

# EXAMINING NATIVE AMERICAN BOARDING SCHOOLS



## THE FIRST BOARDING SCHOOLS

- The boarding school movement for Native Americans began in 1859 when the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs opened a boarding school at Fort Simcoe on the Yakima Indian Reservation in Washington Territory.
- This boarding school was an on-reservation boarding school which was intended to teach Native Americans skills like agriculture and manufacturing. However, it would eventually be used to “Americanize” Native American children.
- In 1879 the Carlisle Indian Industrial School expanded upon this model when it opened in Pennsylvania. This school was designed strictly with the purpose of eradicating Native American culture.
- The founder of the school had been a Union officer in the Civil War who was placed in charge of Native American prisoners. During that time he taught the prisoners English and forced them to adopt American dress and manners. He used this as an example to prove to the government that the same could be done for native children.

The picture to the left shows Native American children in their school uniforms as the Fort Simcoe Indian Boarding School on the Yakama Reservation, Washington State.

# THE CARLISLE SCHOOL

- The Carlisle School's model was soon adopted by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and implemented across the United States. These schools were far away from reservations so that children would have little contact with their tribes.
- At school, the children were organized into a military like structure and expected to follow white cultural standards. Their hair was cut upon arrival, and they were given English names to erase their traditional identity.
- Students were then organized into military like battalions, with older children supervising the younger ones and informing school officials if they broke the rules.
- Corporal punishment was common when students spoke native languages or exhibited their own native cultures.
- The school held fast to the motto of its founder, "Kill the Indian, save the man."
- Students were also expected to follow a rigorous daily schedule. They would wake up early, attend classes in English, participate in regular daily prayer and go to bed early in the evenings.
- Students were expected to write home to their families at least once a month to inform them of their progress.



Students at the Carlisle School in Pennsylvania.



# “KILL THE INDIAN, SAVE THE MAN”

As you view the following images from the Carlisle School and other Native American boarding schools, consider the definition for genocide from the United Nations. ***Does the treatment of Native Americans at this school constitute genocide in your view?***

## Article II

*In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:*

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

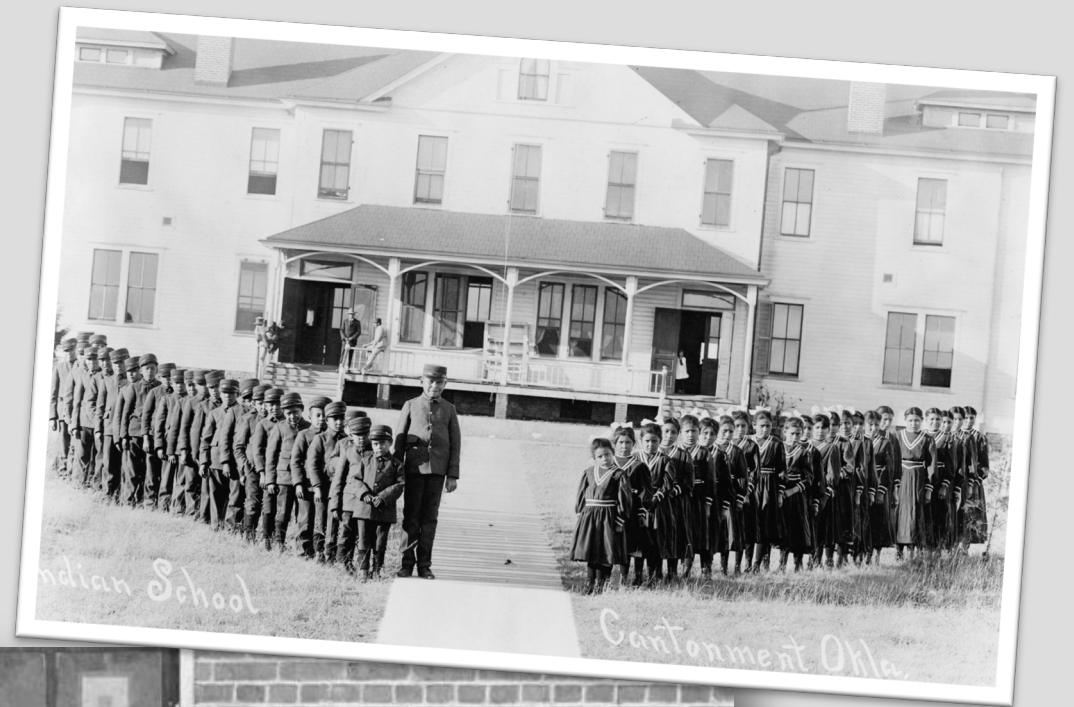
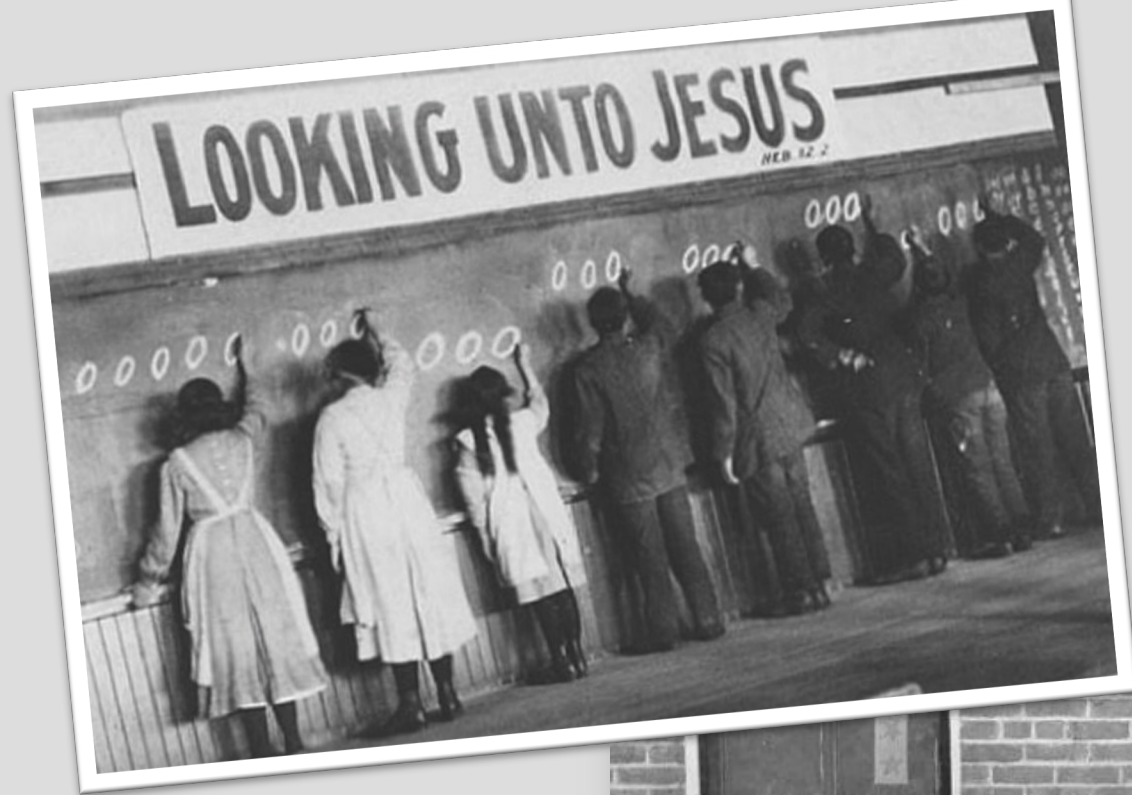






1583 - ENTRANCE TO INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL, CHEMAWA, NEAR SALEM, OREGON.

















HENRY STANDING BEAR  
WOUNDED YELLOW ROBE

SIoux BOYS AS THEY ENTERED THE SCHOOL IN 1883.



CHAUNCY YELLOW ROBE

THREE YEARS LATER.