box 1, Folder 1	<p><a href="#">Booklet- United States Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pa., circa 1900</a> Notes: This booklet entitled, "United States Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, Pa." was produced and published by the Carlisle Indian School printing press, circa 1900. The booklet features photographs of students, classes, activities, and campus buildings. Photographs of classes and student activities include music, carpentry, blacksmith, masonry, and athletics, among many other scenes. Photographs of buildings include the interiors and exteriors of student dormitories, classrooms, gymnasium, hospital, laundry room, and dining halls. The booklet also features "before and after" photographs of students when they first arrived at Carlisle Indian School and after a period of time enrolled in the school. The photographs were shot by the official Carlisle Indian School photographer John Nicholas Choate.</p>
Box 1, Folder 2	<p><a href="#">Booklet- This is Carlisle, 1908</a> Notes: This booklet entitled, "This is Carlisle" was produced and published by the Carlisle Indian School printing press in 1908. It includes</p>

photographs, a description of the school activities and history, and lists of students.

Box 1, Folder 3

[Correspondence- Carlisle Indian School Alumni Association, 1914](#)

Notes: This folder contains a 1914 letter, newsletter, and envelopes from the Carlisle Alumni Association to its Alumni. The letter written by Supervisor in Charge Oscar Lipps requests the names and address of potential new students. The newsletter written by Carlisle Indian School President Charles E. Dagenett discusses happenings at that school.

Box 1, Folder 4

Reference materials- biographical, circa 1896-2012

Notes: This file contains copies of archival materials and are to be used for reference purposes only. The materials include photocopies of 5 family photographs depicting George Conner and his son and grandson. This file also contains copies of original archival material held at the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), Record Group 75, and includes a student record for George Conner, a questionnaire that Conner filled out entitled, "Record of Graduates and Returned Students," and a letter from Conner to the Alumni Association. Finally, a copy of a George Conner's biography written by his grandson Dr. Joe Conner is also in the file.

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