

16.5. SOUTHERN WORKMAN AND HAMPTON SCHOOL RECORD AND EDNA DEAN PROCTOR, "COLUMBIA'S ROLL CALL" (JUNE 1892) AND "THE INDIANS' APPEAL" (JANUARY 1892)

The establishment of Indian boarding schools became an official U.S. policy with the passage of the Dawes Act on February 8, 1887. Indian education was a simple idea proposed by reformers who thought they were providing a humanitarian alternative to violence. Indian children were taken away from their "ignorant" parents and "backward" communities and trained to be Americans who cherished individualism and republicanism over tribal life.

Indian boarding schools commemorated the passage of the Dawes Act with a special holiday and an elaborate pageant designed to reinforce the ideals of Indian assimilation. The Hampton School celebrated with a stage production, "Columbia's Roll Call."

COLUMBIA'S ROLL CALL

The platform was cleared for the scenic representation of "Columbia's Roll Call," a reproduction, with some abbreviation, of that given on Indian Citizenship day, of which our March number contained a full account. The characters were taken by the same students as then, so far as possible, and they entered into it with equal spirit. Juanita presided with queenly dignity as Columbia, "from her century terraced height;" the heroes who had made her great, summoned forth from the past by the Heralds of Fame and History, took their stand at her right hand—Columbus, Capt. John Smith; Miles Standish and the Puritan maiden; John Elliot, Apostle to the Indians, William Penn and a sister of peace, and the great Washington. Again the "Indian Petitioner" threw herself at the foot of the throne, beseeching a share for her people with Columbia's children, and, to justify her plea, Fame and History summoned those who could balance the roll of pale face heroes—the friend of Columbus from San Salvador; Pocahontas the savior of Capt. John Smith, Samoset, welcomer of the pilgrims; one of Eliot's Indian converts; Taminend,

friend of William Penn, and the White Mingo, friend of Washington. The double line of heroes, in the varied beautiful costumes of the old world and the wilderness, made a brilliant setting for Columbia's throne, the keystone of the arch. Every word spoken by the characters was distinct and clear, and very sweetly the voices of the Pilgrims blended in Mrs. Heman's song of "The Breaking Waves Dashed High." But Columbia was not satisfied with past records. Had she not conferred her citizenship already on one other race? The Afro-American Student of Hampton stepped forward with the stars and stripes. What can the petitioner match with that? She is ready with "The Hampton Indian Student," who bearing the School's banner took stand opposite. "This is well for the present, what of the future?" "Who is ready to pledge our future?" "Speak for yourselves?" A rush from the ranks of the Indian school, and gathering under the Hampton flag they respond, in the song, "Spirit of Peace." "Brothers, we come at your altars to pray." "It is enough. Take my banner," says Columbia, "and your place as my citizens." "Speed our Republic, O Father on High!" What can close the scene but a gen-

Sources: "Columbia's Roll Call," *Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* 21, no. 6 (June 1892), 82; Edna Dean Proctor, "The Indians' Appeal," *Southern Workman and Hampton School Record* 21, no. 1 (January 1892), 11.