Journal #2632 from sdc 7.11.12

Carlisle Indian School
Stewart Indian School roommates return after 60 years
Vance Column: Finding our place in history

Hi Shayne-there is a typo in the journal...the HR 4022 is actually HR 4402.
I looked for it on the congress web site. t
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PRATT, FT. MARION PRISONERS AND HAMPTON.

The story of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School begins with a brief introduction to its founder. Richard Henry Pratt spent eight years (1867-1875) in Indian Territory as an officer of the 10th Cavalry, commanding a unit of African American "Buffalo Soldiers" and Indian Scouts. During this time, he was stationed at Ft. Sill, OK, 60 miles east of the site of the Battle of the Washita where Black Kettle (Cheyenne) was killed in 1867.

Pratt came into contact with Kiowa, Cheyenne and Arapaho who had been placed on reservations in the area of the Red River near what is now the Texas and Oklahoma borders. He, his scouts and freed slave soldiers, participated in the many campaigns to keep the Indians on the reservations and away from the encroaching settlers. But Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors continued with their raiding parties in search of game and buffalo. Scant provisions and lack of supplies on the reservations made it impossible for the Indian people to thrive, forcing such raids.

Constant complaints about inadequate government rations brought no relief. After filing numerous reports describing rancid beef, inferior and diseased livestock, poor grains and lack of provisions, Pratt developed a distrust and loathing of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) which endured throughout his military service. This deep hostility began while he was administering supplies on the reservations and eventually led to his resignation as the superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School in 1904.

Frustrated by unsuccessful attempts to 'bring in' the most recalcitrant of the 'hostiles', the United States instituted a plan to incarcerate them. In April, 1875, seventy-two warriors from the Cheyenne, Kiowa, Comanche and Caddo Nations, were rounded up for exile to St. Augustine, Florida. There they would be held hostage in exchange for the ransom of the good behavior of their kinfolk with Richard Henry Pratt as their jailer. These men were shackled and transported by rail to Ft. Marion Prison far from their homelands to a hot, humid climate unfamiliar to them.

Shortly after their arrival, Pratt removed the prisoners' shackles, cut their hair and issued them military uniforms. The Indians were expected to polish their buttons and shoes and clean and press their trousers. After a time, they were organized into companies and given instruction in military drill. Eventually, their military guards were dismissed and several of the most trusted Indian prisoners were chosen to serve as guards.

Local women, curious about these prisoners, volunteered to teach them to read in exchange for archery lessons. The Indians were given art supplies to illustrate on paper, their early days as buffalo hunters. With colored pencils, they drew many beautiful pictographic ledger drawings, over a thousand of which survive today. They collected, polished, and sold sea beans as trinkets. They were eventually given the freedom to leave the fort unchaperoned and some found employment as day laborers in the neighboring communities.

St. Augustine in the 1870's was the vacation spot of choice for New Englanders traveling by steamboat down the East Coast. Here Pratt came in contact with several benefactors who expressed an interest in the welfare of the Indians who were beginning to resemble white men. During this era, Pratt's philosophy of Indian education began to take shape.

Quaker and missionary reformers explored new methods to 'civilize' the Indians. They were uncomfortable with extermination policies and began to formulate ideas of assimilation. These methods appealed to Pratt, who was already experimenting with his Ft. Marion charges. He agreed that to 'civilize' the Indian would be to turn him into a copy of his God-fearing, soil-tilling, white brother. By the end of their term of incarceration (1878), Pratt had convinced 17 prisoners to further their education by enrolling in the Hampton Institute in Virginia.

Hampton was founded in 1868 by Samuel Chapman Armstrong. It was a government boarding school for African-American children designed to educate by training "the head, the hand, and the heart". Its goal was to train and return them to their communities to become leaders and professionals among their people. This fit Pratt's developing philosophies about assimilation, with the exception of returning to community. He began to formulate a model similar to Hampton - but exclusively for Indians.

In an address to a convention of Baptist ministers in 1883 Pratt wrote: "In Indian civilization I am a Baptist, because I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked." So Pratt began his aggressive and relentless quest for a school of his own to begin his work. He lobbied Washington; he contacted his wealthy supporters in the East and convinced the powers that be that his experiment would be a success. He would take Indian children from the reservations, remove them to a school far away from tribal influences, and transform them.

RECRUITING THE FIRST STUDENTS

By mid 1879, Pratt had secured the permission of the Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz, and Secretary of the War Department McCrary to use a deserted military base as the site of his school. Carlisle Barracks in central Pennsylvania was chosen. It was a former cavalry post that had been closed after a petitioning campaign by the local community found the Sunday parades disruptive to their church going activities. Sensing potential trouble from the townspeople, Pratt approached the town fathers of Carlisle for approval for his school and was able to get the support of the community which provided him with favorable petitions.

In September 1879 - Pratt, accompanied by Miss Mather, a former teacher and interpreter from St. Augustine, headed to Dakota Territory to recruit the students he had been instructed to enroll in his new Carlisle school. These were to be children from Spotted Tail's Rosebud reservation

and Red Cloud's Pine Ridge Agency. Pratt's instructions were to recruit 36 students from each reservation.

He arrived at Rosebud first to meet with Spotted Tail, Milk, Two Strike and White Thunder. Spotted Tail was skeptical. He was reluctant to send his and others' children to be trained in the ways of the men who had violated their treaties and trespassed in their Black Hills. But Pratt was persistent and urged Spotted Tail to reconsider, using the argument that had his people been able to read the white man's words, the treaties would have been better understood and such violations might not have occurred.

Pratt illustrated the problem of communicating such important decisions by insisting they could not speak in confidence, just the two of them - owing to Spotted Tail's inability to speak the white man's language. It was necessary for an interpreter to translate the words spoken, and perhaps the interpreter was not truly conveying the real meaning of their words. It seems not to have occurred to Pratt that had he been able to speak the language of Spotted Tail, greater understanding might have taken place.

Pratt also predicted that no matter what happened, the white man would keep coming and coming and that Spotted Tail's people must "be able to meet him face to face and take care of themselves and their property without the help of either an interpreter or an Indian agent." Spotted Tail consulted with his tribal headmen and after a long time, returned with his consent. "It is all right. We are going to give you all the children you want. I am going to send five, Milk will send his boy and girl, and the others are going to send the rest."

After persuading Spotted Tail, Pratt headed west for Pine Ridge. There he met with Red Cloud, American Horse, Young-Man- Afraid-of-His-Horses and other leaders. He told them of Spotted Tail's consent and got the approval of the Pine Ridge head men. Red Cloud had no children to send, but sent a grandson. American Horse sent three children. All in all, 82 children from both agencies were sent to Carlisle after medical examinations determined their fitness.

While Pratt was securing the children from Dakota, two of his former prisoners were recruiting potential students from their nations. Both Etadleuh (Kiowa) and Okahaton (Cheyenne) agreed to find more children to send to the first off reservation boarding school for Indian children.

Luther Standing Bear was among the first wave of students to travel to Carlisle. He described the journey east in his book, "My People, the Sioux". He talked of traveling on a moving house - his first experience on a railroad car. As they pulled into stations along the way, crowds of curious people peered into the trains, anxious for a look at these 'wild' children. Pratt had telegraphed Chicago of their stopover and the newspapers had publicized the journey. This was only three years since the Battle of the Greasy Grass in which Custer had been killed.

The group arrived at Carlisle in the middle of the night, October 6, 1879. They stepped off the platform to be greeted by hundreds of townspeople, welcoming them and accompanying them to the army post. But when Pratt, Miss Mather and the children arrived at the empty military post, tired and hungry, there were no provisions awaiting them. No bedding, no food, no clothing - none of the requested necessities. Once again, Pratt had been thwarted by the BIA. The children slept on the floor in their blankets.

SCHOOL LIFE

Teachers were waiting at the school to begin their work. Pratt had hired a full complement of staff, both for academic and industrial instruction. They had been carefully selected and were ready to begin as soon as the children arrived. Pratt left immediately to collect the second wave of students - the Cheyenne and Kiowa recruited by his former prisoners. During his absence, Mrs. Pratt and several teachers took charge of the children to begin the process of assimilation. One of their first responsibilities was to hire a barber to cut the children's long hair. For the Lakota, the cutting of hair was symbolic of mourning and there was much wailing and lamenting which lasted into the night.

Upon arrival of the second wave of Cheyenne and Kiowa children, the requested provisions had still not arrived but for the least important item - an organ. The children were housed in dormitories and classes began immediately. The school was structured with academics for half day and trades, the other half. Half the group learned reading, writing and arithmetic in the mornings, and carpentry, tinsmithing, blacksmithing for the boys, or cooking, sewing, laundry, baking, and other domestic arts for the girls in the afternoons. The other half learned their trades in the mornings and academics in the afternoons.

School life was modeled after military life. Uniforms were issued for the boys, the girls dressed in Victorian-style dresses. Shoes were required, as no moccasins were allowed. The boys and girls were organized into companies with officers who took charge of drill. The children marched to and from their classes, and to the dining hall for meals. No one was allowed to speak their native tongue.

Discipline was strictly enforced - military style. There was regular drill practice and the children were ranked, with the officers in command. A court system was organized in the hierarchical style of a military justice system, with students determining the consequences for offenses. The most severe punishment was to be confined to the guardhouse. The old guardhouse, built by Hessian prisoners during the Revolutionary War, still stands.

An ambitious printing program was developed at the school and the school newspapers were popular among the local folk, available at the post office and by subscription throughout the country. This became a small source of income to supplement funding by the government which was always inadequate. The publications also provided Pratt with a platform from which to publicize his experiment and perpetuate his views on education.

Funding was also secured from the benefactors who had tracked Pratt's activities since his days at Ft. Marion. Among his supporters were former abolitionists and Quakers who were eager to be involved in his success and who often visited the school. They were treated to special programs - concerts and dramas, written and performed by the students. Brochures for these programs were printed at the school and publicity for special programs were spread via the school newspapers.

ADJUSTMENT AND RESPONSE

Zitkala Sa (Dakota) wrote about her early experiences after arriving at a boarding school in Indiana. She described the trauma of having to wear hard, tight fitting shoes and confining dress

instead of moccasins and loose shift. She tells about hiding under her bed trying to escape the strict matron's domination and how the matron and the other girls tried to find her. It took her some time to adjust to her new school life. But she did, became an accomplished writer and the darling of the New England literary circle in the late 1800's. She taught at the Carlisle school for a few years, but didn't see eye to eye with Pratt. After some of her works were published, Pratt used the school newspapers to publicly criticize her for her story, "The Soft-Hearted Sioux", in which a young man returns to his reservation unable to effectively participate in tribal life after his exposure to the boarding school experience.

The earliest newspapers featured letters from the students written to their families back home. In September 1882, "THE SCHOOL NEWS" printed the following from Harry Shirley to his father:

"A HAPPY LITTLE CADDO BOY WHO CAME LAST MONTH, WRITES HIS FIRST LETTER HOME. My Dear Father: - I thought I would write you a few lines and I like the place very much and there was one Negro boy got killed on the railroad and we have a very nice farm and cold water to drink and would send my Bow and arrows and how is my little pony getting along I would like to know how are you getting and would please send me some money and we have a great many boy and is great many girls and the boys have a small house I wish they play the band and I have a bed to myself. And I am coming home in two years from now if Capt. Pratt will let me and how are you getting along with the big house and will you tell me in your letter when you write and we got at Carlisle on Thursday and when we got here I did not like the place but since I have being here two or three days I have got used to the place and I like it very well but when we got I felt very home sick and be sure and send my bow and some spike arrows. And we go to church every Sunday. And I have a blue suit to where and there was one Shyenne boy shot himself with a pistol and how is Mrs.Cornet folks getting along Mr. and Mrs. Blankshiy folks getting and the boys have a nice green lawn in which play Kicking a football and how are you getting along with your stock."

Pratt lobbied politicians for support for the school. He often visited Washington or entertained dignitaries at Carlisle. One of his early supporters was Senator Henry Dawes, author of the General Allotment Act, the US government policy which resulted in the loss of more than 40% of tribal lands. Pratt's assimilationist policies for education for Indians coupled with Dawes' checkerboarding allotment legislation formed a perceived potential solution for the "Indian Problem" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In addition to the academic and industrial programs, music and art classes were taught at Carlisle. According to Standing Bear's book, *My People, the Sioux*, when the first students were given paper and pencils, they pulled their blankets over their heads and began to draw pictographic images depicting their lives as they remembered from their days on the plains. These drawings represent the imagery of buffalo hunting, courting ceremonies, special ceremonies and everyday village scenes. There are three Harry Shirley drawings among these drawings. This is the same Harry Shirley (Caddo) who wrote the letter home asking about his little pony. About 50 of these early drawings are extant.

Music was also an important part of the Carlisle curriculum. Every student took music classes and many received private instruction. A band leader was hired, and the Carlisle Indian School

band became a popular parade addition. The band performed at football games and traveled to expositions and competitions. It was featured at every Presidential Inaugural Parade during the life of the school. Dennison Wheelock (Oneida) became the first Indian band leader and after his tenure, his brother James took up the baton.

Choral music was also encouraged and soon the school had several choirs. Regular "entertainments" were held at the school. Visitors were often treated to musical performances and some old-timers still recall the Indian School concerts.

In 1900, Richard Pratt surveyed his teachers and asked them to compare their students to the non Indian students they had taught before coming to Carlisle. Their comments were published in the February 1900 issue of "The Red Man" (school paper). Among these comments:

"...they have been systematically taught self-repression. They are also close observers and render nature with truth; Miss S. commends the Indian's 'true eye', also regards them as 'more patient and painstaking than white children.' She was struck at first with the marked stillness, the 'reposeful feeling' in a room full of Indian pupils. In the natural sciences, and in civil government - a favorite study - they are more at home. Miss W., teacher of the Juniors, declares that her pupils show superior ability in solving for themselves problems in physics and physical geography. She thinks that, 'with sufficient training, some will be found to have special gifts for original research.' Discipline is universally admitted to be easier than in white schools.. This may be explained partially by the fact that here the children are under continuous discipline, from which there is no appeal. The problems quite different in a reservation day school. The easier control was attributed by some, however, to the Indians' 'patience' and 'lack of nervous irritability,' while others thought 'they are more in earnest than the average white child - they really want to learn.' It was Prof. B's opinion that while we found here many unevenly developed characters and strong idiosyncrasies, owing to a lack of systematic home training, yet 'he had seen more genuine beauty of character among these Indian children than among any others he had ever known'. 'They seem', he said, 'to be remarkable keen judges of human nature. I believe that we have lost some things by civilization - among them this native unconscious keenness. I do not suppose they formulate it to themselves at all, but instinctively, as it were, these children seem to size you up with wonderful quickness and accuracy'. 'If they possess one quality', he added, 'that is all but universal, among them and in which they are our superiors, it is that of personal dignity'.

Several of the teachers found that the older girls were self-conscious and embarrassed by the presence of the boys. It was on that account, said one, that the boys excelled in recitation, while the girls usually did better written work. It is hard work to persuade an Indian girl, in school for the first time, to stand up and recite at all in a class with boys. It is contrary to all their ideas of modesty and propriety. Miss S., who teaches vocal music, says that 'the Indians have a strong sense of rhythm, but are deficient in ear. The male voices are rather better than the female, and there is an unusually large proportion of tenors, owing, perhaps to the habit of singing in unison, with the men singing falsetto, in tribal music.'"

Pine Ridge Sioux children of American Horse and High Wolf: Bear Don't Scare, Lone Hill,

Singer, Frank Twiss, Daisy Glade, Lucy Day, Mary Bridgeman
Courtesy of Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center

Maggie, a Sioux girl, dictated this letter to an interpreter for publication:

"Carlisle Barracks, PA, Jan. 24,1881.

My dear father: AMERICAN HORSE:- I want to tell you something, and it makes me feel very glad. You tell me that my brother is married and that makes me feel very glad. My cousins, and brothers, and I are all very well, at this Carlisle School. We would like to see you again. I am always happy here, but lately I sometimes feel bad, because you tell me that my grandfather is getting very old. Tell me how my brothers are. I would like to see my brother's wife's picture. Tell my brother Two-Dogs to write to me again. Miss Hyde's father died two weeks ago, and I am very sorry. I remember all of my friends. If you don't answer my letter soon, I'll feel bad. I don't always answer your letter soon, but it is because I can not write. As soon as I get so that I can write myself, I will write as often as I can. Tell Brave Bull that Dora (Her Pipe) has been a little sick, but is most well now. Tell if my grandfather is well. If he gets sick tell me. You wrote to my cousin Robert and told him that you had a house to live in, and lots of pigs and cows and such things, and I was very glad. You've got a white man's house to live in now and I am anxious to learn all that I can, so that I can come home by and by and live with you. I hear that they have a big school out there and it makes me very glad. If you can, come again, and tell me if you can come again, when. I want to tell you that some more girls and boys came here. Twenty-five. Fifteen of them are girls. There are a great many of us here now, and Capt. Pratt is very kind to us. That is all I want to say now. Give my love to all of my friends. Your daughter, Maggie Stands-Looking."

Maggie Stands Looking was among the first wave of children brought from Rosebud. She was the daughter of American Horse. According to Pratt in his book, "Battlefield and Classroom," Maggie had difficulty adjusting to the demands of her new lifestyle at Carlisle . She once slapped Miss Hyde, the matron, when Hyde insisted that Maggie make her bed every day and keep her room clean. Instead of retaliating, Miss Hyde stood her ground and Maggie acquiesced.

THE OUTING SYSTEM

Like most of the Carlisle students, Maggie was enrolled in the Outing Program. [See 1907 Outing Contract, between student William Peters (Chippewa) and patron, Isaiah Gibble.] Instead of returning the Indian children to their families during the summer months, the detribalizing process was continued by placing them for hire with non Indian families. After her arrival to her country home, Maggie wrote this letter to the Superintendent:

"Dear Captain Pratt: What shall I do? I have been here two weeks and I have not bathe. These folks have no bath place. Your school daughter, MAGGIE STANDS LOOKING"
Pratt advised her to do as he had done on the frontier...[after] filling a wash basin with water and "rubbing myself well, have had a bath that made me feel as good as jumping into a river." He signed his letter - "Your friend and school father," R.H. Pratt.

Pratt often referred to himself as the school father. He wrote in the June 16, 1893 Indian Helper:

"George Kirochuma writes that he has a very nice country home and that the 'folks are all kind to me all the time.' Mr. R. with whom George lives says he cannot spare him to go home, and George feeling that he is in a place where he is wanted says he does not want to go. This is the secret of the solution of the Indian question, and there is no other."

For the farmer, businessman, or craftsman, the Outing System provided a source of cheap labor in the home and on the farm. Some children remained with families year-round and went to the local public schools with their non-Indian siblings. This, to Pratt, was the ultimate means of acculturation.

"SOMETHING NOBLER AND HIGHER"

Pratt was driven by his strong desire to see the Indian become an imitation of the white man. This article from the March 18, 1898 school newspaper, the "Indian Helper" embodies Pratt's assimilationist philosophy. This is his response to a letter asking for Indian stories:
WANTS INDIAN STORIES "'I am inclined to say that the 'HELPER' is a good little paper, but I would think it would interest its readers more if at least one of the inside pages contained some interesting stories or would describe the Indian a little better by telling how he is tamed and brought up,' writes one of our Eastern subscribers. We thank our friend for his interest and kindly suggestion. The author of the letter evidently has the idea of Indians that Buffalo Bill and other showmen keep alive, by hiring the reservation wild man to dress in his most hideous costume of feathers, paint, moccasins, blanket, leggins, and scalp lock, and to display his savagery, by hair lifting war-whoops make those who pay to see him, think he is a blood-thirsty creature ready to devour people alive. It is this nature in our red brother that is better dead than alive, and when we agree with the oft-repeated sentiment that the only good Indian is a dead one, we mean this characteristic of the Indian. Carlisle's mission is to kill THIS Indian, as we build up the better man. We give the rising Indian something nobler and higher to think about and do, and he comes out a young man with the ambitions and aspirations of his more favored white brother. We do not like to keep alive the stories of his past, hence deal more with his present and his future."
Pratt is often quoted as saying "Kill the Indian, save the man".

Of the 10,000+ Indian children who attended the Carlisle school over its 39 year life span, most returned to the reservation. Some of the returned students, much to Pratt's dismay, joined Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show. Pratt disliked the Wild West shows and was upset that he was forced to share exhibition space with Cody at the Columbian Exposition in 1893. Proud of the fine displays recognizing the stellar accomplishments of his Indian students, Pratt railed against the exploitation of Indians for show.

Enrollment at the Indian School began to swell as more and more nations' children were recruited. The original group of 82 grew to yearly averages of 1,000 students, necessitating more living and classroom space. The students built an administration building, a gymnasium for athletics, shops for the industrial training, and a chapel for worship on the grounds.

A cemetery was also needed.

The Carlisle Indian School Cemetery

At the Carlisle school, as on the reservations, the health of many Indian people was in peril particularly after European contact. Some students were stricken with tuberculosis or smallpox. Others could not cope with the severe stress of separation from family and tribe. Most of the children who became ill were sent back home to their families, but some did pass away at the school and are buried there.

From Luther Standing Bear's book, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, we hear the stories of an Indian informant who wrote about the deaths at Carlisle. He wrote about the responsibilities of a challenged youth, determined to make his family proud by braving the unknown, anticipating the possibility of never returning. His fears may have been exaggerated in their concerns about being killed, but the dread faced by his relatives and friends back home were realized in the numbers of Rosebud Sioux children buried in Indian Cemetery at Carlisle.

During the first five years of the Carlisle experiment, at least ten burials were of deceased children enrolled from Spotted Tail's Rosebud Agency. Three of the girls and two of the boys had traveled to school with the fifteen-year-old Luther. Their ages ranged from twelve to eighteen years. Two of these children who had arrived October 6, 1879 also passed away on the same day – fourteen months later.

"It was a sad and mysterious coincidence by which two of our pupils were taken from us by death on the night of the 13th of December, both of them being from the same agency and the same band of Sioux.

ERNEST, Chief White Thunder's son, was sent to the hospital in October to receive treatment for a slight sore throat. The applications being disagreeable he would not submit to them. He rejected not only medicine but nourishment, so that he became so weak and exhausted that when toward the latter part of his illness he was willing to recover, the most strenuous efforts proved powerless to save him. He was the only son of his father who was most anxious he should become an educated, useful man.

MAUD, (Little Girl) the daughter of Chief Swift Bear, was a bright, impulsive, warm-hearted girl, much loved by her school mates. She came to the Training School suffering from diseased lungs, and so had not strength to resist pneumonia which seized her. She was the first girl to die here, and the first Sioux out of more than ninety connected with the school.

Funeral services were conducted by Professor Lippincott, and the double burial is one which will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

EADLE KEATAH TOH., Vol. 1 No. 3, p. 3. December 1880.

White Thunder was among the very first tribal head men Pratt visited to recruit children. The chief agreed to send a son and daughter to Carlisle, as did Milk, Spotted Tail, and others from the first group from the Rosebud. Pratt's letter of December 13, 1880, to White Thunder informing him of his son's illness, contradicts the obituary published after the boy's death. In the letter, he assured the father that the boy had been fortified with good food and that Ernest's friend, Robert American Horse, was stationed at his side to care for him.
Two days later, Pratt sent the following letter to Chief White Thunder:

My dear Friend,

Yesterday when I wrote you I told you that I would write to you when we buried your son and tell you all about it because I know you want to know that we did what was right.

I had them make a good coffin and he was dressed in his uniform with a white shirt and collar and necktie. He had flowers around him that some of the ladies brought for the white people love to get flowers for their friends who are buried. Six of the Sioux boys who were Ernest's good friends carried the coffin into the chapel and then the people sang about the land where people's spirits go when they are dead. The minister read from the good book and told all the teachers and the boys and girls that some day they would have to die too. He told them they should think a great deal about it and they must be ready to die because none of the teachers or scholars could tell when the time would come for them to die.

Then he prayed to the Great Spirit we call God. He prayed for you and for the other friends of your son that the Great Spirit would take away all your sorrow.

Then they let all the boys and girls go and look once more at their friends, because Chief Swift Bear's daughter had died on the same night that your son did, and we buried them at the same time.

The teachers and boys and girls cried a great deal because their hearts were sad. After that all the people walked down to the graveyard slowly and then put the coffins in the graves and the minister said more words and prayed again to God and then we filled the graves up, just the way our people always do.

My friend my heart is heavy when I write to you about your son but I want you to learn about the good book and what it says. That was the best thing we taught your son while he was alive.

I shall not forget you my friend, and I hope your heart will always be good toward me.

I look upon this detachment of children away from your people somewhat as you would look upon a party sent out to gather a quantity of buffalo meat or even sent out to make war upon some other people or to capture horses from some other people. You know how that is, my friend, how that very often there are some who never come back and such is the course of things in this life. We must expect death to come to some of us in a good cause as well as in a bad cause.

I find that I have two pictures of Ernest which I think you will like to have.

Your friend, R. H. Pratt, Lieut.

Despite his passing in December 1880, Ernest White Thunder's photograph continued to be advertised for purchase in the April 1881 Eadle Keatah Toh.

The deaths of the relatives of Swift Bear and White Thunder on the same day, were of particular concern back home at the Rosebud Agency. Illnesses contracted at boarding schools, or brought to school from home communities were the typical communicable diseases so prevalent at the boarding schools: tuberculosis, trachoma, measles, pneumonia, mumps and influenza. "Every off-reservation school had its own graveyard."

Of the 192 native American Indian children buried in the Carlisle Indian School Cemetery from more than three dozen nations, the Apache represent the greatest number.

When Geronimo was arrested and sent to Ft. Pickens, Florida, the Chiricahua Apache women and children were sent to St. Augustine to the Ft. Marion prison. Conditions there were unspeakable. Food was scarce, disease rampant, and there was terrible overcrowding.

In 1886, Pratt traveled to the fort and chose 62 of the older Apache children to be removed to Carlisle. Many of these children were sent to Pennsylvania against the wishes of their grieving parents, who protested their departure, trying to hide them. Asa Daklugie was among this group along with the sons of Chatto, the scout who had helped General Crook convince Geronimo to surrender. Geronimo's son, Chappo was also sent with these children. One-fourth of the graves in the Carlisle Indian School cemetery hold the remains of these Apache children. Chatto's son Horace is among them.

Geronimo visited Carlisle en route to Washington for the inaugural parade of Teddy Roosevelt in 1905. He and head men representing several nations - American Horse and Hollow Horn Bear (Lakota), Little Plume (Blackfoot), Buckskin Charlie (Ute), and Quanah Parker (Comanche) rode on horseback through the streets of Carlisle, dressed in regalia. These six men addressed the students of the school, with Geronimo speaking the following words recorded in the "Carlisle Arrow", March 9, 1905:

- **"My friends: I am going to talk to you a few minutes, listen well to what I say.** You are all just the same as my children to me, just the same as if my children are going to school when I look at you all here. You are here to study, to learn the ways of white men, do it well. You have a father here and a mother also. Your father is here, do as he tells you. Obey him as you would your own father. Although he is not your father he is a father to you now. The Lord made my heart good, I feel good wherever I go, I feel very good now as I stand before you. Obey all orders, do as you are told all the time and you won't get hungry. He who owns you holds you in His hands like that and He carries you around like a baby. That is all I have to say to you."

- Student Information Resources - For ordering searches, check into these links.

- The Carlisle Indian School closed in August 1918. A catalyst for the demise of Carlisle was the Senate Investigation of 1913, precipated by Gus Welch's petitioning to look into the conditions of the school. It was Montreville Yuda who carried the petitions to the Senate. The entire hearings are found on line, in searchable format.
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- The Crow Tribe's Official Site includes the Apsaálooke Nation Community links.
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- The Comanche Language and Cultural Preservation page is determined to restore the language to a living language.
- Visit the Library of Congress' Resource pages about Indian Boarding Schools. Includes bibliography, lesson plans and valuable links to on-line resources.
- National Geographic features an online article by Joe Bruchac about "American Indians reclaiming their place on the national stage." This site includes some great links.
- Where did the names come from? How Indian boarding school children were sometimes given their names.
- Search the American Native Press Archives for Carlisle Indian School newspaper references to former students, teachers, admininstrators, Indian policy-makers and others whose articles may have appeared in the school publications. This searchable

bibliography offers extensive holdings that include publications from other Indian schools, journals, newspapers and monographs.

- **Dovie Thomason,** Storyteller, has included a Carlisle Indian School story in her repertoire.
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- If you are looking for good, authentic children's books that do not exploit Native Americans by presenting the same old tired stereotypes (and yes, folks this is STILL going on after decades of assimilationist policies) visit Oyate.
- A few more Photographs of the Carlisle Indian School students.
- Wotanging Ikche, Native News is a regularly published newspaper that features weekly transcriptons of the INDIAN HELPER'S, the four-page publications printed at the Carlisle Indian School. These papers provide a fascinating glimpse into the life of the school, as presented by the administrators, and namely, the Man-on-the-Band-Stand. Anyone interested in receiving the papers weekly, email Barb Landis to get on the list.
- Some Carlisle students eventually made their way to Hollywood and into film careers. Their brief bios are among those listed in A Golden Quiver of Noted Native Americans from the Silent Era. Jim Thorpe, Isaac Johnnyjohn, William Malcolm Hazlett, Lillian "Red Wing" St. Cyr, Luther Standing Bear and Richard Davis Thunderbird.
- "Edeghoyeneeghaaleedeneek" Koyukon Athabascan means "Take Care of Yourself". The Alaska Native Knowledge Network features a search component that will allow searches of Carlisle-related information. These pages are an excellent source for community-based culturally-responsive schools and communities.
- The American Indian Institute was established at the University of Oklahoma in 1951 as a non-profit Indian service, training and research organization. Through its many education/training programs, workshops, conferences, research projects, technical assistance activities, and grant/contract-supported projects, the American Indian Institute works to assist Indian people in implementing the full extent of self-determination legislation.

http://home.epix.net/~landis/histry.html
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Stewart Indian School roommates return after 60 years

By Teri Vance tvance@nevadaappeal.com Sunday, June 24, 2012

Facts about Stewart Indian School
• The campus opened in 1890 with a capacity for 100 students. It included a Victorian-style, wood-framed dormitory and schoolhouse.
• A V&T Railroad stop was created by 1906 to deliver supplies and transport students.
• By 1919, 400 students attended the school.
• Between 1920 and 1936, Hopi stone masons taught fellow students and teachers how to build the 60 buildings on campus using stones from a nearby quarry.
• Vocational training was the school's focus until a shift to academics in the 1960s.
• The school closed in 1980 due to budget cuts and earthquake safety concerns.
• The state of Nevada acquired the buildings in the 1990s, which are now used as state offices, including the Nevada Indian Commission.
• The Stewart Indian School is listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places.

Reynelda French James and Helena Jones Melendez remember whispering in Paiute to each other in their room at night to avoid punishment for speaking in their native tongue at Stewart Indian School.

“They taught us not to speak our own language,” Helena remembered. “That was the hardest part. We didn't know anything about English.”

More than 60 years later, the two were roommates once again in their old dormitory, this time slipping effortlessly between English and Paiute, and not caring who heard.

Both women, who went on to teach Paiute in Washoe County schools, were guest speakers during a workshop hosted by the Nevada Department of Education to create a statewide curriculum for teaching American Indian culture.

As part of the workshop, they stayed at the old boarding school, which closed in 1980.

The hallways of the dormitory were longer than they remembered and were now carpeted.

“We used to have hardwood floors,” Reynelda said. “Beautiful hardwood floors that we had to keep clean.”

Despite all the time and energy they put in to maintaining those floors, Reynelda said she wasn't disappointed they hadn't been preserved.

“Everything changes,” she said. “We expect change.”

Helena, now 78, attended all 12 years at the school, arriving in 1940 and graduating in 1952.

Reynelda, also 78, only spent three years there, from 1947-1950.

While both remember sadness and feeling homesick, they also have fond memories of their time at Stewart.

“When the Navajos came, they taught us to dance,” Reynelda said. “We would go into the fun room. They dance was jumping up and down. We had a lot of fun doing that.”

By the time they were there, they said, the school had softened from the harsh military style of the past, which included beatings as punishment.

“We didn't experience what the students did before us,” Reynelda said. “I think it got better and better over the years.”

Still, they wore government-issue dress and had to maintain a strict schedule, along with a daily schedule of chores.

“We had to make our beds with those square corners,” Reynelda said. “Nowadays, sometimes I just take the end and tuck it in.”

During summer breaks and over the weekends, Helena remembers working as a maid in Carson City and once worked as a housekeeper in Lake Tahoe.

“It was too cold in Lake Tahoe,” she said. “I didn't like working there. There was no sun.”

When she could, she would ride the V&T Railroad into Reno to visit family in Wadsworth.

After graduation, the women went their separate ways. Helena worked and raised her five children in the Reno area.

Reynelda stayed at home to raise her four children in Carson City.

Because of their time in Stewart, they took extra care with their own children.

“When you're with your children all the time, you get to know them,” Helena said. “When we were here, we were all alone.”

Now, both women are back in their hometown of Wadsworth. They take turns buying breakfast for one another after church on Sundays.

That's just how it is, they said, among the former students of the school.

“We remain friends,” Reynelda said. “Even though there's distance, we're like family.”
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Vance Column: Finding our place in history

BY Teri Vance tvance@nevadaappeal.com Sunday, June 24, 2012

I met Aletha Tom a few weeks ago when I was writing a story about the organized effort to refurbish the “S” for Stewart painted on the hillside above the former American Indian boarding school.

She graduated from the school in 1965 but didn't return until many years later, after she'd gotten married and had kids of her own.

Passing through Carson City, she took a spontaneous detour to her alma mater. As she walked onto the grounds of the old Stewart Indian School, she told me, the present faded away.

All the years disappeared, she even forgot for a moment that she had children. She was a girl again, amidst friends and laughter on the campus.

I'd heard stories of children being forced to attend, stripped of their culture and heritage. And those who, later, chose to receive their education there.

But seeing the school come to life through Aletha's eyes made me take a second look for myself.

In some small way, I could relate.

I grew up on isolated ranches in rural Elko County. When it came time to go to high school, we were on a ranch in Ruby Valley. Because of the distance, students in the small ranching community at the foot of the Ruby Mountains would board in Elko to go to high school.

Growing up, we didn't have television reception in our home and going to the movie theater was a rare luxury. We didn't talk on the phone. We didn't go out to eat.

I had left a three-room schoolhouse where I was the only one in my grade to a school swarming with kids who spoke a language of pop culture I was oblivious too. Some days, I felt like I wore my ignorance like an insignia, hyper aware of my own difference.

To that extent, I can empathize.

But there's so much more to it.

Sherry Rupert, executive director of the Nevada Indian Commission, whose office is at the Stewart Facility, gives lectures about the school, which operated from 1890 to 1980.

She explained that it was Nevada's only off-reservation boarding school, one of dozens that popped up throughout the United States in the late 1800s by the federal government.

“They perceived they had an Indian problem,” Rupert said. “The problem was that the Indians did not want to give up their ancestral lands.”

The government solution, she said, was to address the next generation.

“They came up with a program to focus on the children of Indian chiefs and leaders. By taking them away from their families, they could change not only their outward appearance, but their belief system. If they could do that, when the children grew up to become leaders, they would more freely give up their lands.”

Children were given “white” names and forbidden from speaking their native tongues. They were stripped off all personal belongings, especially those of cultural significance.

They were forced to go to school as young as 4 and often didn't see their families again until they were grown. Graduates were usually secured jobs in large cities to move on to the next phase of assimilation into white culture.

Over the nearly century-long run of Stewart Indian School, it evolved from a strict, military-like structure, where students were beaten as punishment, to an alternative to public school that had a waiting list by the time it closed due to budget cuts.

As it evolved, teaching shifted from vocational skills to academic pursuits.

“We want to tell the whole story,” Rupert said. “Both the good and the bad. Because both happened.”

And it's not just for the sake of understanding the past, she explained. The effects from those days may still have place today.

As generations of children were raised at the strict boarding schools, they missed out on the nurturing from their parents and families. In return, it may have been difficult for them to nurture their own children. Distrust of the federal government and the education system may also linger.

Rupert said she's hurt when people remark that they just need to “get over it.” It's just not that simple.

“We need to understand where we've come from before we can move on,” she said. “That history cannot be forgotten.”

She's quick to point out she has no interest in casting blame, but to raise awareness.

And not just among the American Indian community. We all need to acknowledge the role of Stewart Indian School and others like it, what it contributed and what was lost.

It is the history of us, all of us.

By recognizing our collective past, we can all move forward together.