



## LUCY NICOLAR: A BRIGHT STAR

Both Joseph and Elizabeth, Lucy's parents, felt that an education was vital to the success of Native Americans. In 1888-1889, while Lucy was seeking an education away from Indian Island, she was presented with an opportunity to travel around the country as a performer. She became a star on the traveling circuit. Recognizing that the public wanted what they thought of as "real" Indian performances, Lucy would dress the part. Often in pictures she would be wearing western Indian, or Plains, style regalia.

Later in her life, Lucy was very successful organizing groups of Penobscot basketmakers. She also coordinated many pageants and performances in Old Town and on Indian Island. Although Lucy learned basket making from her mother, she herself was not a basketmaker. Her talents were better matched to performance and organization.

Through her parents, Lucy understood the market for Indian-made baskets and she soon became a master at marketing the image of the "Indian" for economic purposes. To more clearly identify these items as "Indian made," Lucy capitalized on the stereotypical image of what people thought "real" Indians should look like, based on her experiences as a traveling performer. When she was a teenager, Lucy had taken on the persona "Princess Watahwaso," meaning Bright Star. As an adult, Lucy brought costumes of Plains Indian style headdresses and buckskin dresses to Maine, and she continued to use the title of "Princess" to further her reputation and distinguish herself from others.

