

History of Indian Boarding Schools

Most of you know Native American children were taken from their homes during 1880-1902 and forced to live in reform boarding schools - but did you know the count was between 20,000-30,000? That's a lot of heartache.

The goal for these schools was to Christianize and tame the children. The term used during this time by the teachers and staff was, "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." Some of the schools were closed in the 1940's, some were converted into Native schools and also colleges. Including, "Haskell Indian Nations University" in 1927. I attended Haskell and remember seeing the burials for the many children who died during their time at the boarding school. Haskell still has the cemetery on campus. It's hollowing to visit and know the abuse and heart-break those poor babies went through.

Here is a list of the Boarding Schools:



The oldest continuously operating Native American boarding school which still houses and educates Native children to this day. Chemawa Indian School.
Salem, OR



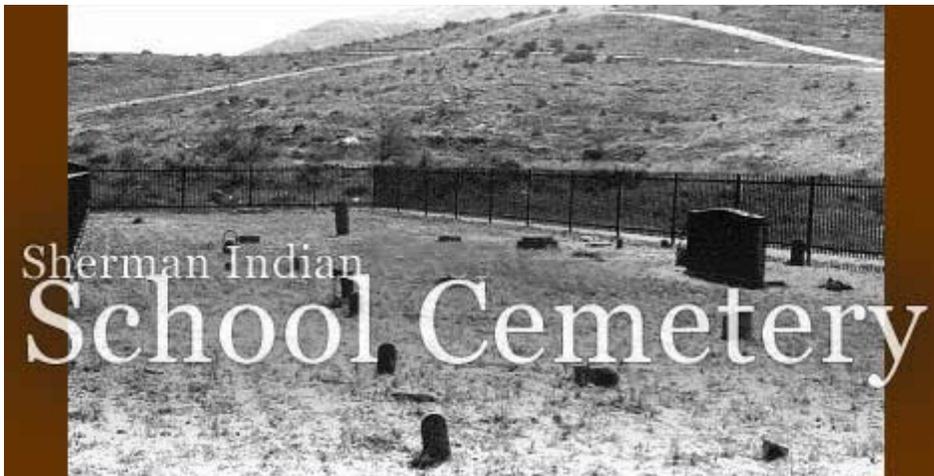
Originally a Fort that was the center of many attacks by Natives - this Fort turned into an Indian Boarding School (must have felt like prison to the kids). Now the Fort is an Indian Community Center.
Ft Bidwell, CA

(no photo)
In the early 1900's, this school burnt to the ground.
Greenville, CA

In 1889 the U.S. commissioner of Indian Affairs declared, "We must either fight Indians, feed them, or else educate them. To fight them is cruel, to feed them is wasteful, while to educate them is humane, economic and Christian." He suggested using boarding schools to prepare Indian children to live in American society. At boarding schools, Indian children would be introduced to English, vocational skills and Christianity.



Stewart Indian School is now a historical site but was in operation as a Native American boarding school from 1890 to 1980.
Carson, NV



Perris Indian School is now a museum.
Riverside, CA



Fort Shaw Industrial Indian Boarding School
operated between 1891 and 1910 when it closed
due to declining enrollment.
Ft Shaw, MT

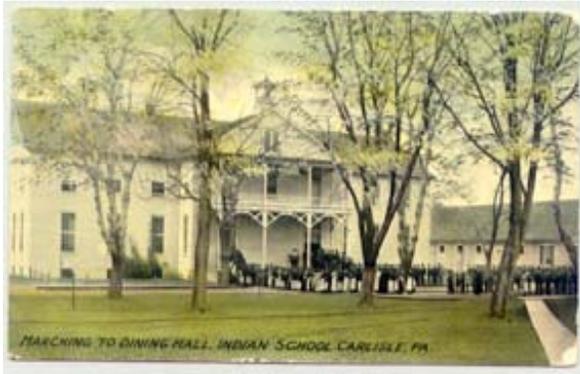
Grand Junction operated between
1886-1911.
Grand Junction, CO





Fort Lewis Indian School operated between 1891-1911 when Congress offered the school to Colorado provided it continue to be used for Higher Education. The school changed locations to Durango and is a college where many Native college students attend to this day.
Fort Lewis, CO





Fort Mojave was established as a military outpost in 1859 along the Colorado River. Soon after, it became a boarding school. Today the fort and school are ruins.
Ft Mohave, AZ



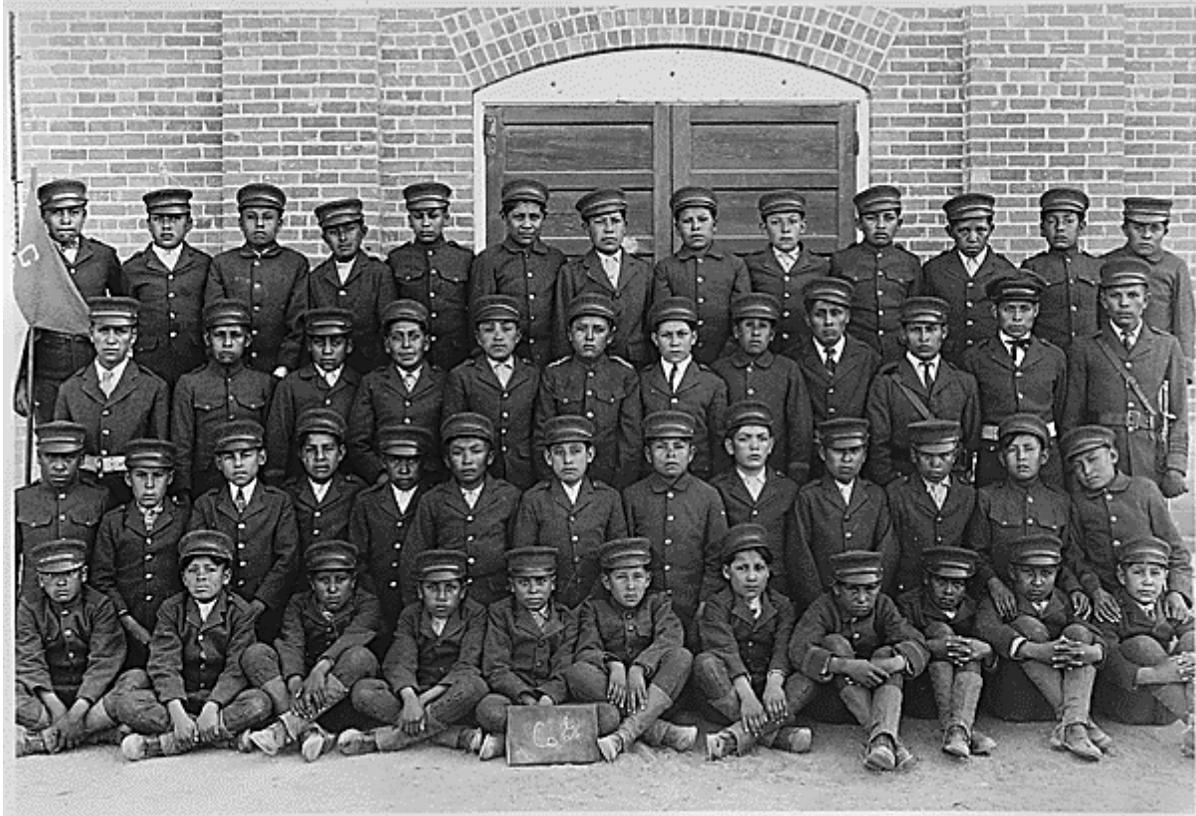
The original Santa Fe Indian School was founded in 1890 and demolished in 2008. It is a secondary education school for Native students. In the 1920's, the school began focusing on arts and has had many famous artists associated with the school's progress.
Sante Fe, NM



Phoenix Indian School was founded in 1891 and forced assimilation until 1935.
Phoenix, AZ

Think it out:

*Can you imagine the Government forcing you to leave your family, friends
and home as a small child and not see them again for years?*



Founded 1885, it continued operation until 1982 when it transferred programs to the Santa Fe Indian School.
Albuquerque, NM



Operated from 1898 to 1933 when it became a Sanitarium for the treatment of tuberculosis for the Lakota.
Rapid City, SD



Opened in 1891 and continues to operate as an off-reservation boarding school to this day.
Pierre, SD



St. Joseph's Indian School was a newer founded boarding school that began in 1927. St. Joseph's still operates as a fully-functional Lakota boarding school, however, now instead of dormitories, they use a family /home environment with 12 children per their 19 campus homes.
Chamberlain, SD



Flandreau School actually began by a request from a reverend to furnish the Santee Indian "a teacher, with perhaps a little aid in the way of school books." The school was added to and changed to, "Riggs Institute" Boarding in 1892 when Congress passed the Indian School act. It is run as an Indian Boarding school to this day.
Flandreau, SD

Began in 1884 and closed in 1934. There is only one building that remains from the school.



The Manual Training building was purchased by the City of Genoa US Indian School Foundation and is open for tours from Memorial Day to Labor Day every year.
Genoa, NE



Haskell Indian Industrial School was founded in 1884. The school's name was changed to Haskell Institute in 1887. By 1894 there were 606 students enrolled, representing 36 states. Haskell began offering college level classes in 1927. In 1993, the school became a 4-year college and the name was changed to Haskell Indian Nations University. It continues to operate as an All-Native Nations University and is very successful with it's educational endeavors!
Lawrence, KS (now a university)

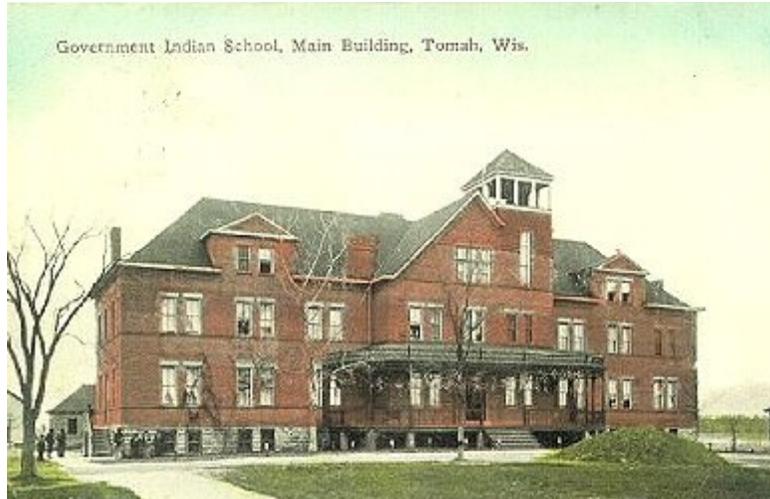




Founded in 1883, Chilocco was operated as a boarding school until 1979. Currently the buildings are vacant.
Chilocco, OK



This Boarding school was closed in 1909 and handed to the State of Minnesota with the stipulation that all Native Americans at all times shall be admitted free of charge for tuition. This is a policy the school, now "University of Minnesota" still proudly honors.
Morris, MN



Opened in 1893, Tomah was praised as a model institution. The children's time was carefully monitored, with boys receiving instruction in agriculture or trade and girls in the domestic arts. The school became the home of the Tomah VA (Veterans Administration) Hospital in 1947.
Tomah, WI

(no photo)

1910 - 1953. The school's buildings were removed and destroyed in 1976 to make way for the Southwestern Vocational Technical Institute. The Superintendent's Residence remained intact and was used as a private residence until 1983 when it was moved to Minnesota West Community College.

Pipestone, MN

(no photo)

Wittenberg Indian School was opened in 1895 by the Government. Before that, it had been used as a Native American school by the Norwegian Evangelical Church since 1886.

Wittenberg, WI



Opened in 1893 and closed in 1933. The buildings were given to Michigan with the agreement that Native children could now attend their public schools.

Mt Pleasant, MI



So much can be said about this school, it was the first Native American boarding school to operate. Hundreds of children died at Carlisle Indian School. Most from disease (tuberculosis, pneumonia, smallpox), others died while attempting to escape from the school or from physical, emotional and sexual abuse or malnutrition. Any behavior outside of white culture, the students would be fiercely punished. What is important to remember is that children as young as toddler-age were torn from their parents arms and forced to travel hundreds of miles from home. This was an act of cruel inhumane proportions! Beatings were a common form of punishment for grieving, speaking their native languages, not understanding English and attempting to escape. Broken bones from the beatings were common. These children were abducted and abused. And all this happened only 100 years ago.

Carlisle, PA



(Notice the before and after photos of 3 boys from Carlisle –above and one boy to the left)

More Photos from Indian Boarding Schools
(locations unknown)





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(locations unknown)





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(locations unknown)





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All images from unknown boarding schools are courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.