

**AMERICAN INDIAN**

**AND**

**ALASKA NATIVE**

**NEWSPAPERS**

**AND**

**PERIODICALS,**

**1826-1924**

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**and**

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## I API OAYE

*Iapi oaye*, established in May, 1871, was published by the Dakota Mission at Greenwood, South Dakota. Published in Yankton and Santee dialects, the four-page, two-column monthly began a publication career of nearly seventy years. The first editors were John P. Williamson, in charge of the Yankton, and Stephen Return Riggs, in charge of the Santee.

The Reverend John Pogue Williamson had removed with the Sioux from Minnesota to Nebraska and South Dakota in 1866. He was born at Lac Qui Parle, Minnesota, the eldest son of Thomas Smith Williamson, a Yale-educated physician who had practiced medicine for over a decade before attending seminary and becoming a Presbyterian missionary to the Sioux. John Williamson graduated from Lane Seminary in 1860 and preached in Indiana and at the Red Wood, or Lower Sioux Agency, in Minnesota. He arrived just in time for the outbreak of 1862, after which he accompanied the Dakota families to Fort Snelling. After a number of Dakota men were arrested and taken to Camp McClellan at Davenport, Iowa, for their part in the "uprising," their families were taken to Fort Thompson, or Crow Creek, in Dakota Territory. Williamson accompanied them during this time of hardship and deprivation. In the summer of 1866, when the Indians were resettled in the northeast corner of Nebraska, Williamson again went along as a missionary. From 1873 to 1878, he was special agent at Flandreau.

Like Williamson, Stephen Return Riggs had been a missionary to the Minnesota Sioux. Born at Steubenville, Ohio, on March 23, 1812, he was educated at Jefferson College and at Western Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. Licensed to preach by the Presbyterians in 1836, he was commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as a missionary to the Sioux. Arriving at Fort Snelling in June, 1837, he studied the Dakota language with Samuel W. and Gideon H. Pond, the latter of whom edited *Dakota Tawaxitku Kin*, and with Dr. Thomas Williamson. Later, at Lac Qui Parle, Riggs worked for five years, translating hymn and school books as well as sections of the Bible into the Dakota language with the help of the Ponds, Williamson, and Joseph Renville, a part Sioux trader for the American Fur Company. In 1842, Riggs and his wife traveled east to oversee the publication of these works. Returning to Minnesota in 1843, he was assigned to a new station at Traverse des Sioux, Minnesota. In 1851, treaties provided for removal of the people to a reservation on the upper Minnesota River. Riggs and Williamson continued to work among the Sioux at Lac Qui Parle and at the Yellow Medicine. After the "outbreak" of 1862 and during the subsequent arrests and removals of the Dakota, Riggs worked with the prisoners at Mankato and Davenport and in the camp at Fort Snelling. He also accompanied the Sibley expedition to the Missouri in 1863, serving as chaplain and interpreter. After 1866, Riggs spent his summers in the field and his winters in Beloit, Wisconsin, where he translated and conducted most of his work with *Iapi oaye*.

In 1877, Alfred L. Riggs became a third editor and, the following year, co-editor with his father, Stephen R. Riggs, when Williamson left the publication. Beginning in 1877, the

paper was issued from the Santee Agency but continued to be printed at the office of the *Advance* and *Illustrated Bible Studies* in Chicago, as it had been since at least September, 1874. It would continue to be printed there until 1881, when the C.B. Howard Company of Chicago took over. In 1880, the monthly was enlarged to eight pages.

Alfred Longley Riggs, who replaced Williamson, was born on December 6, 1837 at Lac Qui Parle, Minnesota, eldest son of Stephen R. and Mary Ann (Longley) Riggs. A graduate of Knox College and the Chicago Theological Seminary, Riggs had preached in Illinois and Wisconsin for seven years after leaving the seminary. After visiting the Santee Agency in 1869, Riggs joined the agency a year later as education director. He started the Santee Normal Training School under the auspices of the American Missionary Association in 1870, and remained close to the mission and school for the rest of his life. He was principal of the school and later was trustee of Yankton College. He was author and editor of several Dakota-language works.

Content related to religion, the mission, and the school was foremost in *Iapi oaye* during the early days. Early issues devoted large sections to scriptures, hymns, and prayers translated into the Santee and Yankton dialects by Joseph Renville, Williamson, and Stephen Riggs. Some of the Biblical translations were direct, while others were translations of Bible stories or of paraphrased passages. While the content of the Dakota-language section was largely scriptural and religious, the early English sections contained news of the mission and school. Specific conversions of individuals were treated as news stories, as were announcements such as births, marriages, and deaths. News of missionaries working out of the Dakota mission was printed, many times in the form of letters from these individuals. Sometimes, the memoirs of longtime missionaries were printed. Members of the reservations-many times students at the school-published letters, too, in both Dakota and English. Some of these letters by Indian students urged the people to abandon the traditional customs and lifestyle and to adopt the ways of the white society. News of the various social and educational activities at the Santee and other mission schools was published in both languages along with some news from distant reservations. In the English section, especially, an attempt was made to convey to the people in the East what it was like to live in Nebraska and Dakota Territory through details of everyday life at the mission and through specialized reports. An example of the latter was an account of a Sioux hunting party written by an observer, Thomas L. Riggs, and serialized in several 1881 numbers.

Early issues of *Iapi oaye* carried in both languages news of and commentary on government Indian policy and events that affected the Indian people. Current news of other tribal groups, especially that which related to treaties, suits and government actions, was given close attention. Also published were statistics, census data, and other information concerning various Indian groups. Under the banner carrying the motto "Helping the Right, Opposing the Wrong," specific issues were addressed by the editors in commentaries, news stories, and editorials. News stories reported on and reprinted memorials to Congress that the editor supported. For example, reprinted in full was a memorial presented by the Indian Committee of the Presbyterian General Assembly (and signed by Richard H. Pratt, Stephen R. Riggs, and others) on January 12, 1882, asking for

American education, American rights, and American citizenship for the Indian people. News stories were often followed by commentaries in which the editor interpreted and evaluated events and actions. "Another Congressional Wolf Indorsed [*sic*] as a Sheep," published in June, 1882, for instance, told how the Poncas lost their land on the Niobrara River, and the editors exhorted the Eastern friends of the Indians to keep an eye on Congress so that that kind of land-grabbing should not recur. In July, 1882, *Iapi oaye* carried the news of false reports of Indian attacks on white settlements, describing them as "jokes." An article the following month claimed that these false reports were planted as a means of arousing the settlers to call for further removals. The article offered a means of defusing the explosive situation: the allotment of land in severalty to individuals on reservations, and the rest of the land opened for settlement by whites. Through much of 1882 and 1883, editorials called for allotment, for leasing Indian land, and for outright cession of reservations. These policies were seen as a means of "civilizing" the Indians, theoretically by providing the good example of thrifty, white neighbors, and of raising revenues for the Indian people. The editors of *Iapi oaye* also editorialized against the leaders of former years. In May, 1883, for example, an editorial denigrated Sitting Bull, saying that in the end he would "plow the ground with his stubby horns."

The early issues contained some material that presented Indian lore, introduced the reader to Sioux literature from the oral tradition, and offered lessons in the Dakota language. Articles in English described the customs of the people, another way of showing what life was like in the West. Language lessons, primarily parallel columns of Dakota and English, appeared throughout 1880 and 1881. Also, traditional stories were published in both languages, the text being printed in Dakota with an interlinear English translation.

General interest material appears in the early years, too. Domestic and foreign news in both languages as well as travel stories and social news was regularly featured. Some pieces were reprinted from other publications – verse, for example, especially the kind thought to be uplifting. From 1878 to 1884 drawings provided a cover for the publication and illustrated articles, these materials being furnished, probably, by the printing company in Chicago. The cover usually consisted of a large picture depicting a contemporary travel or domestic (white) scene or a religious setting based on a Biblical passage. The same kind of drawings appeared in the inside pages. Most often depicted were scenes from large American and European cities or pictures of large man-made structures (the Brooklyn Bridge, for example), huge ships and lighthouses, or the Great Wall of China. These pictures, along with the explanatory articles accompanying many of them, were doubtless intended to be educational; at the same time, the great cities and huge edifices introduced the Indian reader to the "advanced" white civilization because these products of Anglo society were thought to be awe-inspiring (and possibly intimidating) to the people on the reservations.

After 1883, significant changes occurred in the monthly. Stephen Return Riggs died on August 24, 1883, after which Alfred Riggs continued as editor. In March, 1884, the publication became two separate four-page publications: *Iapi oaye* and *The Word Carrier* (see *The Word Carrier of the Santee Normal Training School*) the latter edited in

English by Alfred Riggs at Santee Agency, Nebraska. Williamson edited *Iapi oaye* until 1888. In January, 1888, Alfred L. Riggs and the Santee Normal School Press took over publication of both periodicals at the Santee Agency.

During the 1890s, Indian editors were given charge of sections of the publications. James Garvie and Charles A. Eastman edited the Dakota local news portion from 1895 until the turn of the century. Garvie, a Santee Sioux, attended the Santee school and went on to Carlisle Indian School, graduating in 1915. Eastman, a Santee as well, was born at Redwood Falls, Minnesota in 1858. He attended the Santee school and later was sent to Beloit College in Wisconsin and Knox College in Illinois. Later, he studied at Dartmouth and at Boston University where he earned an M.D. in 1890. For the next three years, he was the physician at Pine Ridge. Arthur T. Tibbetts replaced Eastman in January, 1899. Tibbetts, also Santee, graduated from the Santee school in 1894. He then attended YMCA College in Springfield, Massachusetts, graduating in 1898. He was involved in YMCA work and was pastor of the Big Lake, South Dakota, church. Tibbetts remained on the publication staff until 1907, when he was replaced by Stephen Jones, who edited the local news until 1912.

Content from the 1890s until World War I continued to include a strong religious and educational flavor. Scriptures were translated into Dakota and printed regularly along with popular hymns such as "Rock of Ages" and "I Hear Thy Welcome Voice." News from churches and missions was published, such as proceedings from congregational meetings, financial statements, and membership lists. "Mission News," a regular feature for a time, included news notes from Santee, Oahe, Fort Yates, and Fort Berthold. Missionaries and teachers from outlying missions and schools provided correspondence for the columns.

Other material in *Iapi oaye* in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included typical reservation publications fare: unsigned letters from students about their schools, reports on Indian affairs such as local government on area reservations, and letters from prominent figures like Bishop Hare.

The Reverend Edwin James Lindsey began editing the Bible translation sections in *Iapi oaye* in 1915. Born September 18, 1858, in the Cumberland Valley, Pennsylvania, he attended Dickinson College and Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh and graduated from Union Theological Seminary in New York. He worked as a Presbyterian missionary among the Sioux in Montana before moving to Pine Ridge in 1912. In 1918, he moved to Santee. Lindsey died in 1920 and was replaced by the Reverend A.F. Johnson.

In 1916, Alfred L. Riggs died and was succeeded as editor and publisher by his son, Frederick B. Riggs. Riggs was born in Illinois in 1864. During high school, he lived with his grandfather at Beloit, Wisconsin. Later, he attended Yankton College and Chicago Theological Seminary before moving to the Santee school as assistant principal. Riggs edited *Iapi oaye*, while he and Olive W. Riggs edited *The Word Carrier*. Under Frederick Riggs, publication continued without major changes.

During the 1920s, *Iapi oaye* contained the same kinds of material as it had in earlier years. School news, pupil lists, and curriculum offerings were presented as was social news such as YMCA activities. Articles and cartoons urging sobriety and steady industriousness appeared with regularity, and the Dakota translations of the Bible continued. On February 28, 1922, Perkins Hall, home of the printing department at the Santee school burned and left *Iapi oaye* and *The Word Carrier* as well as *Anpao* without a press. Two presses, one paper cutter, and all furniture were lost. For a while, *Iapi oaye* was printed at Springfield, South Dakota, by the *Springfield Times*, carrying advertisements for an eight-by-twelve job press, a thirty-inch paper cutter, a galley press, a bindery press, a lead cutter, and a mitring machine. By autumn, 1922, the required equipment was set up, and publication resumed at Santee.

By the 1930s, the publication had become much more oriented toward school affairs, serving more as a school publication and less as a community one. National and regional Indian affairs were still given close attention, however, both in the news and editorial columns and among the letters to the editor. John Collier's policies and proposals, naturally, were the object of much attention during this time. In October, 1933, the Reverend Rudolf Hertz replaced Frederick Riggs as editor of *Iapi oaye*. Hertz continued until October, 1936, when Millard M. Fowler became editor, assisted by Elmer E. Erickson. With the October 15 1936 issue, *Iapi oaye* became a four-page weekly published in both languages. James Garvie was a feature writer; and Robert Brown was interpreter. In July 1937, it once again became a four-page monthly published entirely in Dakota. Robert Brown and F. Philip Frazier replaced Fowler as editor in September, 1937, but the latter remained on the masthead as publisher. The publication's last editor was Rudolf Hertz, who returned in October, 1938, and was assisted by Brown.

*Iapi oaye* ceased publication in March, 1939, after having run longer than any of America's native-language periodicals. Its longevity allows a sense of the continuum of missionary efforts to Christianize and educate the Sioux, and the languages and content demonstrate clearly the dual role of this and most other missionary and school publications.